

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

October 21, 2022 6:00 p.m.

*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*



## Nora Bartosik, piano

Valses Nobles, D. 969, Op. 77 (1827)

Franz Schubert  
(1797–1828)

Valses Sentimentales, D. 779, Op. 50 (1825)

~ Brief Pause ~

Dauidsbündlertänze, Op. 6 (1837)

Robert Schumann  
(1810–56)

*Lebhaft*

*Innig*

*Mit Humor*

*Ungeduldig*

*Einfach*

*Sehr rasch und in sich hinein*

*Nicht schnell mit äußerst starker Empfindung*

*Frisch*

*Lebhaft*

*Balladenmäßig sehr rasch*

*Einfach*

*Mit Humor*

*Wild und lustig*

*Zart und singend*

*Frisch*

*Mit gutem Humor*

*Wie aus der Ferne*

*Nicht schnell*

~ Brief Pause ~

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.

## Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911)

- I. *Modéré – très franc*
- II. *Assez lent – avec une expression intense*
- III. *Modéré*
- IV. *Assez animé*
- V. *Presque lent – dans un sentiment intime*
- VI. *Vif*
- VII. *Moins vif*
- VIII. *Épilogue: Lent*

Maurice Ravel  
(1875–1937)

### Notes on the Program

This program presents sets of short dances that display strong parallels to each other despite being created by three very different composers in different eras. The connections are not coincidental, as the later composers admired the earlier ones and studied their works, but the extent of the subtle similarities is still being discovered. Ravel's cycle of waltzes is named for Schubert's two sets and loosely follows their simple waltz form, but its structure as a cohesive larger cycle of miniature dances followed by an epilogue more closely resembles Schumann's dance cycle. The similar forms are nevertheless treated entirely differently by each composer, with each work reflecting the individual musical language and time of its composer.

**Franz Schubert** composed over 400 dances for solo piano, including a significant number of waltzes, *German Dances* and *Ländler* (Austrian folk dances). These short pieces in fast triple meter reflected the musical taste of the time and were based on typical folk dances. The simple nature of Schubert's waltzes, conceived for intimate gatherings, stand in stark contrast to the ornate ballroom waltzes popularized by "The Waltz King" Johann Strauss II in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The waltz in Schubert's time had already been adopted by aristocratic society, but was not far removed from its folk roots in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Schubert's waltzes also preceded the now-famous piano waltzes of Frederic Chopin (1810–49).

The *Valses nobles*, *D. 969, Op. 77* and *Valses sentimentales, D. 779, Op. 50* are the only waltz sets by Schubert without German titles. The titles were presumably added by Schubert's publisher in a marketing bid to suggest sophistication and French high society. Overall, the "noble" dances tend towards vigorous, energetic and stately displays, while the "sentimental" collection is more graceful, supple and intimate.

The *Valses nobles* consist of twelve short waltzes that are self-contained and could be performed individually. These dances highlight Schubert's creativity in allowing a relatively predictable form with the same  $\frac{3}{4}$  waltz accompaniment figures to sound entirely different every minute. The "noble" character of these waltzes seems to lie in the louder, more insistent and openly celebratory quality of

the melodies, which feature many technically challenging octave figures. Each melody, however, retains a unique character despite the similarities within each waltz, demonstrating Schubert's famed mastery of melody.

The *Valses sentimentales*, composed two years before the *Valses nobles*, are a much larger set of 34 short waltzes, many of which are only 16 measures long. While the overall form and style of these waltzes closely resemble those of the *Valses nobles*, the character of the melodies is more intricate and personal, highlighting the delicate and tender quality of these waltzes. Nevertheless, many of the waltzes in this set also include very vibrant, even boisterous moments.

