



Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

STUDENT RECITAL

April 18, 2024
6 p.m., von Kuster Hall
Jiazhi Sun, *piano*

Goyescas Op. 11- Los majos enamorados (The gallants in Love)
El amor y la muerte – Balada (The love and death, 1913)

E. Granados
(1867-1916)

Sonata no. 9 in E Major op.14 no.1 (1799)
Allegro
Allegretto
Rondo-Allegro comodo

L. v. Beethoven
(1770-1827)

-Intermission-

Cinq Préludes, Livre 1 (1910)
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir
Les collines d'Anacapri
La fille aux cheveux de lin
La cathédrale engloutie
La danse de Puck

C. Debussy
(1862-1918)

Fantasy in B minor Op.28 (1900)

A. Scriabin
(1872-1915)

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Program Note ----- "The Abyss"

The Haunting Dénouement of Passion Distilled - Granados's "El amor y la muerte"

As the velvet curtains part, we are transported into the very depths of the Spanish psyche through Enrique Granados's kaleidoscopic tonal fresco "El amor y la muerte." This crowning musical jewel from his ground-breaking Goyescas cycle encapsulates the tumultuous dénouement of passion's anguished apotheosis, shattered by death's indomitable embrace. The scion of Felip Pedrell's nationalist renaissance, Granados alchemized the sprits of melodies from his beloved homeland into an audacious masterwork - a searing meditation on love's ephemerality within mortality's shadow. Each exquisite dissonance and sweeping phrase conjures the immortal visions of Goya transposed into melancholy harmonies, echoing that titanic dean's chiaroscuro marvels.

Embracing modernism's calling to elevate societal peripheries, the intrepid Granados thrusts his blazing feminine protagonist Rosario into the maelstrom. This warrior against convention's fetters commands the lifeblood of the score, her feverish outpourings for her ill-fated beloved swelling in earthy chromatic surges - Goya's unvarnished portraits of the defiant Spanish working class resurrected in tone. Yet as Rosario's devotion succumbs to death's inexorable requiem, her unbridled lamentations etch the air like one of the painter's searing wartime masterpieces.

Granados harnesses dissonant storms within gossamer lyricism, capturing that duality of darkest anguish coexisting with shards of transcendent beauty that so haunted his inspiration's canvases. In this cathartic denouement, dolor and ternura bleed into the sublime equanimity of the protagonist's transcendent dignity, resolving in ethereal D pearls. It is Granados's supreme feat - the embodiment of that elusive metaphysical truth distilled from Iberia's earthy rhythms: the Verdad and Libertad of the expression of Spanish spirit itself. Let us exalt this immortal genius who so vividly animated Goya's perdurable visions through the searing grandeur of natural expressions: A fresco of harrowing authenticity and audacious modernity defying the shackles of convention and social norms- Bravísimo, Enrique!

A Resounding Affirmation from the Depths of Adversity

"All that happens to us...is given as raw material, so that we may shape our art." These sage words from the immortal Borges find profound embodiment in Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 9 in E major, Op. 14 No. 1. For this seminal masterwork blossomed from the very crucible of the composer's escalating hearing affliction - a mournful rite of passage that first cast its ominous

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shadow in 1798, one year before this sonata's conception began. Within this opus, we bear witness to the daunting struggle of a creative titan locked in existential combat with the anguish of failing auditory faculties. The earlier *Pathétique* had already sounded the opening salvo from this tormented psyche. But here, even amidst exquisite lyrical phrases evoking Viennese elegance, an underlying turmoil pulsates.

The opening *Allegro*'s exuberant joy belies an intricate contrapuntal discourse shifting into the development section - harmonic suspensions and modulations laying bare the agonies, doubts and fears unfolding in Beethoven's innermost depths. Each thematic expansion and transition enfolds searing autobiographical intensity, as the composer defiantly refracts his existential upheaval through symphonic imagining. Yet from these abyssal depths emerges a *Rondo* of disarming simplicity and grace. Having navigated the densities of the *Allegro*'s struggles, the music now radiates with an atmosphere of tender innocence - a fleeting respite of childlike wonder that momentarily banishes all cares. An idyll of effervescent joy, harmonic transparency and bucolic charm enveloping us in its ephemeral enchantment.

In this archetypal juxtaposition of complexity with purity, we ultimately discern not capitulation to tragedy, but an indomitable resolve to confront life's vicissitudes head-on. An unwavering creative spirit irrigating itself from the deepest wellsprings of emotional truth to continually transcend adversity through resounding affirmations of human sublimity. Let this oft-overlooked early sonata stand as a persuasive witness to how Beethoven's crucible of suffering gave birth to a new frontier of artistic magnitude. A shattering of conventions that propelled his pioneering expansion of pianistic textural possibilities into innovative realms evocative of chamber ensembles - playful, cantabile, multi-dimensional. An apotheosis of vulnerability transforming into resilience through the alchemic vessel of supreme musical insight.

An revelatory vision that influenced generations of composers, continually elevating the piano into a voice capable of redefining the instrument's expressive possibilities.

In this sonata's profound alchemy, we discern Beethoven's defiant soul etching its own resurrection - a spiritual rebirth that would echo across the ensuing epochs of his canonical trajectory.

