

2013

A master's recital in piano

Katrina Ann Benjegerdes
University of Northern Iowa

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A MASTER'S RECITAL IN PIANO

A Recital Abstract

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy

Katrina Ann Benjegerdes

University of Northern Iowa

December 2013

This Recital Abstract by: Katrina Ann Benjegerdes

Entitled: A MASTER'S RECITAL IN PIANO

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy

Date

Sean D. Botkin, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date

Dr. Theresa C. Camilli, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Robin D. Guy, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Michael J. Licari, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital by: Katrina Ann Benjegerdes

Entitled: A MASTER'S RECITAL IN PIANO

Date of Recital: October 28, 2013

has been approved as meeting the recital requirements for the
Degree of Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy.

Date

Sean D. Botkin, Chair, Thesis Committee

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Dr. Theresa C. Camilli, Thesis Committee Member

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Dr. Robin D. Guy, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Michael J. Licari, Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Katrina Benjegerdes presented a full graduate piano recital on Monday, October 28, 2013. The recital was performed at 6 p.m. in Davis Hall in the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at the University of Northern Iowa. This recital was given in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. The program consisted of works by Scarlatti, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninoff, and Mozart. This abstract contains further discussion of the performed works.

Scarlatti – Sonata in E Major, K.135

Domenico Scarlatti (1685 - 1757) was born in Naples, Italy. He was the sixth child of the composer Alessandro Scarlatti. It is likely that young Domenico studied with one of Alessandro's musical colleagues as well as learning from various members of his musical family, but there is no real evidence to confirm this. Thanks to his father's influence, Domenico had acquired a post in Naples as organist, harpsichordist, and composer by the age of 15. He acquired many important posts during his lifetime, including the position of *maestro di cappella* for the former queen of Poland, Maria Casimira, and tutor and private entertainer for Maria Barbara of Portugal, who later became Queen of Spain. It was under Maria Barbara's patronage that he composed his 30 famous *Essercizi* and many of his other sonatas.¹

Although the *Essercizi* and sonatas are Scarlatti's most renowned works, the composition dates are unknown. Ralph Kirkpatrick's catalogue attempted a roughly chronological order, but little more information can be found besides the publishing dates of some of the collections. The *Codice Veneziano* from which these two sonatas are taken² was published in 1742, but it is possible that many or all of the compositions were completed much earlier than that year.³

1. Roberto Pagano, et al., "Scarlatti," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24708pg7> (accessed September 29, 2013).

2. Scarlatti, Domenico, *Scarlatti Masterpieces for Solo Piano: 47 Works* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999).

3. Pagano, "Scarlatti."

The Sonata in E Major, K. 135, is characterized by quick changes. The rapidity of motivic change in this sonata requires a quickness of hand and ear that rivals that demanded in Mendelssohn's op. 16. A certain level of individual finger activity is helpful in many passages, but the pianist's approach must be able to change instantaneously to create the articulation changes that an audience can fully appreciate.

The sonata opens with a series of descending arpeggios interrupted briefly by miniature ornamented scales. This is quickly replaced by a new variation on the arpeggios, and then undergoes a sudden change into longer melodic passages which are again interrupted by miniature ornamented scales. Scarlatti's sense of humor becomes evident in the next motives. The awkwardness of changing accidentals is doubled by the unusual rhythmic feel: three-measure phrases in strange alternation with two-measure phrases that make the entire section feel oddly off-balance. It is after the completion of these unbalanced repetitions that the most significant motive appears: a lovely, upbeat alternation of scalar and arpeggiated runs in the right hand offset by leaping octaves and thirds in the left hand. This cheerful motive gains a sense of insistence by happening three times in a row, morphing into a new cadential run, and then returning to nearly the same motive for another three instances before the reappearance of the cadential passage from four measures previously. In a manner similar to that often displayed by Mozart, this cadential treatment does not end the section, but gives way to a miniature coda that delays the close of the section by yet another four measures. The B section opens with rising and falling chords interrupted in now-typical fashion with miniature scales ending in trills, then gives way to melodic material somewhat similar to the twelfth bar of the A section. This again is completed by an ornamented scalar motive, but does not rest upon the cadence, but rather runs straight into a brief reminder of the awkward rhythmic passage from before, this time heard in a simple three-measure set before returning to small scalar motion. Finally, the scales yield to an unexpected change: the leaping octaves and thirds from before, now tumbling down the keyboard with only off-beat trills in the right hand to vary them, and come crashing to a rapid downward scale and trill. This is not the grand finale, however; after a brief pause, the rhythmically unbalanced motive comes back in slight variation once more, but this time Scarlatti reconciles the motive to the more stable three- and six- measure phrases we would expect. A brief flirtation with mixed motives

occurs only to transition back into the upbeat scalar and arpeggiated alternations from the end of the A section (of course in slightly different presentation each time), and once again the ending is delayed by a four-measure codetta that brings the sonata to a definitive close.

