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Graduate recital in violin

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GRADUATE RECITAL IN VIOLIN

An Abstract of a Recital

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

Maria del Pilar Serrano Pineda

University of Northern Iowa

May 2021

This Study by: Maria del Pilar Serrano Pineda

Entitled: Graduate Recital in Violin

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music

Date

Dr. Steve Koh, Chair, Recital Committee

Date

Dr. Julia Bullard, Recital Committee Member

Date

Dr. Erik Rohde, Recital Committee member

Date

Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital by: Maria del Pilar Serrano Pineda

Entitled: Graduate Recital in Violin

Date of Recital: April 2, 2021

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music

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Dr. Steve Koh, Chair, Recital Committee

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Dr. Julia Bullard, Recital Committee Member

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Dr. Erik Rohde, Recital Committee member

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Maria del Pilar Serrano Pineda performed her Master of Music Recital in violin on April 2, 2021, at 6:00 pm in the Graham Hall of the University of Northern Iowa School of Music's Russell Hall building. She was assisted by pianist Sean Botkin. The program selected included the Violin Concerto No.2, Op.22 by Henri Wieniawski, the Chaconne in G minor by Tomaso Antonio Vitali and the Chaconne from Violin Partita No.2 in D minor, BWV 1004 by Johann Sebastian Bach. These works were selected to represent a variety of musical genres and styles, and present a variety of complex technical and expressive challenges.

Wieniawski, Henri - Violin Concerto No.2, Op.22

Henri Wieniawski (1835-1880) was a Polish violin virtuoso and composer. As a composer, nearly all his music was written for violin and orchestra. As a child prodigy, Wieniawski moved to Paris to study at the conservatory at the age of eight and graduated with a first prize at just eleven years old, returning to the conservatory at the age of thirteen to study composition. As a virtuoso, he spent his life traveling and performing in the most prestigious concert halls of Europe, Russia, and the USA. According to Orrin Howard, "Wieniawski left as a legacy, a very high performing standard (he was reputed to have combined a superb technique with vibrant temperament and a great tonal beauty) and several attractive showpiece compositions for his instrument."¹

¹ Orrin Howard, "Violin Concerto No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 22 (Henryk Wieniawski)," Hollywood Bowl, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/musicdb/pieces/4567/violin-concerto-no-2-in-d-minor-op-22>.

The *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor*, was written between 1856 to 1862 and premiered in 1862 in St. Petersburg with Wieniawski himself playing the solo part, and the orchestra conducted by Anton Rubinstein. The concerto represents two of the most remarkable qualities of Wieniawski's compositions, a great balance between the brilliance, virtuosity and technical challenges of a show piece, and the beauty and lyricism of the romantic period.

The first movement *Allegro Moderato* is peculiar in its form. This first movement does not follow the standard of the sonata form, because it never returns to the recapitulation in which the first and second theme should be presented again in the original key. For this reason, the most accurate way to describe the form of this movement would be "Half Sonata Form."² In the opening, the orchestra plays an exposition in which the first and second theme are presented. In measure 68, the violin solo makes its first appearance with the presentation of the first theme, followed by a development of the first theme that involves a display of virtuosity including fast scalar passages, double stops, octaves, and up-bow staccato. In measure 152 the soloist presents the second theme, returning to the romantic and serene character typifying the exposition of the first theme. The treatment of the second theme is similar to the first, with the violin solo developing the theme which portrays a new level of technique displayed that includes sections in which he juxtaposes the first theme with the solo part. After the soloist's final note, the orchestra keeps performing sequences and juxtapositions of the first and second theme, but those never go

² DaeJin Bae, "Stylistic Changes in Two Violin Concertos by Henryk Wieniawski" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2015), pp. 53-55.

back to the original key of D minor, instead transitioning to B minor that connects without pause to the second movement.

