Doctor of Musical Arts Recitals

by

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ABSTRACT

These three dissertation recitals were programmed and performed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts (Music: Performance). The repertoire on these three recitals were chosen for specific reasons. The entirety of the first recital contains repertoire not originally written for the cello. The *Romanze* by Bruch and the sonata by Clarke were written for the viola, and *Romeo and Juliet* for multiple instrumentations such as orchestra and piano. The goal of this recital was to explore repertoire that is rarely, if ever, played on the cello, bringing it to new audiences. To do this, I either found transcriptions of the pieces or transcribed the pieces myself (as was the case with the Prokofiev) and presented these pieces on the cello.

The second recital is far more utilitarian in programming. Each of these three pieces fulfill a different role within a recital, from starting a program to ending the first or second half of a program. The Kodaly is a piece that can function in either half of a recital, depending on what else is being performed. In the case of the second recital, it served as the opening piece. The Martinu can function as either a closing piece to the first or second half of a recital, as it is a virtuosic show piece of only eight minutes or so. The Mendelssohn sonata is a substantial work and can function as an ending to the first of second half of a program, depending on what else is being performed.

The third recital showcases the music of Schubert, with performances of his *Quartettsatz*, and the first twelve songs in the *Wintereisse* song cycle. The Brahms is a sizable piece and was programmed in contrast to the Schubert compositions utilizing all of the personnel in the first half of the concert.

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM

Romanze, Op. 85 — Max Bruch (1838 - 1920)

Romeo and Juliet — Sergei Prokofiev (1891 - 1953)
Arranged for Viola and Piano by Vadim Borisovsky,
transcribed and arranged for cello by Dakota Cotugno

Sonata for Viola and Piano — Rebecca Clarke (1886 - 1979)

Dakota Cotugno, cello
Dr. Barbie Noyes, Piano

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES

Romanze, Op. 85
Max Bruch (1838 - 1920)

Max Christian Friedrich Bruch was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1838, and passed away in Berlin in 1920. Bruch's legacy is marked by a considerable output of over 200 works encompassing orchestral, chamber, and vocal works. Among his notable compositions is the F-major Romanze for viola and orchestra, op. 85, which he wrote between 1909 and 1911. This piece, along with others from the same period, such as the Eight Pieces for clarinet, viola, and piano, op. 83, and the Double Concerto for clarinet, viola, and orchestra, op. 88, showcased Bruch's affinity for highlighting the viola's expressive capabilities.

Dedicated to the French violist Maurice Vieux, the Romanze premiered on April 25, 1911, with Willy Hess performing the solo viola part. The birth of this piece is tied to Bruch's close association with performers, as many pieces around this time in his life were composed for specific individuals. Interestingly, the first public performance occurred in a private concert given by Bruch’s conducting student Leo Schrattenholtz, featuring Willy Hess on the solo viola. The Romanze is originally scored for viola and orchestra, however the version for viola and piano is performed much more frequently, with the piano part being written by Bruch himself.

In this composition, Bruch, akin to Brahms, expands upon established styles of Mozart and Haydn, infusing his work with a blend of lyricism and virtuosity. The ABA’ ternary structure of the Romanze exemplifies this balance, with folk-like melodies and virtuosic passagework interwoven seamlessly, creating a captivating musical narrative. The Romanze begins with a gentle orchestral introduction, followed by a lyrical entrance of the solo viola reminiscent of Bruch's Scottish Fantasy, op. 46, for violin and orchestra. Bruch's habit for incorporating folk melodies into his compositions is evident, particularly in the folk-like character of the first A-section, with the solo viola introducing double-stopped passages. The contrasting B-section, marked by stormy arpeggios, showcases the viola's virtuosic capabilities, culminating in a dramatic flourish before transitioning back to the serene lyricism of the final A-section. This piece is a staple in the viola repertoire, often appearing on recitals of every caliber.

