

Achievement in Music Level 12 Exam

September 30, 2020

Program Notes by Angela Wang

Johann Sebastian Bach, Italian Concerto, BWV 971

The first published works of JS Bach appeared in the 1730's, composed for the keyboard and put out in groups collectively called the Clavierübung, or the "exercise or practice of all keyed instruments". The second part of the Clavierübung published by Bach in 1735, the Italian Concerto, is simply what its name suggests: a solo concerto in Italian style. Originally composed for the two-manual harpsichord, the Italian Concerto effectively demonstrates the contrasting ensemble forces of concerto grosso, or tutti, and concertino, the soloists, through the separate voicings in each hand and terraced dynamics. The fast-slow-fast form of all three movements within the Concerto also successfully represent Bach's imitation of the exuberant style of Italian compositions at the time. Even Johann Scribe, one of Bach's severest critics, admired this piece, stating that the "clavier concerto is to be regarded as a perfect model of a well-designed solo concerto".

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sonata in D Major, K. 576, Mvt. 1

Often nicknamed "The Hunt" for its trumpet-like opening, the Piano Sonata in D Major k. 576 was classical composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's last piano sonata. Composed in 1789 after his concert tour in Potsdam, Leipzig, and Berlin, the question of whether or not it was written for Princess Friedrike Luise of Prussia has frequently been debated. The entire sonata is composed of three movements: fast-slow-fast, which was typical at the time. The many areas of technically challenging counterpoint passages and, as previously mentioned, its trumpet-like opening is what distinguishes this sonata from the others.

Claude Debussy, Passepied from Suite Bergamasque

When asked about a piece of Impressionistic composer Claude Debussy, many people's first reactions are likely, "Clair de Lune". However, unbeknownst to many average people, Clair de Lune is a part of Suite Bergamasque, a collection of four movements total. Despite being relatively overshadowed by its preceding movement, the fourth and final movement of the suite, Passepied, also had much to contribute to the fame of one of Debussy's most well-known works for the piano. Passepied itself is a French court dance found frequently in 18th-century French operas and ballets. The bouncy, light-footed dance moves are reflected in the patterns of the left hand throughout the piece. The pedal combined with both slurred and detached notes provide a dreamy, fantastical feel.

Frédéric Chopin, Ballade No. 3 in Ab Major, Op. 47

Polish romantic composer Frederic Chopin's work ranges from etudes to nocturnes to waltzes, and among his variety of styles are the Four Ballades composed in the 19th century. Before this time period, the term "ballade" was only widely used in French poetry, but ever since Chopin composed music under the name "ballade", it became associated with him and romantic music as well. Some defining characteristics of this piece would be its repeating theme, wide range of dynamics, rubato, and story-telling mood. Chopin never confirmed what literary sources served for inspiration, and so many believe that he wanted the listeners to find their own narrative within his music.



Angela Wang is currently a freshman at Adlai E. Stevenson High School. Having started at age six, she has been playing for around eight years now. Other than finishing schoolwork and practicing piano, she enjoys reading and walking outside the most out of her few hobbies. Under normal circumstances, Angela would also enjoy playing badminton and talking with her friends, but she has found ways to accommodate and also learn many new things, particularly in the topic of science.

Angela would like to thank everyone who has supported her throughout her journey to complete AIM. Despite studying with her for a relatively short period of time so far, Angela would especially like to thank her teacher, Ms. Jennifer Cohen, for all that she has been taught and looks forward to future works as well. She also feels gratitude towards her family who have encouraged and been with her the entirety of her piano experience.