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### Senior Recital

Alayne Hsieh  
*Chapman University*

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

*Hall-Musco*  
*Conservatory of Music*  
*presents a*

Senior Recital

Alayne Hsieh, piano

May 15, 2015 ▪ 5:00 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

# Program Notes

## **Well Tempered Clavier, Book 1, Prelude and Fugue No.5 in D Major**

Johann Sebastian Bach was a master of counterpoint and motivic organization, and composers since the Baroque era have utilized his genius as reference and inspiration for their own works. Born into a family of musicians, organists, and composers in Germany, Bach had great exposure and early childhood practice in the organ, violin, and clavichord. Early in his career, Bach's frequent organ composing and playing experience resulted in *The WTC*, the monumental collection of preludes and fugues in every major and minor key.

At first glance, the Prelude to this D major piece looks like an etude or velocity exercise. The right hand contains constant sixteenth notes from beginning to end and the left hand helps to outline the tonality of the piece every quarter beat. While these two concepts are truly simple, analyzing the piece by outlining the chords within each measure unveil the ever-changing tonal structure behind the constant rhythmic texture. This piece is constantly modulating from key to key, creating a restless and continuous feeling by moving onto new tonalities. The challenge and opportunity after discovering this is that the performer can decide how to convey these harmonic qualities both chord-by-chord and relative to its preceding and succeeding harmonies. One can even find the occasional "call and response" dialogue in the right hand, utilizing the scalar direction and the sequencing motifs. The D Major fugue primarily parallels the French Overture. It's reoccurring subject sounds like a turn or ornamental line, and the dotted notes create a stylized, regal effect much like the works of Jean Baptiste Lully and some of Bach's French Overtures.

## **Sonata in D Major, K.576**

Born in Salzburg, Austria, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's genius as a musician began early when his parents instilled the importance of music into the lives of their children. By the age of six, he was an accomplished keyboardist and blossomed as a composer. It was at this age that Mozart's father presented him to perform at the imperial courts in Vienna, which began a music tour across Europe. By his teens, Mozart's musical maturity and ability paralleled that of older musicians, and his experience composing for instrumental works expanded to composing for opera. He is well known for integrating dynamic characters and colors into his music which make all his compositions, operas and piano sonatas alike, come to life.

Mozart's collection of piano sonatas are some of his most familiar works. There are only two of the 18 sonatas that are in a minor key, written at some of the most difficult times of his life. The sonata in D Major K.576 was one of his last sonatas, written at age 33, that still involve the lightheartedness of Mozart's young musical vocabulary, as well as the complex

with Russian nationalist ideals.) *Visions Fugitives* Op. 22 was composed at a time when Prokofiev was exploring orchestral composition. It is a collection of 20 short pieces that is growing in popularity as a piece of major piano repertoire, and can be performed altogether or with only a few selections, in any order. Prokofiev intended each short piece to evoke its own mood and setting, independent of the others.

The first short piece in *Lentamente* clearly exhibits tonal structure and calculated organization of antecedent and consequent phrases (dictated by direction of the melody and cadential material.) Prokofiev uses parallel minor sevenths to prolong the moving harmonies into something the ear can understand. The second half is almost exactly the same, but now varies the first with a descending chromatic line down the middle of the primary material. The second short piece in *Comodo* can be inferred to have stemmed from Prokofiev's tonal study at the Conservatory. Although the concepts in this piece are relatively simple, Prokofiev explores colors and tempi reminiscent of an orchestra with relatively basic melody and accompaniment material.

## Sonatine

The *Sonatine* is one of Maurice Ravel's more well-known piano works that encompasses the factor of Classicism in his composing. The first movement was composed for a competition in Sonata form under the condition that the piece had to be under 75 bars long. Ravel was the only entrant, and it was disqualified for being 77 bars. Ravel later finished the latter two movements, but often only performed the first two, thinking that he did not have the skill to play the virtuosic third movement well enough. Although Ravel is categorized as an Impressionist composer, his composition technique is famous for craftsmanship and abidance to form (his favorites of which were dance forms and sonata form.)

The entire sonata consists of three movements: *Modéré*, *Mouvement de menuet*, and *Animé*. *Modéré* introduces the theme of a falling fourth that can be found throughout the movements, embellished, repeated, and inverted into an upward leap of a fifth. Another theme is a melodic phrase that is reiterated over a variety of contexts, textures, tempi, and dynamics. The second movement is most like a dance, extending the traditional 3-beat waltz into a 6-beat minuet (with variation.) Even so, Ravel establishes syncopation through placement of accents and specific dynamic markings, sometimes veering from too exact of a 6-pattern. Ravel consistently involves these themes in the harmonic journey of each movement, and by the third movement, has successfully transformed and melded the material from the first two movements into something that consists of both Sonata allegro and Rondo forms. The third movement features the themes like splashes of water or exploding colors amidst the wild texture of sixteenth notes and triplets. It also involves crossing crossing and conflicting of hands at such great speed.

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