Scarlatti – Sonata in B minor, K. 87

Scarlatti's Sonata in B minor, K. 87, is in AB form like K. 135. The two sections in this work, however, are much more similar in length. Whereas the B section of K. 135 felt like two distinct sections, the B section of K. 87 is only two measures longer than the A section, and the continual similarity of motivic material between the two is more evident than in the ever-changing K. 135. K. 87 is written in four voices, and is easily comparable to Bach's complex contrapuntal compositional style. The intricate dialogue between each voice demands a high level of awareness and skill to be able to execute successfully; while the upper voice should be free and singing, the pianist also must maintain awareness of the other voices to create the support and interplay necessary to keep the audience's interest despite the slower tempo. Scarlatti himself did not give this sonata any tempo marking; however, too much or too little motion can make this sonata more difficult to realize effectively.

Mendelssohn – Trois Fantaisies ou Caprices, op. 16

Jacob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) was a highly talented pianist, organist, conductor, and composer. He was born in Hamburg, Germany to a Jewish family. Many of his best-known works were composed before he was twenty years old. His compositional style was influenced by Bach's contrapuntal genius, Mozart's elegance and simple formal design, and the passionate complexity of Beethoven and Weber. He is widely studied for his synthesis of Classical and Romantic compositional

models.⁴ The same year these three fantasies were composed, Mendelssohn's monumental revival of Bach's St. Matthew Passion, brought Bach back to the public consciousness.⁵

The first caprice of the set, *Andante con moto – Allegro vivace*, is characterized by sharp contrast, similarly to Rachmaninoff's *Polichinelle*. The inscription below the title reads "*Componirt 1829. Im Druck erschienen spätestens im Jahre 1833,*"⁶ which translates to the following: "composed in 1829. In print [appeared] no later than in the year 1833." The caprice is in ABA form, and begins in A minor. The introduction consists of a flowing, melodic theme flavored with sudden dynamic shifts. A small diminuendo and series of descending chords announce the arrival of the A major *Allegro vivace* in a fast 6/8 meter. This section features dance-like chordal triplets in the left hand and an ascending triumphant theme in the right hand. The entire A major section is characterized by sudden dynamic changes and breathless energy. The piece returns to *Tempo dell'Andante* at the end, in which the original melody reoccurs with some variations in presentation, such as the right hand triplets that continue from the end of the A major section into the second Andante. This time, the final descending chords are passed from the left hand to the right hand instead of being played simultaneously, and accidentals are added to prepare the conclusion of a lovely ascending A Major arpeggio with *pianissimo* chords. This Caprice was inspired by carnations and roses⁷ and originally entitled "*Nelken und Rosen in Menge,*" or "Carnations and roses in plenty."⁸

Number two, *Scherzo*, begins with a high-pitched *piano* trumpet call, answered by quick *pianissimo* chords reminiscent perhaps of the fairies Mendelssohn imagined when composing his E minor Capriccio. This one was inspired by small, trumpet-shaped flowers called *Eccremocarpus*.⁹ Mendelssohn

4. R. Larry Todd, "Mendelssohn, Felix," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51795> (accessed January 18, 2013).

5. Christopher Hogwood, *Foreword*, in *Mendelssohn in Performance*, ed. Siegwart Reichwald (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), viii.

6. Felix Mendelssohn, *Trois Fantaisies ou Caprices, op. 16* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1880).

7. Radcliffe, *The Master Musicians: Mendelssohn*, 16.

8. Lydia T. Morris, *Famous musical composers: being biographies of eminent musicians* (Cambridge, MA: Frederick A. Stokes, 1891), 177.

