

Abstract

Title of Dissertation: Bridging the Divide Between the Soloist and the Ensemble Player

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In conservatories and music schools, the general practice for an aspiring pianist is to focus on solo performance learning mainly solo repertoire. With the advent of the advanced degree in collaborative piano, pianists could submerge themselves in the study of duo sonatas, larger chamber music ensembles, and art song. The appearance of this degree was an important step in the development of pianists, as this kind of work requires specific training and focus to master the vast repertoire involved. However it also more clearly brought out the invisible divide separating the solo pianist from the collaborative pianist, a.k.a. the accompanist. While geniuses such as Bach, Beethoven and Brahms were known to compose and perform all types of music, the appearance of super stars such as Liszt and Paganini helped bring into being the term accompanist and since then music world has tacitly embraced this divide. The goal of my dissertational study is to show that this divide need not exist.

The three recitals which comprise this dissertational project were all performed at the University of Maryland, the first on 12 November 2010 at Gildenhorn Recital Hall, the second at Ulrich Recital Hall on 10 September 2011, and the third at Gildenhorn Recital Hall on 11 November 2011. The repertoire included Rachmaninoff Prelude in *g#*

minor op. 32 no. 12 and Etude-Tableaux in Eb minor op. 29 no. 5, Brahms Sonata for Piano and Violin in d minor op. 108, Mendelssohn Piano Trio in d minor op. 49, Chopin Sonata No. 2 in Bb minor, Franck Sonata for Piano and Violin, Prokofiev Piano Concerto no. 2 in g minor op. 16 with pianist Elizabeth Brown as orchestra, Beethoven Sonata for Piano and Violin in A op 47 (*Kreutzer*), and Paul Schoenfield *Café Music*. All works with violin and cello were performed with violinist Rebecca Racusin, and cellist Devree Lewis. The recitals were recorded on compact discs and are archived within the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

Bridging the Divide Between the Soloist and the Ensemble Player

By

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Recital Program #1

Prelude in g# minor op. 32 no. 12

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Etude-Tableaux in Eb minor op. 39 no. 5

Sonata for Piano and Violin in d minor op. 108

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro

Adagio

Un poco presto e con sentimento

Presto Agitato

Piano Trio in d minor opus 49

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Molto Allegro agitato

Andante con moto tranquillo

Scherzo - Leggiero e vivace

Finale - Allegro assai appassionato

Recital # 1 Program Notes

Sergei Rachmaninoff, born April 1st (some say 2nd) 1873, was a legendary pianist, a universally acclaimed conductor, and a composer whose music, while popular during his lifetime, has only grown in success through the decades. While there are those who have accused him of sentimentality and have not taken him seriously, he has proven to be one of the great melodists, and a composer whose music has stood the test of time. His piano music in particular is full of openness and passion and a strong and individual expressive style. While his compositions didn't do much to advance 20th-century form, he provided the world with old forms gorgeously infused with his personal style. As a pianist, it is a gift and a pleasure to perform Rachmaninoff. His music is gratifyingly difficult, yet remarkably playable.

Interestingly, Rachmaninoff's chamber music pales in comparison to his solo works. Like Chopin, his cello sonata is the only work that comes close to an accurate representation of his compositional skill. He struggled a great deal with balance and with understanding the expressive possibilities of instruments other than the piano, and for the most part, his chamber works are either overly piano-driven, or seem as though they are little more than accessible salon music. He did compose two piano trios which have remained in the repertoire, however they are full of flaws and less-often performed. One is left to wonder how such a creative and colorful composer could have struggled so much with this genre. Perhaps, like Chopin, Rachmaninoff was simply destined for the

keyboard. However there was very little Russian chamber music prior to the 20th century and so his lack of output in this department was not uncommon. Additionally, his two unfinished string quartets, two piano trios, and his duo music were all composed during his earlier years. Whether he gave up because he felt chamber music was not his forte or whether his chamber works simply suffered from a lack of maturity cannot be known, but for this reason, his piano music is all the more essential to the repertoire, as it is the only way to truly come to know the magic of Rachmaninoff.

Again, like Chopin, Rachmaninoff wrote preludes and etudes in most of the major and minor keys. His op. 32 set, while considered somewhat less taxing technically than op. 23, presents interpretive difficulties that are noticeably more demanding. No. 12 in G sharp minor, the first work on tonight's program has an ambiguous, hazy quality that has been compared to his last set of songs, and indeed this prelude can sound, at least in the opening section, like a melancholy vocalise. It is more or less a miniature tone poem, musical depictions of external visual stimuli. Generally, Rachmaninoff did not reveal what specific visual stimuli he had in mind, however there are letters in which he tells Respighi what the inspiration was for some of the pieces that Respighi was orchestrating. While the inspiration for this particular prelude is unknown, the restless and melancholy Rachmaninoff mood is unmistakable and clearly communicated.

His op. 39 Etude-Tableau, is particularly thorough in exploring the palette of the keyboard both in timbre and technique and fully explores the capabilities of the instrument as well as the pianist. The mood of this set ranges from quiet lyricism and tragedy to a fiery and passionate somewhat triumphant despair as heard in Etude-Tableau

no. 5 in E flat minor, the second work on tonight's program. This piece enchanted me several years ago and has remained a favorite of mine ever since. It is soulfully vocal yet wild and impassioned. In particular, the final return of the A theme in the base against the shimmering, pleading figures in the right-hand chords creates an unforgettable effect.

