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A graduate recital in piano

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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN PIANO

An abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

Elisabed Imerlishvili

University of Northern Iowa

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This Abstract by: Elisabed Imerlishvili

Entitled: A Graduate Recital in Piano

Has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music

Date

Prof. Sean Botkin, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date

Dr. Dmitri Vorobiev, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Randall Harlow, Thesis Committee Member

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Dr. Kavita R. Dhanwada, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Elisabed Imerlishvili

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ABSTRACT

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) Three Keyboard Sonatas:

1) *E Major K. 380. L. 23*; 2) *D minor K. 1. L. 366*; 3) *D Major K. 492. L. 14*

Elisabed Imerlishvili performed her Master's recital in Piano Performance at Bengtson Auditorium at the University of Northern Iowa on March 20th, 2017. In this abstract she will be discussing the following pieces that she performed at the recital: Scarlatti: Three Keyboard Sonatas-E Major K. 380. L. 23, D minor K. 1. L. 366 and D Major K. 492; Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major, Op. 81a "Les adieux" by Ludwig van Beethoven; and 24 Preludes, Op. 28 by Frederic Chopin.

Italian composer, Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples in 1685, the same year as J. S. Bach and Handel. He was born to a musical family and his father, Alessandro Scarlatti was a famous composer in his time, especially for operas and cantatas. Domenico received musical education from early childhood and by the age of ten, he had already demonstrated his talent. When the composer matured, he became famous for his phenomenal technique on the harpsichord. He was clearly influenced first by his father but as he moved to other countries and settled in Spain for the rest of his life, his attention was captured by the virtuoso harpsichord performers of the time

from Rome, Lisbon and Spain.¹

Scarlatti wrote 555 keyboard sonatas. The first publication (1738) comprised thirty sonatas, which was followed by forty-two sonatas in an edition published by Thomas Roseingrave in London (1739). His later sonatas mostly remain in manuscripts and are stored in Italy at Parma Conservatory Library, the British Museum and Viennese Library (Biblioteca Marciana). Ralph Kirkpatrick, an American musicologist and harpsichordist who created the chronological catalog of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas claimed that more than half of Scarlatti's sonatas were written during the last five years of his life and were composed for Maria Barbara, princess of Portugal and later Queen of Spain.²

Most of Scarlatti's sonatas are single movement works in binary form, the musical form consisting of two parts where each of them is repeated. They do not have traditional recapitulations, as was usual in standard classical sonata form. The two, mostly equal-length halves are separated with a double bar and repeated. In his sonatas Scarlatti used different keyboard techniques: fast running scales, arpeggios, parallel thirds, sixths, or octaves, trills, hand crossings, jumps, repetitions and different ornamentations.

Sonata in E Major, K. 380, L. 23 was published in 1804. The tempo-

¹ Eiji Hashimoto, "Domenico Scarlatti 1685-1757," *American Music Teacher* 28, no. 6 (June-July 1979): 12.

² *Ibid*, 13

Andante comodo-(comfortably at a moderate tempo) and the sonority of the piece in general presents a calm and pastorale character. There are a lot of melodic and rhythmic imitations, same patterns of figurations, ornamentations, and in this case mordents. The composer uses the interval of a fifth very often which resembles the sound of wind instruments and conjures images of peaceful and pure nature scenes.

Sonata in D minor, K. 1, L. 366 was published in 1739 in *Essercizii per Gravicembalo*. The tempo marking is *Allegro*, (fast tempo) and consists of two parts, each of them repeated. Running sixteenth notes and dotted rhythms create a sparkly, vivid character. The first phrase, introduced in the right hand is repeated in the left hand on the same pitch of a D. These kind of “dialog figurations” occur in other places as well, for example in the beginning of the second half of the sonata. Scarlatti uses many modulations in a very short period of time, varying major and minor keys frequently. Added ornamentations, particularly trills on the third beats in the right hand produce the stylistic sense of Baroque music. Hence, the sonority is clear, with almost no pedal, which gives us the sensation of a Baroque style instrument, a harpsichord in this case.

Sonata in D Major, K. 492, L. 14 marked *Presto* (Quite fast tempo) is a representative work of Scarlatti’s virtuosic style. This sonata requires a high level of technique from the performer. The texture consists of double thirds in

both hands, running sixteenths and even thirty-second notes in different directions and dotted rhythmical figures with ornamentations. The character of the sonata is bright, dignified and perhaps festive, although in the middle parts of each section there are some minor episodes that suddenly create a kind of melancholy mood. The first time this minor section appears, in measures 19-35, it is in C minor, and the second time we hear the minor section again but now in D minor, in measures 75-90. These sections offer contrasting colors.

