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Senior Recital

Christopher DeFazio
Chapman University

Clara Cheng
Chapman University, ccheng@chapman.edu

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Beethoven's fourth cello sonata, a two movement work for cello and piano, was composed in the beginning of his third period of composition. Because of this timing, the piece is not quite as experimental as his later works in his third period. This reserved style in his third period is indicated by the use of traditional elements such as a slow introduction to both movements, followed by the statement of the first theme. Furthermore, the movements abide by traditional sonata forms. Because this work was composed at the very beginning of his third period, many aspects of his second period also carry over. For example, in order to demonstrate different emotions and levels of drama, there are many sudden changes in dynamics in both movements.

Dvořák rondo

Noted for his contribution to nationalism, Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) was a Czech composer. Born in Prague, Dvořák began his musical career as a performer, later transitioning into composition and gaining recognition by winning competitions. These competitions were of particular importance in launching his career as a composer. However, Brahms, one of the judges in the competition, was of even more importance in this subject. Because Brahms was so impressed by Dvořák's Moravian Duets, Brahms recommended Dvořák to his publisher (Döge). By 1883, Dvořák achieved an international reputation, especially in London. By 1892, Dvořák traveled to the United States as to teach at the National Conservatory of Music. During his time in the United States, he searched for a new style of writing and drew upon traditional folk songs to achieve this new style, a style that remained as one of the most prominent features in Dvořák's vast works.

Dvořák's Rondo, for cello and piano, was composed as part of his "farewell tour" before he would leave Bohemia to live in the United States. During this tour, Dvořák would often play the piano accompaniment himself, using the tour as a way to say goodbye to his friends (Döge). In this work, however, there is not much presence of traditional folk tunes. Instead, there is a consistent alternation between the primary theme and different material. This is because the form of a rondo causes such an alternation in material. Furthermore, if one compares this work to his famous cello concerto, certain similarities will be noticed. For example, there is a passage in the rondo that uses a scale of sixteenth notes, which is a technique that Dvořák also used in the first movement of his cello concerto. Therefore, although his rondo does not borrow much material nor quote any folk songs, it serves as a source for Dvořák's later works.

Program notes by Christopher DeFazio

Works cited

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music

presents a

Senior Recital

Christopher DeFazio, cello

Clara Cheng, piano

April 17, 2016 ▪ 5:00 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

Program

Cello Sonata No. 4
I. Andante-Allegro vivace
II. Adagio-Allegro vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Rondo

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

~Intermission~

Sinfonia Concertante
I. Andante
II. Allegro giusto
III. Andante con moto

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music in Instrumental Performance and Music Education degree. Mr. DeFazio is a student of Laszlo Mezo.

Program Notes

Prokofiev Sinfonia Concertante

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a Russian composer and pianist, notable for his combination of Russian tradition, Neoclassicism, and modernist elements, which ultimately contributed to his involvement in writing music for his homeland of Soviet Russia. At a young age, Prokofiev began studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, writing in multiple genres at the same time. In 1918, he moved to the United States to make his debut, where he was received quite well. Upon his return to Soviet Russia in the summer of 1936, Prokofiev decided to take upon the concept of revolution and incorporate this into his music in order to contribute to his homeland (Redepinning). However, he needed to adapt his music to the style of socialist realism. Otherwise, his music would not hold a place in the Soviet Russian collection of repertoire.

Prokofiev's Sinfonia Concertante is one of two works that Prokofiev did not design to fit Soviet Russia's socialist realism approach to music, however. In terms of musical style, this work deviated from socialist realism by not using a conservative approach to classicism or conservative harmonies. Completed in 1938, Prokofiev's Sinfonia Concertante was written for cello and orchestra and was premiered with very little success. Following the criticism of Myaskovsky, another Soviet composer, Prokofiev revised the work for its premier in the United States with Piatigorsky as the cellist in 1940. The work was revised, yet again, with the help Rostropovich, a cellist that is widely regarded as one of the greatest cellists of all time (Redepinning).

Throughout the work, the Sinfonia Concertante features many distinct and quick key changes, often in the middle of phrases. Furthermore, these key changes do not go to closely related keys, but distantly related keys. For example, the opening of the first movement begins in the tonic of E Minor but moves to F Sharp Minor by the end of the first phrase. In addition to these quick key changes, this work reuses the various themes in each respective movement extensively but in different ways and disguises. This disguise idea is especially prominent in the second and third movements. For example, the first theme in the second movement is applied to the cadenza but with added double stops in order to not make the repetition as apparent. It is bit easier to identify this technique in the third movement because Prokofiev reuses the theme but in different keys and tempos.

Beethoven Sonata #4

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was a German composer, regarded as a transitional figure from the Classical Period to the Romantic Period. Largely prolific in instrumental works, Beethoven's time of composition is divided into three main periods. His first period reflects a traditional approach to composition, similar to that of Haydn or Mozart, which is why counterpoint is used in his music. His second period involves more experimental music, meaning that his music reaches a heightened level of drama and emotion. This change was largely because Beethoven started to lose his hearing by this time and had started to seclude himself from others. His third period can be viewed as an extension of the second period in the sense that his music became much more experimental and challenging to both performers and audience alike (Kerman).