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Charles Clevenger, Piano

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**THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC AND WORSHIP**

PRESENTS THE

FAREWELL TO THE PIANO

A FINAL FACULTY RECITAL

**CHARLES CLEVINGER
PIANO**

**MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017
7 P.M.**

**RECITAL HALL
BOLTHOUSE CENTER FOR MUSIC
DIXON MINISTRY CENTER**

PROGRAM

The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I, BWV 849. . . . J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

7. Prelude and Fugue No. 7 in E \flat Major

Chôros, W 207. Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

5. Alma brasileira

A prole do bebe No. 1, W140. Heitor Villa-Lobos

3. Caboclinha

Préludes, Book I. Claude-Achille Debussy (1862–1918)

8. La fille aux cheveux de lin

Liebesträum No. 3 in A \flat Major. Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

INTERMISSION

Sketches of Florence. Steven Winteregg (b. 1952)

- I. Piazzale Michelangelo
- II. Rush Hour Over the Arno
- III. Il Duomo
- IV. Ponte Vecchio
- V. Church Bells

Scherzo No. 3 in c \sharp minor, Op. 39

. Frédéric François Chopin (1810–1849)

No flash photography, please.

Please turn off all cell phones.

Program Notes

Prelude-Fugue in E^b major

Back in the fall, I asked my former piano students to recommend the pieces I should play tonight, and they have chosen most of the program. They were unanimous in telling me that I needed to start with a Bach prelude and fugue, because I have made every last one of them learn one when they were freshmen. This one is special, in that the Prelude is actually a 5-voice double fugue in stretto, which is just about as intricate a piece of writing as one pianist can handle. When the Fugue comes along, Bach shows his sense of humor; it's unexpectedly light and just pure gymnastic fun.

Alma brasileira

"Brazilian Soul" by Villa-Lobos is my answer to a request by several alums for something "fun" or "just cool." Trevor and Sarah, this is for you, to honor your work in Brazil for Wycliffe Bible Translators – and because it's the coolest little piece of music I know.

Caboclinha

The second Villa-Lobos piece, titled "Caboclinha," or "little copper-colored girl," is for my daughter Courtenay Clevenger. Like my daughter, the little girl in the music is finding her way between two cultures, represented by two simultaneous melodies – both syncopated, but in different ways, and a little out of sync with one another. As my daughter has done, the little copper-colored girl resolves the problem not by choosing one culture over the other, but by embracing both, and by choosing to be her amazing self. Who is the copper-colored girl? She is a daughter of the King.

La fille aux cheveux de lin

This piece is for my daughter, Carla, who is visiting tonight from Tucson with her husband Joel and their children, Ally, Marty, and Liza. Like my firstborn, Debussy's "Girl with the flaxen hair" is short, but awesome. The impressionistic title is evocative but purposefully vague – a tender remembrance of a girl with hair the color of ripe wheat; Debussy has not told us whether she was 7 (like Liza), or 13 (like Ally), or a bit older (like their Mom), and each of those would be a different kind of remembrance. The tenderness and nostalgia of this music speak eloquently to a father's heart. Because I can remember and treasure you at every age, ma petite fille aux cheveux de lin.

Liebestraum No.3 in A-flat major

The Liebestraum is for Rhonda Clevenger. Babe, do you remember the first time I played this for you? You were standing at the back of the church, a vision in white, ready to walk down the aisle. I played the music, then went offstage, collected my groomsmen, and came back out. Some of your family hadn't met me yet, and we got a kick out of watching them do a double-take; it's still funny after all these decades. My love, I meant every note of this music then, and I still do; I love my life with you. Thank you for spending your life with me, and for listening to my millions of wrong notes over the last 45 years.

Continued on back

Sketches of Florence

Tonight is the world premiere of these pieces. Steve and I team-taught Cedarville's Humanities class together in Italy this past summer, and these five little piano vignettes are his musical distillation of that experience. Thank you, Steve, for trusting me with the opportunity to bring these pieces to life. As I was working on them, it all came back to me – the art, the architecture, the people, the indescribable Italian sunlight, and permeating it all, the sound of the church bells, which are audible in several of the sketches.

The set begins with a sketch of the **Piazzale Michelangelo**, a huge plaza that sits atop a hill just south of the Arno river. From the Piazzale you can see everything; it's the money shot of the city. Florentines come up here every evening, weather permitting, to watch the sunset.

There are eleven bridges across the **Arno** at Florence, and at certain times of the day, if you're a pedestrian, you take your life in your hands to try to cross any of them. If you have ever seen Italians driving during rush hour, this dissonant, fractured, kaleidoscopic picture will be self-explanatory.

If an Italian city has a cathedral, it's always locally called "**the Duomo**;" but the cathedral in Florence is in a class with places like St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. When you enter, the scale of the place dwarfs you. It's calculated to produce a sense of reverent awe. Then when you stand at the altar and look straight up, you see, frescoed on the inside of Brunelleschi's massive dome, the whole story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. Gargoyles and demons leer out of the corners, the Serpent slithers through the garden, and then Christ emerges triumphant, surrounded by angelic beings and twinkling stars.

In Italian **Ponte Vecchio** means "the Old Bridge." This is the iconic bridge everyone knows from pictures, a bustling tourist trap lined with gold shops -- and to have a storefront on the bridge, you must be a jeweler. The bridge is closed to motor traffic, but there is a nonstop "traffic jam" of sightseers, lovers, pickpockets, vendors, and shoppers gawking at all that gold glittering in the jewelers' windows. The vibe on the bridge is not really Florentine, but a kind of frenetic, cosmopolitan, touristy energy. Then in the middle of the bridge there's a place with no shops on either side; instead there are three large Romanesque stone arches where you can see out. And for miles upriver and downriver, there's the town and the Arno valley, with its vineyards and villas and churches. For just a tranquil moment you have a window on the Medieval past. But then, of course, you have to fight your way through the crowd again to finish crossing the river.

Finally, Florence is a city of **Church Bells** -- calling the faithful to worship or prayer, marking the hours of the day in quartal-quintal harmony. And of course, at those times all those bells go off at once, in joyful cacophony. This final vignette is a fitting coda to the set, with its out-of-sync bells pealing out their triumphant message: Christ is King! Come and worship!

Scherzo in c# minor, Op. 39

My farewell to Chopin is this ferocious virtuoso warhorse, which Arthur Rubenstein once called "The most difficult piece of music I have ever played."



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