



Rudi E. Scheidt
School of Music

DMA RECITAL

Lien Nguyen, piano

APRIL 26, 2024 | 7:30 PM

HARRIS CONCERT HALL

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music
Kevin Sanders, Director
College of Communication and Fine Arts
Ryan Fisher, Interim Dean

PROGRAM

Two Pieces from "The Love for the Three Oranges"

I. March

II. Scherzo

Sergei Prokofiev

(1891-1953)

Piano Sonata no. 17 in D minor, op. 31/2 "Tempest"

I. Largo - Allegro

II. Adagio

III. Allegretto

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Intermission

Prelude, Fugue, and Variation Op. 18

César Franck

(1822-1890)

arr. by Harold Bauer

Sonatine pour Yvette

I. Vivo e spiritoso

II. Moderato molto

III. Allegretto

Xavier Montsalvatge

(1912-2002)

PROGRAM NOTES

Two Pieces from *The Love for Three Oranges* Sergei Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a Russian composer, pianist, and conductor. He was born in Sontsovka, now known as Sontsivka, Ukraine. In his early years, he studied composition with Alexander Glazunov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, he lived and concertized in the United States and Europe. During this period, he composed some of his most iconic works, including the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Classical Symphony*. Upon his return to the Soviet Union in 1936, his works were under heavy influence of Soviet cultural policies. Prokofiev's legacy played a pivotal role in neoclassicism, fusing traditional tonality with modern harmonies.

Prokofiev composed *The Love for Three Oranges* between 1919 and 1920 as a commissioned work for the Chicago Opera. The opera premiered in 1921 at the Auditorium Theater in Chicago under the composer's baton, followed by numerous stagings in the States and Europe over the decade. Prokofiev wrote the libretto, basing the plot on an 18th-century Italian satirical tale. The opera tells the story of a Prince - son of the King of Clubs, who suffers from melancholy due to excessive reading of tragic poetry. The King summons an ensemble of the Joker, the Witch, and the Prime Minister to entertain his son. All attempts to make the Prince laugh failed until the Joker accidentally knocked over the Witch, revealing her underclothes. Offended, the Witch cursed the Prince for obsessing over "a love for three oranges." With the help of the Joker, the Prince finds the three oranges, which surprisingly reveal three princesses inside when peeled. Two of the princesses die instantly. The third and most beautiful, Ninette, survives. The opera ends with the happy union of Ninette and the Prince.

Two movements from the orchestral suite, March and Scherzo, were transcribed for solo piano by the composer. The March accompanies the Prince from his sickbed to the Court. The Scherzo depicts the Prince's magical travels searching for the three oranges.

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Sonata No. 17 in d-minor, Op. 31 No. 2 “Tempest”

Ludwig van Beethoven

At the age of 28, Beethoven’s hearing began to deteriorate. The condition caused devastating impacts on his work, life, and relationships, which he described in the “Heiligenstadt Testament.” The Heiligenstadt Testament signifies a new direction in his compositional outputs, commonly known today as the “middle period.” Beethoven’s works in the middle period utilize virtuosity to realize far-reaching musical and philosophical intentions. *Piano Sonata No. 17 in d-minor, Op. 31 No. 2 “Tempest,”* composed in 1801/2, is an example of this approach.

Largo – Allegro: The first movement opens with a brooding Largo introduction, creating an atmosphere of mystery and anticipation with an arpeggio leading to a four-note motif. The following Allegro section is based on the same motif, yet contrasting with agitated character, featuring dramatic contrasts in dynamics and abrupt shifts in mood.

Adagio: The second movement provides a poignant and introspective episode, contrasting the two outer movements. The movement embodies an orchestral timbral design, evident in the use of low and high registers and two contrasting melodic materials.

Allegretto: The final movement is a stormy rondo developed from a four note idea. It is gripping with perpetual motions and changes in harmony.

PROGRAM NOTES

Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18

César Franck

César Franck (1822-1890) was a Belgian-born French composer, pianist, organist, and music teacher. He is considered the father of the organ symphony, a genre of solo organ works that imitate the grandeur and complexity of the orchestra. Franck began his studies at the Liège Conservatoire and later entered the Paris Conservatoire. He composed in various genres, including symphonic music, chamber music, choral works, piano works, and organ music. Franck served as organist of multiple Parisian churches and later became a professor at the Paris Conservatoire in 1872. His students included important French composers such as Vincent d'Indy and Henri Duparc.

Franck's contribution to French organ music was associated with the advancements of organ building in France during the 19th century, credited to organ builder Aristide Cavaille-Coll. In 1858, Franck was appointed the organist at the newly completed Basilica of Sainte Clotilde in Paris, where he inducted one of Cavaille-Coll's finest instruments. Franck's post-service improvisations quickly attracted public attention, showcasing his impeccable skills and the powerful features of Cavaille-Coll's organ. Some of these improvisations were later captured in his *Six Pieces*.

Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18, dedicated to Camille Saint-Saëns, is the third piece from *Six Pieces*. The Prelude opens with an introspective 5-bar melody and is in the rounded binary form. The Fugue follows the exposition-episode-exposition-episode structure, which is more simple than a typical fugue by Bach. The ending of the Fugue and the beginning of the Variation are in the dominant key (F sharp major). The Variation is a reprise of the Prelude with a more active accompaniment. The piece fades to an end in the elevating B major chord. *Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18* was transcribed for the piano by American pianist Harold Bauer. Due to the different natures of the two instruments, the piano transcription poses challenges in voicing and layering of texture, yet brings a more romantic sentiment to the piece through the piano's capacity for more wide-ranging and nuanced dynamics levels.

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonatine pour Yvette **Xavier Montsalvatge**

Xavier Montsalvatge (1912-2002) is an important composer and music critic of Spanish music in the twentieth century. He is known for embracing folk tradition and nationalism, while at the same time being among the first Spanish composers who adopted atonality and the twelve-tone techniques. He was in frequent contact with and influenced by Les Six, the group of six French composers that formed as a reaction to Impressionism. Another major inspiration in Montsalvatge's works was the music and poetry from the Spanish colonial world of the Caribbean region.

Published in 1962 in Paris, *Sonatine pour Yvette* is a charming composition dedicated to the composer's young daughter Yvette. The piece follows a three-movement fast-slow-fast sonata structure. The program notes for the premier indicated that despite its title and youthful spirit, the composer did not intend for the piece to be played by children. *Sonatine pour Yvette* exemplifies Montsalvatge's extensive experimentation in twentieth century concepts and styles, including polytonality, whole-tone scales, references to Spanish folk singing, rhythm, and a popular children's folk tune in the last movement.