Senior Recital on Violin and Viola

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Student Recital

2012-13 Season
280th Concert

Wednesday 16 January 2013
Dalton Center Lecture Hall
7:30 p.m.

VERONICA CIERI, Violin & Viola
Gunta Laukmane, Piano
assisted by
Laura Boekeloo, Viola
Brittany Harris, Cello
Rose Gifford, Piano

Johann Sebastian Bach
1685-1750
Cello Suite Number 2 in D Minor BWV 1008
I. Prélude
VI. Gigue

Cecil Forsyth
1870-1941
Viola Concerto in G Minor
I. Appassionato – Moderato
brief pause

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
1756-1791
Piano Quartet in G Minor K.478
I. Allegro

Édouard Lalo
1823-1892
Symphonie espagnole Opus 21
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Andante

Fritz Kreisler
1875-1962
Praeludium and Allegro

Veronica Cieri is a senior from Dearborn majoring in performance. She studies with Professor Renata Artman Knifer and Professor Igor Fedotov.

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Program Notes

Cello Suite No.2 in D minor, Prelude and Gigue
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
J.S. Bach most likely composed his six cello suites between 1717 and 1723, during his time as a Kaellmeister in Kothen. The cello suites remain some of Bach’s most enduring and popular works and have been transcribed for a wide variety of instruments; including bass, trombone, classical guitar and, as in this case, viola. Each suite is comprised of a set of six movements: a prelude followed by five movements each inspired by a different dance. Today I’m performing the understated but emotionally intense prelude and the energetic gigue.

Viola Concerto in G minor, Appassionato-Moderato
Cecil Forsyth (1870-1914)
Having premiered in 1903, this beautiful piece is technically a twentieth century concerto but is Romantic in spirit. I’m performing the first movement, which shows its Romantic influences in its lyrical themes and virtuosic passages. The first movement not only has a cadenza but a lengthy cadenza-like introduction that sets up the mood of urgency and momentum that persists throughout the piece. Preparing and performing this piece has taught me a great deal. It’s pushed me to learn how to play in the highest tessitura of the viola and to create the huge dynamic range this concerto requires.

Piano Quartet in G minor K.478, Allegro
W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
Mozart composed his piano quartet in G minor in 1785 as the first in an intended set of three piano quartets to be published by Mozart’s friend Franz Anton Hoffmeister. The entire set was never completed, though the Eb Major piano quartet is also part of this series.

The first movement of this quartet features a variety of contrasting textures; a declamatory opening, string trio sections in the exposition and recapitulation, contrasting piano solos and canonic entries throughout the development. Mozart also highlights to form of this piece using contrasting moods. The first theme in g minor is assertive and ominous in both the exposition and recapitulation. The second theme in Bb Major is cheerful when it first appears during the exposition, but during the recap it takes on not only the key but the character of the first theme. These often sudden shifts in texture and mood make the piece exciting and engaging as it keeps moving forward.
Symphonie Espagnole Op.21, Allegro non troppo and Andante
Edouard Lalo (1823-1892)
Symphonie Espagnole’s Spanish motifs and dramatic feel are reminiscent of the music from the opera Carmen, so it’s not surprising that these pieces premiered only a month apart in 1875. In the first movement the contrast between the trumpet call in the decisive first theme and the sweeping melody of the second theme is so drastic that it is as though the piece portrays two different characters in an opera or play. I’ve revisited the first movement of this piece, the Allegro non troppo, a few times over the past five years and every time I do it gives me the opportunity to learn more about bringing out the characters in a piece through musical gestures.

The Andante fourth movement differs in its more leisurely pace from the fiery first movement; though the Andante is equally as dramatic and emotionally intense. It also has its unique technical challenges such as large, exposed jumps in range. Symphonie Espagnole is an ongoing project for me, and my hope for this piece is to get past the fireworks in the more virtuosic passages in order to bring out the larger musical ideas.

Praeludium and Allegro
Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)
Kreisler originally attributed this piece to the Italian Baroque violinist Pugnani and it’s one of several of his own works that Kreisler advertised as undiscovered Baroque masterpieces. Today the Praeludium and Allegro is seen as a very Romantic homage to a Baroque virtuoso.

The Praeludium introduces a majestic quarter-note theme which serves as the basis for a series of variations. The first variation, a cadenza-like, rhythmically free rendition of the theme, occurs after its initial statement. The theme is then repeated in its original form before the beginning of the Allegro. The Allegro consists of six additional variations which highlight various types of bow strokes and methods of playing multiple melodic lines on the violin. One of the most popular short pieces in the violin repertoire, the Praeludium and Allegro is playful and exhilarating.