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An Abstract of a Graduate Piano Recital

Miriam Gisselquist Jensen

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Jensen in partial fulfillment of the
Degree of Master of Science
is hereby approved

AN ABSTRACT OF A GRADUATE
PIANO RECITAL

by

Miriam Gisselquist Jensen
B.A., Augsburg College, 1983

C. W. White

Creative Work
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of
St. Cloud State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Science

W. J. ...
Dean
School of Graduate Studies

St. Cloud, Minnesota

August, 1986

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This creative work submitted by Miriam Gisselquist Jensen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

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A. Recital Program

B. Musical Examples

Carmen White

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preferences and as a representation of a variety of styles. These styles include the structured prelude and fugue and sonata-allegro forms, and, as a contrast, the very free-styled fantasia form. A knowledge of performance practices and the understanding of different styles of music is essential in the field of piano pedagogy.

J. S. Bach (1685-1750) composed two sets of twenty-four preludes and fugues, each representing a different major or minor key. The prelude and fugue form stem from the sixteenth century toccata and ricercar. The toccata was quite improvisatory in nature and was intended to show the skill of the performer. The ricercar was a structured piece where a theme was continuously developed in variations. As the Baroque era developed, the emphasis on clearly articulated and symmetrical phrases became strong and influenced the toccata and ricercar. Melodic sequences and imitation helped provide this phrase structure and are evident in the twenty-four Bach Preludes and Fugues.

A solo piano recital was given on Sunday, March 16, 1986, as partial fulfillment of the Master of Science in Piano Pedagogy degree at St. Cloud State University. Music from the Baroque, Romantic, and Twentieth Century style periods was chosen according to the performer's preference and as a representation of a variety of styles. These styles include the structured prelude and fugue and sonata-allegro forms, and, as a contrast, the very free-styled fantasia form. A knowledge of performance practices and the understanding of different styles of music is essential in the field of piano pedagogy.

J. S. Bach (1685-1750) composed two sets of twenty-four preludes and fugues, each representing a different major or minor key. The prelude and fugue form stems from the sixteenth century toccata and ricercar. The toccata was quite improvisatory in nature and was intended to show the skill of the performer. The ricercar was a structured piece where a theme was continuously developed in repetition. As the Baroque era developed, the emphasis on clearly articulated and symmetrical phrases became strong and influenced the toccata and ricercar. Melodic sequence and imitation helped provide this phrase structure and are evident in the twenty-four Bach Preludes and Fugues.

The Prelude and Fugue XXII in B-flat minor served as the opening invocation for this recital. They are from Bach's first book, entitled Well Tempered Clavier, Volume 1. The Prelude is made up of a simple motive that can be easily heard (example 1). Bach is able to take this simplicity and conceive an expressive and solemn piece of music that can be compared to the greatest of his Passion music.¹

The motive begins simply by using two ascending tones in the tonic chord, connected with a passing tone. This ascending pattern continues over a tonic pedal point, and because it doesn't resolve, suggests a desire to grasp or plead for something that seems beyond its reach. The chord progression that follows this motive brings even more tension and pleading to the music.

The five-note motive must be played in a way that will make the listener sense the striving that never seems to be satisfied. In order to express this, one must first find the longer phrases. Within these phrases, the motives work together to shape each phrase. The climax of the first phrase is reached on the highest tone and most intense harmony. It is then resolved through the use of the three notes of the motive in contrary motion to a tonic tonality in measure seven. From here the motives move through secondary dominant tonalities to the dominant key in measure thirteen, which is the end of the second long phrase. An episode of two measures leads to the start of the third

phrase in the tonic key in measure fifteen. This phrase climaxes on the sub-dominant and finally resolves to the dominant, where the final phrase begins.

The Prelude climaxes in a rolled first inversion dominant ninth chord--the final cry of pleading. The last two measures then resolve to a Tierce de Picard on the final chord--a reassurance that the pleading will be heard.

The five-voice fugue that follows also displays the same Passion music qualities. On the surface, it is simply a beautiful piece of music, but it becomes even more beautiful and fascinating as its contrapuntal complexities are explored.

The subject begins with two half notes in descending order, I - V, followed by a dynamic leap of a minor ninth. Quarter notes descend back to a tonic chord tone where the tonal answer will begin (example 2). It is difficult to grasp the structure of this fugue for many reasons. For one, the subject answer often begins before the first subject is completed. Also, the countersubject, starting at measure four, is very long--twelve measures. There is also much stretto of the Fugue subject's first two notes, most notably at measures fifty through fifty-two. Here it is difficult to distinguish where the subject is beginning, since the second note of the subject very often serves as the first note of the following subject (example 3). Because of the difficulty this poses in projecting the

subjects throughout the Fugue, it is best to shape the two notes so that the first is stronger than the second (example 4). It is also important that the entire subject be heard above the other contrapuntal voices. All these complexities allow the pianist and listener to continually find new discoveries masterfully woven throughout this Fugue.

