

THE BOB COLE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH AND THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PROUDLY PRESENT:



FACULTY ARTIST RECITAL

MONI SIMEONOV

VIOLIN

CLARA CHENG STOSCH

PIANO

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2018 8:00PM

GERALD R. DANIEL RECITAL HALL

PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC MOBILE DEVICES.

PROGRAM

Sonata for Piano and Violin in G Major, Op. 96, No. 10.....Ludwig van Beethoven
I. Allegro moderato (1770-1827)
II. Adagio espressivo
III. Scherzo: Allegro
IV. Poco allegretto

Chant from *Suite Bulgare*, Op. 21, No. 2.....Pancho Valdigero
(1899-1978)

Road Movies for Violin and Piano (1996) John Adams
I. Relaxed Groove (b. 1947)
II. Meditative
III. 40% Swing

INTERMISSION

Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, BWV 1023.....Johann Sebastian Bach
I. Prelude, Adagio ma non tanto (1650-1725)
II. Allemanda
III. Gigue

Sonata for Violin and Piano in B minor.....Ottorino Respighi
I. Moderato (1879-1936)
II. Andante espressivo
III. Passacaglia: Allegro moderato ma energico

PROGRAM NOTES

SONATA FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN IN G MAJOR Beethoven left us nearly fifty pieces that prominently feature the violin, including his ten sonatas for piano and violin. The first nine sonatas were completed by the time Beethoven was 32 years old in the span of about three years. The tenth came nearly a decade later. Its calm and idyllic mood is quite a change from what we may expect, given some of his earlier works. We get a glimpse into the mind of a more reflective and gentle Beethoven.

During Beethoven's life, the violin had been undergoing significant structural changes—the neck, fingerboard, and strings had lengthened; the higher bridge added extra tension to the sonority. Having studied the violin since an early age, Beethoven was aware of these transitions, and, in turn, increased the technical demands and expressive range as the sonatas progressed in number.

The work begins with a gentle trill in the violin part. Like a flickering thought, the gesture quickly unfolds into an idea, a flowing melody that establishes a pastoral mood. Often times, the music hovers, then circulates, as if in contemplative expectation. The second theme further explores the melodic reach, but instead of finding resolution, it melts into a series of unusual modulations.

The Adagio opens with a tenderly expressive melody, reminiscent of a hymn. The delicate line develops into improvisatory expeditions, expanding the tonal range. The introspection of the opening gives way to passion. The vocal character of this movement reminds us of the lied-style of Schubert, who was, himself, a great admirer of this Sonata.

The Scherzo, with its repeating offbeat accents, highlights "Beethoven-type" humor. In contrast, the Trio section is waltz-like and the melodic line spans over two octaves. The figure in the left hand of the piano part brings to mind a bagpipe.

The sonata was premiered by Pierre Rode on the violin and Archduke Rudolph on the piano. Beethoven wrote to the Archduke, to whom this work is dedicated: "In our finales we like to have fairly noisy passages, but Rode does not care for them—and so I have been rather hampered." The movement is indeed less virtuosic than the famous *Kreutzer* sonata, but the contrast of expression is unique. It begins with a folk-like theme followed by a set of variations. A rather chromatic Adagio, reminiscent of the second movement, interrupts an upbeat mood. Both instruments break into coloratura-like passages before returning to the theme, this time in an unexpected key. The joyous Allegro follows, which is halted by a mysterious and somber, fuge-like variation in a minor key. At last, the long-expected, virtuosic showdown takes us to the work's greatest heights of the tonal range. Then the theme returns once again, this time fatigued and uncertain, only to be propelled into one final, humorous, eight-bar tumble to its end.

ROAD MOVIES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO Before the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, the classic American road trip was, by far, the most popular version of a family vacation in the United States. Such an integral part of a few generations of Americans, it inspired hundreds of books and songs, giving birth to a cinematic genre called "road movies." Iconic examples of such films include

“Easy Rider” (1969), “Two-lane Blacktop” (1971), and “Natural Born Killers” (1994). A common theme in nearly all road movies is rebellion against the social norm. However, John Adams’ *Road Movies* displays no hint of such conflict.

Resembling the style of his other works: *Shaker Loops* (1978), *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986), and *Hallelujah Junction* (1996), *Road Movies* presents a simple overall texture. John Adams refers to it as the least dramatic of his chamber pieces. While the conceptual relationship between the genre of road movies and *Road Movies* is not evident, there are a few technical similarities. The necessity to keep the actors “on the move” gave rise to the development of two types of shooting modes. One is the tracking shot, a technique that allows the viewer to follow the actor as new scenery is continually revealed. Another method, obligatory in establishing the scene in these movies, is panning into open space. John Adams skillfully adapts these approaches for the realm of music.

The first movement, “Relaxed Groove,” brings to mind an easy drive over an imagined landscape. The quickly established groove conveys the sense of steady motion, already in progress. Objects come into view, become clearer, fade away, and make room for other scenery to be revealed. Adams achieves this by introducing a new rhythmical, tonal, or textural idea, one snippet at a time. Like in the visual world of a forward-facing, vehicle-mounted camera, the newly introduced image disintegrates more quickly than it appeared. The variety of articulations, unexpected accents, and the use of pizzicato add an element of humor to this first part of the journey.

