

Department of Music
Junior Recital
8:00 p.m. April 8, 2017



Alexander Woods, piano and harpsichord
with Akira Nagao, violin & Savannah Meadors, cello

Étude symphonique, Op. 28

Cécile Chaminade
1857–1944

Sonate (1946–48)

Allegro con moto

Lied

Chorale et variations

Henri Dutilleux
1916–2013

❧ INTERMISSION ❧

Sonata in G Major, K. 13

Sonata in C Major, K. 132

Sonata in A Minor, K. 175

Domenico Scarlatti
1685–1757

Trio in E-flat Major, Hob. XV/29

Poco allegretto

Andantino ed innocentemente

Finale (Allemande): Presto assai

Joseph Haydn
1732–1809

Mr. Nagao, violin; Ms. Meadors, cello



In the sensitive acoustic environment of Lyman Hall, your neighbors can hear you! Please be considerate of the audience and performers and silence your telephone ringers, beepers, and alarm watches. Recording devices and cameras may not be used during the performance.

It is customary to hold all applause until the end of a piece or set of pieces.

Audience members arriving late will be seated during a suitable break in the program.

PROGRAM NOTES

CHAMINADE Despite her status as a spectacular concert pianist and a gifted composer, Cécile Chaminade was largely overlooked for most of the twentieth century. One might attribute this lack of recognition to the decidedly tepid reviews from contemporary and posthumous critics, who, focused on her role as a woman, found her work either unbecomingly masculine or too feminine to be taken seriously. Today Chaminade's reputation is still modest at best, but a growing number of audiences and performers are rediscovering her works. Chaminade was born and raised in Paris, where from a young age she studied violin, piano, and composition. Her father would not permit her to attend the prestigious Paris Conservatoire, so she instead received in-home tutoring from its instructors. Chaminade composed the majority of her large-scale works early on in her career, including the *Suite d'orchestre* (1881), the comic opera *La Sévillane* (1882), and the *Concertstück*, Op. 40, for piano and orchestra (1888). From the 1890s onward Chaminade's compositional output consisted mostly of songs and short character pieces for piano, but her popularity as a performer was beginning to grow. Beginning in 1892 she regularly travelled to England to give concerts for Queen Victoria, and by 1900 several Chaminade appreciation clubs were founded in major cities across the United States. In 1908 Chaminade trekked across the Atlantic to give a concert tour for her American fans, dazzling them with her original works for piano. In 1913 she was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur*, becoming the first woman composer to receive France's highest order. Amidst health difficulties and the onset of World War I, Chaminade gradually ceased performing and composing, but her piano playing has been preserved through numerous piano rolls and gramophone recordings.

Chaminade's piano works run the gamut from gentle and pleasing to impassioned and show-stopping. The Op. 28 *Étude symphonique* covers some of both realms, with two recurring sections that evoke the lush, richly fleshed-out textures afforded by a symphony. The piece is not particularly adventurous from a compositional standpoint, but rather aims to charm the audience with tuneful melodic content, ample keyboard acrobatics, intertwining rhythms between the hands, and lots of room for the performer to take expressive liberties.

DUTILLEUX The year 1948 witnessed the completion of several important works in the twentieth-century classical canon, including John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano, Elliott Carter's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, and Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila* Symphony. Each of these pieces introduced novel and vastly different conceptions of sound and time to the musical world. Within such a climate, Henri Dutilleux's 1948 piano sonata was not momentarily earth-shattering. He considered it to be his "Opus 1:" no doubt a landmark composition, but still not a fully-mature work. Dutilleux studied at the conservatories in Douai and Paris, and eventually won the prestigious *Prix de Rome* for composition in 1938. He began to cultivate a personal style after the Second World War, demonstrating his aptitude for large-scale writing with two symphonies (1950-51 and 1955-59). Dutilleux continued to turn out colorful orchestral compositions for the remainder of his career, and even received commissions for a cello concerto (*Tout un monde lointain...*, 1967-70) and violin concerto (*L'arbre des songes*, 1979-85) from Mstislav Rostropovich and Isaac Stern. He also penned several significant chamber works, including the string quartet *Ainsi la nuit* (1973-76) and *Les citations* for oboe, harpsichord, double bass, and percussion (1985, revised 2010). Aside from his work as a composer, Dutilleux served as the music director for Radio France from 1945-1963 and held faculty posts at several universities and institutes, including the Paris Conservatoire and Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts.

