

HOUGHTON COLLEGE

GREATBATCH SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Hannah Hawes

piano

in

Senior Recital

We would like to thank the Houghton College administration for its faithful support of the Greatbatch School of Music.

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Hannah Hawes, a student of Dr. William Newbrough, is performing this recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance.

As a courtesy to the performer and your fellow audience members, please be certain that all cell phones, watch alarms, and pagers are either turned off or set for silent operation. Flash photography can be very disconcerting to performers and is not permitted during the performance. Thanks for your cooperation.

Recital Hall
Center for the Arts
Monday, March 30, 2020
8:00 p.m.

Program Notes

Sergei Prokofiev, Piano Sonata No. 3

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a Russian composer, conductor, and pianist, and one of the most important musical figures in the 20th century. He wrote extensively for piano, orchestra, and strings over a wide array of genres including film music, opera, and ballet. Prokofiev began formal lessons in composition and piano at age eleven, and enrolled at the conservatory in St. Petersburg two years later, where he went on to make a name for himself as a pianist-composer.

Prokofiev began his first piano sonata when he was fifteen, and composed a total of nine over the course of his life. Piano Sonata No. 3 was completed in 1917 and given the subtitle “From Old Notebooks,” as it drew on themes Prokofiev had composed in his teenage years a decade prior. The sonata is an impressive synthesis of fervor and often foreboding calm, drawing upon several short motives to provide overarching structure. Starting with a burst of momentum, Prokofiev maintains this energy to the end. Throughout the piece’s numerous sections, he juxtaposes the mechanistic and militaristic with the simple and sweet, preserving a sense of energy as it fluctuates between dormant and lively states. Upon the suggestion of a friend, Prokofiev commonly opened his own concerts with his Third Sonata.¹

Franz Joseph Haydn, Keyboard Sonata in F major, Hob. XVI:23

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) is one of the most prolific composers of the transition between Baroque and Classical eras. Along with operas, masses, and concerti, he is known for his critical role in the development of the string quartet, the symphony, and sonata form.

Haydn’s sonata in F major was written during his time at the Esterházy court. It was first published in a set six of sonatas (Hob. XVI:21-26) and dedicated to his patron, Prince Nikolaus. This is one

of the last sonatas Haydn wrote before introducing dynamics in his keyboard works, and as such, it is likely initially composed for and performed on the harpsichord. The sonata in F major is a brilliant showcase of Haydn’s mastery of the classical gallant style and his characteristic musical wit. As is typical of Haydn’s earlier sonatas, the first and third movements (Allegro moderato and Presto) are written in the tonic key, while the middle movement (Adagio) is set in the parallel minor. He contrasts an elegant, yet virtuosic first movement with a somber second movement, concluding with a comical and sprightly finale.

Johannes Brahms, Intermezzo No. 2 in A major, Op. 118

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was a musical giant of the Romantic period. While his works include chamber music, symphonies, lieder, and choral works, Brahms wrote extensively for the piano, including four-hand and two-piano literature. He was a skilled pianist himself, and often premiered his own compositions. Closely aligning himself with the ideals of absolute music, Brahms’ compositions were intended to be highly evocative and self-sufficient, not relying on extramusical interpretation.

Brahms’ Six Pieces for Piano were written in 1893 and were the second to last of his published compositions. The set was dedicated to Clara Schumann, with whom Brahms had a close relationship for much of his life. These pieces portray a quieter, more mellow temperament than many of Brahms’ works. Four of the six are simply designated “Intermezzo.” The second, one of Brahms most well-loved pieces for piano, is written in simple ternary form, the “A” section in A major and the “B” section in F# minor.

Franz Liszt, Etude No. 3 in G# minor, “La Campanella,” S. 141

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was perhaps the most intense and charismatic musical revolutionary of his time. Beginning his concert career as a child prodigy, Liszt performed extensively through his adulthood. He became known for his striking stage presence and

¹Berman, Boris. (2012). Prokofiev's piano sonatas: a guide for the listener and the performer. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 77

intense, memorized performances, often inspiring frenzied responses in the crowd and gaining a type of rock 'n roll celebrity in his day.

“La campanella” was written as part of Liszt’s *Grandes études de Paganini*, a set of six études based on the works of the violinist Niccolò Paganini, a performer who Liszt sought to emulate. “La campanella,” translated “little bell,” is characterized by bell-like repetition and ornamentation of high register notes, a source of technical difficulty as the interweaving melody moves up and down the keyboard. Although the claim that La Campanella is one of the most difficult pieces written for the piano is somewhat exaggerated, this étude certainly calls for a superior level of technical virtuosity.

Domenico Scarlatti, Keyboard Sonata in A major, K. 113

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) was an Italian keyboardist and composer. Scarlatti composed over 550 keyboard sonatas during his life, most of which would have been performed on harpsichord, some possibly on early fortepianos.

Like many of Scarlatti’s sonatas, this lively sonata is a one-movement work, written in binary form. The piece is a constant conversation between hands, featuring passages in which the left hand leaps across the right hand to execute repetitive three-octave leaps. This sonata is a comical and entertaining dance, suggestive of a taunting court jester who is constantly one step ahead of getting caught.

Maurice Ravel, Pavane pour une infante défunte, M. 19

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) was one of the most prominent French composers of the impressionist era. He began studying composition at the Paris Conservatoire at the age of fourteen. Despite failing to meet the necessary academic standards and finding himself dismissed from the Conservatoire twice, Ravel wrote his well-loved “Pavane for a Dead Princess” during this time.

Ravel first composed “Pavane for a Dead Princess” for piano solo in 1899, publishing an orchestrated version eleven years later. The piece was dedicated his patron the Princess de Polignac, the founder of a notable music salon in Paris. As he explained, the piece was not written about a certain “dead princess;” rather he simply liked the sound of the name in French. Ravel described his vision of the piece as “an evocation of the pavane that might have been danced by such a little princess as painted by Velázquez.”²

Alexander Scriabin, Piano Sonata No. 4, Op. 30

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) was a renowned Russian pianist and composer distinguished by his use of musical symbolism and extended harmony. While he wrote a number of orchestral works, the majority of Scriabin’s compositional output was for piano. Scriabin was a rather eccentric character: he supposedly carried out “flying experiments,” attempted to walk on water,³ and composed a piece which when performed, he believed would cause the end of the world.

Scriabin fourth of ten sonatas was composed in 1903, as he was progressing towards a more atonal harmonic idiom. His increasing obsession with themes of mysticism and eroticism can be observed in this work, and particularly in its accompanying poem. Scriabin writes of the pursuit of a distant star, a pursuit driven by “the insanity of desire,” which culminates in the blissful engulfment of the “sea of light.” This progression is evidenced throughout the piece—from the soft and gentle harmonies of the first movement through the wildly darting passages of the second movement, the “subject of desire” is amplified until reaching a frenzied and powerful climax at the end.

² Elliott, Suzanne. (2012, April 17). Maurice Ravel: Pavane pour une infante défunte. <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/ravel/music/maurice-ravel-pavane-pour-une-infante-defunte/>

³Lefevre, Peter. (2014, December 30). Scriabin, invoking mysticism and perhaps madness, in 'The Divine Poem' - CSO Sounds & Stories. Retrieved from <https://csosoundsandstories.org/scriabin-invoking-mysticism-and-perhaps-madness-in-the-divine-poem/>