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Concert and Recital Programs

3-19-2023

Abigail Grace Kenyon, Junior Piano Recital

Abigail Kenyon

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

PRESENTS THE

**JUNIOR PIANO RECITAL
OF
ABIGAIL GRACE KENYON**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023
7 P.M.**

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

PROGRAM

Concerto No. 5 in f minor, BWV 1056 J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

I. Allegro

II. Largo

III. Presto

Assisted by Kenneth Bechtel and Mary Jo Johnson, violins;
Ethan Tanner, viola; and Christopher Stauffer, cello

Children's Corner L. 113, No. 4 "The Snow Is Dancing"
..... Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Variations sérieuses, Op.54 Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Etude, Op. 25, No. 12 "Ocean" Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Abigail is a student of John Mortensen.

Program Notes

Concerto No. 5 in f minor

Each of the movements within the concerto suggests a specific image for me personally. The image for the first movement hinges on the word resolve. The main theme in a steady duple division reappears throughout, interspersed by episodes in a triplet division of the beat. Steady and determined, the duple division of the main theme brings to mind a hero's forging toward his goal against all odds and hardships, his face met by harsh wind. Within the theme, the keyboard offers an echo at the end of each phrase which I picture to be the mind's whisper reaffirming the hero's resolution. The dividing episode's triplet beat provides a flighty setting for the grounded steadiness of the theme. Far more intimate than the first movement, the second movement focuses around the beauty of a miniature world. In the wake of a light spring shower, a green meadow heartily receives the warm sunshine. Characterized by the string pizzicatos, prismatic droplets of water sidle down grass tips and touch the ground catapulting the stems to their original upright posture. A box turtle hand-painted with splotches of orange on his scaly legs pokes his nose out of his mobile house. Blinking in the sunlight, he tentatively emerges to stroll among the droplet-cast rainbows.

The last two measures of the second movement refocus the listener's ears from the miniature scale of raindrop wonders to the epic scheme of the final movement. I learned the third movement over winter break, a time tinged with the heaviness of the curse and the worthlessness of my own music, of Bach concertos and competitions. Fitting the occasion, I nicknamed the third movement "Ecclesiastes." The music's beat perseveres relentlessly throughout, at times adventurous and rollicking, at times reflective and pensive. Drawing close to the end, the keyboard abruptly interrupts a string soliloquy after the final statement of the theme, contrary to the back-and-forth pattern established throughout the movement, and instead drives the concerto to an emphatic conclusion. The ending almost has the same effect as someone tightening his grip on horse reins or clamping a lid on an overboiling broth: no plot resolution has been achieved-heaven has not been attained-nevertheless, the determination to continue struggling uphill has been fiercely reached.

Continued on the back

Children's Corner, The Snow is Dancing

Drastically different from the resolute character of Bach's concerto, the "Snow Is Dancing" crafts a whimsical and mysterious atmosphere. Stillness reigns as the first flakes drift onto the skeletal branches of the wood, laying a cold downy blanket, and a soothing breeze whisks the snow into softly swaying eddies. The cry of a scarlet bird shatters the melancholy stillness. His shrill, urgent notes seem to question, "Will spring come again or the buds blossom? Will the earth reawaken?" Silence sings as a sole reply, for the world has already fallen in deep slumber beneath the dancing snow.

Variations sérieuses

A man known for his Classical tastes and daedal compositions, Mendelssohn ventures into unexpected Romantic seas for this set of seventeen variations. Opening the work, the theme evokes solemnity and gravitas through a hymn-like composition. The ensuing variations on the theme maintain either the same melody as one of several layers or a similar harmonic structure. Mendelssohn's juxtaposition of styles between neighboring variations piques the interest of the listener. While one variation offers an intimate prayer, the next travels with the tilting cosmic planets; while one follows a stealthy chase, the next portrays the mischief of a pixie; and while one languishes over the heartfelt song of a nostalgic lover, the next leads a thundering, rhythmic charge.

Etude

The extended arpeggios from one hemisphere of the keyboard to the next won this well-known pianistic "study" the nickname "Ocean," despite Chopin's never having referred to it as such. Whether or not the composer intended to evoke the image of ocean waves, the listener can easily picture the magnificent tides ebbing in out with crashing ferocity or gentle coercion. Within the rise and fall, a lowly rumbling bass paves a long melodic line marked by longing and heavy contemplation.