

Danying Zhang

Master's Recital

Program Notes

The Well-Tempered Clavier BWV 888 in A major, Book 2 by J.S. Bach

The Well-Tempered Clavier BWV 846-893 is a collection of 48 preludes and fugues by Johann Sebastian Bach published in two books. The publications are separated by thirty years, 1742 and 1772. They approach the complexity of polyphonic writing in each of the twelve major and minor keys, representing the most substantial writing for solo keyboard work from the Baroque era. 'Well-Tempered' implies a tuning system that divides the octave into 12 semitones and a performance would work equally well in all keys.

The Prelude in A major opens with a poetic and pastoral character. It is in three voices, with a two-bar motif repeated and inverted throughout. The Fugue is in three parts too, but with a rather fast tempo in contrasting with the prelude. The subject starts with a pick up beat and its syncopated rhythm has a humorous and playful effect.

Piano Sonata No. 13 in E flat major, Op, 27, no. 1 by Ludvig Van Beethoven

Composed between in the year of 1800-1801, when Beethoven was about thirty years old. During this time he explored and developed new ideas in order to find an alternative to the traditional sonata form. The two Op. 27 sonatas were his first try. The sonata op, 27/1 was published separately with its more famous opus mate Op. 27/2 (commonly known as the Moonlight), but both bear the title of "Sonata Quasi Una Fantasia" which means 'sonata in the

manner of a fantasy.’ True to the word of ‘fantasy’, the four short movements with their dramatic change of tempo are to be performed together without breaks. The opening movement is not a fast movement nor is it in the sonata form, but a song-like Andante. As the music flows, it is interrupted by a blazing and virtuosic Allegro, which eventually returns to the original Andante theme before it leads directly to the second movement, Allegro molto vivace. Here the theme in arpeggios is played in unison in parallel motion, and it changes into syncopated rhythm as the temperature heats up in the end. The third movement Adagio con espressione has a melodic line that is both lovely and broad. After a cadanza-like passage, it leads to the Allegro vivace finale, a fast and energetic rondo with brilliant contrapuntal passagework. At the highlight of this final movement, the music comes to a sudden halt, and the Adagio theme returns for a good reason to show a delicate and intimate moment with the audience before the feverish coda in Presto draws an unforgettable end.

Etude op. 25, no. 10 in B minor by Frederic Chopin

This etude was written by Frederic Chopin in the year of 1835. It includes elements that have not been used in most of his etudes, such as the application of an unusual ternary form.

The note-pattern of this piece can be found in op. 10, no. 2 with the chromatic ascending scales, only it transferred the technical part from twisting finger operation into wrist moving practice with the jumping parallel octaves. The first theme shows up with a progression of the triplet of eighth notes in tempo Allegro. The second theme presents a rather sweet and peaceful music style in B major with triple metre. It is repeated four times to build the height of the music image and returns into a variation of the first theme in cut time and B minor. With the last section

building up to the climax, the piece bursts with energetic flames and fire, pulling it to a brilliant end.

Moment Musical Op. 16, no 4 in E minor, by Sergei Rachmaninoff

Sergei Rachmaninoff wrote the set of six pieces between October and December 1896. Each piece represents a specific musical style from the previous music eras. No.4 from this set- Presto in E minor, particularly requires true virtuosity, and it is the most popular one of the set that has been performed with the most frequency on concert stages. This piece clearly shows the influence of Chopin on Rachmaninoff, most notably Chopin Etude Op. 10, No.12, e.g. The rapid motion and turbulent left hand passages, which creates a fierce motion while the right hand dominates with an eloquent melody that expresses pathos.

'Novelette' by Eduardo Palacios

Educated in Brooklyn College, Eduardo Palacios, a versatile American-Mexican composer composed music for different genres that include classical and Latin. Many of his works have been performed in Tri-state venues. The Novelette received its premiere in Brooklyn College in 2019.

The piece begins with a deep melody infused in a rich fabric of harmonies. The dreamy atmosphere evolves as the pitches rises and register widens, expressing an anguished emotion ablaze in forte. One of the most dramatic moments is at the end when the tempo slows down

with a fortissimo. The theme expands itself and creates an effect that is both fiery and noble. The weight of the final chords vibrates as a bell toll, which concludes a story that is tragic, solemn and moving.

Rhapsodie Espagnole, S. 254 by Franz Liszt

Liszt took a six-months tour in Spain and Portugal, which leaves its mark in this piece. Written in 1859, the title reflects the inspiration he got from this trip in the year of 1845. As an extraordinary composer and virtuoso pianist with fiery personality, he was particularly attracted to the temperament of the region, and he incorporated the exotic music and dance rhythm into a rhapsody. The introduction opens with a dramatic power, and the thunder-like left hand rumbles in bass reaching the higher register where lies the divine sound of the chord's impact. The main theme used the traditional Folies d'Espagne tune. First presented with the left hand played the single notes to show the simplicity. The tune gradually elaborates the right hand accompaniment to decorate and alternate displays the melody until the elaboration extends over most of the keyboard.

At the peak of the section, Liszt changed the sound to a bell-like chiming effect with the playful Aragon's Jota folk dance. Variations continue to dazzle until the intimate song-like recitative provides a sentimental moment for lyrical reflection. After the lyrical theme, the music turns up its temperament and goes on to the last variation in D major and present the Jota dance. After that, an extension made with thirds jumping around as to recall the memory of folies tune. In the end, the Folies d'Espagnole finally returns with the thunder chord impact and brings the brilliant conclusion.