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Marshall University Music Department Presents a Senior Recital, Michael Wilcoxon, violin

Michael Wilcoxon

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SCHOOL of MUSIC
and THEATRE

presents

Senior Recital

Michael Wilcoxon, violin

assisted by

Stephen Daming, piano

Sunday, January, 2016

7:30 p.m.

Jomie Jazz Center Forum

This program is presented by the College of Arts and Media through the School of Music and Theatre with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304) 696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

Senior Recital
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<i>12 Variations on La bergère Célimène, K. 359</i>	W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
<i>Theme from Schindler's List</i>	John Williams (b. 1931)
<i>Fratres</i>	Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)
<i>Vielle Chanson from Six Morceaux</i>	Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)
<i>Sonata in A minor, Op. 105</i>	Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
I. Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck	
II. Allegretto	
III. Lebhaft	

Program Notes

Twelve Variations, K359, was written by Mozart during a most critical point in his professional life. During the year 1781, Mozart traveled to Vienna after being summoned by Archbishop von Colloredo to perform for the Emperor. However, Mozart grew tired of being treated as a servant and his wages being less than he had earned in Salzburg. Soon, after an altercation with the Emperor, Mozart was forcefully dismissed. From this point, he became a freelance musician, composer, and teacher in Vienna. This new-found freedom allowed Mozart to compose what he wished.

The variations are based on a French folksong called *La Bergère Célimène*, which translates as *The Shepherdess Célimène*. *La Bergère Célimène* was originally in G minor but Mozart converted it to G major. The structure of the theme, as well as each variation, is compound ternary form. The violin and piano pass the melody back and forth throughout the variations.

There are, however, certain variations that stray from this pattern such as Variation III. In this variation the violin is absent which allows the pianist to be rhythmically free. Variation VII is drastically different. Unlike all other variations within this work, Variation VII is in the key of G minor as is the original folk song. In the final variation, Mozart changed the meter from cut time to 6/8 time.

Perhaps one of the most well-known contemporary composers is John Williams. Williams is primarily a film score composer. Many of his compositions have earned prestigious awards. Williams' works can be heard in many of Hollywood's most iconic films of the latter half of the 20th century, including *Jaws*, *Indiana Jones*, *Star Wars*, and *E.T.* However, there is one particular work that stands out from the rest.

As Stephen Spielberg was working on his 1993 film, *Schindler's List*, he asked Williams to compose the score for the film. *Schindler's List* is about a Nazi officer who bribed his commanders to allow Jews to work in factories rather than to remain in the concentration camps during the Holocaust. Williams agreed to write the score for the film. He then asked world-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman to play the main theme for the film. Perlman, having Jewish heritage, became emotionally tied to the music. Not only was the piece related to the Holocaust, it also paid tribute to traditional Jewish music.

The violin and piano version heard tonight begins with a tragic D minor theme. This theme is continuously heard throughout the piece and grows with intensity as it progresses into higher registers. In the middle of the piece there is a short section in which the piece hits its emotional peak. The piece then returns to the original theme concluding its ternary form. This time it modulates to the key of A minor. This is the point in which the piece is in the highest register. 32nd note runs interrupt the main theme. This continues to the end, as the piece grows quieter; ending on a lonely high A.

Arvo Pärt was born on September 11, 1935 in Paide, Estonia. After finishing his mandatory military service, Pärt enrolled into the music conservatory in Tallinn, Estonia in 1958. During this time, Pärt also worked in the music division of the Estonian radio. He began to be recognized when he won first place in the All-Union Young Composers' Competition, with two of his earliest works.

Pärt soon developed an interest in 12-tone music, *Nekrolog* (1960) being his first experiment with the concept. This interest continued throughout the nineteen-sixties but in 1971 Pärt began to display a new musical direction with *Symphony No. 3*. This happened during a period in which Pärt spent hours on end in meditative silence, known as his "years of silence."

Although he was developing his own style in the nineteen-seventies, it wasn't until later in the decade when his works began to take on a "Pärtian" sound, especially his string compositions. *Fratres* is one of the leading examples. This is also one of Pärt's works in which he utilizes the *Tintinnabuli* principle.

The *Tintinnabuli* principle was invented by Pärt. It was derived from *Tintinnable* which means "bell" in Latin. *Tintinnable* refers to the bell-like resonance of the tonic chord in music. Usually in this style there are two voices. One is the "bell" while the other voice dances around the bell voice. In *Fratres* the bell tone is A. Even when it is not actually played in certain parts of the piece it can still be imagined in the background.