The *Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6*, like Schubert's dance sets, consist of short dances strung together into a cycle of 18 dances ranging from one to three minutes long. Like other dance cycles for piano by **Robert Schumann** such as *Carnaval, Op. 9* (1835) and *Papillons, Op. 2* (1831), the *Davidsbündlertänze* is comprised of a series of miniature dances that each reflect a different character or mood. While *Carnaval* includes subtitles for each dance that reflect their character, like "Pierrot" and "Coquette", the individual characters of the *Davidsbündlertänze* can only be surmised from the title of the collection, which translates to "Dances of the League of David". The League of David was an imaginary society of artists created by Schumann to resist the "Philistines", anyone who lacked appreciation for art. The two primary characters in the League represented contrasting aspects of Schumann's own personality: Florestan, impetuous and passionate, and Eusebius, thoughtful and introspective. Schumann attributed many of his compositions and writings to one of these two characters, sometimes signing his works "F." or "E." These signatures appear, sometimes in combination "F. and E.", at the end of the dances in the autograph of *Davidsbündlertänze*, confirming the two main temperaments that underly the set.

The opus number 6 of this work is misleading, as the dances were composed in 1837, after *Carnaval* and after the Op. 13 *Symphonic Studies*. Schumann numbered the work as Op. 6 to match the Op. 6 *Soirées musicales* by Clara Wieck, to whom he had recently become secretly engaged. The opening line of the *Davidsbündlertänze* is labeled 'Motto by C.W.' and quotes the opening of Clara's Mazurka Op. 6, No. 5. In several letters, Schumann described the summer in which he composed the *Davidsbündlertänze* as the most blissful of his life, with the dances reflecting many excited thoughts on his future with Clara.

The eighteen *Davidsbündlertänze* are intended to be played as a complete set, but each individual dance except No. 16 is a self-contained, miniature work that retains a distinct ending. No. 16 by contrast leads directly into No. 17, highlighting the fact that each dance is to be understood in context with its neighboring dances. While twelve of the eighteen dances are in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, it is the final dance No. 18 that truly takes on the form of a waltz. After the tempestuous ending of dance No. 17, this final waltz acts as a kind of musical epilogue that seems to offer tranquil, somewhat nostalgic closing thoughts on the musical events that have just transpired.

**Maurice Ravel** named his *Valses nobles et sentimentales* after the two eponymous waltz sets by Schubert. Ravel wrote that the title "sufficiently indicates my intent to write a set of Schubertian waltzes." The *Valses nobles et sentimentales* consist of eight short waltzes, with the final waltz labeled as an epilogue. They were dedicated to Louis Aubert, a pianist who premiered the work in 1911 at a concert of the *Société Musicale Indépendante*, a society formed by composers including Ravel to support new music. The works on that concert were performed without the audience knowing who the composers were. This resulted in a lively discussion about the music that culminated in the audience voting on who the composer of each work was. Ravel later recalled that the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*

were booed and heavily criticized even by his supporters, and that about half of the audience did not guess that he could have been the composer. Even though the *Valses* ostensibly are a homage to Schubert, the harmonies they feature are often raucous, dissonant and decidedly modern. Ravel viewed these dances as an opportunity to veer away from the virtuosity and complexity of his earlier work, *Gaspard de la Nuit*, and focus on clarity and harmony.

The simple Schubertian waltz form provided an ideal vehicle for Ravel to create an innovative composition within the limits of a traditional and easily recognizable framework. Many composers before Ravel had embraced the waltz form, taking it to elaborate heights epitomized by the waltzes of the Strauss family in Vienna just a few decades earlier. In a compliment to Strauss, the seventh waltz of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, described by Ravel as “*la plus caractéristique*” [most characteristic] of the set, emulates the Straussian waltz style. Nevertheless, the reference to a Schubertian model is fitting, as the textures in the *Valses* remain simple, short and transparent. Although there are no direct references to Schubert’s waltzes, the *Valses* display many similar principles in their form and meter. In the *Valses*, the all-important  $\frac{3}{4}$  time is often lost to the ear, but always reveals itself again with fateful force. The enigmatic epilogue wanders far from the character of the preceding seven waltzes, but maintains the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time while quoting fragments of earlier melodies in a nostalgic, distorted reminiscence on the waltzes.

