



Claremont
Graduate
University

CGU Concerts

German Music: Bridging Bach, Schumann, and Strauss

*December 3, 2021, 4:15 p.m.
Albrecht Auditorium, Stauffer Hall of Learning
925 N. Dartmouth Ave., Claremont*

Pin Fei Tang

cello

Assisted by Karen Lee, *piano*

Program

Suite for violoncello [Eb], No. 4, BWV 1010

Johann Sebastian Bach

(b1685; d1750)

Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrée I & II
Gigue

Sonata for violoncello and piano [F], Op. 6

Richard Strauss

(b1864; d1949)

Allegro con brio
Andante ma non troppo
Allegro vivo

Fantasiestücke for piano and violoncello [a], Op. 73

Robert Schumann

(b1810; d1856)

Zart und mit Ausdruck
Lebhaft, Leicht
Rash und mit Feuer

This concert is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree for Ms. Tang.

Next CGU Concert:

Works by: J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Ginastera, and Liszt

Ying Han, *piano*

Wednesday, December 8, 4:15 p.m.

Albrecht Auditorium, Stauffer Hall of Learning

925 N. Dartmouth Ave., Claremont

Please turn off cell phones.

Program Notes

*Dear friends: I would like to use this opportunity to explore some of the cello repertoire that are not often performed on the stage nowadays but are magnificent compositions. The theme of the recital is German music across one and half centuries from the Baroque music to the early 20th century.
Thank you for joining me.*

Bach Suite No. 4, BWV 1010

The six cello Suites, BWV 1007-1012, are unaccompanied cello suites by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). They are the most frequently performed solo compositions ever written for cello. Bach composed the suites from 1717-1723 while serving as Kapellmeister in Kothen. The suites consist of a Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Bourrée I & II, and Gigue. Besides the opening Prelude, each movement is a particular type of dance.

Suite No.4 is one of the most technically demanding suites among the six suites. The E flat key on cello is awkward and uncomfortable; it requires many extended left-hand positions. The flat key is less resonant on the cello, so it is demanding for the performer to produce a full sound. There are 6 movements in the suite:

- The Prelude consists of difficult flowing quaver movement with big leaps between the octaves. The quaver sections contrast with the Cadenza sections. It gives the listeners a feeling of traveling from one place to another. The Prelude also features ascending low to high notes.
- Allemande is a sweet, charming dance without much accent or over dramatic feeling.
- Courante is a very lively but elegant dance with the triplets in the $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.
- The Sarabande obscures the stressed second beat, which is a basic characteristic of the $\frac{3}{4}$ dance. It is full of double/triple stops and trills which enrich the texture and provides variety of color changes.
- Bourrée I and II are contrasting dance forms. Bourrée I is bright and spirited with a faster tempo. Bourrée II is mellow and lyrical with a slightly slower tempo.
- Gigue is a playful and cheerful dance, full of energy and fast notes. This exciting approach brings the piece to the highest peak to enclose the suite.

Strauss Sonata in F Major Op.6

Richard G. Strauss (1864-1949) was a German composer, pianist, violinist, and conductor. He was one of the leading composers of the late Romantic and early modern eras. He represents late German Romanticism which pioneered the combination of an advanced harmonic style with subtleties of orchestration. His works cover a wide range of compositions: solo and chamber works, orchestral tone poems and symphonies, concertos, Lieders, and Operas.

This cello sonata was one of his early compositions, composed in 1883 when Strauss was nineteen years old. It is full of youthfulness, hopefulness, and victory. He dedicated the piece to his dear friend, the Czech cellist Hanus Wihan, who gave the premiere the same year. Soon after the premiere, this composition became a standard of cello repertoire. The sonata is in a classical three movements form:

- *Allegro con brio*
- *Andante ma non troppo*
- *Finale: Allegro vivo*

The *Allegro con brio* is in a sonata form and begins with a series of the heroic chords at the onset. The chords are followed by an intimate and lyrical theme, serving as a contrast element through the whole movement. It is technically challenging to constantly switch positions between the high range notes and the intense chords. The heroic spirit and the joyfulness is penetrating throughout the piece.

The *Andante ma non troppo* is a gorgeous serenade, having a heavy and introspective mood. The middle section contrasts the dark theme that begins the movement and is a brighter, high-pitched melody. This symbolizes hope, light, and determination, especially when the harmony modulates to the major key towards the end of the movement.

The *Allegro vivo* is an energetic, virtuosic, and victorious movement. Dotted rhythms alter with the lyrical melodic lines and together bring the piece technically and emotionally to triumphant climax.

This sonata represents a combination of Strauss post romanticism and the modern expanded harmonic musical style.

Schumann Fantasiestücke Op.73 For cello and Piano

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a German composer, pianist, and influential music critic. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Romantic era. Schumann left the study of law and instead pursued a career as a virtuoso pianist.

Fantasiestücke was composed in 1849 and was originally intended for clarinet and piano, but Schumann indicated that the clarinet part could be also performed on viola or cello. He wrote the pieces over two days. Schumann was fond of the moniker “fantasiestücke” as he used the title in several of his other works.

The piece is divided into three parts:

- Zart und mit Ausdruck (Tender and with expression)
- Lebhaft, leicht (Lively, light)
- Rasch und mit Feuer (Quick and with fire)

The *Zart und mit Ausdruck* movement is in A minor. It begins dreamily with hints of melancholy, but concludes with resolution and hope in A major, looking forward to the next movement.

The *Lebhaft, Leicht* second movement is in A major and is playful, upbeat, energetic, and positive, with a central section modulating to F major with chromatic triplets in dialogue with the piano.

The *Rasch und mit Feuer* third movement is in A major again. The pace suddenly drives into a frenzy of passion and fiery energy, bordering on the irrational. It ends exuberantly with a triumphant close.

Each part has delightful and unexpected harmonic shifts to give the listeners a new and distant world of expression. The persistent harmonic alternations, frequent mood changes, and development through the repetition of musical fragments are particularly characteristic of Schumann’s compositional approach. This fantasy offering from Schumann promotes the fundamental Romantic idiom that creative expression is the product of the artist’s unrestricted imagination.