The overall mood of the second movement, “Meditative,” is pleasant and tranquil. The establishing “pan shot” in the piano part is free of motion but depicts an expansive landscape. Throughout the movement, Adams purposely avoids using downbeats as anchor points and bar lines as any guide to small-scale structure. The sense of relaxation is furthered by an extra loose sound in the violin, with its G string tuned down to an F. The lethargic atmosphere slowly lifts and we hear the theme develop into a “motoric” passagework, leading to various modulations. After the section winds down, we hear an echo of the opening, with one important difference—the interval of a fourth, often played by the violin in the beginning, has been transmuted into a third, reminiscent of a Picardy cadence.

In “40% Swing,” Adams challenges the instrumental prowess of both players. This virtuosic movement, similar in mood and drive to his later *American Berserk* for solo piano, moves at lightning speed and often pits the two instruments against each other, assigning them conflicting rhythm, diverging tonal areas, and contrary accents. Underneath, there is a strong sense of a simple bluegrass song. Unlike the first movement, this portion of the trip comes to an end rather abruptly. The irregularity of gestures and the rhythmical discord in the last few measures could point to the motor giving out after a long and fast ride.

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND HARPSICHORD, BWV 1023

Having studied the violin extensively, Bach left us quite a few masterpieces for the instrument. He wrote a number of concertos, double concertos, and concerto grossos. In addition, there are numerous orchestra concertmaster solos in his oratorio works. In the violin world, however, Bach is most revered for his six sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin. At nearly the same time that he completed the set, he also composed eight sonatas and a fugue for violin with accompaniment. BWV 1023 is cast in three movements and includes the baroque dances Allemanda and Gigue. It begins with an introduction that features the violin soaring over a pedal tone.

The Prelude to the first movement brings to mind numerous characteristics of the E Major Preludio (BWV 1006). The violin line consists of sixteenth notes, and with graceful gestures, reaches the extremes of the register. While there are no double stops, the multiple voices are implied masterfully.

At first, utilizing single strings, the texture expands to include voice interplays on two strings, and then on three. This opening section attests to Bach's familiarity with specific violinistic idioms, as well as his ability to create an astounding array of functional harmonies over a single pedal tone.

After a convincing closure in the home key, the brilliant Prelude transitions into the Adagio *ma non tanto*. The choral-like melody here is longer and seems to brush over the bar lines, providing the listener with cadences on strong and weak beats alike. Besides shifting the rhythmical gravity, Bach also plays with our expectations in terms of harmony. The tasteful use of deceptive cadences and suspensions give the violin line a quality of tender longing.

In the Allemanda, the walking bass provides steady momentum. The multitude of combinations of original articulations in the violin part creates great variety in the melodic line. Bach ventures into major keys, widening the expressive range. The Gigue is structurally more clear, and almost playful with its syncopations and suspensions. Sequences and melodic leaps add to the dramatic character of the movement. The single-note violin line implies a few pedal tones, building towards the coda-like end of the sonata.

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN B MINOR After a 1924 performance of the sonata by Bronislaw Huberman and Paul Frankel, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported, "Quite outside its own merits, of which there were many, this sonata served to indicate how the new generation of Italian composers is labouring to get away from the theory that Italian music means Italian opera."

The influences acting upon Respighi were indeed multifaceted and international. His formal composition training at the Liceo Musicale was rooted in the German style and he often looked north of Italy for inspiration. In 1900, he moved to Russia to begin working as the principal violist of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg, where, after mastering the language, he began studying with Rimsky Korsakov. The lessons Respighi took in orchestration are evident in his later masterpieces of the trilogy *Fountains, Pines, and Festivals of Rome*.

The sonata opens with a haunting violin theme over a gloomy accompaniment. Respighi paints a dark atmosphere with a sense of searching. The second theme is rather sweet and less rhythmically complex. The change of mood is accompanied by an ascend of register in both instruments. The sense of driving forward and emotional instability is achieved by dynamic swells, a multitude of modulations, and the nearly 40 meter changes. Toward the end, we hear both themes in short succession with the violin at the top of its register, and the left hand of the piano nearing its bottom. The expressive marking is *Calmo, con grande espressione e dolcezza*, and the overall sense is one of gentle resolution.

The second movement gives us a glimpse into Respighi's symphonic techniques. The piano opens with a lyrical theme that slowly floats upward. The almost impressionistic, harp-like gestures are not only accompanimental, but are often thematic. The two instruments move in two different meters, rarely aligning. After a heated and highly syncopated interplay, the two instruments come to a climax that dissolves into the transition to the theme of the opening, now played by the violin.

Brahms' influence is most easily recognized in the last movement. The last movement of his fourth symphony, also a Passacaglia, titled *Allegro energico e passionato*, inspired Respighi with more than its tempo marking. A sense of urgency is achieved by the tremendous skips in register and abundance of dotted rhythms in the melody, and unrelenting, off-beat accompanying figures, all of which are found in Brahms' Passacaglia as well. The theme is ten bars long, rather than the expected eight, and many of the phrases are also unusual in length. After a steady increase in tempo, reaching *Presto*, the music slows down as we hear the opening theme in a major key for the first time. But soon, darkness permeates once again as both instruments build towards the robust *coda*.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Thursday, December 6, 2018:**
Concert Band with Hughes Middle School Band, Jermie Arnold and Kendra Clements, conductors 7:00pm Daniel Recital Hall Tickets \$10/7
- **Friday, December 7, 2018:**
World Percussion Concert, Eric Hartwell and John Mazzano, directors
8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall Tickets \$10/FREE
- **Monday, December 10, 2018:**
Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band, John Carnahan and Jermie Arnold, conductors
8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall Tickets \$10/7



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