

*The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of Music
presents*

Piano Duets

featuring students of Music 211.009

taught by Professor Mimi Solomon

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

7:30 pm

Moeser Auditorium

Program

Slavonic Dance Op 46 No 8

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Scaramouche

Darius Milhaud
(1892-1974)

II. Moderé

III. Brasileira

Kenneth Fischer and Evangelina Dong, piano

Suite Burlesque

Germaine Tailleferre
(1892-1983)

I: Dolente

II: Pimpante

III: Melancolique

Sonata for Four Hands

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

I: Prelude

Val Steffel and Olivia Morse, piano

Petite Suite

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

I. En Bateau

III. Minuet

IV. Ballet

Camilla Fratta and Benjamin Yang, piano

Summer Dreams

Amy Beach
(1867-1944)

V: Elfin Tarantelle

VI: Goodnight

Chase Bonin and Kyle Jewell, piano

Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

Astor Piazzolla
(1921-1992, arr. P. Petrof)

II: Invierno Porteño (Winter)

Suite No. 2, Op. 17

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

II. Valse

Monet Jowers and Kyle Finley, piano

Program Notes

Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances* (Op. 46), composed for four-hand piano in 1878 and orchestrated soon after, were among the first works to establish the budding composer's international reputation and commercial success. Inspired by the famous *Hungarian Dances* of Johannes Brahms, the *Slavonic Dances* are a set of eight colorful pieces written to emulate the characteristic rhythms of the folk songs of Dvorak's native Bohemia. Based on the energetic *furiant* dance style, the eighth and final work of this set presents a fiery, thrilling theme with punctuating accents and grand dynamic contrasts throughout its driving yet lyrical melodies.

-Kenneth Fischer

Scaramouche was written by Darius Milhaud, one of the prominent French composers of the 20th century and a member of the revered *Les Six*. His hundreds of works often took the form of symphonies, choral arrangements and quartets; however, one of the pieces he is most known for, *Scaramouche*, is a Suite performed on two pianos. Originally written in 1937 for the commedia dell'arte play *Le médecin volant*, it consists of three movements each with their own vibrant melodies, reflecting the playful persona of the character for which it was named. In the second movement, performed by Evangelina and Ken, a few different motives can be heard trading the leading melody and eventually overlapping to create a beautiful harmonic experience. The third movement draws upon the rhythms of the *samba* to create a bright and lively atmosphere.

-Olivia Morse

Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983) was a French composer particularly known for being the only woman in the neoclassical composer group *Les Six*. *Suite burlesque* (1980) is one of Tailleferre's final compositions. Val and Olivia portray the moods of three movements—Dolente, Sprightly, and Melancholic—with elegance and poise.

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) was another French composer in the *Les Six* group. Olivia and Val will play the first movement of the duet class Poulenc's popular fiery Sonata for four hands (1918). The Sonata is a popular repertoire choice for four hands, partly due to its clarity and brilliance. Poulenc directs the performers to make full use of the piano's range in this exciting piece.

-Camilla Fratta

En bateau (Sailing)

The shepherd's star, it shivers,
The steersman, in darker waters,
Seeks fire in the depths of his trousers.
Now's the hour, Gentlemen, or never,
To be daring, and you'll discover
My hands, from now on, all over!
Atys, the knight, scratching at

His guitar, on cool Chloris casts
A glance, and a wicked one at that.
The priest confesses poor Églé,
And that Vicomte, in disarray,
Prince of the Fields, gives his heart away.
Meanwhile the moon sheds its glow
On the skiff's brief course below,
Gaily riding the dream-like flow.

A few years after finishing his studies and winning the Prix de Rome with his cantata *L'Enfant prodigue* (*The Prodigal Child*), Debussy composed this suite of 4 movements: En Bateau, Cortège, Menuet, & Ballet for four-hands at the piano. Each movement is distinct, expressing contrasting themes and differing techniques in a magical way that captivates the audience in a daze. En Bateau is filled with lyrical arpeggios and swaying melodies, as it paints a starry night filled with the peaceful motion of a flowing river. Debussy fashioned this particular movement from a poem written by friend and poet Paul Verlaine's poem En Bateau, which is translated to "sailing" or "on a boat." His attention to the last stanza of the poem is especially clear with the ascending and descending phrases, mirroring "a dream-like flow." Menuet, while not as smooth as En Bateau,

is filled with grace notes and quick changes in tone and harmonies, while still expressing a noble elegance and poise in each new section. Ballet evokes the light-hearted grace and clarity of a scene at the ballet. As played by Benny and Camilla, these three contrasting movements and hands come together seamlessly to paint Debussy's vision of 4-hands piano.

-Evangalina Dong

Amy Beach, nineteenth-century American composer of art music, was a recognized musical prodigy from childhood and autodidact, learning theory, harmony, and orchestration largely on her own. Her extraordinary ear allowed her to play four-part hymns upon listening, and improvise counter-melody (by age two, one source tells us). Women composers were uncommon in her historical milieu, and she was compared to her European pianist-composer counterpart, Fanny Mendelssohn.

Beach composed *Summer Dreams* in 1901, with each of six movements introduced by a few lines of poetry. From Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, she quotes:

Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers, and shades of night.

Interestingly, Beach experienced synesthesia, color associations to certain keys. The "Elfin Tarantelle" overtly represents these harmonically, with "black" A minor, "white" key C major, "green" A major, and dark, nighttime Neapolitan chords.

The suite closes with a gentle, warm, and enveloping "Good Night."

Goodnight! The crimson scented rose
Droops low her pretty head,
And the little grasses long ago
Their evening prayers have said.
Night's starry eyes are blinking
At the moonbeams silvery light,
While the lily hides her golden heart
And whispers soft, – "Goodnight."
--Agnes Helen Lockhart

Listen for the white and blue keys in Beach's musical night sky, painted for you tonight by Chase and Kyle.

-Monet Jowers

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) brings a passionate, improvisatory sound to the table with the Invierno Porteño. Invierno Porteño (Winter) is one of the movements from Piazzolla's Four Seasons of Buenos Aires, and this work blends the sounds and rhythms of the tango with the mood of his beloved native Argentina in the winter. This piece's jazzy sound and strong beat emphasize the dance-like feeling, one that Monet and Kyle present in a fun and flashy manner.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) was a Russian composer, primarily known for his many contributions to piano composition, performance, and his incredibly large hands. The Waltz of his Second Suite for Two Pianos is strongly rhythmic and energetic, though is contrasted with lyrical but difficult stretches, both of which Kyle and Monet excel in bringing out.

-Benjamin Yang

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