Broadly speaking, Dutilleux's music is notable for its vibrant colors and creative textural elements. The piano sonata is no exception, conjuring up a unique sonic palette from a blend of diatonic, chromatic, modal, and octatonic pitch sets. The *Allegro con moto* has two opening themes that are propulsive yet somewhat emotionally detached. The middle section of the movement veers into softer, more shadowy territory, then

builds to a thickly-textured climax before calming down to recount the two main themes. The contemplative second movement integrates lyrical melodies with a variety of coloristic effects. While the first and last sections accurately fit the title *Lied* (German for “song”), the middle portion contains virtually no melodic content. Instead, it features a sweep of soft undulations that eventually swirl out of control. The last movement begins with a clangorous main theme that is followed by four variations: *Vivace*, *Un poco più vivo*, *Calmo*, and *Prestissimo*. The first two variations are locked in perpetual motion, taking a few distinct musical threads and weaving them into a variety of textures. The third variation is subdued and ethereal, making use of the piano’s entire range to explore all the different colors available within a soft dynamic. The final variation brings a flurry of excited energy, inexorably progressing to a bombastic re-statement of the original theme.

SCARLATTI Having written over 550 keyboard sonatas, Domenico Scarlatti was one of the most prolific composers of the Baroque era (1600–1750). Sheer volume alone, however, is not what distinguishes his work. Scarlatti’s sonatas are set apart by their charming ingenuity, profound expressiveness, and formidable technical challenges. They showcase the keyboard’s full range of musical capabilities, no doubt reflecting the composer’s own mastery of the instrument. One story, for example, depicts Scarlatti besting Handel at the harpsichord during a 1708 contest in Rome. It was not until his move to Lisbon in 1719, however, that Scarlatti began his keyboard writing in earnest. There, in the service of King João V, he gave harpsichord lessons to the talented princess Maria Bárbara. Scarlatti later accompanied the princess to Spain (upon her marriage to the Spanish prince Ferdinand), where he spent the rest of his career composing, performing, teaching, and absorbing a variety of musical influences. Echoes of Spanish folk music recur throughout the sonatas, emulated by the harpsichord’s guitar-like plucked strings. Other trademarks include surprising key changes, dissonant chords, and calling for the hands to cross over one another. With regard to form, Scarlatti’s sonatas differ from those of later composers such as Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven. They are typically divided into two repeated sections, where the first presents three or more distinct strands of material, and the second introduces new ideas and builds upon ones stated previously.

It is common to perform Scarlatti’s sonatas in sets of two or three. Ralph Kirkpatrick, one of the preeminent Scarlatti scholars, believed that the composer himself wrote them in complementary pairs, but this is not accepted universally. Regardless, performers and audiences may take great delight in hearing the sonatas mixed and matched with one another, highlighting the musical contrasts that help to define Scarlatti’s creative genius. This evening’s set begins with a spritely sonata in G major, distinguished by its use of rapidly repeated notes and long sequences. The C-major sonata is marked *Cantabile* (singing), and thus possesses a slower, more expressive demeanor. The final piece is fiery and dramatic, featuring dense cluster chords and temperamental changes in texture.

HAYDN Although Haydn’s earliest keyboard trios date from as far back as 1760, it is only the 29 “late” trios (written after 1783) that are considered truly significant within the corpus of his chamber music. In most of these works, the violin and cello play an accompanimental role, while the piano takes the lead. Nevertheless, the strings add essential rhythmic and harmonic elements to the music, and in the later trios from the mid-1790s, they gain more independence. Haydn composed around a dozen trios while he was in the service of the Esterházy Court in Vienna, but took a brief hiatus from writing keyboard music when he departed for London in 1791. During his stay there, Haydn wrote the first six of his “London” symphonies, working with the violinist and impresario Johann Peter Salomon to produce concerts featuring his works. When Haydn returned to London for a second time in 1794–1795, however, he turned out three sets of piano trios, including the famous “Gypsy” trio in G major. An additional and final set, dedicated to the renowned pianist Therese Jansen Bartolozzi, was written at the very end of Haydn’s stay in London, or perhaps just after his return to Vienna. Tonight’s trio is the last in the Bartolozzi collection.

As is common in Haydn's late eighteenth-century works, this trio departs from traditional models of form and harmony. With regard to orchestration, the piano tends to remain in the foreground, but also engages in fluid dialogue with the other instruments to generate humor, expressiveness, and excitement. The sunny and regal first movement opens with two contrasting sections centered in E-flat major, then moves to a dark interlude in E-flat minor. The opening sections are then repeated in the form of two spirited variations, leading to a dynamic and grandiose ending. The second movement is set in the distant key of B major, featuring an unassuming yet thoughtful melody played by the piano and the violin. This material is combined with more brooding and melodramatic moments as well, giving the entire movement a complex and deeply poignant character. The Finale is marked "In the German Style" (also "Allemande" in some editions) to denote its similarity to a jolly dance tune, or maybe even a boisterous tavern song. Flashy melodic fragments are passed between the violin and the piano, while the cello provides rhythmic and harmonic foundation and its own tuneful interjections. Comical meter shifts, dramatic pauses, and plenty of good cheer all work together to make this last movement a rousing finale.

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