Romeo and Juliet
Sergei Prokofiev (1891 - 1953)
Arranged for Viola and Piano by Vadim Borisovsky,
transcribed and arranged for cello by Dakota Cotugno

The genesis of Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet ballet dates back to a commission from the Kirov Ballet in 1934, against the backdrop of a storied history of adaptations of Shakespeare's timeless tragedy. While the tale had been explored through various mediums like symphonic and operatic works, it was Adrian Piotrovsky and Sergei Radlov's proposition to Prokofiev that ignited the ballet's conception. Prokofiev, fully aware of the weight of expectation from the Kirov's audience, embarked on the project in 1935. However, the journey to bring Romeo and Juliet to the stage was fraught with obstacles.

Despite initial enthusiasm, the Kirov and subsequently the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre withdrew from production, citing various reasons including the perceived undanceable nature of the music and disagreements over the narrative direction. The Bolshoi even proposed an alternate, happier ending, which Prokofiev reluctantly composed before ultimately reverting to the tragic conclusion that Shakespeare had penned.

These setbacks did not deter Prokofiev's dedication to the project. He meticulously revised the music, adapting it into orchestral suites and piano pieces, which garnered acclaim in performances in 1936 and 1937. Despite the challenges, Prokofiev remained steadfast in his vision, determined to bring his interpretation of the beloved tale to fruition.

Finally, in December 1938, the ballet received its world premiere at a provincial theater in Brno, Czechoslovakia. However, Prokofiev's inability to leave the Soviet Union prevented his attendance. It was not until January 1940, with a significantly revised score, that Romeo and Juliet made its Soviet premiere at the Kirov, where it was met with critical acclaim and received a prestigious Stalin Prize.

Over the years, Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet has become a cornerstone of the ballet repertoire, with choreographers such as Frederick Ashton, John Cranko, Kenneth MacMillan, and Rudolf Nureyev interpreting the timeless story through dance. Beyond the confines of the ballet theater, Prokofiev's music continues to captivate audiences through its inclusion in cinema and television.

The transcription for viola and piano by Vadim Borissovsky provides an opportunity to explore this music on a smaller scale, allowing more intimate audiences to enjoy the characterful music of Prokofiev. This rendition gives the two performers a wide range for personal interpretation without the constraints of a larger ensemble or dancers. For example, this could allow some tempi to be faster or slower, as the need to choreograph with dancers is nonexistent. This transcription was adapted for cello and piano by cellist Dakota Cotugno, who hopes the work will be performed more frequently and become a well known part of the cello repertoire.

Sonata for Viola and Piano
Rebecca Clarke (1886 - 1979)

Rebecca Clarke was born in 1886 in Harrow to a German mother and an American father. and passed away at the age of 93 in 1979. She studied composition under Sir Charles Villiers Stanford and viola under Lionel Tertis at the Royal College of Music. In 1912, she became one of the first female professional orchestral musicians, joining Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra. Much of her later life was spent in America. When World War II began, she went to stay with her brothers and found herself unable to return to Britain due to visa issues, eventually taking up a position as a governess in Connecticut after a productive period of composing. Clarke's compositions include chamber, vocal, and choral works, though much of her work remains unpublished.

Her Viola Sonata, written in 1919 when she was 33, was composed for a competition sponsored by her neighbor and arts patron, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The sonata tied for first place with Ernest Bloch's Suite for Viola, giving Clarke what she referred to as "my one brief whiff of fame," despite speculation that 'Rebecca Clarke' was a pseudonym for Bloch. The viola sonata features an inscription from Alfred de Musset's 1835 poem La Nuit de mai, which Clarke used to define the work's character: Poète, prends ton luth; le vin de la jeunesse Fermente cette nuit dans les veines de Dieu. (Poet, take up your lute; the wine of youth is tonight fermenting in the veins of God.)

The Sonata for Viola and Piano showcases clear influences from other twentieth-century composers, with its extensive use of whole-tone scales and modes reminiscent of Debussy, Ravel-like impressionism, creating a lush and intense sound world unique to Clarke. The first movement, Impetuoso, opens with an improvisatory solo from the viola introducing a recurring

theme. The piano joins with a turbulent accompaniment to the viola's rhapsodic melody, rising to a climax before easing into a more lyrical middle section. A recapitulation of the poco agitato chromatic section leads into an appassionato coda.

