

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

Undergraduate Honors Capstone Projects

Honors Program

12-2005

Senior Violin Recital and Notes on the Works

Angela Carpenter
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/honors>



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carpenter, Angela, "Senior Violin Recital and Notes on the Works" (2005). *Undergraduate Honors Capstone Projects*. 784.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/honors/784>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



Senior Violin Recital and Notes on the Works

by

Angela Carpenter

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

of

**HONORS IN UNIVERSITY STUDIES
WITH DEPARTMENT HONORS**

in

Music

Approved:

Thesis/Project Advisor

Jessica Guideri

Department Honors Advisor

Bruce Saperston

Director of Honors Program

Christie Fox

**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, UT**

December 2005

Notes on Works from the Senior Recital of Angela Carpenter

Juan-Carlos Mackey's 1st String Quartet, Jameson

It all began with a string of music, a melody. It seemed fitting for strings and so it was decided to begin a work for strings. The first movement was intended to stand alone, but once the idea to complete a string quartet was born it progressed from there. It is easy to see a progression in the compositional style of Juan-Carlos Mackey from the beginning to the end, and it is somehow fitting for the piece as well.

Each movement stands alone and was written alone, although there are motives woven throughout. The first movement displays a meandering form, Mackey's exploration into molding a form to fit the music. The movement itself is an exploration into writing for string quartet. The music from this movement inspired the name, Jameson, as much as one could say the name was inspired. When asked about the name, Mackey only replies that it is a cool sounding name and a cool sounding string quartet.

After the first movement, each movement explores an aspect of music that appeals to the composer. In the case of the second movement, that aspect is sound. This style was influenced by Ives' Unanswered Question. Mackey builds chords and savors the harmony in those chords. He also uses the string sonority here create these harmonies.

The salsa is, "the most fun to listen to" of the movements, according to Mackey. It is indeed quite a departure from the calm pace of the previous movement. The salsa is a foray into the world of dance music. It explores the connection between dance, movement and music. When asked the reason for this exploration, Mackey replied,

“There was a really hot girl who was into salsa dancing.” Whatever the reason, there is a distinct sense of motion and general exuberance that is exhibited in this movement.

The most complex movement of this work is undoubtedly the fourth movement. After a static prelude, the Rondo kicks off in an asymmetrical rhythm that permeates the movement. From there it proceeds to tell a story, a story of the composer's writer's block by his admission, but I think it goes beyond that. The exploration in this movement comes in a couple of parts. One is the percussive element that was exploited in other movements but seems a part of the essence of this rondo. Another obvious technique appears almost out of nowhere, that is, the fugue. It has a distinct character in context and clears the palate for the rest of the movement. Themes from the first movement weave in and out in this movement and appear again as the piece winds to a close.

It has been a wonderful experience to prepare and perform this work. It is great to see the string quartet through the eyes of someone first writing for the genre. The unique approach to meter and rhythm have kept us on our toes while keeping us forever entertained. I hope it is the first of many works to come.

J. S. Bach's 3rd Partita in E Major for Unaccompanied Violin

A partita is defined as a set of dances, and the movement titles would certainly indicate so. Did Bach really intend for these to be danced to? Most likely not, but these movements do exhibit certain characteristics.

The first movement we are given is an introduction of sorts. The first strain calls out to us. I almost picture it at a ball as the music used to call everyone to the dance floor. It is substantial in size in comparison to the rest of the partita, but sets the stage well.

For the first dance, Bach chose the Loure. This dance was not used as commonly, and this is the only appearance of a Loure in the unaccompanied works for violin and cello. This is a shame, for it is a beautiful dance. The tempo of the Loure is slow (Little & Jenne 185). It typically begins with an upbeat and exhibits a "sautillant" rhythm. The character of the Loure is generally proud and arrogant (186). This Loure does not seem to me to be arrogant, but it does have a proud or noble quality to it, particularly from the slow swing that is prominent. The phrase structure of the Loure is usually unbalanced, which is demonstrated in this movement (185). The phrases seem to sprawl out before you and continue to spread until the finish.

According to the relative tempi of dance movements the Gavotte falls into the same category as the Loure, although it is expressed differently in meter and rhythm. That is where the similarities end. The Gavotte has a very predictable rhythm and balance and the music has in general a great regularity (Little & Jenne 47). The character is described as tender, graceful, or joyful. This seems particularly true on the heels of the calmer Loure. This is the longest Gavotte written by Bach and uniquely has the form of a Rondeau (57). The Gavotte bears many similarities to the Bourée. The Gavotte can only be distinguished to the listener by exaggerating the differing characteristics. The Bourée starts on the downbeat while the Gavotte begins in the middle of the bar. This must be played as a pickup into the down-beat in order for it to be clear. The length of this Gavotte comes from the growth that each phrase receives as the movement continues. It makes the 'A' theme of the Rondeau very joyous every time it returns.