Impressions Inouïes: Cruising the Sensory Expanse with Debussy

We board on our cruise after intermission into Debussy's mixed preludes first tinted by the shimmering pastels of "*Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir.*" This exquisite rendering of Baudelaire's verse is a mesmerizing immersion into the sensory ether itself. The sonic imagination coalesces with poetic intonations, the very fabric of language and music merging into a rhythmic, harmonious embroidery. Repetition, compression, transposition,

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inversion - all devices of linguistic musicality are harnessed, intertwining with rhyme scheme cadences. The result is an inlaid mosaic of sensory tableaux - a swirling vortex of fragrance and languid waltz, the trembling violin echoing a heart beset by distress. We are drawn into a realm where sound and scent amalgamate, conjuring an exponentially intoxicating ambiance that speaks to the soul's yearning amidst the vast existential expanse.

Onward we venture to "Les collines d'Anacapri," where Debussy's visionary strokes capture the rugged, sun kissed Caprian vistas. Paganini's bowing, accompanied by zephyric Mediterranean murmurs, evokes carefree sojourns savoring the island's *delizioso* culinary like ravioli capresi. A tarantella to simple pleasures.

"La fille aux cheveux de lin" transports us to exuberant youth, where beauty's initial allure and the ephemeral essence of simplicity entwine. Immersed in the mellifluous verses, we're gently reminded to embrace life with an untainted, cynicism-free heart - cherishing each fleeting moment of innocence and vitality.

Yet we must pay homage to Shakespeare's masterful strokes, from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' we encounter the intricate self-sculpted in the enigmatic Puck persona. Mischievous yet observant, cunning yet compassionate - Puck embodies the delicate balance of contradictory traits, captivating our imagination. We ponder why Debussy would pen a fleeting prelude for such an impulsive spirit, unless to capture the very essence of one who can traverse the entire earth in 40 minutes - a whimsical, enchanting glimpse.

Finally, we gaze upon "La Cathédrale Engloutie," where Debussy conjures a haunting chiaroscuro portrait. Submerged beneath briny depths, sunlight surrenders to somber shadows echoing the forgotten resonance of a once-hallowed sanctuary. A profound melancholy imbues the composition - the weight of moral consequences intoned as the submerged cathedral emerges from the depths of memory. Like the mythical city of Ys consumed by the sea's greed and moral bankruptcy, Debussy's orchestration juxtaposes temptation's ascent and descent - a poignant challenge to ideology hearkening Nietzsche's caution: "When you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back."

A Mystic Voyage Into the Abyssal Self

Alexander Scriabin's seminal "Fantasy in B minor" - a rapturous trip radiating the flickering luminescence of the Russian soul's ceaseless yearning for transcendence. Herein, the composer recontextualizes the hallowed sonata form's architecture, a symbolic masterstroke heralding his artistic evolution from prodigious virtuoso to metaphysical seer, unveiling realms of heightened consciousness through music's ethereal dominion.

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As relentless chromatic surges undulate across the tonal landscape, we discern the existential tumult gripping Russia's fin de siècle intelligentsia amid a cauldron of conflicting worldviews. Yet pulsing defiantly beneath the dissonant currents resounds an unmistakable ethereal heartbeat - the mythic cadence of the Übermensch, that indomitable life-force which Scriabin embodied. A sovereign creative spirit ever-aspiring towards the empyrean of artistic liberation.

Before arriving to rapturous surrender to the work's phantasmagoric thematic metamorphoses, we begin an experience of self-exploration into psyche's abyssal depths. The unspooling sonic narrative becomes a mirror, refracting in prismatic hues the spectrum of human Experience - our frailties, our relentless strivings, our merciless confrontation of all that renders us bereft yet imbues us with transcendent potentials. Scriabin's chromatic eddies envelop us, cosmic tentacles prodding the abyssal chasms within while tantalizing with rapturous visions awaiting those who embrace authentic selfhood.

This audacious Orphic invocation, reverberating across epochs, is a clarion call to artists and truth-seekers alike. A summons to transcend the shackles of mortal pessimism through music's hallowed mysteries. The "Fantasy's" dissonances are the searing contractions heralding psyche's regeneration, its cadences the exhalations of a spirit cosmically enwoven with existence's eternal recurrence. As we brave the descent into unfathomable metaphysical depths, this opus shines an inextinguishable guiding light illuminating the path towards rarefied realms where the divine, the dreadful and the unknowable coalesce into illimitable oneness.

Here, within the swirling maelstrom of art's most harrowing strivings, Scriabin's profound reverie endures as an exhortation to shed the carapace of spiritual aridity. For if we but heed the cosmic pulsations resounding beneath these sonic revelations, we discern life's indomitable rhythm - the eternal heartbeat reminding us of art's inexhaustible creative potentials residing within the intrepid depths of every daring soul. Let us exalt this enthralling sonic trip unveiling music's abyssal metaphysics - where even the abyss's penetrating gaze reflects fleetingly luminescent glimpses of the eternal and sublime. Even singular tonal revelry transcends terrestrial ideologies to illuminate the spiritual cosmos.

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