

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT CASADESUS (1899 – 1972)

Seyon Lee, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2009

Dissertation directed by: Professor Larissa Dedova
School of Music

Robert Casadesus, French pianist and composer, was born in Paris on April 7, 1899, and lived the life of a great artist until his untimely death on September 19, 1972. Casadesus did not have the international celebrity of Horowitz and Rubinstein but, as a pianist-composer, he expressed elegance and classicism through clarity and brilliance at the keyboard. This dissertation performance project pays tribute to a great virtuoso of the 20th century through selected piano works that shaped his artistic life.

The life of Robert Casadesus echoed his style as a pianist. From his upbringing in a prestigious musical family to finishing his studies at the renowned, Paris Conservatoire, Casadesus certainly enjoyed a rich musical background and training.

In 1921, Casadesus married Gabrielle L'Hôte whom he met in the class of

Diémer at the Paris Conservatoire. This marriage began a lifelong musical journey that formed one of the most successful duo-piano partnerships of all time. Together, they made exemplary duo-piano recordings.

A year later, Casadesus met Maurice Ravel and earned the composer's praise for his performance of "Le Gibet" from *Gaspard de la nuit*. Ravel and Casadesus performed and toured together, keeping a strong relationship built on great respect. Casadesus enthusiastically embraced the repertoire of this French composer and, in 1924, became the first pianist to give an all-Ravel program with the composer in attendance.

Casadesus excelled in performing the music of Ravel, Scarlatti, Rameau, Couperin, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, and Debussy. His playing was distinguished by extraordinary control, elegant simplicity, sparkling technique, objective clarity and absolute fidelity to the composer's text.

Besides being a renowned concert pianist, Casadesus was an artistic pedagogue who could verbalize the sound with a single gesture. As a recording artist, his recordings of Debussy, Ravel, Mozart concertos, and violin-piano duos with Zino Francescatti, still remain legendary. As a prolific composer, he explored rhythm, virtuosity, dissonant harmonies and contrapuntal textures in a neo-classical style.

The selected repertoire for my recitals consists entirely of major works, significant to Casadesus' artistic career. Some works remain as milestones in his life and almost all the works have been either frequently performed or recorded by Casadesus.

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT CASADESUS (1899-1972)

By

Seyon Lee

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2009

Advisory Committee:

Professor Larissa Dedova, Chair
Professor Rita Sloan
Professor Mikhail Volchok
Professor Donald Manildi
Professor Sung Won Lee

Table of Contents

CD Contents	1
-------------------	---

CD Contents

CD 1: Recital 1 - Saturday, May 10, 2008 in the Chorus Rehearsal Room - CSPAC

(Assisted by Margarita Glebov, piano)

1. Franz Schubert (1797-1828) *Fantasiën D. 940* for piano, 4 hands, in F minor

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) *Petite suite* for piano, 4 hands

2. En bateau
3. Cortège
4. Menuet
5. Ballet

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) *Six consolations*

6. No. 1 Andante con moto
7. No. 2 Un poco più mosso
8. No. 3 Lento placido
9. No. 4 Quasi Adagio
10. No. 5 Andantino
11. No. 6 Allegretto sempre cantabile

12. Liszt *Années de pèlerinage, 3e année. Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*

CD 2: Recital 2 - Friday, December 12, 2008 in Gildenhorn Recital Hall - CSPAC

(Assisted by Sooyung Jung, piano)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Concerto for piano & orchestra, K. 491, in C minor

1. Allegro
2. Larghetto
3. Allegretto

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) *Thème et variations, op. 73, in C# minor*

4. Theme – Quasi Adagio
5. N. 1 Lo stesso tempo
6. N. 2 Più mosso
7. N. 3 Un poco più mosso
8. N. 4 Lo stesso tempo
9. N. 5 Un poco più mosso
10. N. 6 Molto Adagio
11. N. 7 Allegretto moderato
12. N. 8 Andante molto moderato
13. N. 9 Quasi adagio
14. N. 10 Allegro vivo
15. N. 11 Andante molto moderato espressivo

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) *Valses nobles et sentimentales*

16. I Modéré _ très franc
17. II Assez lent _ avec une expression intense
18. III Modéré
19. IV Assez animé
20. V Presque lent _ dans un sentiment intime
21. VI Vif
22. VII Moins vif
23. VIII Épilogue

24. Encore: Thou, my everlasting portion

CD 3: Recital 3 - Saturday, October 31, 2009 in Gildenhorn Recital Hall - CSPAC

1. Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Pièces de clavecin. Gavotte avec 6 doubles

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) *Sonata no. 24, op. 78*, in F# major

2. Adagio cantabile – Allegro ma non troppo
3. Allegro vivace

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) *3 nouvelles études*

4. No. 1
5. No. 2
6. No. 3

7. Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) *Jeux d'eau*

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) *Fantasie, op. 17* in C major

8. Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen
9. Mässig. Durchaus energisch
10. Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten

11. Robert Casadesus (1899-1972) *Toccata, op. 40*