The second movement, *Andante non troppo* has the title “*Romance*”, a term used during the romantic period to designate a short and lyrical piece usually written for a solo instrument with piano accompaniment. In that sense, the term fits perfectly with the character of this slow second movement, which is lyrical, romantic, and stunningly beautiful. This movement is written in B minor, with a meter of 12/8. The violin solo has long melodies that move mostly in stepwise or arpeggiated motion and develop over consistent rhythmic motives that give a sense of unity to the whole movement. In fact, the movement has such a sense of coherence that it is commonly performed independently from the rest of the concerto as a solo piece. It is not a virtuosic showcase as in the first movement and highlights the capacity to produce colors and phrasing by the use of wide vibrato, connected bowings and dynamics. The role of the orchestra in this movement is less prominent, keeping a low profile in a light accompaniment with a subdivision of the beat in eighth notes.

The third movement opens with an *Allegro con fuoco* passage from the solo violin that transitions to an *Allegro moderato, à la Zingara*. The abrupt *Allegro con fuoco* breaks the peaceful serenity atmosphere left by the second movement, by making an immediate change of character achieved by a strong orchestral opening. These two tutti measures serve to initiate the fervent impassioned cadenza with fast sixteenth-notes passages, which are taken from the motivic material of the first episode in the following rondo, as the introduction leads without any break to the finale *Allegro moderato, à la Zingara*.

Wieniawski's *à la Zingara* indication denotes the Hungarian gypsy style is evident in the melody and in the form. The movement is written between D minor and D major and reinforces the dualistic key character of the gypsy style, with a 2/4-time signature. This movement is in rondo, with three episodes *a*, *b*, and *c*. The episode *a* consists mainly of sixteen-note passages derived from the theme presented in the cadenza. This section requires left-hand agility and coordination to play fast without abandoning the lightness on the bow stroke that shapes bright and vivid melodies. Episode *b* contrasts to episode *a* with its calmer character and warmer tone. This episode brings back the second theme of the first movement, giving formal unity and roundedness to the whole work. Episode *c* is the most imitative of the Hungarian gypsy style through its short rhythmic theme in thirds on the solo violin.

This violin concerto is a standard piece in the violin repertory. Its balance between technical challenge and expressiveness makes this concerto not just a fundamental piece in the educational process of any violinist, but also a piece widely performed by the greatest soloists around the world.

Tomaso Antonio Vitali - Chaconne in G minor

This single-movement work is speculated to have been composed around 1745. It was first published in 1867 in *Die hohe Schule des Violinspiels (No.13)*, a collection of pieces for violin and piano edited by Ferdinand David. In this publication, David attributed the work to Tomaso Antonio Vitali, an Italian composer from Bologna, Italy, and son of Giovanni Battista Vitali. This attribution was considered as a “musical hoax” by the music critics and historians, until a manuscript³ was published by the *Sächsische Landesbibliothek* Dresden. This manuscript, originally titled “Parte del Tomaso Vitalino” (Tomaso Vitalino's part), was hand written by Jacob Lindner, a known copyist of the time who worked at the Dresden *Hofkapelle* between 1710 and 1730, confirming the attribution of this piece to Tomaso Vitali.

The piece originally written for violin and continuo, has a diversity of characteristics that raise questions about its baroque origin. One of the most discussed musical features of the work is its sudden key changes and the specific key choices, including B-flat minor and E-flat minor. These keys and the modulation style are uncharacteristic of the Baroque era, and initially led some critics and historians to believe that the piece was a work from the romantic period.

The name *Chaconne* derived from the *Ciaconne*, a suggestive dance that appeared in Spain about 1600 and that eventually gave its name to this musical form. This dance that quickly spread throughout Europe consisted of the presentation of a theme and a set of

³ Tommaso Vitali, “Chaconnes - MUS.2037-R-1,” Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 2000. <https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/df/2717/1/>.

variations that were repeated over a short harmonic progression constructed over a ground bass.

In the 1867 edition, Ferdinand David wrote a piano part over the original work's ground bass and enhanced the violin part to make it a more virtuosic, moving it away from the original Baroque style of the piece. Some of these changes include the addition of passages in octaves as well the high octave registers change for some sections.

