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Christopher DeShields, Senior Viola Recital

Christopher W. DeShields

Cedarville University, cwdeshields@cedarville.edu

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THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP

PRESENTS THE

SENIOR VIOLA RECITAL

OF

CHRISTOPHER DESHIELDS

AUDREY RUTT, PIANO

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018, 11 A.M.

PROGRAM

Sonata in B ♭ Major for Viola and Piano, Op. 36 Henri Vieuxtemps (1820–1881)

- I. Maestoso - Allegro
- II. Barcarolla: Andante con moto
- III. Finale scherzando: Allegretto

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Sz. 120, BB 128 Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

- I. Moderato
- II. Adagio religioso
- III. Allegro vivace

Two Rhapsodies for Viola, Oboe, and Piano Charles Martin Loeffler (1861–1935)

- L'étang
- La cornemuse

Assisted by Riley Larson, oboe

Octet in E ♭ Major, Op. 20 Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

- IV. Presto

Assisted by Ellen Raquet, James Ryan, Lydia Sarver,
and Adina Taylor, violins; Brianna Patricca, viola;
Joshua Dissmore and Hanna Bahorik, cellos

Christopher is a student of Sheridan Currie.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment
of the Bachelor of Music in performance degree.

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata in B \flat Major for Viola and Piano

Henri Vieuxtemps was a well-known French composer in the nineteenth century. He was also an avid violinist and violist - and wrote the majority of his works for the violin, including seven full-length violin concertos and seventeen works for violin and piano. The *Sonata in B \flat Major for Viola* was written in 1863 and is one of four works that he wrote for viola. It was premiered in London in 1861, featuring pianist and composer Arabella Goddard, and was well received at the first performance.

The first movement starts with a slow introductory section, with the viola singing a lullaby-like melody. It then moves into a faster allegro section, full of singing and soaring melodies, virtuosic arpeggios, and other expressive figures in the viola. This section is in sonata allegro form and continues until the slow, beautiful melody returns from the introduction, this time to excitedly leap into an energetic coda to finish off the movement.

The second movement is a Barcarolle, which is French for "boatman's song." It is a slow expressive dance in compound meter. The movement begins in the key of g minor, and then moves to a slightly faster section in G major, which is in duple meter and creates a happy, playful mood. The movement transitions back to the g minor section in compound meter, and then back to an abbreviated G major section in duple meter to peacefully end the movement.

The third movement is a scherzo, which is light, energetic dance. It is in sonata allegro form like the first movement, and is in the tonic key of B flat major in duple meter. The piano starts the movement off with the viola joining in to transition to the repeat of the main theme. The theme then transitions to a development section which modulates into several different keys and then emerges brilliantly with the reprise of the main theme in the tonic. Vieuxtemps likes to use lots of ornaments in this movement to give it a light-hearted and eloquent feel.

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra

Béla Bartók was a prominent Hungarian composer, considered by some as one of the most important composers in the twentieth century. He has composed numerous works, both orchestral and choral works, as well as chamber music, solo music, and concertos. The *Concerto for Viola* was one of the very last works that Bartók composed. It was written in 1945 while he was suffering from leukemia. It was written specifically for the viola virtuoso William Primrose, who told Bartók not to "feel in any way proscribed by the apparent technical limitations of the instrument." Bartók had indicated that the viola part was complete before his death, but the orchestration for the work was only vaguely specified, and the manuscript was in fragments when Bartók died in September 1945. Tibor Serly, a Hungarian violist who was a good friend of Bartók, finished assembling the concerto and it was first premiered by Primrose in 1949 by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Bartók's style can be a stretch for the new listener, but it is clear through analysis that this composition is written very intentionally. It is unlike traditional concertos in that it has a very "through-composed" feel to it, but it is divided up into three separate movements. It also has several distinct musical sections that are each preceded by a short introduction that is (mostly) solo viola.

The first movement opens with an introduction based on a Hungarian folk tune, with a very loose accompaniment. The introduction ends with a dramatic descending pentatonic arpeggio before moving into a similar ostinato theme with a more solid accompaniment. The entirety of the movement follows a loose sonata form and features a variety of variations on the main theme, and includes two other themes, one being an upbeat dance in fast triplets, and the other being a slow chromatic melody. The end of the movement features another solo viola section with a fiery cascade of chromatic scalar material that ends dramatically and then transitions into the second movement.

The second movement is the slow movement of the concerto. It starts with angelic chords in the accompaniment and a sweet, pure melody in the solo line. The movement then escalates into a turbulent middle section with viola soaring over what one might call chaos in the accompaniment. The movement reverts back to the calm theme and continues to alternate moods until the viola breaks into another dramatic cadenza that lands into a transitional scherzo. Marked by quartal harmony and chromaticism, the scherzo ends with an *attaca* into the final movement.