The main melody is three measures long. The first measure has four notes spread in a seven beat measure. The second measure has six notes within nine beats. The third has eight notes spread over eleven beats. Rather than adding to the end of the original phrase, Pärt adds to the middle of each phrase. The result would look much like the following sequence: "I play on strings" would be in the first measure. The second measure would look like "I play all day on strings" which would evolve to "I play all night and day on strings." This sequence can be clearly heard in the first piano entrance, although it is presented by the violin first. The pattern persists throughout the rest of the work and can be directly or indirectly heard by the listener.

Pauline Viardot was born in 1821. From the start she had a great musical advantage because her father, Manuel Garcia, was a famous baritone. Rossini created a part in one of his operas just so Garcia could be in it. Viardot was also acquainted with many other famous musicians.

Viardot began her musical endeavors with the piano, under the instruction of Franz Liszt. Within a very short time she became quite accomplished as a pianist. Sadly, her piano career was cut short when her father died. From that point, Viardot's mother took over and made her give up her piano career so she could focus on singing. Later, in an interview, Viardot expressed how heartbroken she was when she had to give up her piano playing.

As Viardot began her singing career, she was constantly criticized. Although she received many compliments about her voice and her singing talent, her looks were often unfavorably compared to those of her sister, who was also a singer. Regardless, she still maintained a successful singing career until retirement. After Viardot retired from singing, she began to teach. As her teaching progressed, Viardot began writing etudes for her students. Some of these were worthy of performance despite the fact that she never really considered composing music other than for teaching purposes.

One such piece Viardot composed for her students was *Vielle Chanson (Old Song)*, which is the fifth movement of *6 Violin Morceaux*. It is apparent that Viardot brought her vocal influence to the melody of the piece. The listener may imagine a voice singing alongside the violin. The piece begins with a G minor theme. The second theme is slower and in G major. The piece then returns to the A theme thus completing the ternary form of the piece. However, as the piece concludes, Viardot inverts the melody and then returns to a fragment of the second theme, ending the piece in G major.

Robert Schumann was born in the town of Zwickau, Germany in 1810. His father was a novelist, which allowed Schumann access to literature. His mother was overly obsessive and passionate. This combination caused Schumann to have both an educated and unstable childhood. Despite the lack of stability at home, Schumann took an interest in piano and began lessons at age seven. Later, he became increasingly interested in Greek and Latin along with his passion for piano.

In Schumann's teen years, his father passed away, leaving him an inheritance with the condition that he attend a university. He enrolled in a university in Leipzig where he studied law, and continued piano studies with Friedrich Wieck. It was not long before he met Wieck's daughter Clara. As time went by Robert and Clara became close and, to Wieck's disapproval, decided to marry. Schumann soon had to abandon his pursuits as a professional pianist which he attributed to an unstable middle finger. Even though he fell short of his original pursuit, Schumann was quite successful as a music critic, novelist, and composer. He also made the acquaintances of many other influential composers, one of whom was Johannes Brahms, who became a lifelong friend.

To all appearances, Schumann was thriving. However, there was a much darker side to Schumann's personal life. As Schumann entered his 30's he began to show signs of mental illness. He displayed obsessive and compulsive behavior and experienced spells of depression. Regardless he still pressed on and obtained a job at Düsseldorf as a conductor, but it was short-lived. Three years after he was hired, Schumann was relieved from the position because of his unstable behavior. At the age of forty-four, Schumann's illness took over. He began hearing voices that first sounded beautiful but then turned into grotesque sounds of "hyenas," as he described them. As the incidents became even more severe, Schumann voluntarily admitted himself to an infirmary for the protection of his family.

Sonata in A minor was composed in 1851 which was the peak of Schumann's turmoil. Normally when Schumann wrote a piece he went into deep self-examination. This work was no exception. The first movement opens with a rich yet eerie melody in A minor on the violin. Meanwhile the piano plays 16th-notes, adding texture to the piece. Then the piano begins to play the same melody only in a higher register before the violin can finish. The piece briefly modulates to D minor then to F Major. These frequent modulations attest to the restless and unsettling spirit Schumann had during his last days. Soon the piece recaps with the same melody as the beginning. It remains, for the most part, the same until the end of the movement which consists of a fiery ending.

The second movement, in stark contrast, is in F Major. The melody is more at ease; possibly representing tranquil time in Schumann's life. Although the melody is tranquil, it is also inconclusive. This theme is soon followed by a folk like melody. Soon after, the work immediately returns to the opening material. This process repeats twice throughout the movement. As the ending approaches, the melody fades and ends with two soft pizzicato chords.

The third movement obliterates the relaxed feeling the second movement creates. It spirals its way into madness in the key of A minor. The melody consists almost entirely of 16th notes. After the relentless opening theme, the work modulates to a lighter A flat major theme. This melody is short-lived and soon returns to the torment of 16th notes. Towards the end, the violin faintly echoes the opening theme of the first movement before continuing its 16th note spiral to the tragic end.

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