

Piano Recital: Mar. 15th, 2022

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Antipasti

Sonata form was invented by Hayden, who taught Mozart who taught Beethoven. Sonata allegro became the dominant form for structuring a large musical story. Exposition, Development and Recapitulation
Recap. typically has the main theme entering on the tonic

Theme and variations: typically structured as a series of short movements with pauses in between. The first short movement is the “theme”: a simple expression of the melody, and the others are variations of that theme. Typically the 4th or 5th will be minor and slow.

Beethoven’s 9th – so much to say! Composed in 1824, when Beethoven was completely deaf. Was originally going to be premiered in Berlin, but friends pleaded with Beethoven to premier it in Vienna. Written in aftermath of Napoleonic Wars and Conference of Vienna. Tells an epic struggle between hope, darkness and eventual light. Lots of warring, conflicting sections. 4th movement has Ode to Joy, based on a Schiller poem. First time chorus was used in symphonic writing. Now is the European nat. anthem. Played this at Ukraine benefit concert as a statement about European unity.

Primi Piatti

Philip glass is an American composer, a minimalist. Writes “music with repetitive structures” — born in 1937 and writing music came right after the Bauhaus movement emerged. Emphasized chordal space. I heard his music paired once with a Schubert impromptu, was very chordal and very good. I started wondering what other pieces would pair well.

Bach composed some of the most intricate, developed music of all time. Known for interweaving harmonies. Composed hundreds of pieces that he burned right after writing, saying “God has heard this once now, he does not need to hear it again.”

Chopin was a Polish composer, known for bringing Polish folk songs — waltzes, polonaises — into his music. He was insecure that his compositional style did not fit the grandiose large productions of the day. Known to improvise a lot.

Liszt widely viewed as the greatest piano virtuoso of all time. Similar to Chopin, he brought Hungarian folk music into his writing.

Contorni

Spanish music. Underrepresented in the Western Canon. Most famous Spanish themes (Bizet's Carmen, Spanish Dance in Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, Saint Saen's Danse Macabra) were not actually written by Spanish composers. What makes Spanish music special?

1. Spanish Chord progressions
 - a. 1-2-1, 1 minor - 5 major
2. Use of the harmonic minor
 - a. Saw this in Hungarian Rhapsody
3. Spanish rhythms
 - a. Tango, Danza, Bolero
 - b. Similar to waltz, Hungarian Rhapsody
4. Spanish ornamentals
 - a. Contrast with Beethoven's ornamentals

Similar influences (Gypsy and roma). A culture is not a series of mechanical descriptions, though, and the unknowing element that you love you can't often put a finger on.

Albeniz was part of an emerging group of Spanish composers in the 1880s who sought to build a new school of Spanish writing. Albeniz is the most well known of them, having composed extensively for guitar and piano. Was heavily influenced by Debussy and emerging French styles, so you can hear some French tonal scales and other elements in his music.

I wrote Spanish Dance in 2019/2020. This is the first premier of it. Shows scenes of a city when you're walking along the avenues.

Secondi Piatti

The opera Carmen is one of the most famous operas in Western music, and it's long been my dream to play a piano version. Surprisingly there are no undisputed piano versions a la Liszt or something. So I put this together from a lot of different sources, many of which I had to transcribe from their original versions.

Anderson's two hands is fun and relatively standard, but I like it. I'm pairing it with Busoni's version — Busoni was a well-known Italian composer in his time. They both have a version of the famous Habanera.

Opera Carmen tells the story of Carmen, a gypsy. She's arrested for stealing, she seduces Don Jose who frees her. He leaves the army a criminal, they travel around, profess their love. He

leaves to see his mom. He comes back and Carmen has moved on, taunts him, flirts with the Toreador. Eventually, enraged, he kills her.

Habanera is the key moment where she's seducing him. Typically it's a theme with a lot of violence, because it precipitates the opera's tragic ending. The Anderson version is relatively standard and conveys this violence. The Busoni version, though, is very calm and ethereal. Calmness of accepting our fate and the willingness to walk towards it.

Kornienko is kinda a weird, contemporary Russian composer. I don't like the way he plays his own piece, but his version is passable.

Sarasate was a violin virtuoso who transcribed a lot of music for violin. I remember playing his Carmen Fantasy in orchestra when I was young and that's really when I fell in love with the music.

Horowitz is perhaps one of the greatest performers of all time. Ukrainian who left the Soviet Union rather than compete on behalf of them. "Variations of the Gypsy Dance" is one of the few pieces he played consistently throughout his life, from his 20s to the Jimmy Carter Whitehouse. We played it at the recent Ukrainian benefit concerts we did and Sheila danced with me while I played it. Leads in from previous piece.