

HOUGHTON COLLEGE

GREATBATCH SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Victoria Karns Piano in Senior Recital

Recital Hall
Center for the Arts
18 April, 2020
2:00 p.m.

Program

Italian Concerto, BWV 971
III. Presto

J.S Bach
(1685-1750)

Sonata No. 9 in D Major, K. 311
III. Rondeau

W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Pause

Mélancolie, FP 105

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

Liebstraum No. 3

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Pause

Three Preludes
1. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso
2. Andante con moto e poco rubato
3. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

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

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Victoria, a student of Dr. William Newbrough, is performing this recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education.

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 consideration.

Program Notes
for the Senior Recital of Victoria Karns

J.S. Bach, Italian Concerto, BWV 971

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was an extremely influential and important composer of the Baroque period. In fact, he is one of the most influential composers of the entirety of Western music. He composed a staggering amount of over 1,000 pieces in his lifetime and held positions as organist and composer for various churches.

Bach composed the *Italian Concerto* in 1735 as originally directed to be played on a 2-manual harpsichord. This meant that more contrasting dynamics could be achieved. Thus, there are “piano” and “forte” markings on the score. The piece is called a “Concerto” though it is only intended for one instrument. It is meant to simulate an orchestral score with elements such as various solo and tutti parts and three movements that are presented as fast-slow-fast.

The third movement is lively and animated. It mostly consists of two contrapuntal lines that weave themselves together. It is largely based on material of scales centralized around F Major but also heard in various other keys. Like most Bach piano works, there is constant motion and few moments where one of the hands isn’t playing. Long runs and ascending and descending lines also contribute to the movement’s excitement and vigor.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sonata No. 9 in D Major, K. 311

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791) was born in Salzburg to Leopold Mozart and Maria Anna Pertl as one of seven children, though only two survived. Taught by his Father in his early years, Mozart became a child prodigy at a very young age. He played keyboard at four years old and was composing at five. In the next following years, Mozart and his family toured around performing in many notable venues for a variety of important people.

Mozart composed Sonata No. 9 around the middle of his life in 1777 while in Augsburg and Mannheim. The work is structured containing the typical fast-slow-fast movements with the third movement being a rondo. Thus, the main theme is heard in the beginning and it returns throughout. The Rondo begins in D major with the main theme. When the theme returns again it transitions into G Major and then the development makes its way through various keys such as the relative minor until it ends with a short cadenza bringing it back to the main theme again in D Major. This movement has a spritely and fun sound to it and the continual return of the theme helps add to the humor.

Franz Liszt, Liebestraum No. 3

Hungarian composer, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was known to be an almost impossible virtuosic pianist. Yet, he strived to be accepted as an accomplished composer alongside his contemporaries such as Chopin and Wagner. Liszt was an innovator in the world of music as he was the first to coin the term “recital” because he was the first to tour around playing solo piano in large venues. He also was the one to begin the tradition of performing solo repertoire from memory.

Liebestraum No. 3 is a solo piano transcription by Liszt based off of his song for voice and piano: "O Lieb, so lang du lieben kannst." The text of the original song was written by Ferdinand Freiligrath and it speaks of loving as best and as long as one can for death is not too far away for us all. In the piano work, Liszt takes liberty with alternating between original melody and solostic-like passages. In two different places, he inserts a virtuosic cadenza that serves as a transition into another variation of the melody in a different key. The piece is in the beloved key by nocturne composers of A-flat major, and it is bursting with a rich, warm melody whose first two notes begin with the lush interval of a major sixth. The piece carries the listener through a journey of love through sound and invokes the imagination in expressing passion without words.

Francis Poulenc, Mélancolie, FP 105

Known for his melodic craftsmanship, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was a mostly self-taught pianist and composer who was greatly influenced by composers such as Debussy, Satie and Stravinsky. Oftentimes, Poulenc would compose in an improvisatory fashion. He would sit at the piano and improvise, invite friends over to listen to what he had created and if there was enough positive reaction, he would then finalize the work and write it down. Throughout various seasons of his life, Poulenc struggled with depression and this would often influence his music such as his solo piano work *Mélancolie*.

Mélancolie is a piece dripping with nostalgia and the bittersweet. Though the title may suggest a more sad-sounding piece, this work is in a major key and begins with a beautiful, thoughtful melody that returns throughout in various keys. However, the piece is almost even more emotionally impactful in the fact that Poulenc uses well-placed minor and altered chords within the major key sections, perhaps to indicate the underlying sadness of a happy exterior. The piece often wanders wistfully through different keys and sections, sometimes almost seeming to break the train of thought to something entirely different. The work is filled with surprising harmony through its great amount of tritones, fully diminished chords and extended tertian harmony. It often contains the unexpected, though sometimes very subtly. It is a piece that tugs on the

heartstrings of the listener through its reflective, wistful mood.

George Gershwin, Three Preludes

George Gershwin (1898-1937) was an American composer who began in popular music and theater but was also composing in classical genres in the 1920s and 30s. For Gershwin, there was no solid line between jazz and classical and he often drew from the influences of both. He studied piano classically through works by composers such as Chopin, Liszt and Debussy and also studied form, counterpoint and orchestration. He used the skills he learned from these subjects, along with his understanding of jazz to create a new, unique style of American music.

Three Preludes is a prime example of classical music that was influenced by jazz. This work brings in elements of blues and Latin dance elements as well. As the title suggests, this piece consists of three short preludes and each one has a specific main theme or motif on which that specific prelude is built. The first piece has a bit of energy but also a laid back quality to it as well and it contains syncopated rhythms and seventh chords. The opening measures begin with a short statement of a motif that displays notes of the scale which are lowered called “blue” notes in blues music. These will be present throughout the three pieces. The second prelude brings about a much different feel from the first prelude. While it still contains the very bluesy vibe from the first piece, it is much more relaxed. It was described by Gershwin as “a sort of blue lullaby.”¹ The third prelude is fast and furious and is filled with much chromaticism. The pieces are delightful to hear and bring one back to the nostalgia of the American 20’s.

¹ Howard Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work*, (University of California Press, 2006), 391.