

Sunday, July 25, 2010

2:30 p.m.

Program

Prelude and Fugue in C# Major, WTC IJ.S. Bach

Pour le Piano.....Debussy
III. Toccata

Rhapsody in G minor, Op. 79, No. 2.....Brahms

Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No. 2.....Brahms

Sonata in C minor, Op. 111.....Beethoven
Maestoso – Allegro con brio ed appassionato

In fulfillment of AIM Level XII Performance requirement

Bach, Prelude and Fugue in C# Major, WTC I

The Well-Tempered Clavier, composed by Johann Sebastian Bach in the first half of the eighteenth century, celebrates the tuning system called “equal temperament,” developed in 1691 by the organist Andreas Werckmeister. Where older systems only tuned the instrument for frequently used scales, in equal temperament, the octave is divided into twelve tones of equal intervals. *The Well-Tempered Clavier* consists of two books of preludes and fugues in all twenty-four major and minor keys. C# Major is the third prelude and fugue pair in Book I, and possibly the first keyboard work ever written in the key of C# Major. The prelude is elegant and quick, with rhythmically contrasting parts alternating between both hands. The fugue consists of three voices built on a subject and countersubject response, separated by unique episodes.

Debussy, Toccata from *Pour le Piano*

French composer Claude Debussy greatly influenced the musical Impressionistic Period. While artists such as Monet and van Gogh were inventing new techniques with color to capture the effect of light in paintings, Debussy’s innovative use of pedal, sounds, and rhythm combined to establish very clear moods and images. Debussy began working on the three-movement piano suite, *Pour le Piano*, in 1896, and completed it in 1901. The first movement of the suite is a Prelude, dark and fast, stretching the sound with gliding whole-tone scales and glissandos. The second movement, Sarabande, is much slower and more contemplative. Brighter than the Prelude and less dreamy than the Sarabande, the third and final movement, Toccata, is energetic and lively, concluding the suite with a resounding statement.

Brahms, Rhapsody in G minor, Op. 79, No.2 and Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No.2

Romantic composer Johannes Brahms was strongly influenced by more traditional classical composers, such as Haydn and Beethoven, as well as by his contemporaries, Robert Schumann and Johann Strauss. As a result, Brahms is often considered to be both a conservative and modernist composer of the Romantic Period. Rhapsody No. 2 in G minor, opus 79, brings out both sides of Brahms, for though it is written in a traditional sonata form, the intense and emotional nature of the Rhapsody clearly marks it as a product of the Romantic Movement. Intermezzo in A Major, opus 118, is one of six pieces written for piano. Gentler and more lyrical than the Rhapsody, the Intermezzo is a work of sheer beauty. Both the Rhapsody and Intermezzo are examples of “character pieces” that were prevalent in the Romantic Period, which evokes a single mood with descriptive and suggestive titles.

Beethoven, Sonata in C minor, Op. 111

Ludwig van Beethoven’s musical writing has three distinct musical periods. During his Early Period, Beethoven modeled his pieces from his contemporary classical composers, Mozart and Haydn. Beethoven’s Middle Period is also called his “Heroic” Period, and marks a change and development in his unique musical style, breaking from the more traditional classical modes by focusing more on conveying moods and images. Beethoven was especially interested in the pastoral scene, and often wandered the countryside, partly to avoid social situations made awkward by the onset of his deafness. Piano Sonata No. 32, opus 111, was written during the later period of Beethoven’s life, during which he was almost completely deaf. Dramatic, alternating between fiery and violent, Sonata No. 32 is a challenge, both in the technical and musical aspects. Unlike the classical sonata, opus 111 contains only two movements; the impassioned first movement depicting man’s struggle with everyday hardships, while the serene second movement consists of theme and variations, suggesting the immaterial world, a world without conflict. Sonata No. 32 is the last piano sonata written by Beethoven.

AIM Level XII Recital

Jaime Cohen, *pianist*



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