To parallel the form of the Baroque prelude and fugue, the next selection performed was Prelude and Fugue No. 2 in D Major by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). This was one of six Preludes and Fugues that Mendelssohn wrote between 1827 and 1837. He felt he needed to discipline himself in composing some structured forms after having recently written the free-styled "Songs Without Words". He realized that the Preludes and Fugues probably would not be played much since the structured Baroque preludes and fugues of Bach had not been revived fully at this time.² Mendelssohn's Preludes and Fugues differ from Bach's in that they portray few of the academic contrapuntal and tonal characteristics of the Baroque era. Instead, the Mendelssohn seems to be conceived harmonically and employs a much more lyric melodic style, as is typical in the Romantic era.

The Prelude is an allegretto three-voice movement. The lyrical melody is found in the "soprano" voice. The bass forms the harmonic foundation with running eighth note octaves. The middle voice consists of sixteenth notes and serves mainly to complete the harmonic structure laid out by the soprano and bass voices. The middle voice, as well as the

melody, is played by the right hand. Herein lies one of the main pedagogical problems--distinguishing between the two upper voices when both are played in one hand (example 5). This requires sensitivity of touch and control of balance in the individual fingers.

The phrases are divided mainly into two-measure groupings. These combine to form larger phrases. It is not difficult to distinguish where the phrases begin and end because of the very evident cadences. It is necessary to first shape the top voice. The other two voices can then be shaped to develop the phrases harmonically. The Prelude is written primarily in closely related keys--I, IV, V. Starting in measure fifteen, though, is a contrasting section in the relative minor key of B minor. This continues until measure thirty-one returns to D Major and a structure similar to the opening fourteen measures. Seven measures from the end, the Prelude climaxes on a v^7/v tonality and then resolves to the tonic key.

The four-voice Fugue that follows has a simple three-measure subject that can be shaped this way: (example 6). Two fragments of this subject are utilized throughout the piece and should be brought out in the phrasing in which they were originally played (example 7). Since so many running eighth note patterns occur in this Fugue, the main difficulties are in the fingering and pedalling. Along with the contrapuntal lines being passed between hands, much finger substitution will also be required.

Slow hands-alone work to find the most legato fingering possible without the use of pedal is helpful (example 8).

The Fugue's harmonic form is similar to that of the Prelude's in that they both have a section in the relative minor key. The Fugue's subjects outline the tonality of each subject phrase and primarily stay in closely related keys.

To conclude the first half of the recital, a piece by Samuel Barber (1910-1981) was chosen. Written in 1949, his Sonata for Piano (the only sonata of this type that he wrote) is a four-movement work in classical sonata form. The first movement, Allegro energico, was performed for this program.

Barber is known for combining past forms with contemporary tonality and rhythm.³ This is very evident in the sonata-allegro form of the first movement of this sonata. The typical sonata-allegro form has three sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation. The exposition states two main themes and sometimes a closing theme. The first theme is in the tonic key and is connected to the second theme by a bridge that generally takes it to a closely related key. The development's purpose is to "work out" the musical ideas of the themes stated in the exposition. Usually the development dwells in the dominant key before resolving to the tonic in the recapitulation. The recapitulation then restates the exposition's themes in the tonic

and serves as a psychological relaxer after the unsettling effect of the development.

According to Nathan Broder, there are four main themes or motifs stated in the exposition of the Barber Sonata (examples 9-12).⁴ The first theme is rhythmically restless and provides admirable subjects for contrast and working out. All but the third theme are worked out in the development.

Throughout the work, Barber explores polytonality and twelve-tone writing; yet there is always a sense of tonality. Even some of the chromatic passages are very lyrical.

The recapitulation restates all the themes--the first, especially, in a much more grandiose fashion. Bigger leaps, fuller chords, a fortissimo marking, and octave doubling in both hands make the recapitulation big and exciting. As is typical of the classical sonata-allegro form, a coda follows at measure 149. It begins quietly and ends in a frenzy.

As is the case in the piano music of Frederic Chopin, this piece is definitely music for the piano. It fits the hands well and shows off the capabilities of both the performer and the instrument to produce soft lyric melodies as well as strident and jagged chords. The piece may be difficult to understand at first, but once the complexities of unfamiliar rhythms and tonalities are grasped, the Sonata proves to be very pianistic and exciting to perform.

