

Date du récital/Date of recital : May 12, 2018, 13h00  
Nom/Name: India Yeshe Gailey  
Classe de/Class of: Matt Haimovitz

*These program notes are written by the student performing, and are presented by the student in partial fulfillment of the requirements of their course.*

*Ces notes de programme sont écrites par l'étudiant-interprète et sont présentées en tant que réalisation partielle des critères de leur cours.*

### **Kaija Saariaho – Sept Papillons (2000)**

The Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952) worked on her butterfly miniatures during rehearsals for her glacially passionate opera *L'Amour de Loin* in Salzburg. Categorized as a spectralist, the interrelation of timbre, harmony, and visual ideas are more important in Saariaho's compositions than melody and rhythm. Painted in delicate timbres, the cello is a microphone for the soft movements of a butterfly. Fragments of sound appear and reappear as fleeting rays of light. The Papillons are ephemeral and subtle; a fragile etching without beginning or end. As Saariaho expressed, these impressionistic details are "a metaphor for one's life line which so easily gets broken."

### **György Ligeti – Sonate for Solo Cello (1948-53)**

In 1949, the Stalinist regime took over Hungary and banned all modern music, rendering composer György Ligeti's more experimental works censored. To retain a sense of artistic freedom, he moved away from his earlier Hungarian-folk classical style to develop an otherworldly synthesis of musical languages. His *Sonate for Solo Cello* represents part of this rebellious stylistic transformation. Ligeti wrote the "Dialogo" (1948) for a female cello student who he was secretly in love with while studying at the Kolosvar Conservatory. She thanked him for the piece and never played it, unaware of his admiration. The cello being a natural medium to sing gypsy melodies, the "Dialogo" recalls Hungarian and Romanian folk idioms, much in the style of Bartok or Kodaly. According to Ligeti, it is a conversation between two voices. Each string of the cello is used differently, portraying conventional notions of gender with a masculine voice that is lower and quieter than a more rhapsodic feminine voice, alluding to Ligeti's romantic shyness. In 1953, a different cellist asked Ligeti for a sonata, so he wrote the "Capriccio" to accompany his rejected musical love letter. Written in sonata-allegro form, this second movement is more tonally experimental than the "Dialogo," channelling gamelan-esque snippets, allusions to Bartok's more aggressive style, and a fascination with Paganini's virtuosic violin caprices. The work was first publicly performed in 1976.

### **Anton Webern – Two Pieces for Cello and Piano (1899) and Little Pieces for Cello and Piano, Op. 11 (1914)\***

In 1899, Anton Webern was a 15-year-old student at the Klagenfurt Gymnasium, just beginning to experiment with composing. The "Zwei Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier" were his first completed effort, though he did not deem them opus-worthy (Webern only started using opus numbers in 1908). He was a cellist and his mother was a pianist, an opportune combination. The pieces are utterly tonal, gentle, and tuneful. They are simple and contained, but there are contrapuntal moments subtly ambitious for a beginning composer. The pieces were rediscovered by Piatagorsky and published in 1970.

One of Webern's most famous instrumental miniatures, "Drei Kleine Stücke," is a highly distilled aesthetic experience. Although he regarded it fondly, he worried that people would think it was too experimental and would not understand it. The work is meticulously composed using unordered statements of the twelve chromatic pitches as musical ideas, similar to the method of 12-tone serialism codified by his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg, in 1920. The Little Pieces are aptly named—they are only 9, 13, and 10 measures long. This is magnifying glass music. Blink, and you may miss it.

\*I will be performing these two works as a Webern sandwich à la Matt Haimovitz—tonal bread, 12-tone filling.

### **Jocelyn Morlock – Halcyon (2003)**

Jocelyn Morlock is a JUNO award-winning composer based in Vancouver, BC. Here are her notes on "Halcyon":

"Halcyon: A bird, otherwise known as the kingfisher, believed to calm storms during the time of its incubation. According to legend, Alcyon's husband Ceyx is drowned at sea, with his last thought being of her and that, if he doesn't live, he may return to her after death. When his body floats back to her, out of grief she throws herself into the sea, but as she does, she is turned into a bird. In her sorrow, she flies over her husband and enfolds him with her wings. The gods take pity on them, and turn both of them into kingfishers. During the two weeks around the Winter Solstice in which the kingfishers nest and incubate their young, the weather is unusually placid, hence the term 'Halcyon Days.'"

### **Dmitry Shostakovich – Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor, Op. 40 (1934)**

In May of 1934, Shostakovich was in Leningrad at a festival premiering of his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He kept busy with more than just professional engagements, for it was at this time that he fell in love with a 20-year-old university student, Yelena Konstantinovskaya, who was working as a translator for the festival. He had married Nina Varzar two years prior, and although they had agreed to an open marriage, Dmitry's affair stirred much turmoil in their relationship. Shostakovich's summer was a daze of lovesickness for Yelena, suggestions of divorce from Nina, and a frustrating inability to compose music. But, in mid-August he began writing his cello sonata and completed it within four weeks. Nina and Dmitry divorced in 1935, but made amends and remarried with the birth of their first child in 1936. Although their relationship underwent tremors, they remained married thereafter.

Shostakovich wrote his Opus 40 for cellist Victor Kubatsky, his friend and recital partner, intending for it to pair with the Rachmaninoff sonata for cello and piano. Beginning with his cello sonata, Shostakovich attempted to compose in a simpler and more expressive musical language, and this piece is indeed one of his more melodic and graceful works. The lyricism, regular phrase lengths, and classical form (sonata movement – scherzo – largo – rondo) shocked his contemporaries. However, the piece still bears his signature waves of fierceness and solemnity, and he avoided writing a "petty-bourgeois formalist" ending. Many of Shostakovich's works were censored by Soviet authorities, but his cello sonata was never banned.