The third movement is based on two different Hungarian folk tunes. It starts with a high energy folk tune and maintains this energy for the majority of the movement. The only major change in mood and tempo occurs about halfway through with emergence of a slightly slower pentatonic folk tune. The movement transitions back into the original tempo shortly thereafter, and finishes with an exciting climax of the recurring folk dance that ventures into the highest register for the viola.

Two Rhapsodies for Viola, Oboe, and Piano

Charles Martin Loeffler was a German-born American composer during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Although he is not French, he studied in Paris for a significant period in his life and was heavily influenced by French music. He is most renowned for a series of five symphonic poems, his concerto for violin, his concerto for cello as well as his several chamber works for various combinations of instruments. By his death he was considered one of America's most important composers. His *Two Rhapsodies for Viola, Oboe, and Piano* were written in 1901 and are based on two French poems by the poet Maurice Rollinat.

The first Rhapsodie, "L'étang" or "The Pond," starts in the key of c minor with piano and then the viola in bar two with a gloomy and mournful theme. The movement continues with a beautiful yet haunting second theme that is tossed between the viola, oboe, and the piano. This theme develops and then resolves into a third theme, which is beautiful but very serene and calm. However, this theme develops and then builds into an agitato restatement of the opening theme, which transitions to the second section of the movement. This section is a light-hearted dance that acts to represent the rippling of the pond. This section also includes a direct quote of the familiar Dies irae in Loeffler's attempt to mimic the "consumptive toads" mentioned in the poetry. The movement ends with a restatement of the opening theme from the viola and proceeds to die away in the same dreary mood in which the movement started.

The second Rhapsodie, "La cornemuse" or "The Bagpipes," begins with a piano cadenza that is punctuated by a mournful theme between the oboe and viola. The piano then plays the same cadenza again, this time in a new key that ends with the oboe and viola playing the same mournful theme. This time it continues into new material. The movement doesn't cease to imitate the bagpipes in the way that the oboe and piano play what would be the melody of the bagpipe, and the viola playing what would be the drone of the bagpipe. The movement includes two additional themes, including a stretto between the oboe and viola, and a beautiful closing melody that is reminiscent of a bel canto singer. The movement ends with all three instruments slowly alternating fragments of the bagpipe theme(s) while diminishing away to nothing.

The Pond

Full of ancient fish stricken by blindness,
The pond, under a low sky rumbling with muffled
thunder;
Shows among its centuries-old reeds
The lapping horror of its density

Over there, elfin spirits act as lights
For more than one black swamp, sinister and feared,
But the pond is revealed in this deserted place
Only by the terrible noises of consumptive toads

For the moon which rise just now,
Mirroring itself there so fantastically,
That seeing its ghostly face,

It's flattened nose and strangely rippled teeth,
It might see a death's head lit from within
That had come to admire itself in a clouded mirror.

The Bagpipes

His bagpipes in the woods
Whined like the wind that bellows,
And never the stag at bay,
Never the willow nor the scull,
Has wept like this voice.

Those sounds of flute and oboe
Were like the death rales of a woman.
Ah! Near the crossroad of the crosses,
His bagpipes!

He is dead. But the under the cold skies,
As soon as the night weaves itself,
Always, in the depths of my soul,
There, at the point of old terrors,
I hear wailing, just as of old,
His bagpipes.

Octet in E \flat Major

Felix Mendelssohn was a German composer of the nineteenth century. He was a prominent composer of the Romantic era and is often called the “Mozart of the Romantic Era” because of the light texture in his music that is reminiscent of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He composed numerous works of almost every musical genre and is very well respected today. The *Octet in E \flat Major* for strings was written in 1825 when Mendelssohn was only sixteen years old. This is not a surprise, however, considering that he started composing much earlier at the age of eight. The Octet was well received, as Conrad Wilson summarizes much of its reception ever since: “Its youthful verve, brilliance and perfection make it one of the miracles of nineteenth-century music.”

The presto is the last of four movements and is likely the most brilliant of all the movements due to its inclusion of all the themes in the previous three movements. It starts with a fugue in the second cello, and adds each instrument one by one to the ensemble. The movement is driven by constant, fast sixteenth notes which are tossed between all the instruments and also include two main themes, the one that the movement starts with and another that very closely mimics a line from Handel’s “Hallelujah” Chorus, first stated in the first viola. The movement ends with the same energy in which it started with continuous, fast sixteenth notes, which precede the final cadence in the tonic.