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Junior and Senior Recitals

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4-1-2023

## Emma Ross, Junior Piano Recital

Emma N. Ross

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THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MUSIC AND WORSHIP

PRESENTS THE

JUNIOR PIANO RECITAL

OF

EMMA ROSS

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2023  
7 P.M.

RECITAL HALL  
BOLTHOUSE CENTER FOR MUSIC  
DIXON MINISTRY CENTER

## PROGRAM

*English Suite No. 2 in a minor*, BWV 807 ..... J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

- I. Prélude
- II. Allemande
- III. Courante
- IV. Sarabande
- V. Bourrée I
- VI. Bourrée II
- VII. Gigue

*The Seasons*, Op. 37a ..... Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

- VI. June: Barcarolle

*Consolation No. 3 in D $\flat$  Major*, S. 172 ..... Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

*Scherzo No. 2 in c minor*, Op. 14 ..... Clara Schumann (1819–1896)

*Milonga del ángel* ..... Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)  
tr. John Mortensen (b. 1965)

Emma is a student of John Mortensen.

## Program Notes

### English Suite No. 2 in a minor

Bach wrote six English Suites for piano. Baroque era suites comprised a set of instrumental dances, typically consisting of at least the allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. Unlike Bach's French Suites, all his English suites contain a prelude. The prelude introduces the key of the following movements, and often motives developed later. I am opening this prelude with an improvised "prelude to the prelude." This practice of improvisation was quite common in Bach's day. It allowed the player to warm-up, find out if all the keys were working (not a guarantee!), and get the hall to be quiet. I have loved experimenting with pulling different voices out of the prelude to make a melody. The allemande is a quick dance in duple meter. My favorite characteristics of this allemande are the imitative parts where one hand plays an idea which is then overlapped in the other hand. The courante is a dance written in 3/2. I have enjoyed experimenting with different types of articulation in this movement to achieve a cheerful and quick sound. The sarabande is a slow court dance in triple meter. Bach loved the sarabande and often placed it at the heart of his suites. During the Baroque era, performers improvised ornamentation as the sections of movements repeated. This suite is unique because Bach provided an example of sarabande ornamentation—*La misma Sarabanda con adornos*. I will be playing his example during the repeats. This sarabande is a gorgeous piece of music with contrasting textures and sounds. I have loved learning to hear the lines and tiny details—it is the soul of the suite. The bourée is a quick dance in double time that starts with a pickup beat. The first bourée has a two-part texture that seems simple at first, but as Dr. Mortensen kept reminding me in the words (and accent) of the Russian pianist Mikhail Petukhov quoting Tatiana Nikolaeva, "If you are stupid, then everyone will know you are stupid." The texture gives no room to hide, and Bach shows his creativity by slyly shifting the downbeats from their proper place. The second bourée is the only movement of the piece not in a minor. Instead, it is written in the parallel key of A major and is characterized by a quarter-note pickup to the downbeat of each new phrase. Per tradition, I will be playing both bourées a second time without repeats after finishing the second bourée. The gigue is a lively dance in compound meter that often appears at the end of a suite. Once again, Bach shatters expectations by including suspensions against the bass and imitation of voices in a fiery and energetic last dance. This movement is a fitting end to the rest of the gloriously varied suite.

*Continued on the back*

## **June: Barcarolle**

*The Seasons* are a collection of twelve piano pieces corresponding to each month written on commission by Tchaikovsky. A poetic motto was attached to each piece by the publisher. The poem for *June* reads: “Let us go to the shore: / there the waves will kiss our feet. / With mysterious sadness / the stars will shine down on us.” *June* is a barcarolle, which is a piece derived from a rhythm reminiscent of the “rocking” songs of Venetian gondoliers. This piece is not in compound meter, but still creates a swaying feel using two-note slurs in the bass. The melody is mournfully lovely and is contrasted by a middle section that feels like an energetic Russian folk dance. I love the dreaminess of the theme and the aggressive rustic sound of the middle.

## **Consolation No. 3 in D $\flat$ Major**

Liszt wrote six Consolations, this being the most popular. It is written in the style of a Chopin nocturne and is sometimes considered a tribute to Frédéric Chopin. When Liszt received a piano from Steinway with a sostenuto pedal, he immediately transcribed this piece to include the use of the middle pedal. If you listen closely, you can hear the sostenuto sustaining the bass to create a tranquil sound. The melody of this piece is glorious and creates a hemiola on top of the tenor triplets. I love the feeling of epiphany—coming out of the clouds to the view from a mountaintop—when reaching the climax. The piece melts away into a whisper, capturing the sentiment of a romantic lullaby.

## **Scherzo No. 2**

Clara Schumann was a brilliant composer and pianist who is often overshadowed by her husband, the great Robert Schumann. A scherzo is usually a light and playful work, but this piece overturns traditional ideas of scherzos. It begins with an intense and dark melody in the tenor surrounded by constant arpeggios. The themes are somewhat tricky to bring out because they are hidden within a dense texture. The contrasting middle section is lovely and lyrical but has stretched me in creating phrases that are convincing when dealing with repeating material. A return to the main theme provides this piece with a tumultuous and arresting apex. I love the passion and drama created in this piece and have enjoyed the technical challenge it has provided.

## **Milonga del ángel**

A milonga is kind of slow tango, originating in Argentina. Piazzolla composed this piece for a quintet of piano, violin, guitar, bass, and bandoneon (like an accordion). The bass consistently plays a tango rhythm throughout the piece, and the other four voices contribute different lines. The hardest part of this piece is learning how to make my two hands sound like they are playing five unique instruments. My musicianship has grown to handle this challenge and it has been so rewarding to create multiple layers of sound. I love playing Spanish and Latin American music and the combination of rhythm, melody, and sound have made this Milonga one of my forever favorites. I hope listening to this piece is a decadent treat for you!