

Forestine Wise Monsen Memorial Scholarship Recital
Natalia Parmly, *piano*

Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 5pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

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Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

Introduction

Dr. Lark Powers, *Associate Professor of Piano*
and Dr. Cameron Bennett, *Dean, College of Professional Studies*

- French Suite No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 813** **J. S. Bach (1685-1750)**
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Air
Minuet I
Minuet II
Gigue
- Piano Sonata in G Major, op. 14, no. 2** **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**
I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Scherzo: Allegro assai
- Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Major, op. 50 (“Youth”)**..... **Dmitri Kavalevsky (1904-1987)**
I. Allegro molto
II. Andante con moto

with Dr. Lark Powers, *piano*
- Fantasia Impromptu in C-sharp Minor, op. 66**..... **Frédéric Chopin (1910-1849)**

Program Notes

The *French Suites, BWV 812-817* are six suites written for clavier (harpsichord or clavichord) between the years 1722-1725. The suite was the early eighteenth-century keyboard genre *par excellence*, and these were written for Bach's new wife Anna Magdalena, a talented singer, who was studying the clavier. The *French Suites*, though Bach did not give them this epithet, are characterized by cantabile, galant melodies and idiomatic keyboard writing, as opposed to the *English Suites* which possess more contrapuntal density.

Showing freer treatment of stylized dance forms, the first movement is an "Allemande," paired with a subsequent "Courante." The moderate tempo and warmth of the opening "Allemande," less contrapuntal than some, contrasts with the lively "Courante" in the style of an Italian Corrente. In this movement, listen for the emphasis on the left-hand sequences the first time they are played, and then for the quick notes in the right hand when repeated for both sections. The following movement is a "Sarabande," originally a Spanish dance in triple meter which evolved into a slow court dance. During this lovely slow movement, be sure to listen for the beautiful melody and the surprising chromaticism between the hands, particularly in the second half, and for the greater elaboration of the ornaments when the sections are repeated. Completely different in character to the "Sarabande," the "Air" is a light and quick movement and is the only other movement with a similar character to the "Courante." The highlight of this "Air" is the cascade of left hand sixteenth notes that remain elegant in the lower register under the right-hand melody in its four closing bars. Originally, the suite had no minuet, but one was added in a second version, and some versions have two, which are both being played here. The first "Minuet" contains interesting sequences in both hands that simultaneously descend by an interval of a second, and highlights a trill in the treble register that lasts two bars. The second "Minuet" has a moodier character than the first, with a predominantly melodic right hand, and brief passages of quick eighth notes played with both hands. Finally, the last movement of this suite is the "Gigue," in the style of a joyful French Canarie. This movement is highly ornamented, and the performer must bring out all the nuances of the phrasing while playing quick trills and mordents in almost every measure.

In 1798-1799, soon after the release of the "*Pathétique*" Sonata, his eighth piano sonata, Beethoven completed a pair of intimate, smaller-scale sonatas designed for domestic consumption. Published at the end of 1799 as opus fourteen, they were dedicated to Baroness Josephine von Braun, wife of the director of the Viennese court theater. Gently lyrical in the first movement and puckishly humorous in the finale, this *Piano Sonata in G Major, no. 2* is the antithesis of the tumultuous "*Pathétique*." In the easy-paced opening "Allegro," the main theme initially teases the listener as to which is the main beat – the kind of rhythmic ambiguity Haydn loved. Only in the coda is the theme finally normalized, with an added lyrical expressiveness. One challenge of the development is the lower staccato lines balanced by quick triplets in the upper register. In the middle of the development Beethoven plays a Haydn-esque trick by bringing back the main theme, as if to herald the recapitulation, but the key here is E-flat major, rather than the tonic G major, and few early listeners would have been fooled by this false reprise.

For the slower middle movement, the "Andante" is a set of three variations on a childlike theme, a march-on-tiptoe akin to some of the calculatedly naive nursery tunes in late Haydn and Mozart (such as the variations on the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"). The ending – a series of pianissimo chords shattered by a final fortissimo crash – is Beethoven's own take on Haydn's famous "surprise" (the *Surprise Symphony* was written seven years earlier). This prepares us for more Haydn-esque fun in the bucolic "Scherzo" finale, launched by a main theme that dances impishly across the bar lines, causing a feeling of being in two rather than three – a reminder that the first movement had delighted in playing rhythmic games with the listener. Whole measures of rest cause the listener to hang onto the ends of the phrases grasping for what comes next. One final humorous stroke of the main theme in the lower register brings the whole work to an abrupt but entertaining finish.

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Major, op. 50, subtitled "Youth" by Russian composer Dmitiri Kabalevsky, is one of three concertos (the others are for violin and cello) written for and dedicated to young performers within the Soviet Union in 1952, and is sometimes performed as a student's first piano concerto. This sunny and tuneful piece combines effective pianistic techniques whilst keeping the challenges within the ability of a keen student. The opening movement begins with a dramatic trumpet fanfare, followed by swirling piano writing that has a touch of the great piano concertos of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. There is a central dramatic cadenza before the opening theme returns, the movement ends with the same short fanfare as the beginning. The second movement begins in G minor in a far more austere style, using pizzicato string notes over which a melody is played in octaves on the piano. There is a shimmering central section at a

faster tempo that moves through various major keys before the opening minor theme is restated, by this time with a forte from the full orchestra. The opening quiet atmosphere eventually returns at the end of this movement.

Natalia, as one of the winners of the 2023-24 Student Showcase Competition, was fortunate to receive the opportunity to perform this concerto with the PLU Symphony Orchestra this past March.

Written in 1834 and published posthumously against Chopin's wishes, *Fantasia Impromptu in C-sharp Minor, op. 66* is the fourth impromptu written by Chopin, with the other three having been published in his lifetime. One of the many genres Chopin composed for solo piano, the impromptu came about in the Romantic era and has a free, improvised sound, and spontaneous character. Even though written in the spirit of improvisation, this work has a ternary form. Some interesting qualities of this impromptu are the difficult polyrhythm of sixteenth notes in the right hand and triplets in the left, a key change from C-sharp minor to D-flat major in the lyric middle section, and a dramatic finish in the major (Picardy third).

The first section is stormy and restless, marked "agitato", in tempo and character. In this section the listener can hear the melody emerging from rapid flights of sixteenth notes. The A section culminates in a furious descending chromatic scale and a left-hand octave melody that digs lower and lower. The dramatic fury eventually cascades into a beautiful B section. Marked "largo", the B section is quickly followed by the marking "moderato cantabile" which transforms the turmoil of the beginning into a completely different mood – the melody, perhaps from a dream, begins to sound. This eye in the storm is full of lovely rubato and expressivity that so wonderfully characterizes many works Chopin brought to the Romantic era. The golden, dreamy sequence carries on and repeats before transitioning suddenly back to the opening material. There is no dramatic build-up to this transition – rather, the lovely major sound dissipates as though it was never there. The coda explodes in fortissimo, even faster and more agitated than the preceding tempo that slowly melted into the major tonality. A major climactic moment of the piece is here in the coda, but it is followed by true peace in the last moments, ending in the major, a happy ending to a feverish dream.

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Forestine Wise Monsen (1944-1981) was the inspiration for this memorial scholarship. A lifelong music student and teacher, she studied with Calvin Knapp and graduated from PLU with degrees in education and sacred music. This piano music scholarship has helped many accomplished students since it began in 1982. Your donations to further the scholarship are greatly appreciated.