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Abigail Kenyon, Senior Piano Recital

Abigail Kenyon

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THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC AND WORSHIP

PRESENTS THE

SENIOR PIANO RECITAL

OF

ABIGAIL KENYON

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024
3 P.M.

RECITAL HALL
BOLTHOUSE CENTER FOR MUSIC
DIXON MINISTRY CENTER

PROGRAM

Pavane pour une infante défunte Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Students:

He's a Pirate from THE PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

..... Klaus Badelt (b. 1967)
arr. Jennifer Ecklund (n.d.)

Merrin Jackson

Dino Dance Nancy (b. 1955) and Randall (b. 1954) Faber
Everett Jackson

Six Pieces for Piano from CINDERELLA, Op. 102

..... Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

1. Cinderella Suite
2. Cinderella's Variation
3. Quarrel
4. Cinderella's Departure from the Ball
6. Amoroso

Ballade No. 1 in g minor, Op. 23 Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Fairy Tales in f minor, Op. 26, No. 3 Nikolai Medtner (1880–1951)

Abigail is a student of John Mortensen

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the
Bachelor of Music in keyboard pedagogy degree

No flash photography, please.

Please turn off all cell phones

Program Notes

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel was born in the small French village of Ciboure where his early years were laced with memories of his Spanish mother singing tunes from her homeland and his Swiss engineering father tinkering with inventions. These childhood images wove themselves into Ravel's music which was characterized by Spanish melodies and meticulous, precise textures. Igor Stravinsky, one of his few close friends, once described Ravel the composer as "the most perfect of Swiss watchmakers," referring to his exactitude in rhythm and orchestration. *Pavane pour une infante défunte* recalls both of these themes found in the composer's life and music. Despite the tragic storyline typically conjured by the English translation, "Pavane for a Dead Princess," this delicate, mysterious piece would have been perhaps more accurately named "Pavane for a Princess Out of the Past" had it not been for Ravel's affinity for the consonance between the French words *infante* and *défunte*. In a letter, Ravel urges his reader, "Do not attach any importance to the title. I chose it only for its euphonious qualities. Do not dramatize it. It is not a funeral lament for a dead child, but rather an evocation of the pavane which could have been danced by such a little princess as painted by Velázquez." The reference to Spanish Renaissance painter Diego Velázquez suggests his most renowned work *Las Meninas* depicting a scene from the Spanish court in which Princess Infanta Margaret Theresa poses with whimsical refinement. Instead of dispelling the magic of his beloved piece, Ravel's description illuminates the washes of nostalgia and winsomeness perceived by hosts of listeners. The sweet and precise melody carries with it pictures of a young princess thoughtfully stepping to the imaginary orchestration of a courtly pavane. See the delicate liting of her small hands, the light tapping of her slippered feet, and the aristocratic tilt of her dimpled chin; hear the lonesome woodwinds, the grand trumpets, and the soft shimmer of the princess's satin skirts.

He's a Pirate

"An energetic piece that is adventurous and foreboding at the same time." – Merrin Jackson

Dino Dance

"T-rex and tiny dinos stomping." – Everett Jackson

Six Pieces for Piano from CINDERELLA

Prokofiev completed the orchestral ballet score for Cinderella in the midst of World War II in cautious compliance to Soviet Russia's musical injunctions and to the Bolshoi Ballet's criticisms. One demanded that he compose for the understanding of the people, and the other demanded that he compose for the rhythmic sanity of the dancers. Moreover, his own musical vision demanded that he compose a marriage of extremes between the grotesque and the ethereal. The three tyrants eventually produced a work of colorful caricatures, familiar dances, and dramatic juxtapositions. One of several adaptations, this piano set draws from the character motifs of each act, recreating certain distinctive themes of the ballet or scenes without necessarily following the narrative timeline.