9. *Ibid.*

said they reminded him of small trumpets for fairies to play on.¹⁰ Since the set was composed three years after Mendelssohn's very successful concert overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is not difficult to see the link in ideas.¹¹ The trumpet theme and fast, scurrying notes are echoed repeatedly in rondo fashion. The climax of the piece – a passage of *fortissimo* octaves in both hands – is reached a little over halfway through after a set of arpeggiated figures in the right hand, joined at their loudest point by the trumpet motive in the left hand. The closing section consists of rapid sixteenths punctuated by fragments of the trumpet motive in the left hand, this time all in one pedal and performed at a whisper-quiet *pianissimo*.

Number three, *Andante*, opens with a visual representation of the stream Mendelssohn is said to have had in mind when composing this piece.¹² The entire piece is constructed on uninterrupted, flowing sixteenths passed back and forth from hand to hand. This gentle fantasy could easily have been included in Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs without Words) – it is written in the same style, with a clear picture suggested but no words called for. It was originally titled “*Am Bach*” (by the brook).¹³

According to Hans Von Bülow, who studied with Mendelssohn, Mendelssohn's music should not be performed in the Romantic style of Schumann, but instead in the Classical style of Mozart. Also, he said that Mendelssohn's tempos should be in a fairly consistent pulse, with no *ritardandi* unless marked; he added that said marked passages should not be overdone.¹⁴ Tempos should be fast; there are many reports of Mendelssohn's performances being too fast or spirited for some listeners.¹⁵

10. Morris, *Famous musical composers: being biographies of eminent musicians*, 177.

11. Todd, "Mendelssohn, Felix."

12. Radcliffe, *The Master Musicians: Mendelssohn*, 16.

13. R. Larry Todd, *Piano Music Reformed: The Case of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 213.

14. Hogwood, *Foreword*.

15. Donald Mintz, *Mendelssohn as Performer and Teacher*, in *The Mendelssohn Companion*, ed. Douglass Seaton (London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 97.

Rachmaninoff – Prelude in D Major, no. 4 from 10 Preludes, op. 23

Rachmaninoff was born in Oneg (near Novgorod) in 1873. He entered the Moscow Conservatory in 1887. He was better known in his lifetime as a composer and conductor than as a pianist.¹⁶ He was supported as a young composer by the older and more famous Tchaikovsky.¹⁷ Rachmaninoff left Russia in 1918 and never returned.¹⁸ He settled in the United States in 1935 and stayed there until his death in 1943.¹⁹

Prokofiev said of Rachmaninoff's piano performance that his notes "stood firmly and clearly on the ground."²⁰ Other qualities of Rachmaninoff's performance included simplicity of movement, warm and vibrant tone despite light pedaling, and wonderful precision. His melodies were strong, but the inner voicing was still easily audible to help create his richer tone quality. His performance, according to Schonberg, was "at all times elegant, but it had inevitability rather than spontaneity."²¹

This prelude comes from a set of ten preludes composed in 1903.²² The fourth is essentially a set of variations on a theme. The theme is introduced in its simplest form: a single note in the right hand, accompanied by arpeggiated chords in the left hand. The right hand melody builds in intensity as it progresses by adding notes to create larger chords before coming to a conclusion sixteen measures after it begins. This is not the end of that theme, however; it is re-introduced immediately in a new style. The theme is presented in a three-part texture, in which the melody has become the alto voice, while a soprano voice emerges in triplets that provide rhythmic contrast with the duplets in the arpeggiated left hand bass. After another sixteen measures of the theme, the soprano triplets move to the bass, and the right hand voices merge into duplet melody. Rachmaninoff adds yet another dimension: he brings the prelude to a climactic *fortissimo* in the seventeenth measure of this variation before descending with an effective

16. Harold C. Schonberg, *The Lives of the Great Composers*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 511.

17. *Ibid.*, 512.

18. *Ibid.*, 519.

19. *Ibid.*, 510-519.

20. *Ibid.*, 519.

21. *Ibid.*, 522-523.

22. Geoffrey Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146> (accessed January 18, 2013).

diminuendo to the final presentation of the theme. Within this final presentation, the bass triplets continue, but the thematic melody returns to its original simplicity, but in larger chords, and is offset by soprano sparkles. In order to bring the prelude to a satisfying conclusion, Rachmaninoff lengthens the final presentation by more than half. As the end approaches, the duplet theme returns for a final *pianissimo* farewell that swells to a gentle *mezzo forte* before settling into the quiet ending V⁷ - I authentic cadence.