The second movement, Vivace, is a playful scherzo utilizing multiple techniques for both viola and piano: con sordino (to be played with a mute), right and left hand pizzicato, harmonics, barriolage, and glissando in the piano. The angular, interlocking lines, many based on whole-tone scales, build momentum until a flowing meno mosso section appears, after which the tempo quickens again, leading to a small coda section a humorous return of the opening material.

The appassionato third movement starts with a lyrical melody in the piano's left hand, later taken up by the viola. The texture builds as the piano and viola come together in unison, then subsides into stillness. This all progresses to a hushed return of the piano's opening melody, with viola tremolo sul ponticello (played near the bridge, creating a breathy, metallic sound). This transforms into the rising theme from the sonata's start, followed by material reminiscent of the first movement. The tempo and momentum build to the end of the sonata, interrupted only by a brief pastoral section, concluding with a jubilant elaboration of the opening theme, connecting the piece from beginning to end.

There are many pieces in the string repertoire that are shared between instruments after the death of the composer without their official blessing, however this sonata is an exception. There was an additional publication of this piece for cello and piano with Clarke's stamp of approval, although it's not played nearly as often on the cello.

RECITAL 2 PROGRAM

Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 4	Zoltan Kodaly (1882 - 1967)
Variations on a Theme of Rossini, H. 290	Bohuslav Martinu (1890 - 1959)
Sonata for Cello and Piano no. 2 in D Major, Op. 58	Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Dakota Cotugno, cello
Dr. Barbie Noyes, piano
Dr. Forrest Howell, piano

RECITAL 2 PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 4
Zoltan Kodaly (1882 - 1967)

It is usually the case that unfinished pieces of classical music do not have an a middle or an end. Mozart's Requiem, Schubert's 8th Symphony (referred to as the Unfinished Symphony), and Puccini's Turandot are famous examples of this, however this is not the case with Kodaly's Op. 4 for cello and piano.

Kodaly began writing this piece in 1909, originally planning on publishing a three movement work but failing to complete more than two. The work, as it is performed now, begins with what was originally the second of three movements and concludes with the planned third and final movement. The illusive first movement had been sketched out by Kodaly multiple times throughout the existence of this piece; as its conception, and then again later in its lifetime but was never finalized as he was never satisfied with how it turned out. Even in its unfinished state, Op. 4 is a wonderful composition that still feels complete, ending the sonata with the cello playing the very first theme the piano introduces in the piece.

This piece is filled with folk-induced melodies and rhythms one could expect of Kodaly's compositional style given his background in ethnomusicology (cataloging Hungarian folk music). His lifelong friend and colleague Bela Bartok even played the piano at the piece's premiere in 1910. The first movement contains many melodies played by the cello and piano that are quite syllabic, and long in musical sentence structure. These melodies often become intertwined with one another, creating a beautiful dialogue between the two instruments.

Throughout the first movement, marked *Adagio di Molto*, this conversation happens at many different levels of intensity. You can break this movement into five different "sections" (or musical paragraphs as I like to think about them), beginning and ending with a more inward sense. The conversations toward the middle of this movement become more tumultuous with greater activity in texture in both instrument's parts with more aggressive markings such as *feroce,* molto marcato appasionato, and *agitato.*

The second movement, marked *Allegro con Spirito,* is much more dance-like, with far less argumentative back and forth than the first movement. Within the piano part we see a healthy amount of these "boom-chuck" patterns between the right and left hands, which gives off a lighthearted and playful sense to the movement. We also see many examples of unison playing between the cello and piano, whether it be rhythmic or melodic, creating a more spirited sense of camaraderie. The piece comes to a close with the same material the piano introduces in the beginning, creating a sense of closure and completeness to the shorter than intended work.

Variations on a Theme of Rossini, H. 290
Bohuslav Martinu (1890 - 1959)

Bohuslav Martinů was born in 1890 in Bohemia, near the Moravian border. As a talented young violinist, his entire town pooled resources to send him to Prague Conservatory. However, the allure of Prague's cosmopolitan lifestyle distracted him from his studies, leading to his expulsion in 1910 for "incorrigible negligence." Despite this setback, Martinů's career flourished. He moved to Paris in 1923, where he absorbed influences from Stravinsky, American jazz, and symphony concerts led by Russian émigrés like Serge Koussevitzky. This period was one of his most prolific.