No. 1 "Cinderella Suite" depicts a masquerade ball riddled with expectation, suspense, and fear as the heroine along with the listener enters a bizarre, bittersweet world. The first theme opens in an emphatic waltz and a persuasive melody; racing with Cinderella's anxiety should she be recognized, the second theme introduces the cruel stepmother and her two roguish daughters. In the concluding pages, Cinderella and the prince lock eyes across the room, whirling dancers between them, and eventually find themselves face to face in breathless suspension.

No. 2 "Cinderella's Variation" contrasts the comedic dullness of Cinderella's daily chores and her brilliant imagination, perhaps in recollection of the ball the night before. The opening phrase paints a clumsy, mundane rhythm which swiftly transitions into a sweeping waltz. By the conclusion of the brief variation, Cinderella's memories of a fantastical night empty her mind of all sluggish chores.

No. 3 “Quarrel” frames the dissonance characterizing Cinderella’s stepfamily. An introductory sweep introduces the intimidating presence of the stepmother. However, the atmosphere quickly alters as Cinderella’s stepsisters chase each other across the stage. Throughout the duration of the piece, their petty, pathetically selfish squabbles and antics shatter any hope of peace in the household. Amid the chaos, a mournful motif emerges representing Cinderella’s long-suffering servitude.

No. 4 “Cinderella’s Departure from the Ball” spins a surreal tale of glee and apprehension. Chromatic melodic material casts the Fairy Godmother’s mysterious magic over the ball, and the bell-like countermelody rings out in exuberant frenzy. Ever rushing throughout, the composition finally concludes in harsh, rhythmic percussion as the clock strikes twelve.

No. 6 “Amoroso” lowers the curtain as the blissful couple is reunited at last. Having recognized his beloved in the garb of a servant girl, the Prince declares his devotion to Cinderella, and the two are whisked away by fairies to a dreamlike dimension of lush, lavender wisteria.

Ballade in g minor

When Robert Schumann expressed his admiration for Chopin’s first ballade, the composer pondered before responding earnestly, “I am glad because I too like it the best, it is my dearest work.” In his early twenties at the time, Frédéric Chopin imbued his Ballade in G minor with the romanticism characteristic of epic, medieval poems recalled in the 19th century by the literature of Adam Mickiewicz. A ballade is “a tale spun from the incidents of everyday (that is, real) life or from chivalrous stories, animated by the strangeness of the Romantic world, sung in a melancholy tone,” wrote Mickiewicz. The opening statement of Chopin’s Ballade No. 1 recalls this description with a grand ascending Neapolitan chord that seems to read, “Once upon a time,” immediately transporting the audience to a bygone age of epic love and tragedy. Following a discordant tone charged with foreboding, the first theme unfolds in a simple lilting waltz. By the second page, however, a second bass line increasingly interacts with the original line, rousing turmoil. For a moment, the squall ceases, and horns harken in the second theme of gentle, blossoming love. The two themes alternately weave a tale of heart-stilling suspense and heart-wrenching exuberance. A fiery coda brings the poem to a fateful, desperate conclusion.

Fairy Tales

A musical visionary, Nikolai Medtner perfected the craft of succinct, poignant composition most emphatically portrayed in his thirty-eight *Fairy Tales*, otherwise known as *Skazki*. Gaining inspiration from the brief programmatic pieces of past Russian composers such as Tchaikovsky and contemporaries such as Rachmaninoff, Medtner also turned to Russian tales passed down by oral tradition. Only a handful of Medtner’s *Fairy Tales* refer to specific legends while most simply evoke a narrative-like structure. Op. 26. No. 3 falls in the latter category. Vulnerable and lonely, a single tone beckons the audience into a wistful memory as the harmony arises in the second beat and a melismatic melody unfolds. From this reverie, the imagery sharpens into a waltz which eventually unravels into two different, heightened voices. The overlap culminates in an overwhelming disintegration of tonality pierced suddenly by silence. From the quiet a single tone again emerges as the first theme winds back to the original key, this time with gained gravitas. Finally, memories and emotions flit across the mind concluding in a still goodbye.