The Minuet is perhaps the most famous of the French dances (Little & Jenne 62). Because of this there is much discussion over proper tempo, character, etc. Tempo is fast,

but it is unclear whether this refers to the bar or to the three beats within the bar (59). The character is moderate, or “not given to extremes of passion” (67). What are interesting about the Minuet are the rhythmic nuances. The reason for having two Minuets relates back to the actual dance. The pattern of this dance was large, and did not line up with the actual phrase of the music. As a result, the music would end with the dance not yet complete, so a second Minuet would be played. This second Minuet keeps the tempo, but the character, mood, and other aspects would be in contrast to the first Minuet. This pair of Minuets is the only ones in the solo violin works, and is in my opinion a very cute addition to this work.

The last two dances in this partita are light in comparison. First the Bourée, which of the dances is the least complex rhythmically. It is in duple meter in a fast tempo (Little & Jenne 35). The harmonic changes occur on the beat. The Bourée is gay or joyful and is to be played lightly. There is an upbeat quality or a “lilt” (Little & Jenne 41). The Bourée in this partita is not structured in the most common of ways. There are many sequences and echo effects, which are not common. Also, this Bourée is more ambiguous than is normal for such a simple structure. The result for me is a delightful movement that is somehow intriguing.

Last but certainly not least is the Gigue. There are several types of Giges in French dance and this Gigue is one of less consequence than the others. It is more taken to complexity and exploration than the French Gigue. The character is very lively or joyful (Little & Jenne 168). There are long phrases of unpredictable length, imitative texture, and paucity of internal cadences. As opposed to the Bourée, which was more

complex than normal, this Gigue does not pose too many problems. It brings the partita to a charming end, as the shortest Gigue of this type that Bach has written.

Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra in E-flat Major

Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major for violin and viola is one of my favorite of his compositions. It was written in 1779 and is his last major work in this genre. The history of this genre comes from the baroque concerto grossi, which called for soloists from within the orchestra, usually two violins and cello (Einstein 274). The solo parts are further developed here, however. He titles it Sinfonia Concertante, which is fitting, for it is more a combination of a concerto and a symphony (Keys 121).

Mozart uses techniques known from the Mannheim school, as he had lived there as recently as 1778. Specifically he used rockets, or melodies that arpeggiated upwards. These occur several times in the first movement, and there is indeed an entire passage of such arpeggios immediately before the recapitulation.

Another striking feature of this work is the opening. Keys has this remark, "It is a measure of the new richness of invention that throughout this movement the solo passages never quote any of the orchestral thematic material ample though it is" (121). The only winds used in the orchestra are two horns and two oboes, but they play a very important role entirely separate from the strings. They work together in this opening, but later in the movement the winds have their own specific passages.

The orchestration in the strings is also unique. There are not only two violin sections, as is customary, but there are also two viola sections. It gives more balance. And indeed, the solo violin and viola parts are very balanced. The viola part is notated in

D major, meaning the instrument was to be tuned up a half step. This makes the part more natural to play, and also helps to distinguish the sound of the soloist from the two viola sections by giving the instrument a brighter sound.

Whether or not the tuning is changed, the two solo lines weave beautifully together to create a work wonderful to match these two instruments.

Vieuxtemps' Souvenir d'Amérique

Henri Vieuxtemps was born on February 17th, 1820 in Verviers, Belgium. His father was the one who introduced him to the violin. Although his ability to teach Henri was limited he always kept a hand in his education and general life as a violinist.

One of the teachers that most influenced Vieuxtemps was Charles de Bériot. He studied with him for years. He nearly idolized de Bériot and sought to imitate him. To this de Bériot responded by urging him to develop his own style, one that was unique and virtuosic.

Vieuxtemps first tried his hand in composition by the age of 10 (Radoux 9). It was also around this time that he stopped all of his violin lessons. He never again had a lesson, furthering his individual development as a violinist.

Another great source of inspiration for Vieuxtemps was Beethoven. He performed Beethoven's violin concerto in 1834. At that time, it hadn't been performed since Beethoven's death in 1827 (Radoux 12).

Vieuxtemps is most remembered as a virtuoso on the violin. He was compared to Paganini. He did much touring as a violinist and as he wrote violin concertos he included them in his concerts, with varying degrees of success. In November of 1843 he journeyed

to America. In his opinion, America was not ready for him, "With the exception of a few choice spirits who could appreciate my efforts, the only thing with which I could charm the Yankees and excite their enthusiasm was their national theme, Yankee Doodle, with which I became popular" (Radoux 57).

Works Cited

Einstein, Alfred. Mozart, his character, his work. New York : Oxford University Press, 1962.

Keys, Ivor Christopher Banfield. Mozart : his music in his life. New York : Holmes & Meier Publishers, c1980.

Little, Meredith and Natalie Jenne. Dance and the music of J.S. Bach. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c. 1991.

Radoux, Jean Théodore. Henri Vieuxtemps: his life and works. Linthicum Heights: Swand Publications, 1983.