

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: SELECTED TWENTIETH-CENTURY
 NEOCLASSIC CELLO REPERTOIRE

 Juwon Moon, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2013

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 School of Music

In the twentieth century, various stylistic trends occurred in classical music. One of the most important of these was Neoclassicism, a reaction against the overstated emotion of Romanticism and the radical musical experimentation of the first two decades of the twentieth century. In order to reestablish the balanced aesthetic precepts and spirit of the classical period, composer Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) championed the neoclassic style in the 1920's.

Neoclassicism was adopted by composers seeking a variety of new styles and techniques to call their own. While incorporating classical elements such as tonal centers, balance, and clarity of form and texture, many composers endeavored to connect with new musical aspects, such as irregular rhythms, dissonances, and large amounts of chromaticism. My dissertation focuses on the unique ways in which six individual composers of this era crafted common classical characteristic with diverse new materials.

The twentieth century saw many composers contributing to the enrichment of the cello repertoire. Many of their compositions exhibit exceptional development of cello techniques. As a cellist, I strove to explore their great virtuosity, as well as to demonstrate how each composer approached and aided in the definition of musical Neoclassicism.

The first recital included the three Sonatas for cello and piano by Bohuslav Martinů. The second recital was composed of the Sonata for Solo Cello, Op. 25, No. 3 by Paul Hindemith, the Sonata for Violin and Cello by Maurice Ravel, and the Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 143 by Francis Poulenc. The third recital consisted of the *Suite Italienne* for Cello and Piano by Igor Stravinsky and the Sinfonia Concertante Op. 125 by Sergei Prokofiev.

The three recitals comprising this dissertation were performed on April 7, 2012 in the Ulrich Recital Hall, February 10, 2013 in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and May 5, 2013 in the Ulrich Recital Hall at the University of Maryland, College Park. Compact disc recordings of these recitals are available in the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland.

SELECTED TWENTIETH-CENTURY NEOCLASSIC CELLO REPERTOIRE

By

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University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
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Doctor of Musical Arts Dissertation Recital 1

Juwon Moon Cello

Assisted by Li-Tan Hsu..... Piano

April 7, 2012, 8pm
Ulrich Recital Hall

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1 (1939)

Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959)

Poco Allegro
Lento
Allegro con brio

BRIEF INTERMISSION

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 2 (1941)

Allegro
Largo
Allegro commodo

BRIEF INTERMISSION

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 3 (1952)

Poco Andante
Andante
Allegro (ma non Presto)

Doctor of Musical Arts Dissertation Recital 2

Juwon MoonCello

Assisted by Jenny Wu Violin

Hsiang-Ling Hsiao Piano

February 10, 2013, 5pm

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Sonata for Solo Cello, Op. 25, No. 3 (1923)

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Lebhaft, sehr markiert (mit festen Bogenstrichen)

Mäßig schnell, Gemächlich (durchweg sehr leise)

Langsam - Ruhig

Lebhafte Viertel (ohne jeden Ausdruck und stets pianissimo)

Mäßig schnell (sehr scharf markierte Viertel)

Sonata for Violin and Cello (1922)

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Allegro

Très vif

Lent

Vif, avec entrain

INTERMISSION

Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 143 (1948)

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

Allegro – Tempo di Marcia: Sans trainer

Cavatine: Très calme

Ballabile: Très anime et gai

Finale: Largo, très librement - presto subito

Doctor of Musical Arts Dissertation Recital 3

Juwon Moon Cello

Assisted by Hsiang-Ling Hsiao Piano

May 5, 2013, 2pm
Ulrich Recital Hall

Suite Italienne for Cello and Piano (1932)

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Introduzione
Serenata
Aria
Tarantella
Minuetto and Finale

INTERMISSION

Sinfonia Concertante Op. 125 (1952)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Andante
Allegro Giusto
Andante Con Moto – Allegretto – Allegro Marcato

Program Notes

Recital 1

Bohuslav Martinů's (1890–1959) wrote three sonatas for cello and piano during his twenty years of exile from Czechoslovakia, between 1939 and 1952: The first sonata was written in 1939, the second sonata in 1941 and the third sonata in 1952.

A sense of darkness permeates all three sonatas; for instance, Martinů wrote both cello and piano parts in the deeper register, which is where the keyboard can easily overwhelm the cello, causing difficulty in achieving balance.

Martinů's three cello sonatas occupy an important part of the composer's output and contribute a distinguished repertoire to the cello sonata genre of the twentieth-century composer.

