

The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

April 10, 2017 7:30 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



Hannah Collins, cello
Solon Gordon, Piano

Variations concertantes, op. 17 (1829)

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Rending (2005)

Matthew Barnson
(b. 1979)

Waldesrube, op.68, no. 5 (1891)

Antonin Dvořák
(1841-1904)

7 Variations on “*Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen*,” WoO 46 (1801)

L.V. Beethoven
(1770-1827)

INTERMISSION

Cello Sonata no. 2, op. 39 (1889)
Allegretto con moto moderato
Andante con moto
Allegro giusto

Charles Villiers Stanford
(1852-1924)

The Broken Melody (c. 1892)

August van Biene
(1849-1913)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

Notes on the Program

Tonight's concert is an exploration of music that relates to my dissertation research about the impact and audience reception of foreign cellists in London between 1890 and 1930. The cellists that I am focusing on include Alfredo Piatti (1822-1901), Robert Hausmann (1852-1909), Guilhermina Suggia (1885-1950), and Auguste van Biene (1849-1913). All of these musicians were born in other countries (Italy, Germany, Portugal, and The Netherlands, respectively) but relocated to the UK, or in Hausmann's case, studied there and returned frequently on tour. This program is designed to reflect the repertoire and the approach to programming that these cellists had during this period. Guilhermina Suggia, whose concert programs are carefully archived in Anita Mercier's excellent biography, gave recitals with as many as seven or eight pieces by different composers, which was typical of the time. A recital might include older works by composers like Bach or Beethoven mixed together with contemporary compositions from any number of genres including substantial sonatas, unaccompanied cello works, arrangements of vocal pieces, sets of variations, salon pieces, etc.

Bookending the first half of tonight's program are two sets of early nineteenth century variations for cello and piano. These works served to display the versatility and virtuosity of both the composer and the performers. Germanic composers were very much revered in England at this time, as the British musical style which would blossom in the twentieth century had not yet fully developed. Ludwig van Beethoven's Seven Variations on "Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen," WoO 46 are based on a theme that appears in Mozart's Singspiel, *The Magic Flute*. Written just ten years after the opera was premiered (in 1791, the same year as Mozart's death), this work grows from strains of the joyful duet between Pamina and Papageno as they celebrate love. Beethoven uses the duet format to establish a sense of conversation between the cello and piano from the very start of the piece. As the title suggests, this work features a theme, seven variations, and an unusually dramatic coda which veers off into exciting new material.

Felix Mendelssohn's Variations concertantes, Op. 17, were dedicated to the composer's younger brother Paul, a banker by profession who was also an amateur cellist. A simple theme followed by eight variations and a coda, this piece moves from very elegant beginnings through surprising Romantic outbursts and a long build up in the coda before eventually reaching a serene conclusion. As a frequent collaborator of Joseph Joachim and his quartet, Robert Hausmann was well connected to the major Germanic composers of his time, most notably Johannes Brahms. He was a great admirer of Mendelssohn as well and published his own edition of the Mendelssohn cello works.

The act of performing music written by contemporaries was standard fare, particularly for Hausmann, who premiered several works by Brahms, Bruch, Tovey, and others. Suggia frequently paired eighteenth-century Bach Suites with works by contemporaneous composers like Leone Sinigaglia (1868-1944) and Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). **Matthew Barnson's Rendering** is an example of a work from my own era that represents a different dimension from the other works on the program. Barnson is currently assistant professor of composition at SUNY Stony Brook and was recently awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, among many other recognitions. The piece is inspired by the mythical tale of Orpheus, who famously journeyed to the Underworld to rescue his love Persephone from the grip of Hades. Instead of describing the tragic moment when Orpheus takes his forbidden look back and loses Persephone forever, this is a musical depiction of Orpheus's death at the hands of the enraged Thracian women who, according to some versions of the tale, tore him to shreds after his return to the mortal realm.

