

Spring 4-22-2015

Marshall University Music Department Presents a Senior Recital, Nathaniel Ramsey, violin

Nathaniel Ramsey
Marshall University

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SCHOOL of MUSIC
and THEATRE

presents

Senior Recital

Nathaniel Ramsey, violin

assisted by

William A. Murphy, piano Kendra Ramsey, cello

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Jomie Jazz Forum

Senior Recital Nathaniel Ramsey, violin

assisted by
William A. Murphy, piano
Kendra Ramsey, cello

Program

Légende, Op. 17

Henryk Wieniawski
(1835-1880)

Sonata in A Major, Op. 12, No. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

- I. Allegro vivace
- II. Andante, più tosto allegretto
- III. Allegro piacevole

Passacaglia in G minor

Georg Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)
arr. Johan Halvorsen

Sonata in Eb Major, Op. 11, No. 1

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

- I. Frisch; Ein wenig ruhiger
- II. Im Zeitmaß eines langsamen, feierlichen Tanzes

Scherzo-Tarantelle, Op. 16

Henryk Wieniawski

This program is presented by the College of Arts and Media through the School of Music and Theatre with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304) 696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music Performance. Mr. Ramsey is a violin student in the studio of Dr. Elizabeth Reed Smith.

Program Notes

Wieniawski's *Légende* was composed as a result of his fiery feelings for a woman by the name of Isabella Hampton. The work stemmed from Isabella's parents' disapproval of the marriage. Isabella's father was the main culprit in disapproving of the marriage because he "knew a thing or two about them," and said that he wouldn't allow his daughter to marry a musician with a potentially less stable financial background. Upon hearing the piece her father changed his mind and allowed them to get married. Isabella's father required Wieniawski, however, to take out a rather large life-insurance policy and settle down into married life. One of the witnesses of the ceremony was the composer Rossini. Fellow violinist Vieuxtemps played Ave Maria for the couple during the ceremony. Shortly after they got married, Wieniawski wrote to his Brussels impresario saying, "I don't know whether you have heard that I wish to marry a young English woman whom I love more deeply than the finest Stradivarius or Guarneri." This statement is a clear testament to Wieniawski's passionate love for Isabella.

In 1855 Wieniawski wrote the *Scherzo-Tarantelle, Op. 16*. His intention was to play it with his younger brother Joseph. There are some disputes over what the construction of the piece is actually supposed to be. After having performed it several times with his brother, Wieniawski supposedly wrote an orchestra version of the piece. The question arises however as to whether or not the two brothers had the intention of playing the piece together with the orchestra accompaniment based the parting of the two careers. Supposedly the construction of the piano part for the *Scherzo-Tarantelle* has been rewritten to be easier in order to accommodate the lack of a consistent pianist. Therefore, he had to simplify the music to accommodate the lack of a consistent pianist. The claim that the piano part has been simplified stems from the shorter piano and violin arrangement versus the longer violin and orchestra version. One major telltale splitting of the piece is the title itself. A Tarantelle is a lively dance in 6/8 that was believed to heal victims of a spider bite from a tarantula. The word scherzo stems from the Italian meaning a joke. This explains the joking spidery fingerings that are in the violin music.

German composer Paul Hindemith's *Sonata in Eb, Op. 11, No. 1* represents a departure from the style of his earlier works. In the opening one can hear the harshness of the tonality as Hindemith changes keys every measure. After the rather pompous introduction he then changes the mood. At this point Hindemith settles into one key. The first movement is palindromic in form. After the beginning it has a different theme which is then followed by a completely different theme. After the third theme it reverses the order of themes back to the original theme. In the second movement there is a two note motive that appears throughout. The second movement is based on a half-step motive, which employs augmentation and diminution of rhythm. This movement also follows a palindrome like the first movement.

Beethoven was among the first composers to help set apart the violin sonata genre from the "everyday living room music" to a more sophisticated violinist piece of music. The violin sonata before had mostly been household music for people to enjoy, similar to the way fiddle is played in Appalachia. In older times there were distinctions between different types of violin sonatas such as *sonata da Chiesa* (church sonata) and *sonata da camera* (chamber sonata). Over time the difference between binary and ternary form weakened and a shift away from polyphony to homophony took place. Violin sonatas before Beethoven had mostly been a stand-alone piano part with an optional violin part

doubling the piano's right hand with ornamentation or arpeggiated harmony. Mozart was the one responsible for starting the change in violin sonatas in the late 1770's. The piano and violin began switching between melody and accompaniment, making the violin part more indispensable. Beethoven took this even further. His later sonatas grew even more serious, some of which are arguably as serious as a symphony. Beethoven wrote 38 violin sonatas; he dedicated the three Op. 12 sonatas to Antonio Salieri. At the time that he wrote the Op. 12 sonatas, Beethoven was studying vocal composition with Salieri.

The first movement of the *Sonata for Piano and Violin in A Major, Op. 12, no. 2* begins with a two-note motive that is passed back and forth between the two instruments. As the first movement develops there are brilliant calls and responses between the piano and violin. The movement ends with the same two-note motive trailing off. The second movement has a more intense emotion. The two instruments pass the same theme back and forth in a call and response style. This style is continued throughout the entire sonata. The third movement returns to the playfulness and passing back and forth of the first, but with a more developed theme.

The *Passacaglia for Cello and Violin* was originally written for harpsichord by Handel but was later made into an arrangement in 1894 for violin and piano by well-known Norwegian violinist Johan Halvorsen. Handel was known for being virtuosic on the keyboard and for being a musical genius when it came to improvisation. The terms Passacaglia and Chaconne are often used interchangeably to describe a piece of music that is based on a basso ostinato that does not change throughout the piece. The chords are developed with different variations around each one. There are a total of nineteen variations. Each one uses different compositional techniques such as augmentation, arpeggiation, and chromaticism. This piece has what is referred to as "written improvisation," meaning that Halvorsen wrote passages that when played are supposed to sound improvised. Halvorsen adapted the original harpsichord transcription for strings as well as added a few of his own touches to some of the variations.

~notes by Nathaniel Ramsey

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