The complexity of the rhythm is one of the main pedagogical problems. There are changing meters, changing accents, five notes against eight notes, and other complex rhythmic devices. With some careful counting, a metronome, and hands-alone practice, this problem can be alleviated. Another problem was this performer's unfamiliarity with Twentieth Century music. This prevented perceiving the musical line as easily as that from earlier periods. Critical listening and a complete grasp of the themes help to make the piece more understandable to both the performer and the listener.

After intermission, the program concluded with Robert Schumann's (1810-1856) *Fantasie in C Major, Op. 17*. It is possibly Schumann's greatest pianoforte work, according to David Dubal.⁵ The *Fantasie* was written in 1836 to raise funds for a monument to Beethoven. For reasons unknown, Schumann did not submit it for this purpose, but rather dedicated it to Franz Liszt.⁶ On its title page appears this poem written by Friedrich von Schlegel:

"Through all the tones
of Earth's many hued dreams
one soft-drawn note may be heard
by him who listens in secret."

Solomon Yonty believes this to be a reference to Schumann's wife, Clara (Wieck) Schumann, inferred from a letter that he had written her.⁷

The first movement is in sonata-allegro form. The eight-measure theme is stated in octaves in the right hand

with rapid sixteenth note patterns in the left hand. The melody contains five descending tones which are found frequently repeated throughout the first movement (example 13). These may be derived from a Beethoven song cycle about which Schumann had also written to Clara--"An die ferne Geliebte" ("To the distant beloved") (example 14).⁸

The development has a slower tempo than that of the exposition--Im Legenden ton ("In the style of a legend"). But it explores some of the same thematic material as the exposition (examples 15 and 16). It is written in the key of C minor. The recapitulation also begins in C minor, but returns to C Major for the last twenty-four measures.

The second movement is a triumphant march written in rondo form. The rondo form was traditionally the last movement of a work with multiple movements such as symphonies, concerti, sonatas, and other instrumental works. It is characterized by a simple theme (A) stated at the beginning and alternated with contrasting material throughout. The form of this rondo is ABACBA Coda, with a main theme that is exhilarating and brilliantly written for the piano. This movement is written almost entirely in E-flat Major, with a new subject stated in A-flat Major at measure 114, and it makes prolific use of dotted rhythms, which Schumann frequently used. The coda also contains dotted rhythms as well as "skips which have put fear into the hearts and hands of every pianist who has ever played it."⁹

The first two movements are physically taxing because of their many big chords and fast moving tempi. It is important to be able to hear the melody that can sometimes be hidden by these chords and tempi. Each of these movements is also very sectional. This causes difficulty in achieving unity; but it is the transcendental spirit that Schumann portrays, rather than the thematic substance, that is the main unifying factor in this work.¹⁰

Except for some of the late Beethoven Sonatas, last movements were generally written in a quick and lively tempo--sonata-allegro or rondo form. Schumann chose an unorthodox slow movement to end the Fantasie. It is written in a variation of a binary form. The classic binary form makes use of two themes--A and B. Theme A moves from tonic to dominant tonalities followed by B moving from dominant to tonic tonalities.

The form used in this movement begins with an introduction in the key of C Major. Section A starts in G Major and moves to section B in A-flat Major at measure twenty-nine. Section B delves into other unrelated keys such as F Major and D Major and finally ends on a half cadence in A Major. Sections A and B are stated again, this time starting in D minor. Section B begins in measure eighty-six in D-flat Major. After a long stretch of twenty-two measures in the key of G Major, the movement ends with a coda in the key of C Major. The peaceful style of the

third movement is a very effective way to end this monumental work. It portrays a spiritual calm and transcendence after the victorious second movement. No other piece could fittingly follow the Fantasie. That is why it served as the finale of this recital.

¹J. A. Fuller-Maitland. The '48': Bach's Wohltemperierte Clavier Book 1 (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1925), p. 34.

²Eric Warner. Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and His Age (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1963), p. 275-6.

³Arthur Cohn. The Collector's Twentieth-Century Music in the Western Hemisphere (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1961), p. 15.

⁴Nathan Broder. Samuel Barber (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1945), p. 69.

⁵David Dubal. "Robert Schumann's Piano Music." Piano Quarterly 131 Fall 1985, p. 61.

⁶Solomon Yonty. "Solo Piano Music (I) The Sonatas and Fantasie." Robert Schumann: The Man and His Music, Ed. Alan Walker (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 61.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 62.

⁹Dubal, loc. cit.

¹⁰Peter Gimpel. Jacket notes. Schumann Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17; Chopin Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49. Jakob Gimpel, Pianist. Genesis Records, Inc., 1972.

