

**Senior Recital**  
**Victoria Ferguson, cello**  
**Pi-Ju Chiang, piano**  
**Student of Meredith Blecha-Wells**

**March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
**Willard Living Room**  
**7:30 pm**

**Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959), “Ariette”**

Bohuslav Martinů, born in Czechoslovakia, was a violinist and composer who found himself spending much of his life outside of his native country. Martinů became attracted to Paris during his studies at the Prague conservatory, and was able to go to the city on a scholarship to study composition with renowned French composer and teacher, Albert Roussel. While in Paris, Martinů was heavily influenced by the popular music of the 1920's and 30's. This included a great deal of jazz and big band music, along with the music of composers such as Igor Stravinsky. “Ariette” was written in 1930 during Martinů's time in Paris. We hear in this piece, originally written for voice without words, an innocent, sing-song quality. The main body of this piece, characterized by a song-like style, is periodically interrupted by the music of midnight jazz clubs in cosmopolitan Paris.

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Cello Suite no. 3 in C major, BWV 1009**

- I. Prelude**
- II. Allemande**
- III. Courante**
- IV. Sarabande**
- V. Bourree I**
- VI. Bourree II**
- VII. Gigue**

“Love is proclaimed in the downward, swooning scale, an amorous rush, a falling into someone's arms. The pitch is romantic. The smitten notes promise everything.” This quote from Eric Sibley's book “The Cello Suites,” perfectly describes the tone of Bach's third suite for unaccompanied cello. Bach wrote a total of six dance suites for solo cello. The third suite, written in the bright key of C major, is perhaps the most joyful of the six. During this time in Bach's life, he had just been married to court singer and soprano Anna Magdalena. From letters and other historical accounts, we know that Bach loved Anna Magdalena very deeply and often sent her flowers, bought her canaries and wrote her personal songbooks. Much of his composition was greatly inspired by this relationship.

In the prelude, we hear the “downward, swooning scale” and the “cajoling” melodic strains, followed by triumphant chords. The allemande is playful and light with a child-like quality. This is followed by an ecstatic and relentless courante which cascades across the range of the instrument. In the Sarabande, we find a moment of introspection and gratitude. Bourree I and II express contrasting characters: joy and tragedy. The dance suite is concluded with a raucous and

peasant-like Gigue which punctuates perfectly the glowing happiness found in Bach's third cello suite.

## **Frederic Chopin (1810-1849), Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, op. 65**

Written for August Franchomme (1808-1884)

**I. Allegro Moderato**

**II. Scherzo**

**III. Largo**

**IV. Finale: Allegro**

Chopin wrote the cello Sonata in G minor later in his life for his close friend, August Franchomme, who was a renowned French cellist and composer. The piece was premiered by Chopin and Franchomme in 1847, just two years before Chopin's death. The piece took an unusually long time to compose for Chopin, because the composer found himself unhappy with the piece again and again. Chopin writes in one of his letters: "Regarding my sonata with cello, I'm now happy, now not. I throw it into a corner, and then pick it up again..." At the premiere, the work was cut down to three movements. The first movement was not performed because friends of Chopin who were present at earlier performances of the piece found the Allegro to be overbearing and "unclear." Regardless of negative and positive reception, the Sonata is a staple of cello repertoire and continues to speak to listeners of Chopin's struggles as well as moments of reflection and remembrance that marked the end of his life.

The first movement, Allegro Moderato, is a stormy conversation between two forces: piano and cello. The movement is virtuosic and demanding, emotionally and technically, of the performers. We can hear a great deal of retrospection and at times a sense of hopeless romance. Swelling, pleading musical outbursts followed by quick, fiery expressions make this movement an emotional roller coaster for the listener.

The second movement is characterized by two dance themes. The first is a pompous, stomping dance that is thrown back and forth between the cello and the piano. The second dance is a soaring, waltz melody in the cello over sweeping, harp-like accompaniment in the piano. A short transition takes the listener back to the first dance theme, and a boldly stated ending chord.

The Largo movement is a moment of peace for the listener, as it greatly contrasts with the other movements of the sonata. Filled with a sense of reflection, this Largo calls to mind fond memories.

The sonata's Finale is a quick-paced and articulate Allegro. After taking us through a series of emotions, the movement ends in a triumphant and joyful race toward the final chords of the sonata.

## Bibliography

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