After David's edition, more transcriptions have been presented, including Leopold Charlier's version for violin and organ (performed for this recital), Ottorino Respighi's transcription for violin and orchestra, as well as Friedrich Hermann and by Alan Arnold's editions for viola and Luigi Silva's edition for cello and piano.

The piece became popular after 16-year-old Jascha Heifetz's New York's debut at Carnegie Hall on 27 October 1917, where he opened with Charlier's version of Vitali's Chaconne with organ accompaniment.⁴ This chaconne comprises different variations, constructed over a spectrum of 10 main tonal areas as seen in Table 1:

Table 1. Vitali's Chaconne – Tonal Areas

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| m. | 1 | 37 | 62 | 67 | 87 | 118 | 124 | 127 | 135 | 143 |
| Key | G min | Bb min | F min | G min | A min | G min | C min | Eb Maj | Eb min | G min |

As mentioned before, Vitali's *Chaconne* would be hardly identifiable as a baroque piece for someone who does not know the piece or is listening for the first time. However,

⁴ Dario Sarlo, "Jascha Heifetz's US Debut in 1917," *The Strad*, November 2017.

this work constitutes a great piece for violinists who strive to explore the expressiveness of the instrument through a very engaging and passionate theme and variations. The piece requires from the interpreter musical maturity to portray the different character and technical features of each variation, and it is a perfect opportunity to explore a wide vibrato, phrasing construction, bow connection, and a wide spectrum of vibrant musical colors.

Bach, Johann Sebastian - Chaconne from Violin Partita No.2 in D minor, BWV 1004

The Partita No. 2 is one of Johann Sebastian Bach's solo violin works, originally titled "Sei Solo" (Six Solo), which includes three Sonatas and three Partitas. The idea for these three sonatas dates back to 1703, when the German composer began his first tenure in Weimar, where his first six months of employment did not require much compositional activity. However, these works were not completed until 1720, when the composer was in Cöthen, in service as Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold. It was precisely, at the end of this period, 1718-1720, when Bach wrote most of his instrumental music. The precise reasons for the composition of this collection of works, as well as whether this piece was premiered in the composer's lifetime (and by whom) remain a mystery, although it cannot be doubted that the composer himself would have performed it.

The Partita No. 2, fourth in the "Sei Solo" collection, was composed between 1718 and 1720, but was first published in 1802. This work is divided into 5 movements: *Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue* and *Chaconne*.

The *Chaconne* is the longest movement in this partita, taking up almost half the total duration of Partita No.2. In fact, it is the longest movement in all of Bach's solo violin

works. According to Helga Thoene,⁵ this movement was written by Bach after returning from a trip and discovering that his wife, Maria Barbara, had died. It is perhaps for this reason that the Chaconne is such an emotional and personal piece, since Bach might be conveying his grief through this music.

Johannes Brahms describes the musical concept of this movement with a letter to Clara Schumann in which he wrote:

"The Chaconne is for me one of the most wonderful, incomprehensible pieces of music. On a single staff, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and the most powerful feelings. If I were to imagine how I might have made, conceived the piece, I know for certain that the overwhelming excitement and awe would have driven me mad. If one doesn't have the greatest violinist around, then it is well the most beautiful pleasure to simply listen to its sound in one's mind."⁶

Like Vivaldi's *Chaconne*, this movement draws upon the Baroque dance form known as a chaconne. In this specific *Chaconne*, the basic theme is four measures long, and it is followed by 64 variations, each one of those constructed over new harmonic progressions, covering 256 measures total and restating the theme at the end but with stronger new harmonies.⁷ Indeed, Bach departs from the traditional chaconne scheme and modifies the bass line, as described by Arnold Steinhardt:

"This recurring bass line was supposed to do just that — to repeat endlessly without significant alteration and to serve as the work's distinctive theme. Yet Bach refused to stick consistently to the bass template he fashioned for the beginning and chose rather to draw from several quite distinctive and different ones."⁸

⁵ Helga Thoene, *Johann Sebastian Bach, Ciaccona - Tanz Oder Tombeau? Eine Analytische Studie* (Leipzig, Saxony: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, 2019).

