A CENTURY OF PIANO REPERTOIRE: AN OVERVIEW OF SELECTED WORKS BY EUROPEAN COMPOSERS FROM 1809-1909

By

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ABSTRACT

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During much of the 19th - early 20th century, piano recital - solo and with orchestra, became one of the prominent forms of music entertainment throughout Europe. Further development of performance technique led to an abundance of newly written virtuosic repertoire aimed to capture and impress the audience. In addition, the instrument itself underwent substantial improvements, including expanded range, cast-iron frame and *sostenuto* pedal among others. In today’s world of piano music, it is most common to see the majority of performers dedicate a significant portion of their repertoire to the pieces written during that era.

The inspiration for my dissertation project came both from the desire to learn and perform some of the pinnacles of piano literature as well as discover what was happening in Europe between the years of 1809-1909 in terms of development in piano repertoire. In fact, at first I did not intend to focus specifically on these years, but rather discovered that the pieces which I was interested in learning all were written within this timeframe. This definitely caught my attention and gave me a certain focal point. I wanted to see how the composers represented in my project might have been influenced by each other in their writing and how piano music had evolved from Ludwig van Beethoven all the way to
Isaac Albeniz within just one hundred years. And while discovering these new and exciting pieces, it definitely became apparent to me that there were many connections between all of these composers and their works.

The programs of my three Dissertation recitals included the works by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Franz Liszt (1859-1867), Frederic Chopin (1810-1849), Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909).
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CD I

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Concerto No. 5, “Emperor”, Op. 73, E-flat Major
   I. Allegro
   II. Adagio un poco mosso
   III. Rondo. Allegro

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Concerto No. 2, Op. 18, C Minor
   I. Moderato
   II. Adagio sostenuto
   III. Allegro scherzando

CD II

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Liebestraume Notturno III, “O Lieb”
Sonetto 104 del Petrarca
“En Reve” Nocturne
“Nuagres Gris”
“Die Trauer-Gondel” II
“Les Cloches de Geneve” Nocturne

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Sonate in B Minor

CD III

Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

24 Preludes, Op. 28

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

La cathedrale engloutie: Profondement calme
La fille aux cheveux de lin: Tres calme et doucement
Des pas sur la neige: Triste et lent
Les fees sont d'exuises danseuses: Rapide et leger
La Puerto del Vino: Mouvement de Habanera

Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909)

El Albaicin, Iberia, Book III