The first sonata was composed in Paris in 1939, when Martinů was separated from his homeland due to its occupation by the Germans. This is an uncharacteristic work, perhaps indicative of Martinů's traumatic sadness. Martinů gives the cello line in the uncertainty, though the cello gradually does find its own voice.¹

¹ Šafránek, Miloš. *Bohuslav Martinů. The Man and His Music*. Alfred A.Knopf, New York: The Ryerson Press, 1944. p.31

The second sonata (1941) is more characteristic of Martinů's customary style, with its sunnier character. Martinů utilized a significant number of advanced techniques, including shifting rhythms and meters, in this work. The cellist is called upon to project a tuneful melodic line while accurately executing tricky rhythms.

The listener hears the tunes and dance rhythms of the brighter side of Czech folk music in the third cello sonata (1952). The third sonata is a strictly classical work in Martinů's use of clarity of texture and balance.²

The musical language of the three works is a perfect fusion of Martinů's neoclassic style with Czech Romanticism. In the frame of traditional sonata form structure, Martinů integrated tunes and dance rhythms of Czech folk music into these three pieces.

² (Kenneth Dommett 1989) "*Bohuslav Martinů Cello Sonatas*" accessed on April 9, 2013 <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/al.asp?al=CDH55185>

Program Notes

Recital 2

Although the cello compositions by Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) constitute only a small portion of his work, his Sonata for Cello Solo, Op. 25, No. 3 is surely regarded as one of the most popular representations of solo cello repertoire of the twentieth century.

Hindemith was perhaps the most significant composer in Germany to cultivate a German strain of Neoclassicism. As compared to the neoclassic works by Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), which exhibit a clear classical sonority of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1792), Hindemith's neoclassic style is quite different. His music owes more to the contrapuntal style of the Baroque Period (1600–1750), specifically that of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750).³ In the solo cello sonata Op. 25, No. 3, Hindemith juxtaposed Baroque language, e.g. the use of dotted figures or motoric playing styles with expressionistic traits leaning towards chromaticism, combined with numerous open fifths.⁴ This sonata is full of character and is surely reminiscent of German Romanticism.

³ "Hindemith Neoclassicism" accessed on May 14, 2013
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoclassicism_\(music\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoclassicism_(music))

⁴ "Paul Hindemith, Sonata for Solo Cello Op. 25, No. 3" accessed on May 13, 2013
<http://www.allmusic.com/composition/sonata-for-solo-cello-op-25-3-mc0002364823>

In 1922, Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) completed his Sonata for Violin and Cello and dedicated the piece to the memory of Claude Debussy (1862–1918).

In past centuries, the violin and cello have not often enjoyed a musical partnership. String duo repertoire was limited to the occasional amateur salon-music performance during the Classical and early-Romantic periods. By contrast, the twentieth-century composers such as Bohuslav Martinů, Maurice Ravel and Zoltán Kodály favored writing duo literature for professional musicians.⁵

Ravel's duo sonata is a challenging and virtuosic work, where the composer exploits the technical demands of violin and cello. In this work, Ravel's neoclassic style is presented in his use of form and organizational techniques. The four movements are all set in a traditional sonata form. The composer uses elements of cyclical thematic transformation to unify the work.

Ravel was exposed to the music of Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), who were influenced by Eastern European music.⁶ I have observed that the four movements convey a Hungarian folk flavor and modal melodies that sound more Eastern than Western.

⁵ (Todd E. Sullivan) "*DOUBLE PLAY - DUOS FOR VIOLIN AND CELLO*" accessed on April 7, 2013 http://cedillerecords.org/music/product_info.php?products_id=489

⁶ Demuth, Norman. *Ravel*, Collier Books: New York, NY 1947. P.43

One of the great melodists of the twentieth century, Francis Poulenc (1899–1963), belonged to the Paris-based group of composers, *Les Six*, and led the neo-classical movement. Following the death of a close friend in the 1930's, Poulenc rediscovered his Roman Catholic faith and replaced the ironic nature of neo-classicism with a new-found spiritual depth.⁷

Poulenc's neoclassicism shines with transparent simplicity in his Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 143. This sonata reflects his compositional personality: direct, tuneful, sentimental and melancholy. His harmonic language produced fresh and appealing melodies consisting of bright colors and clear rhythm.⁸

Poulenc composed at the piano, and this pianistic fluency is evident in the cello part of this sonata. Due to its technical difficulties, the work has been rarely performed until rather recently, even though its beauty is well known among cellists. It was dedicated to the French cellist Pierre Fournier (1906–1986), who had helped answer technical questions Poulenc asked pertaining to cello part.

⁷ (Roger Nichols 1992) "Francis Poulenc" accessed on March 13, 2013 http://www.chesternovello.com/default.aspx?TabId=2431&State_2905=2&ComposerId_2905=1241#Full

⁸ (Maurice Richter, July 2000) "*The Complete Chamber Music of Poulenc* " accessed on February 15, 2013 <http://www.lafolia.com/the-complete-chamber-music-of-poulenc/>

Program Notes

Recital 3

In the third program of my dissertation recitals, I have selected works from Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), who championed the neoclassical movement in the 1920's, and Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953), also a leader in the development of this style in Russia.

Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne* for cello and piano is an arrangement of several movements from his "Pergolesi" ballet *Pulcinella* (1919–1920). The *Suite Italienne* was not Stravinsky's first attempt to transform some of the numbers from a ballet into a work for solo string instrument and piano. In 1925, he wrote a Suite for violin and piano, after themes, fragments and pieces by Giambattista Pergolesi (1710–1736). In 1932, Stravinsky enlisted the aid of cellist Gregor Piatigorsky (1903–1976) to re-work the earlier Suite into the *Suite Italienne* for cello and piano. In this version, the order of movements is "Introductione," "Serenata," "Aria," "Tarantella," "Scherzino," and "Minuetto e Finale." In 1933, Stravinsky and violinist Samuel Dushkin (1891–1976) re-worked the Suite one final time for violin and piano.⁹

⁹(James Leonard) "*Suite Italienne*, for cello and piano" accessed on May 7,2013, <http://www.allmusic.com/composition/suite-italienne-for-cello-piano-after-pulcinella-transcribed-with-gregor-piatigorsky-mc0002366246>

This composition is the most pure example of Neoclassicism in this dissertation project. The clear harmonies and the joyful rhythm and melody look back to the classical clarity of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1792). Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne* is regarded as one of the most enjoyable neoclassic works.

Sergei Prokofiev's *Sinfonia Concertante*, Op. 125 (also called as *Symphony-Concerto*) is one of the most difficult large-scale works for cello and orchestra. This is a big and muscular work that requires excellent technical control: the cellist is called upon to make use of the instrument's entire range, and to show off technical tricks.

Prokofiev's Cello Concertos Op. 58 and Op. 125 are closely related, to the point that they are essentially two versions of same work. The premiere of the Concerto Op. 58 was not received well. Prokofiev apparently forgot about the work until he heard Rostropovich play it at a 1947 concert at the Moscow Conservatory. Rostropovich's performance of the concerto greatly impressed the composer and the audience. Prokofiev rewrote his concerto with advice from Rostropovich to create the *Sinfonia Concertante*, Op. 125. It is grander and stronger, and it is one of the most difficult works in the entire cello concerto repertoire.

The three movements are all expansive, with a variety of themes and tempos, justifying the symphonic implications of the title. The slow movement comes first in the order, with a broad *Andante* tempo, even though the second movement is the largest of the composition. The long second movement offers altering ideas and

moods, with great tension between the prominent solo part and the symphonic counterpart.

The finale has the character of variations on a broad, lyrical theme presented at the start by the soloist. At the end the cello ascends the heights, in Rostropovich's words, "as if spiraling up to the very summit of a domed roof," stopped only by the thumps of the timpani.¹⁰

¹⁰ (Hugh Macdonald) "Sinfonia Concertante by Sergei Prokofiev" accessed on March 13, 2013 <http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/music/sinfonia-concertante-sergei-prokofiev>

Recital 1 CD – Track Listings

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1 (1939)

Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959)

- [1] Poco Allegro
- [2] Lento
- [3] Allegro con brio

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 2 (1941)

- [4] Allegro
- [5] Largo
- [6] Allegro commodo

Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 3 (1952)

- [7] Poco Andante
- [8] Andante
- [9] Allegro (ma non Presto)

Recital 2 CD – Track Listings

Sonata for Solo Cello, Op. 25, No. 3 (1923) Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

- [1] Lebhaft, sehr markiert (mit festen Bogenstrichen)
- [2] Mäßig schnell, Gemächlich (durchweg sehr leise)
- [3] Langsam - Ruhig
- [4] Lebhaftes Viertel (ohne jeden Ausdruck und stets pianissimo)
- [5] Mäßig schnell (sehr scharf markierte Viertel)

Sonata for Violin and Cello (1922) Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

- [6] Allegro
- [7] Très vif
- [8] Lent
- [9] Vif, avec entrain

Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 143 (1948) Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

- [10] Allegro – Tempo di Marcia: Sans trainer
- [11] Cavatine: Très calme
- [12] Ballabile: Très anime et gai
- [13] Finale: Largo, très librement - presto subito

Recital 3 CD – Track Listings

Suite Italienne for Cello and Piano (1932)

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

- [1] Introduzione
- [2] Serenata
- [3] Aria
- [4] Tarantella
- [5] Minuetto and Finale

Sinfonia Concertante Op. 125 (1952)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

- [6] Andante
- [7] Allegro Giusto
- [8] Andante Con Moto – Allegretto – Allegro Marcato

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