Rachmaninoff – Polichinelle in F-sharp minor, no. 4 from Morceaux de fantaisie, op. 3

The *Polichinelle*, composed in 1892, is in ABA¹ form.²³ The first A section, *Allegro vivace*, is quickly moving and exuberant, with one exciting motive after another, each in contrasting dynamic range. Many of these motives are two measures or less in length, and occur more than once within the A section. Sometimes these motives are presented as duplicates, and sometimes in slight deviations. After a flurry of rapid arpeggiated figures, a set of four repeated F#s heralds the arrival of the B section, *Agitato*. A melody made more intense by arpeggios in patterned alternation of triplets and quadruplets is presented. Again, the theme is repeated several times, with the final presentation being modulated and varied to re-introduce the opening motives of the A section. This marks the beginning of the A¹ section. Although very similar to the original A plan, there is some chromatic alteration to add interest, and many motives are presented in full octave chords to heighten intensity. The motives are given fewer times in the A¹ section. The slightly altered arpeggios give way to plummeting octave leaps that reverse direction suddenly and climb exultantly to a grand finish that is simultaneously presented in the uppermost and lower realms of the piano keyboard.

“*Polichinelle*” is the French name for the Italian *commedia dell’arte* character of Pulcinella. The *commedia dell’arte* is a set of Italian theatrical characters from the sixteenth century and was inspired by Greek and Roman comedies. The characters made their way into every aspect of Anglo-European visual and performing arts. Since it was made up of a cast of characters but had only the most basic of scenarios and no complete story, the *commedia* was largely an improvisatory art form, and the actors traditionally wore half masks that symbolized their characters. The characters were based in different Italian cities or

23. Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge."

regions. Pulcinella was based on the city of Napoli, or Naples. His defining characteristics are his large nose and dual personalities.²⁴

Mozart – Piano Concerto no. 23 in A Major, K.488

Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart (1756-1791), or Wolfgang Amadé, as he signed his name, is easily one of the most recognizable figures in general world history, let alone music history. He is well-known to have been a musical genius from a very early age, touring to perform on piano and violin for royalty as young as six years of age. His life was, unfortunately, cut short by poor health and alcoholic tendencies. His musical output from his thirty-five short years was incredible, however, and includes nearly every instrumentation and genre known to European composers of his era.

Mozart's inscription on his autograph score of K.488 reads March 1786, but analysis has shown that it was almost certainly completed a year or two before that point.²⁵ I have selected the Edition Peters arrangement for two pianos for this performance due to the inclusion of Mozart's original cadenza in the first movement.

Movement 1, *Allegro*, is in typical Sonata Allegro form, with a double Exposition taking the appearance of an extended orchestral introduction before the piano solo begins. The interplay between the orchestra and piano is playful and reminiscent of Bach's genius in creating dialogue between voices in his instrumental music. The conclusion of the exposition is marked by a full measure-length trill that cadences on E Major. The orchestra interjects reminders of previously heard themes before making way for the piano to begin the Development section on the same E Major chord. The Recapitulation employs Mozart's typical subtle variations on previous themes, shown immediately by the music box-like upper octave and grace notes of the first entry. Once again, the Recapitulation ends with a full measure trill cadencing this time on A Major. After a triumphant climax built by the orchestra, the piano enters one last time in Mozart's own cadenza, which is again brought to conclusion by extended trills and a final cadence on A Major. The

24. Olga Partan, "Shinel' -- Polichinelle -- Pulcinella: The Italian Ancestry of Akaky Bashmachkin," *Slavic & East European Journal*, 49, no. 4 (2005): 549.

25. Konrad Küster, *Mozart: A Musical Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 206.

orchestra takes over and gives a final nod to some familiar themes before closing on two small fluting trills over V-I cadences.

