



Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

FRIDAYS @ 12:30 SERIES

Friday, October 21, 2016
12:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall
Andrea Botticelli, *fortepiano*

Arietta con variazioni in E-flat major, XVII:3

J. Haydn
(1732-1809)

Fantasia in C minor, Hob. XVII:4

J. Haydn
(1732-1809)

Fantasia in E-flat major, Op. 18
Larghetto e cantabile

J. N. Hummel
(1778-1837)

Fantasia in C minor, K. 475

W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Sonata in C minor, K. 457
Molto allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai

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PROGRAM NOTES

Mozart called Vienna 'Clavierland' ('Piano Land') and this concert features three composers that historically were central to this explosion in the taste for the piano. The bursting piano culture in Vienna and other cities in Europe created a thriving piano-building culture. The fortepiano used today is a model from circa 1790, a replica of an original instrument built by Anton Walter in Vienna, one of the most famous builders in his time. It presents many unique characteristics in comparison to the modern piano. This instrument features a five-octave range and knee levers that press upwards to engage the damper pedal. The key dip is shallower and the action is considerably lighter than a modern piano. The sounds of pianos from this period are more clear and transparent and there are more varied characters between the registers; the upper range of the instrument has a different sound than the middle and lower range. These differences create a more varied sound texture to bring out the registral changes in the piano writing. This light sensitivity and intimacy in the feel of the instrument helps to highlight these qualities in the music.

Performances on period pianos create a different experience for the listener as well as the performer. The sound of the instrument is more subdued and the overall balance of the hands is different. This tonal variety adds more to the expressible possibilities of the instrument. As a performer, my relationship to the music stems directly from the feel of my instrument; the "feel" of playing this music is so different that I am re-discovering this repertoire – its humour, playfulness, intimacy, and colourful characters.

The repertoire chosen for this concert, as well as highlighting the capabilities of the fortepiano, seeks to recapture the creative and spontaneous eighteenth century approach to the musical score. Eighteenth century treatises are unanimous in their descriptions of the purpose of ornamentation in musical performance. In 1791, Francesco Galeazzi wrote:

“ornamentation should aid the expression of the principal sentiment...the most skillful performer is one who knows how to enter the mind of the composer, be fully conscious of the character of the composition that he is to perform, increasing its energy, uniting his own sentiments with that of its author...”

Likewise, C.P.E. Bach states, “no one disputes the need for embellishments...they connect and enliven tones and impart stress and accent; they make music pleasing and awaken our close attention. Expression is heightened by them...” By ornamenting and embellishing scores, each performance becomes personalized and unique.

In this concert, I have deliberately chosen music that highlights this fluid and extremely accessible brand of music-making. Haydn's *Arietta con variazioni* in E-flat major, XVII:3, begins with a simple and charming theme with many inherent opportunities for subsequent embellishment. Indeed, in this piece, Haydn seems to invite the player to add her own commentary to each successive variation. The more lyrical variations lend themselves well to florid vocal ornamentation, while the more rhythmically lively, instrumentally-inspired variations are opportunities to amplify Haydn's humour and lively appeal. The theme is written in binary form and each section bears repeat signs. The twelve successive variations also follow this prescription, allowing the listener to first hear the unornamented version, followed by its musically embellished repeat.

Haydn's playful and humorous *Fantasia* in C major, Hob.XVII:4, is a quick-witted showpiece. A cat-and-mouse game, it exploits the different sounds of the registers on the instrument with elaborate hand-crossings and dazzling passagework. The humour comes across in the long pauses and its large dynamic range, taking advantage of the entire capabilities of the fortepiano.

The *Fantasie* by Hummel, Op. 18, written in 1805, is a large-scale and ambitious work. Johann Nepomuk Hummel was the student of the two most famous pianists in his day – Mozart and

Clementi – and he was known as the successor to Mozart in his elegance of style. No mere successor, Hummel was one of the foremost pianists and composers of his time and his music foreshadowed many "Romantic" elements of the next generation. The third movement is a vocal and highly improvisatory slow movement with interposing dramatic sections featuring advanced technical writing and elaborate piano ornamentation that is very striking for 1805. The dramatic chordal section shows Hummel's desire to create a mass of sound that stretches the limits of the pianos of his day. Although Hummel's reputation as a performer was known to be more polished and "conservative" than the rebellious Beethoven, this piece demonstrates that in his piano writing, Hummel was no less revolutionary than his famous contemporary. Altogether this work demonstrates how compositional innovations developed alongside instrumental innovations in the flourishing 18th and 19th century piano culture. Performances on period instruments restore this dynamic connection between the musical score and instrument.

Mozart's Sonata in C minor, KV 457, is a three-movement work with a vast range of emotion and drama. The bold first movement statement is heard many times throughout the piece. Mozart once again uses parallel octaves to evoke a sense of single-minded strength. The cantilena slow movement, excessively ornamented in an operatic manner, is a beautiful contrast to the encircling movements. The third movement features dramatic pauses and quick dynamic changes, creating a spirited ending to the piece. As an introduction to this sonata, I offer my own improvisatory prelude to this stormy and virtuosic work.

Andrea Botticelli

THE ARTIST

Dr. Andrea Botticelli has performed as a soloist and chamber musician across Canada and abroad in England, France, Italy, Spain and the United States. Her performances have been praised as "brilliant and dynamic", with "poetic nuances" and "virtuosity" (Corriere Canadese). A versatile artist, Andrea performs on the modern piano as well as historical keyboards.

Dr. Botticelli has performed in concert series' across Canada such as "Music in the Mountains" in Whistler, BC, the Banff Summer Arts Festival, and "Thursdays at Noon" at the University of Toronto. Her recent performing engagements include 5-octave fortepiano concerts with York Region Chamber Music, the University of Western Ontario, and the Scaramella series.

A faculty member of the Glenn Gould School, the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy, and the Royal Conservatory School, Dr. Botticelli's students have achieved outstanding recent success, most notably the 2016 and 2015 Canadian Music Competition Grand Prizes (7-10 year old category), winning national championships in 2014-2016, as well as making Carnegie Hall, Koerner Hall and Classical 96.3 FM debuts. Some of her earliest students have been accepted into professional university music programs at McGill University, University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

Dr. Botticelli is a graduate of the University of Toronto, the Glenn Gould School and the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy. She has studied with Canada's leading pianists and teachers including Marina Geringas, Marek Jablonski, Marc Durand, Marietta Orlov. For her Doctor of Musical Arts degree, she studied piano with Boris Lysenko and fortepiano with Tom Beghin. During her doctoral studies at the University of Toronto, Dr. Botticelli was awarded full-tuition fellowships from the Faculty of Music, as well as travel grants from the School of Graduate Studies. She was also an exchange student at McGill University, studying fortepiano and performance practice with Tom Beghin. Her research interests include the psychology of performance, piano pedagogy, and performance practice. Dr. Botticelli has presented her research at the University of Toronto, McGill University, Brock University, Ryerson University, and the University of Calgary.