The most compelling question about the inspiration for the *Valses* is whether they were truly conceived with Schubert in mind, or whether they were more closely modeled on Schumann’s character dance cycles such as the *Davidsbündlertänze*. Certain parallels between the *Valses* and the *Davidsbündlertänze* come to mind, including the overall structure of short dances with exceptionally individual characters to be played together and the nostalgic epilogue. The dances by Schumann and Ravel were no longer intended to be danced to, as Schubert’s were, but instead offered individually styled interpretations of familiar dance forms that were firmly based in the composer’s own musical language. Much as the *Davidsbündlertänze* made a subtle statement about those who would ignore or misunderstand art, the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* are inscribed with a pointed quotation from the poet Henri de Régnier that could be interpreted as a statement on the aristocratic society that enjoyed ballroom waltzes or even as a droll commentary on a composer’s métier: “...the delicious and ever new pleasure of a useless occupation.”

## About the Artist

Described as a “young talent in a class of her own” (*Osterländer Volkszeitung*), “marvelous... with elegant grace” (*Le Dauphine*) and “fully in command of her craft” (*Harvard Crimson*), pianist **Nora Bartosik** has performed internationally as a soloist and in chamber ensembles in the United States and Europe. She has performed in venues including the Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, the Gesellschaft für Musiktheater in Vienna, the Théâtre de la Ville in Valence, France, and the Casa da Música in Porto, Portugal. She is the winner of the Concours International de Piano Teresa Llacuna (France, 2013) and the Karl Bergemann Sightreading Competition for Pianists (Germany, 2011) as well as a laureate of the Premio Silvio Bengali Val Tidone Music Competition (Italy, 2015) and the International Blüthner Piano Competition (Austria, 2013). She has performed with orchestras including the Philharmonic Orchestra Altenburg-Gera, the Harvard Bach Society Orchestra and the Harvard Pops Orchestra, and she has worked with conductors including Thomas Ades, Stefan Asbury, Aram Demirjian, Gemma New, Akiko Fujimoto and Thomas Wicklein.

Nora Bartosik was a Piano Fellow at the Tanglewood Festival in 2018, when she also appeared in Tanglewood’s Festival of Contemporary Music, and she has performed in other international festivals including the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Saoû Chante Mozart Festival in Saoû, France, and the Festival des Nuits d’été in Macon, France. Her interest in chamber music and new music has led her to perform at the HARMOS Chamber Music Festival in Porto, Portugal, the Max Reger Forum in Bremen, with the Ensemble for New Music in Leipzig and as a guest artist at Festival Baltimore. She collaborates regularly with other artists, most recently touring in San Francisco and Vancouver with former Martha Graham Company dancer Miki Orihara in *Resonances III*, an interdisciplinary performance project focusing on pioneers of Japanese and American modern dance history. Beyond her regular performance activities, she has served on the jury of the Suffolk Piano Teachers Foundation Piano Competition on Long Island and given recitals in Harvard University’s historic Sanders Theater to benefit afterschool arts programs for children in the Boston area. From 2010–2012, she was on the artist roster of Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now Germany, an organization with the mission to bring live music to audiences who otherwise would not have the opportunity to experience it.

Nora Bartosik holds a Bachelor of Arts cum laude in Music and German Literature from Harvard University, a Master of Arts and postgraduate diploma in piano performance from the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, and a Konzertexamen (Artist Diploma) degree in solo piano from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Leipzig, where she was a two-time recipient of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Fellowship. She also attended the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in Hannover upon the invitation of noted piano pedagogue Karl-Heinz Kämmerling. She wrote her undergraduate honors thesis on Swiss Appenzeller folk music, and her master’s thesis on the performance and interpretation of Maurice Ravel’s *Valse Nobles et Sentimentales* for piano. She is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance at The Graduate Center, CUNY, where she studied with Professor Ursula Oppens. She is on the faculty of the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, the Filomen M. D’Agostino Greenberg Music School for students with vision loss, and the 92nd Street Y School of Music.