⁶ Retrieved from Betsy Schwarm, Kathleen Kuiper, and Aakanksha Gaur, "Chaconne," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last modified August 9, 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chaconne-by-Bach>.

⁷ Jed Distler, "The Gramophone Collection: Busoni's Transcription of Bach's Chaconne," *Gramophone*, 2018, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/features/article/the-gramophone-collection-busoni-s-transcription-of-bach-s-chaconne>.

⁸ Arnold Steinhardt, interviewed by Melissa Block, "'Violin Dreams': Chasing Bach's Elusive Chaconne," *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, January 18, 2007. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6888973>

This ground bass alteration permitted Bach to construct the movement over four different main harmonic patterns instead of a single harmonic pattern. The rhythmic and melodic constructions of the movement emphasize the second of the bar's three beats only sporadically, and not always as expected in the original dance style. This rhythm is derived from the Sarabande, also a dance, in 3/4 and with the accent on the dotted second beat.

The Chaconne is formally divided into three large sections, leading to several religious interpretation, as Steinhardt summarizes:

"(...) Bach, a devout Christian, might have offered the Chaconne as an expression of the Holy Trinity, its bedrock spiritual principle? The first section, in D minor, would represent the Father; the next, in D major, the Son; and the final section, in D minor, the Holy Spirit. This line of thought intrigued me, even though I was on shaky footing as a secular Jew with only the flimsiest knowledge of Christianity. The more I looked, however, the more "threes" I found. The Chaconne's basic building block was a three-beat bar, the initial theme appeared three times — at the beginning, the middle, and the end — and then there were those evocative three-note groups that appeared over and over again. Was the Chaconne some kind of message in a bottle destined for (dare I think it?) God?"⁹

Whether or not this work depicts Bach's deepest feelings of grief and sorrow, or illustrates a tribute to Christianity and its Holy Trinity, it can be said, without any doubt, that Bach's chaconne is a masterpiece for the violin repertoire. It embodies a majestic portrait of Bach's complexity, expertise, precision, and expressiveness. This is a piece that challenges the performer in so many ways, that anyone who has enough bravery and commitment to study it consciously cannot expect less than an exponential growth in one's technical and performance skills.

⁹ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The pieces in this recital were chosen because of its relevance and standardization in the violin repertoire, as well as for variety in featuring contrasting elements of color, style, and technique. Vitali's *Chaconne* is an engaging piece that makes a perfect opening for a recital, capturing the attention and interest of the audience from the very first moment with its evolving themes, emotions, romanticism, and drama that leads the performer to be very musical, expressive, and persuasive. Bach's *Chaconne* is a masterpiece, valuable both for its musical content and its pedagogical value. Every aspect of this works is a challenge to the performer. Technically, it requires intonational accuracy in the intricate double stops and chords, and a deep understanding of the harmony and bowing techniques. Mentally, it requires the capacity of stay focused throughout its 64 variations to give a distinct character to each variation. Finally, Wieniawski's *Concerto in D minor*, is a piece that showcases a wide range of technical features in a mixture of lyricism and virtuosity. At a personal level, I am honored for performing this program which has nurtured my performance career and helped me further my musical growth.

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School of Music
University of Northern Iowa

presents

Maria del Pilar Serrano Pineda, Violin
In a Graduate Recital

assisted by:
Sean Botkin, piano

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the MM degree in Violin Performance
From the studio of Dr. Steve Koh.

Chaconne in G minor

Tomaso Antonio Vivaldi
(1663-1745)
arr. Leopold Charlier

Chaconne
from the Violin Partita No.2

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Violin Concerto No.2, Op.22
I. Allegro moderato
II. Romance. Andante non troppo
III. Allegro con fuoco - Allegro moderato, à la Zingara

Henri Wieniawski