Movement 2, *Adagio*, is in A Major's relative minor of F-sharp. This is Mozart's only work set in this key.²⁶ It is a simple but haunting respite from the cheerful stream of activity in the first and third movements. The piano opens the movement with a simplistic 6/8 melody, which is transformed into a series of descending chromatic scales after a gentle but emotionally powerful interlude from the orchestra. The next entrance by the orchestra changes the character of the music with its more excited accompanimental triplets. This theme is taken over by the piano for a few measures before disappearing into less familiar material. The orchestra gets less than two measures of solo at their next entrance before the piano jumps back in with the first theme, this time extended by a brief pause and a few extra measures. The orchestra returns with its original interlude, which is finally introduced into the piano. The piano and orchestra continue together into a gentle pulsating passage where the piano serves as rhythmic support for a short time, then the orchestral theme returns with the piano providing one-octave leaps and repeated notes that recall the music box-like sound of the Recapitulation's opening in movement 1. Antony Hopkins suggests in his book *Talking About Concertos* that Mozart intended this last section to be ornamented and embellished, providing only the most skeletal idea of what it should be, but I have chosen to keep the music as written.²⁷ Eva Badura-Skoda writes about this as well, but agrees that embellishment is unnecessary here.²⁸ The simplicity of this section is the greatest exemplification of the grace and beauty Mozart commands throughout the entire movement.

Movement 3, *Allegro assai*, is an exciting and showy finish for the concerto. It is in rondo form, but the formal plan is nearly the same as Sonata Allegro (with some variance in the Recapitulation). The unaccompanied piano introduces its main theme briefly at the very beginning of the movement, then makes

26. Antony Hopkins, *Talking About Concertos* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company Inc., 1964), 30.

27. *Ibid.*, 32.

28. Eva Badura-Skoda, *On Improvised Embellishments and Cadenzas in Mozart's Piano Concertos*. In *Mozart's Piano Concertos: Text, Context, and Interpretation*, ed. Neal Zaslaw (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 367.

way for the orchestra to present an extended introduction similar to the one in the first movement, but even lengthier. The piano does not reiterate its original theme immediately after the lengthy orchestral tutti, but rather, moves on to theme number two. Piano and orchestra are again engaged in lively dialogue similar to that in the first movement. The middle section begins with a bold F-sharp minor chord and descending scale that is repeated and varied slightly before giving way to a brief orchestral interlude. When the piano re-enters, it is in accompaniment mode while the orchestra introduces new thematic material. The piano then takes over this material and assigns the orchestra to accompaniment mode, after which both instruments exchange roles twice more. The return of the rondo theme emerges from this exchange, but instead of being a literal restatement, it is a rhythmic presentation with altered intervallic structure. The themes heard before are repeated, but in completely different order than previously presented. A triumphant series of ascending chords in both piano and orchestra heralds the arrival of the end of the work, and a few short trills embellish the final orchestral cadences before the repeated A Major chords that complete the concerto.

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School of Music
University of Northern Iowa

A Graduate Recital
by
Kat Benjegerdes,
Pianist

From the Studio of Sean Botkin

I would like to express my gratitude to the entire keyboard faculty for sharing their knowledge with me ~ I have been so blessed to be allowed to learn from all of you! Thanks especially to my piano professor, Sean Botkin, for his unfailing patience and assistance for the last nine years!

Thank you to the entire SOM faculty for the time I've been here; you've not only inspired me to work hard, but also given me the drive to continue that learning long after graduation.

Thank you to my parents for sharing your love of music with me, and the rest of my family for the support I've received from each of you in turn.

All my friends I've made here at UNI, musicians and non-musicians alike – thank you! You have been the best support group I could have asked for.

Finally, thank you to every one of you here tonight for making this recital happen!!!

Please join me for a reception in the student lounge following the program.

PROGRAM

Sonata in E Major, K. 135
Sonata in B minor, K. 87

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685-1757)

Trois Fantaisies ou Caprices, op. 16
I. Andante con moto-Allegro vivace
II. Scherzo
III. Andante

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Prelude in D Major, op. 23, no. 4
Polichinelle in F-sharp minor, op.3, no. 4

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

~ INTERMISSION ~

Piano Concerto no. 23 in A Major, K.488
I. Allegro
II. Adagio
III. Allegro assai

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Sean Botkin, orchestral reduction

*This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Music degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Piano Studio recital

Wednesday, October 30, 2013, 8 p.m.
Davis Hall, GBPAC

Paolo Mondadori, piano

Friday, November 15, 2013, 6 p.m.
Davis Hall, GBPAC

Kayla Becker, piano

Tuesday, November 19, 2013, 6 p.m.
Davis Hall, GBPAC

Nicole Lewis, piano

Thursday, November 21, 2013, 6 p.m.
Davis Hall, GBPAC

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