Antonin Dvořák's Waldesruhe, or Silent Woods, is said to have disappeared from the repertoire for several decades after the composer's death in 1904, but in fact, Guilhermina Suggia performed it with some frequency. Originally a piano four-hands piece from an 1883 album entitled *From the Bohemian Forest*, Dvořák himself made an arrangement for cello and piano in 1891 in preparation for a concert tour of Bohemia and Moravia with cellist Hanus Wihan and violinist Ferdinand Lachner. This ensemble, with Dvořák on piano, also premiered his Op. 90 "Dumky" Trio in 1891. Wihan would later be the dedicatee of Dvořák's beloved cello concerto.

Charles Villiers Stanford was arguably the most prominent British composer of his time and certainly one of the most influential teachers in the British tradition as a founding professor of the Royal College of Music. His students included Herbert Howells, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams and many others. A major organ and choral composer, Stanford followed the German traditions of Mendelssohn and Schumann with a particular admiration for Brahms. Like Brahms, he wrote two cello sonatas, the first for Hausmann and the second for Piatti, along with an earlier cello concerto, also for Piatti. This **Cello Sonata No. 2, Op. 39**, is in three movements. The first is an elaborated sonata form in d minor which contrasts the brooding, undulating opening material with warm melodies and heroic exclamations. The second movement begins with a slow introduction followed by a hymn-like tune which is then alternated with two lively dance sections. The third movement has the mood of a joyful recessional full of contrapuntal texture and triumph.

Auguste van Biene's signature piece, **The Broken Melody**, was performed as part of a play of the same name that Van Biene himself starred in for over 6,000 performances. His character was a cellist who would also perform a recital within the play. He could change the repertoire if needed and was known to sometimes play Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* (based on Jewish prayer themes and originally written for Hausmann) on Friday nights. Known for his overtly expressive and sentimental style, Van Biene used the endpin at a time when cellists like Piatti and Hausmann did not, and was able to move and gesture dramatically while playing. After he died onstage during a performance, Van Biene's epitaph was a quote from Act 3 of *The Broken Melody*: "The melody is broken, I shall never write again."

About the Artists

Cellist **Hannah Collins**, winner of De Linkprijs for contemporary interpretation, is a dynamic performer who takes an active role in expanding the repertoire for cello. With support from the Presser Foundation, Hannah spent 2009-2011 in France and The Netherlands studying contemporary European cello repertoire. She continues to catalyze and champion the works of compelling young composers with New Morse Code, her duo with percussionist Michael Compitello. Together, they co-direct Avaloch Farm Music Institute's New Music Initiative, a summer residency program in Boscawen, New Hampshire designed to provide resources and workspace for performers and composers collaborating on new works. Hannah has given solo and chamber music performances at festivals such as Orford Centre d'arts, Kneisel Hall, Aldeburgh Festival, and *Musique de Chambre à Giverny*. She is a member of *Cantata Profana* and has recently performed with *Quodlibet*, *A Far Cry*, *Talea Ensemble*, and *The Knights*. Praised for her "incisive, vibrant continuo" playing (*S. Miami Classical Review*), Hannah also appears as a Baroque cellist with the *Sebastians* and the *Trinity Baroque Orchestra*.

Hannah earned a B.S. in biomedical engineering from Yale and holds graduate degrees in cello performance from the Yale School of Music and the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. She is an alumna of Ensemble Connect, a fellowship focused on performance, teaching artistry, and arts

advocacy run by Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and Weill Music Institute. Her principal mentors have included Stefan Reuss, Ole Akahoshi, Aldo Parisot, Michel Strauss, Robert Mealy, and Marcy Rosen. Hannah is currently a third-year DMA student at CUNY Graduate Center and visiting assistant professor of cello at the University of Kansas School of Music.

Solon Gordon's musical path has been forged by his love of chamber music. Mr. Gordon graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2007 with prizes in chamber music and accompaniment. He spent his undergraduate summers at the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival in Blue Hill, Maine. Following graduation, Mr. Gordon resided in San Francisco, where he served as a staff accompanist for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Preparatory Division. He also performed regularly with the Conservatory's collegiate students and faculty, members of the San Francisco Symphony, and the chamber music collective Classical Revolution. He is currently based in Manhattan and is a frequent guest artist on recitals at The Juilliard School, Mannes College, and Manhattan School of Music. Solon is ever grateful to his principal mentors: Monique Duphil at Oberlin Conservatory, and Sandra Dennis at the Community Music School of Springfield, Massachusetts.