Ludwig van Beethoven, (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata N. 26 in E-flat Major Op. 81a, "Les adieux"

Ludwig van Beethoven, a German composer and one of the representatives of the Viennese School, was born in Bonn in 1770 into a family of court musicians. Bonn at the time was almost entirely controlled by ecclesiastical influence. He remained true to the classicism spirit and followed the vision of Schiller, who quoted: "The law of the tragic art was to represent suffering nature. The second law is to represent the resistance of morality to suffering." Beethoven admired Schiller's philosophy. The most vivid illustration of his attitude to his poetry is reflected in the Ninth Symphony where he uses Schiller's "Ode to Joy" in the fourth movement as

the choral text. Beethoven's piano sonatas reflect all the essential aspects of human experience: joy, victories won, heroism, tragedy etc.³ Almost all of his thirty-two piano sonatas are monumental creations.

Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 81a was composed in 1809, published in 1811 and is dedicated to Archduke Rudolph of Austria. This is one of two Beethoven sonatas that can be classified as a "programmatic" sonata. The second one is "*Pathetique*", *Op. 13*. The idea to write this three-movement sonata was inspired by the historical circumstances concerning the French army invasion of Austria in 1809. Most of the noble people decided to leave Austria and Archduke Rudolph was among them. Beethoven reflected upon this fact and wrote this "farewell" sonata. The movement titles, "Lebewohl, Abwesenheit und Wiedersehen," (*Farewell, Absence and Return*), illustrate this historic context.⁴

The first movement, "Das Lebewohl," is written in classical sonata form with three sections starting with a slow introduction. Beethoven writes the word "Lebewohl" above the melody line in the beginning of the right hand marked *espressivo* (indicating to perform with expression), and expresses his sadness and tragedy with a very deep and philosophical conception. The music sounds almost like a funeral march, with the entire introduction at a

³ Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (Schirmer Books, New York, 1998), 253.

⁴ Barry Cooper, *Beethoven, The 35 Piano Sonatas* (The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2007), 19-20.

Piano (soft) dynamic. From measure 17, the tempo becomes *Allegro* (fast tempo), launching *Attaca subito* (immediate attack) while the dynamic changes to *Forte* (loud). Music changes with its character, and suddenly we hear a kind of “invasion” of Beethoven’s persistent soul. The music obtains more movement from here and is full of energy and passion. There are many *sforzandos* (emphasis) on syncopated beats and the texture becomes more dense, especially in the right hand, with octaves, thirds and chords in fast movement. The development section starts with the same rhythmic pattern as the beginning *Allegro* part, but becomes *subito piano* (suddenly soft) from measure 74. This episode sounds sort of mysterious with long suspended chords in the right hand above little slurred eighths in left hand. From measure 108 the *crescendo* reaches *Forte* to where the recapitulation part begins. The second theme is now introduced in the main key of E-flat Major. The first movement finishes with a coda, differing from the main theme and built on the melody of the opening “Lebewohl” section. The same intervals in the right hand start this *dolce* part and appears in polyphonic texture with the left hand. The compositional technique is similar to a canon.

The second movement, “Abwesenheit” (*Absence*), written in C minor, *Andante espressivo* (slow and with expression) is very lyrical, full of grief and sadness. Its tender chromaticisms serve as an expressive introduction for the

finale.⁵ The harmonies with diminished chords create a sense of indecisiveness and struggle. The dominant seventh chord in measure 41 appears broken with separate notes and is followed by the same chord on forte and sixteenths in both hands.

The third movement “Das Wiedersehen” (*The Return*), marked *Vivacissimamente* (lively or in brisk manner), brings joy and light to the music. All of the fast passages, broken octaves, running sixteenth notes, and chords sound brilliant. After a short introduction featuring running sixteenth notes in both hands moving from the lower register to the upper through the dominant seventh chord of E-flat Major, we reach the theme of the third movement. The melody of the theme is represented many times within the structural development. It is in a kind of Rondo form (a form in which the theme is repeated in different sections) and appears three times in the introduction and in different registers, as if in different instrumental parts in the orchestra. Beethoven’s sonatas have an orchestral quality and the performer must always imagine different instrumental and registral sonorities. The whole third movement features in a straight-forward, traditional tonal-key relationship: B-flat Major and E-flat Major. At the very end the composer provides a brief coda, marked *Poco Andante* (a moderate tempo) and develops that to the final part, which enters subito forte in

⁵ Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (Schirmer Books, New York, 1998), 272.

measure 191 after pianissimo in the previous measure. The Sonata ends on an E-flat Major chord. The third movement offers a sense of hope, return and happiness.

