



3-23-2017

Lori Sims, Piano, 3/23

College of Fine Arts

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
School of Music

Faculty Recital

2016-17 Season

454th Concert

Thursday 23 March 2017

Dalton Center Recital Hall

7:30 p.m.

LORI SIMS, Piano

Ludwig van Beethoven
1770-1827

Baguettes Opus 126

- I. Andante con moto
- II. Allegro
- III. Andante
- IV. Presto
- V. Quasi allegretto
- VI. Presto

Claude Debussy
1862-1918

Préludes Book I

Violes (viels or sails)

Le Vent dans la Plaine (the wind on the plain)

Les Sons et les parfums tourent dans l'air du soir
(the sounds and the perfumes as they mingle in the evening air)

Préludes Book II

Les tierces alternées (alternating thirds)

La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune
(the audience on the moonlit terrace)

intermission

Robert Schumann
1810–1856

Davidsbündlertänze Opus 6

In each and every age
joy and sorrow are mingled:
Remain pious in joy,
and be ready for sorrow with courage

Heft I

- I. Lebhaft (lively)
- II. Innig (intimate, heartfelt)
- III. Mit Humor: Etwas hahnbüchen
(with humor: somewhat clumsy)
- IV. Ungeduldig (impatient)
- V. Einfach (simple)
- VI. Sehr rasch (very rash, hasty)
- VII. Nicht schnell (not fast)
- VIII. Frisch (fresh, vigorous)
“...Here Florestan made an end, and his lips quivered painfully...”
- IX. Lebhaft (lively)

Heft II

- I. Balladenmässig. Sehr rasch
(in the art of a Ballade; very rash)
- II. Einfach (simple)
- III. Mit Humor (with humor)
- IV. Wild and lustig (wild and funny)
- V. Zart und singend (gentle, fragile and singing)
- VI. Frisch (fresh, vigorous)
- VII. Mit gutem Humor (with good humor)
- VIII. Wie aus der Ferne (as from far away)
...“Quite superfluously Eusebius remarked as follows:
but all the time great bliss spoke from his eyes.”
- IX. Nicht schnell (not fast)

Lori Sims would like to thank the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival for use of their Steinway piano for this recital.

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Lori Sims

The pieces I have chosen to perform on this recital all have specific significance for me and seemed spiritually to strike the right note for a 50th birthday recital.

The Beethoven **Bagatelles** are the last opus Beethoven wrote for piano, published just two years before his death: Beethoven wrote to his publisher that "they are probably the best I have written." A Bagatelle literally means "toy" which would imply something light and perhaps frivolous: Beethoven is never quite frivolous and particularly not in the end of his life, so the choice of titles already demands an interpretation of sorts. If we consider the turbulent "Appassionata", Opus 57, the almost Sisyphian Hammerklavier Sonata, Opus 106, the methodical and sometimes arduously attained epiphanies of the last three Beethoven Sonatas, the sheer economy of the Bagatelles might seem to support triviality: but perhaps, instead, Beethoven has evolved his composition from expressing force of nature to succinctly communicating a potent, diluted message, one whose gestures and smaller form impact as powerfully but without the need to conquer in the process.

The Debussy **Préludes** I have chosen represent my most recent focus. Having not liked Debussy for much of my life, the immense joy I have found in studying and performing the two books of Preludes has reminded me that there are surprises and the possibility for self-evolution beyond every bend. Debussy composed the two books of *Préludes* within months of each other and not only intended for them to be played together in the order prescribed, but intended the second book of *Préludes* to be an expansion or deeper interpretation of the first book. Each of the first book *Préludes*, then, has a counterpart in the second book, though not in corresponding order and not disclosed by Debussy. For fun, I have decided to disclose my thoughts on corresponding *Préludes* from the two books and play them in closer proximity to each other. *Voiles* (Veils or Sails) and *Les tierces alternées* are based on the interval of a third and even end on the same third. Interesting that Debussy has such a picturesque, leading title for the Book I *Voiles* and an almost utilitarian (but therefore open ended) title for the Book II. *Les Sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir* (The sounds and the smells turn in the night air) is, to me, a groundbreaking work; many composers married the visual and kinesthetic sense to music but this prelude vividly weds the more elusive sense of smell with musical symbol. Not only do we hear warm, sensual wafting of smells transformed into musical gestures, but Debussy captures the strong emotional associations and longing sentiment brought about by familiar smells. The partner *Prélude* in the second book, *Les terrasses des audiences du clair de lune* (the terrace of moonlit audiences), captures a similar sensuality and particularly those feelings associated with the mystery and romance of nighttime, but ingeniously it implies third person observance: the listener is not part of the moonlit audience but voyeuristically seeing the moonlit audience as it responds to Debussy's images of the evening. Debussy also employs more symbolism in this *Prélude*: lusty Spanish hallmarks, drunken Waltzing, a peacock in the garden (the peacock being a symbol of chastity and thus an ironic reference), and the final bars of hypnotizing suspension.

The Schumann **Davidsbündlertänze** may be my signature piece, if for no other reason than I have played it for two-thirds of my life and for most of my career rites of passage. Someone recently asked me if my interpretation had changed over the years and the answer is both yes and no: this is a work of magnificent emotional depth so as I have experienced all those elements that inform emotional maturity, I have probably come to identify more closely with the emotional subtlety and content; on the other hand, I seemed also to have an instinctive understanding and consciousness has served to confirm those initial interpretative leanings.

Though the Opus 6 would seem to imply an early opus for Schumann, Schumann did not assign opus numbers chronologically. He was an early numerologist, assigning significance to certain numbers, so in fact, the Opus 6 was left open until he could fulfill its destiny with the later and more mature *Davidsbündlertänze*. The *Davidsbündler* was Schumann's imaginary "tribe of Davids", or those composers and figures who fought against the Philistines of composers for whom virtuosity was a means to an end. The "tänze" means dances but *tanzen* can also be used as we sometimes do in English: when one walks towards someone and both people attempt to move out of each other's way, only to go into the same direction and almost run into each other, one might say in jest "would you like to dance?" In other words, *tanzen* can also imply a certain inability to align one's motives and direction. In the Opus 6, most of the dances are somehow uncomfortable! One hand may be in a slower sub-meter than the other (1.), the direction and tempo might be chaotic and clumsy (3.) the hands may not ever be together (4.), a simple dance may be rife with chromaticism and inability to stay within the beat (5.), the dance is so despondent it can't keep moving (7.), or the dance is in two different meters at the same time (9.) And yet the music is full of love, sincerity and the universal intention we have to try to dance together. Like landscape painting, we are aware of lots of little scenes in one big painting and to help us tie it all together, Schumann in the penultimate piece of the work harkens back to the second dance; in that moment, we can experience the whole piece retrospectively and realize that all the parts contribute to a whole.

Thank you for joining me on my birthday and contributing to my celebration!