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APPENDIXES

Madame Recital

Madame Recital

Madame Recital

Madame Recital

Madame Recital

MURHAM GINGELQUEST JENSEN, piano

APPENDIX A

Recital Program

FRANZ SCHUBERT

WALDREISER, Op. 9, No. 2

FRANZ SCHUBERT

WALDREISER, Op. 9, No. 2

FRANZ SCHUBERT

FRANZ SCHUBERT

WALDREISER, Op. 9, No. 2
Liedersammlung, Op. 153, No. 1
Liedersammlung, Op. 153, No. 2
Liedersammlung, Op. 153, No. 3

The list of names and titles of the performers is printed
in the program of the concert.

Graduate Recital

ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
RECITAL HALL/PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1986
8:00 P.M.

MIRIAM GISSELQUIST JENSEN, piano

J.S. BACH PRELUDE AND FUGUE XXII IN B FLAT MINOR
W.T.C. I

FELIX MENDELSSOHN PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN D MAJOR, OPUS 35, NO. 2

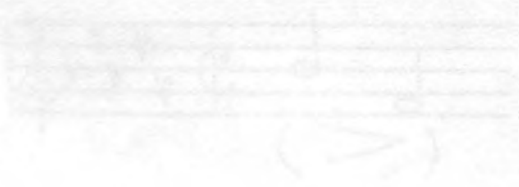
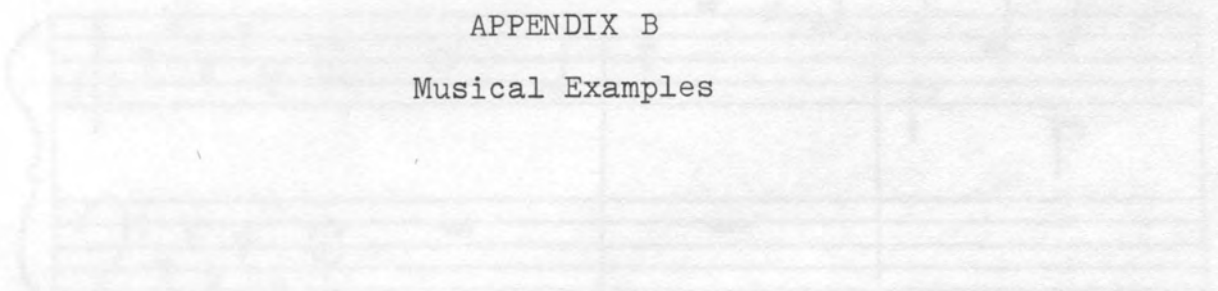
SAMUEL BARBER SONATA FOR PIANO, OPUS 26
Allegro energico

INTERMISSION

ROBERT SCHUMANN FANTASIA, OPUS 17
Durchaus fantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen
Mässig. Burchaus energisch
Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten

*The use of cameras and tape recorders during the performance is prohibited.
Ms. Jensen is a student of Carmen Wilbite.*

APPENDIX B
Musical Examples



example 1, m. 1-2



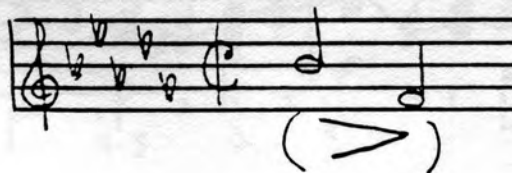
example 2, m. 1-3



example 3, m. 50-52



example 4, m. 1



example 5, m. 2-3

Musical notation for example 5, measures 2-3. The score is written on two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Both staves are in the key of D major (one sharp). The treble staff contains a melodic line with a long slur over measures 2 and 3. The bass staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and a slur over measures 2 and 3.

example 6, m. 1-4

Musical notation for example 6, measures 1-4. The score is written on a single bass clef staff in the key of D major. It features a continuous eighth-note melodic line with a long slur over all four measures. There are also some markings below the staff, possibly indicating fingerings or dynamics.

example 7, m. 1, 3

Musical notation for example 7, measures 1 and 3. The score is written on a single bass clef staff in the key of D major. It shows two measures of music with eighth-note patterns and slurs. There are also some markings below the staff.

example 8, m. 43-44

Musical notation for example 8, measures 43-44. The score is written on two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in the key of D major. The notation includes fingerings (numbers 1-5) and slurs for both hands. The bass staff has additional markings below it, possibly indicating fingerings or dynamics.

example 9, m. 1-5

example 10, m. 23-26

example 11, m. 44

example 12, m. 47

example 13, m. 2-5



example 14, m. 62-64



example 15, m. 33-37 (exposition)



example 16, m. 129-133 (development)