Frederic Chopin, (1810-1849) *24 Preludes, Op. 28*

Frederic Chopin, born in Zelazowa Wola in 1810, was a Polish composer and pianist and is considered one of the greatest composers of the Romantic period. His piano compositions are a treasure of the piano literature and are among the most representative works among piano pieces in every genre. Among his most brilliant works are the *Preludes, Op. 28*, written in 1838-39 and first published in 1839. The *Preludes* are dedicated to Camille Pleyel, who was a French virtuoso pianist. Chopin composed the set of twenty-four preludes to imitate the model of J. S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, a work he admired and played throughout his life.⁶ The preludes follow in pairs of major and parallel minor keys, starting from C Major-A minor moving next through the circle of fifths to G Major-E minor and so on. Chopin was a master of miniatures.

Chopin performed the preludes as individual pieces and strove to make

⁶ Jeremy Siepmann, *Chopin, The Reluctant Romantic* (Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1995), 143.

them “concert” works in scope, as he had accomplished with his etudes. The composer appeared to be responsible with this functional explosion. Qualities such as monothematicism, stylized improvisation, and openness are broadly represented in Chopin’s *Preludes*.⁷ Each prelude is an individual story, with a special character, a micro world with a dramatic conception.

Prelude No. 1 in C Major opens the cycle. The marking, *Tempo-Agitato*, (Agitated) also gives us insight into the character and meaning of the work, as do all of the following markings. In the very unusual meter of 2/8 Chopin writes overlapping triplets in both hands. In the right hand he creates a polyphonic texture and the melody mostly starts with syncopation after a sixteenth rest. Dynamics vary from *pianissimo* (softly) to *mezzo forte* (moderately loud). This prelude acts as a bright opening to the whole set.

Prelude No. 2 in A minor, marked *Lento* (slowly), starts with slow movement in the left hand with fifth and sixth intervals, with the inner notes creating the melody line. The beginning does not give us a real sense of the key of A minor, but rather sounds like it is in the key of E minor. Chopin changes keys throughout the whole prelude and only at the very end takes us to the main key of A minor. There are long melodic phrases in the right hand above that “mysterious” accompaniment.

⁷ Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries, Sex, History and Musical Genre* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996), 152.

Prelude No. 3 in G Major, marked *Vivace* (lively), is in a soft piano dynamic throughout. Running sixteenth notes in left hand must sound *leggieramente*, (light, delicate) while the right-hand melody rides above in a bright color. The prelude sounds soft and with the quality of freshness.

Prelude No. 4 in E minor, marked *Largo* (slowly) is a textually simple prelude but it is very hard to create the right sonority and unite the big phrases, which are three lines long, to convey the feeling of continuation. The left hand presents a chordal harmonic framework, while the right hand has the melody. The music is very tragic with a feeling of loneliness.

Prelude No. 5 in D Major, marked *Allegro molto* (very fast) begins piano. There is the sensation of two huge phrases, though there is really only one phrase with *crescendos* (smoothly increasing the volume) and *diminuendos* (smoothly decrease the volume) creating the sonority of a kind of wave. Both hands play sixteenth notes in parallel motion.

Prelude No. 6 in B minor, marked *Lento assai* (very slow), presents the melody in the left hand with accompaniment chords in the right hand in *sotto voce* (quiet). Here the left hand presents long phrases, sounding like a cello part.

Prelude No. 7 in A Major, marked *Andantino* (moderate tempo) is the shortest prelude of the whole set, marked soft and *dolce* (sweetly) and piano. A 3/4 time signature creates the feeling of a little waltz.

Prelude No. 8 in F-sharp minor, marked *Molto agitato* brings a different mood, passionate and agitated. The texture is filled with thirty-second notes in the right hand and sixteenths in the left hand. The right hand presents a melody line beneath the running fast notes. The big phrases unite the form of the prelude.

Prelude No. 9 in E Major, marked *Largo* (slowly) sounds majestic and calm. We can see the big phrasing structure here as well. The melody is illustrated in chordal texture with very steady motion. There are some modulations but the prelude finishes in the main key and reaches the culmination at the very end of the prelude.

Prelude No. 10 in C-sharp minor, marked *Allegro molto* (very fast) sounds very soft and *leggiero* maintaining a piano dynamic throughout. Fast sixteenth-note passages in the right hand are gently supported by arpeggiated chords in the left hand. The endings of the phrases sound like questions, concluding on dominant harmonies.

Prelude No. 11 in B Major, marked *Vivace* (lively), is written with parallel triplets in both hands under a huge slur, or phrase. The music is fast but not agitated.