With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent Nazi occupation of France, Martinů fled to the United States in 1941. His American years were highly productive; he composed a significant portion of his symphonies, including his better known Symphony No. 1 and Symphony No. 6 ("Fantaisies symphoniques"). Among those early American works are the "Variations on a Theme of Rossini," written for cellist Gregor Piatigorsky and premiered in 1943. This piece is inspired by Rossini's aria from "Mosè in Egitto," and likely influenced by Paganini's variations on the same theme, showcases Martinů's virtuosic style.

Paganini's rendition of this aria is unique in the sense that he instructs the cellist to play the entire piece on a single string, as opposed to utilizing all four strings. This presents quite a challenge in that the performer must exercise their technique to the fullest to manage all of the physical demands present in the piece. For this reason, Paganini's variations are often assigned to students to develop their technique and explore their own physicality with the cello.

While the single string version is incredibly impressive in its own way, one might notice that it doesn't utilize everything the cello has to offer. The richness and color from the lower strings on the cello, let alone the facility they provide, offer a great deal to the listener and performer. Martinu's theme and variations allow the cellist to more fully explore what the cello has to offer. Unlike Paganini, Martinu writes his theme and variations in such a way that it is impossible to play the whole piece on one string, allowing the cellist to play throughout the entire range of the cello. This aspect alone makes this piece quite a different experience for everyone involved.

Even though this is the case, Martinu's composition does not lack in virtuosity; quite the opposite actually. He includes many markings and directions in each part that show what each

instrument is capable of. The cello part for example has many nimble passages in the second variation to be played all with an up bow (which is a very difficult bowing to execute simply and cleanly). This creates a certain anticipation and excitement in the sound you would not have if you played the same passage with alternating bow strokes. He also writes many passages that include rapid and alternating string changes to display a very busy sort of sound, or glissandos between the notes that are quite humorous. Each variation is unique, and provides a wide array of techniques that showcase the potential of the cello.

Martinu's legacy endures through his extensive and varied compositions, which continue to be performed and recorded worldwide. He remains one of the most important Czech composers of the 20th century, alongside figures like Leoš Janáček and Antonín Dvořák.

Sonata for Cello and Piano no. 2 in D Major, Op. 58
Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Mendelssohn's second sonata for cello and piano exemplifies his distinctive blend of classical and romantic elements. He seamlessly integrates the structured elegance of classical forms (perhaps inspired by his love for the works of J. S. Bach) with the expressive tonal colors and virtuosic piano techniques of the romantic era.

Written in 1843 for his cellist brother Paul, this sonata features the four canonical movements of Classical tradition: a sonata-form allegro, a scherzo, a lyrical slow movement, and a vivacious finale.

The first movement, Allegro assai vivace, starts with a joyous, ascending cello melody set against pulsating piano harmonies, reminiscent of the opening of Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony (also written in the 6/8 time signature). Both instruments share the thematic material equally, though the piano's intricate arpeggios sometimes dominate the cello's lyrical expressions. This is a prime example of his departure from more standard classical compositional techniques. The minor key appears briefly in the development section with the same themes heard in the opening, adding color and drama before finding the way back to the home key of D major.

The second movement, Allegretto scherzando, has a more relaxed pace than a typical scherzo (written in 2/4 rather than cut-time). It feels more like an intermezzo, with playful pizzicato themes filled with ornaments played back and forth between the cello and piano. The middle section features a lyrical melody for the cello that's quite perfect for humming.

The Adagio slow movement is memorable, beginning with lush piano arpeggios outlining a chorale-like melody similar to Bach's style, reflecting Mendelssohn's admiration for Bach. There are extraordinary similarities between this movement and Bach's "Es ist vollbracht" from the St. John Passion, where sections of both melodies are almost identical. The cello's expressive lines contrast with the piano's calm chorale, creating drama that resolves as the cello adopts the piano's serene mood, leading to an attacca entrance to the exhilarating fourth and final movement.