Prelude No. 12 in G-sharp minor, marked *Presto* (fast) is one of the most challenging preludes. The right hand plays legato chromatic lines along with chords on each beat. The left hand has jumps from chords to octaves. In the

middle of this prelude there is a fortissimo culmination in D-sharp minor and soon it modulates and returns to the main key of G-sharp minor. The character is agitated and driven. A short coda concludes on *fortissimo* (loud).

Prelude No. 13 in F-sharp Major, marked *Lento* (slowly) takes us to a totally different universe. This peaceful, graceful work conveys some sort of pastoral feeling and reminds me of the F sharp Major Prelude by J. S. Bach.

Prelude No. 14 in E-flat minor, marked *Allegro* (fast) is one of the shortest preludes written in unison melody in both hands. The key and the color evokes a heavy character marked *pesante*. This one-page work is written in a kind of miniature sonata form with three parts: Exposition, development and recapitulation. I associate this prelude with the fourth movement of the Chopin's *Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor*.

Prelude No. 15 in D-flat Major, marked *Sostenuto* (sustained) is known as the "Rain drop" and in a three-part form. The middle part dramatically differs from the first and third parts. A repeated eighth-note A flat sounds throughout the entire piece, starting softly and becomes more prominent in the middle part in C-sharp minor. But in the third part the texture returns to the original soft sonority.

Prelude No. 16 in B-flat minor, marked *Presto con fuoco* (fast, with fire) is one of the most virtuosic and brilliant preludes. The tempo mark already gives us the notion of the character, and the key is also dramatic for Chopin

in general, much like the *B-flat minor Sonata, No. 2, Op. 35*. For the performer, the prelude requires very strong technique.

Prelude No. 17 in A-flat Major, marked *Allegretto* (fast) features a chordal texture. There are big phrases here and big distances between the bass and chords in the left hand. In the middle part the drama reaches its highest peak, where the main melody sounds louder with more chordal support and bell-like basses.

Prelude No. 18 in F minor, marked *Allegro molto*, (very fast) often referred to as “suicide” is one of the more dramatic and tragic preludes. A declamatory character is presented through fast running passages which sound like a recitative, with every new phrase becoming bigger and more intense until it reaches the final climax of very loud chords.

Prelude No. 19 in E-flat Major, marked *Vivace* (lively) is composed of triplet figurations in both hands. The top note of each triplet in the right hand creates the melody line. Distances between notes are predominantly wide and require big stretches and a flexible wrist from the performer.

Prelude No. 20 in C minor, marked *Largo* (slow) is a short work that sounds like a chorale. Following the fortissimo (very loud) third phrase the piece becomes suddenly pianissimo, sounding a kind of echo of the previous phrase.

Prelude No. 21 in B-flat Major, marked *Cantabile* (singing) presents a

beautiful melodic line with pure, light sound. The left hand has a melody as well, featuring two chromatic lines with differing interval relations. In the last part the right hand joins the figurations of the left in unison.

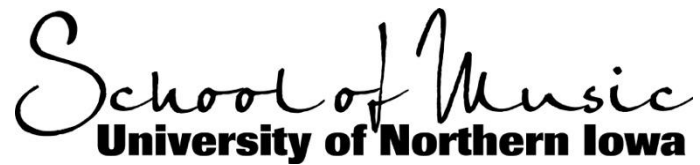
Prelude No. 22 in G minor, marked *Molto agitato* (very agitated), depicts a picture of a passionate, striving, and perhaps hopeless or lonely person. The melody is in octaves in the left hand and is fulfilled by chords in the right hand. The piece ends very dramatically with a fortissimo chord.

Prelude No. 23 in F Major, marked *Moderato* (moderately) is clear, soft, and delicate, bringing a sensation of light and happiness. Piano dynamic is maintained throughout. The left hand contains elements of *Etude Op. 10. No. 8 in F Major*.

Prelude No. 24 in D minor, marked *Allegro appassionato* (fast, passionate) concludes the cycle with a dramatic ending. Starting with the left hand, it evokes an appassionato atmosphere. The melody in the right hand sounds very powerful and tragic at the same time. This is one of the most virtuosic preludes of the entire set. Chopin uses fast running passages, double notes, octaves and jumps. The prelude ends with three last and very low “D’s” in the left hand, like the powerful tolling of a large bell.

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presents

Elisabed Imerlishvili, Piano
In a Graduate Recital

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Master of Music degree in Piano Performance
From the Studio of Professor Sean Botkin

Sonata in E Major, K. 380
Sonata in D minor, K. 1
Sonata in D Major, K. 492

Domenico Scarlatti

Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major, Op. 81a "Les adieux"

Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Das Lebewohl. Adagio*
- II. Abwesenheit. Andante espressivo*
- III. Das Wiedersehen. Vivacissimamente*

Intermission

24 Preludes, Op. 28

Frederic Chopin