The final movement, Molto allegro e vivace, is exuberant and lively, akin to the finale of Mendelssohn's G minor Piano Concerto. From the outset, the cello and piano demonstrate a high degree of cooperation, often completing each other's musical thoughts, creating the feel of a joyous adventure shared by two friends. This vivace exudes optimism and joy, where the frolicking melodies and conversation that both instruments partake in make it impossible for the listener not to smile. Near the end of the movement, there is a relaxation in energy allowing the movements fast-paced nature to subside before building again to an exciting finish, ending the sonata the way it began.

RECITAL 3 PROGRAM

String Quartet no. 12, D. 703 (Quartettsatz)	Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)
Wintereisse, Op. 89	Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)
String Sextet no. 1 in B flat Major, Op. 18	Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)

Michelle DeYoung, mezzo-soprano
Yumi Hwang-Williams, violin
Kate Arndt, Violin
Stephanie Krimm-Mientka, viola
Andrew Krimm, viola
Danielle Guideri, cello
Dakota Cotugno, cello

RECITAL 3 PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet no. 12, D. 703 (Quartettsatz)
Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Franz Schubert possessed a seemingly endless imagination and a constant drive to start new projects. Even a casual conversation could spark the creation of a new piece. He often worked on several compositions simultaneously, and a new commission or enticing idea could easily cause him to set aside a current project with the intention of returning to it later. However, many of these works were never revisited, resulting in numerous incomplete and forgotten pieces. One of the great tragedies of music is that such a brilliant talent shone for such a short time (Shubert passed away at the young age of 31), and we are left to ponder how many unfinished works like the Quartettsatz or the Unfinished Symphony might have been completed. It is a striking realization that we could have enjoyed many other masterpieces from Schubert, was his attention to existing projects not so fleeting.

Similar to his "Unfinished" Symphony of 1822, the Quartettsatz of 1820 remains incomplete, with only the first movement and 41 measures of an Andante in A-flat major (a key that is visited within the completed movement) finished. The reason for its abandonment is unclear, though it is speculated that Schubert may have felt unable to sustain the exceptional quality of the first movement in subsequent sections. This composition is quite important, as it was his first effort at composing a string quartet since he completed his eleventh string quartet years earlier in 1816.

The movement opens with a restless, rapid motif in the first violin, which is soon imitated by the other instruments. According to John Reed's biography of Schubert, this theme may have originated from an incantation scene in Schubert's unsuccessful opera "The Magic Harp" from August 1820. The anticipation in the main theme transitions into a lyrical, flowing secondary subject high in the violin's range. A chordal passage supported by murmurs from the cello concludes the exposition. The development section, concise and focused mainly on variations of the main theme and fleeting scales played by the first violin, leads into a recapitulation that

begins with the lyrical second theme and saves the agitated opening motif for the movement's final gestures, which is quite interesting.

The coda section in many pieces of music explore previously heard material, often with some variation, however Schubert writes the last few moments almost identically to the opening, and lasting only about ten seconds before and abrupt and fiery ending. This ending heavily suggests to the ear that there is more coming, due to its hurried cadence in c minor, however there is not.

Wintereisse, Op. 89
Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Franz Schubert's *Winterreise* (Winter Journey), D. 911, stands as one of the most profound and celebrated song cycles in the classical repertoire. Composed in 1827, a year before Schubert's death, it is a setting of 24 poems by Wilhelm Müller. The cycle explores themes of unrequited love, despair, and existential contemplation, making it a cornerstone of romantic music.

Schubert composed *Winterreise* at a time when he was acutely aware of his declining health. The intensity of his engagement with Müller's poetry was significant; he reportedly said that these songs "affected [him] more than all others." Schubert's composition journey began after discovering Müller's poems in his friend Franz von Schober's library. Initially, he set the first 12 poems to music and later completed the cycle upon encountering the full set of 24 poems.

The cycle is a psychological journey of a solitary protagonist, the Wanderer, who traverses a winter landscape reflecting his inner turmoil. The wintry environment and natural elements serve as metaphors for the Wanderer's emotions. Songs like "Gute Nacht" introduce the journey with somber determination, while pieces such as "Der Lindenbaum" evoke memories of happier times, contrasting sharply with the present desolation.

Schubert's music powerfully underscores these themes. The piano accompaniment is not just a backdrop but an integral part of the narrative, depicting the icy landscape and the Wanderer's emotional states. For instance, the repetitive, sighing figures in "Gefrorne Tränen" mimic falling tears, and the flowing triplets in "Auf dem Flusse" portray a frozen stream.

The structure of *Winterreise* is notable for its shift from personal lament in the first half to broader existential themes in the second. By the time the cycle reaches "Der Leiermann," the final song, the Wanderer's journey has become one of profound introspection and resignation, meeting a mysterious hurdy-gurdy player who symbolizes death or eternal wandering.

Despite its initial mixed reception, *Winterreise* has become a pinnacle of the song cycle genre. Schubert's contemporaries were initially perplexed by its bleakness, but its emotional depth and intricate interweaving of text and music have since been widely acknowledged. The cycle's ability to evoke universal themes of sorrow and the human condition has ensured its enduring relevance and frequent performance.

String Sextet no. 1 in B flat Major, Op. 18
Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)

Johannes Brahms composed his String Sextet No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 18, in 1860. This work, scored for two violins, two violas, and two cellos, marked a significant achievement in his early chamber music repertoire, showcasing his mastery in handling larger string ensembles. The sextet is celebrated for its rich textures, intricate interplay among the instruments, and the emotional depth characteristic of Brahms' music.

Brahms was 27 years old when he wrote this sextet. At this age, he had already developed a mature musical judgment, which allowed him to resist the temptation of overwriting for the medium. This discretion resulted in a work that is both lush and meticulously crafted, exploring the unique sonorities available in a string sextet. The choice of this ensemble reflects Brahms' interest in the deep sonorities of the lower strings, which he balanced beautifully with the brighter timbres of the violins.

The first movement is in sonata form and opens with a lyrical cello theme. Brahms demonstrates his penchant for rhythmic complexity here, using cross-rhythms and irregular phrase lengths (such as the nine-bar opening theme played by the first cello) to create a sense of forward momentum. The development section contains a charming second theme in A major played harmoniously by the first and second violin and first viola. The development is

particularly noteworthy for its thematic transformations, such as the A major theme being repeated in a minor key.

The second movement is a set of variations, a form Brahms greatly admired and excelled in. The theme is simple and song-like, introduced by the first viola, and he cleverly varies it by altering the texture and rhythm in each subsequent variation. This movement showcases Brahms' ability to create a diverse array of moods, textures, and colors from a single melodic idea.

The third movement is vigorous and energetic, with a contrasting trio section that maintains the intensity rather than providing a typical lyrical interlude. This Scherzo and the trio of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony are incredibly similar, and highlights Brahms' ability to draw inspiration from his predecessors while crafting something distinctly his own. The coda in this movement is rambunctious and exciting, as it takes the ever increasing tempo of the movement and kicks it up yet another notch to and exciting end.

The final movement features a charming and lyrical main theme, again introduced by the first cello. This movement unifies each of the voices (both violins, violas, and cellos) creating teams of two that conversationally interject musical phrases in a way we haven't seen before. For example there are passages where the violins and violas state a motif in unison that is directly answered by the two cellos playing in unison. This is a wonderful way Brahms shows off the orchestration of this piece, utilizing the different ranges and sonorities each pair of instruments has.

While Brahms' friend and mentor violinist Joseph Joachim criticized the ending for lacking force, the movement effectively rounds off the sextet with a sense of lightness and grace. This ending seems to be written in more of a classical in style, rather than a robust and dense romantic one. Brahms' String Sextet No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 18, stands as a testament to his early compositional prowess and his ability to blend classical forms with romantic expressiveness. The sextet's innovative use of texture, rhythm, and harmony, along with its emotional depth, ensures its place as a beloved work in the chamber music repertoire.