I chose these pieces for their obvious outstanding beauty and also for their important role in the piano repertoire. In these miniatures, Rachmaninoff found a vehicle of expression for his most intimate emotions. Intimacy such as that expressed in these pieces is something that makes solo piano music truly unique and highly valuable. There is nothing quite like these personal and mesmerizing pieces of musical art.

The next work on the program is Brahms' Sonata for piano and violin op. 108 in d minor. Another long-time favorite, it was easy to choose this piece as it is indispensable to the duo repertoire. If Rachmaninoff was a master of the piano, Brahms was the master of chamber music. While his solo piano music, symphonies, concertos, and vocal repertoire are all epic standards, chamber music was arguably his strongest medium. This could in part be evidence of his musically colorful childhood. His father played horn and double bass in local ensembles and Brahms himself studied both cello and horn in addition to the piano. Unlike Rachmaninoff's unarguably pianistic writing, Brahms' is just the opposite. Even though he was a pianist, many in his day and since have complained of his awkward and even at times unplayable stretches and configurations. I therefore chose this sonata not only because of Brahms' status in chamber music, but because it requires an entirely different musical and technical approach - one that is essential to the skill of any pianist.

Born in 1833, the first ensemble composition we have from Brahms was 20 years later in 1853: the Scherzo movement from the famous F-A-E sonata composed by Schumann, Dietrich, and Brahms himself for violinist, friend and collaborator Joseph Joachim. While the bulk of his compositions up to this point were for solo piano, he had been concertizing in an ensemble format, playing with, for example, violinists Eduard Remenyi and Joseph Joachim. By the time Brahms made his second attempt at violin sonatas he had completed his first piano trio, two string sextets, three piano quartets, the first cello sonata, the piano quintet, the horn trio, and three string quartets. By the third of these sonatas, op. 108 in d minor, his learning and experience in ensemble writing had clearly paid off. It took him from 1886 to 1888 to complete, and it is dedicated to pianist-conductor Hans von Bülow, possibly in an attempt to make amends after a bit of a falling out.

Brahms was a conscious classicist, content with the old forms and as knowledgeable of them as anyone in his time. His music adheres to a strict musical logic, avoiding superficial prettiness. Schonberg called him “a philosopher in sound” and this sonata is no exception. The first movement is a traditional sonata-allegro form that demonstrates the highest quality of ensemble writing. While the violin seemingly has the melody in the opening bars, the piano is left responsible for establishing the mood, creating a simultaneous sense of space and expectation. Brahms employs syncopated parallel octaves which, not to our surprise, later reveal themselves to be as thematically important as the opening melody. The violin is even given a turn with this motive creating a more complex and layered character for this thematic material. This

movement is an ideal example of the musical and expressive possibilities of ensemble repertoire. Musicologist Abraham Loft, in his book *Violin and Keyboard The Duo Repertoire Volume II*, describes a particular musical passage as follows: “Step by step, the building of the musical structure is done by violin and piano in an indissoluble partnership. There is no need to exhort ensemble alertness from the duo in [these] passages...the lines are so interwoven by the composer that there is no way to play them but ensemble.”

I must admit that the second movement was a large part of why I chose this sonata for my recital repertoire. It has long been one of my favorite pieces of music. Compared to the exquisite perfection of the violin melody, the piano seemingly hasn't much to do, however for such a simple melody, the piano's participation in the success of its delivery is surprisingly essential. Again, Brahms has created a perfect duo - two voices who without each other could not exist, and who, with each other, create music of other-worldly beauty. There is ensemble music that could be merely a dividing of parts or simply an arrangement, but in this movement Brahms has created a partnership of perfection.

Although the violin seems to have stolen the show for the space of the second movement, it is immediately handed back to the piano for the third, a scherzo of Mendelssohnian fleet-footed eeriness. Other than this ghostly character, what stands out most is the seemingly thematic use of conversation between the instruments. They fill each others' spaces almost without rest throughout the movement making the ensemble a dramatic and exciting ride. Almost as dramatic in effect are the sudden explosions of

sound and emotion scattered throughout, giving a whole new intensity to the quieter parts. This is particularly effective at the end when together, after a sparkling last word from the piano, the two parts vanish into silence.

Out of this silence the fourth movement comes crashing in with a gratifying noisy violin figure and stormy piano chords. Beginning on the dominant, the movement propels itself forward both harmonically and rhythmically without stopping for breath. Even the quieter sections seem wonderfully ill at ease and in true Brahmsian style, violin and piano are constantly working together to communicate the insistent, hell-bound quality of this movement. While the rhythmic complexity can give the impression that the instruments are battling each other, they are actually working together to create a united ferocity all their own.

The third and final piece on tonight's program is one of the stars of the chamber music genre. Mendelssohn's piano trio in D minor, op. 49 earned immediate approval when it was composed in 1839 and was considered by many, "the master trio of the age", as Robert Schumann called it, alongside Beethoven's B-flat and D major trios, and Schubert's E-flat. Mendelssohn has varied in popularity among critics, however wherever there is a chamber group, this trio, along with the second in c minor, is never far away. Like Rachmaninoff, Mendelssohn began writing chamber music early in his career, however, unlike Rachmaninoff, Mendelssohn's chamber music represents some of his best work. The octet, for example, which he wrote when he was just 16, is considered one of his finest compositions. He clearly felt a preference for chamber music as he composed eleven mature pieces of chamber music as well as 5 others when he was quite

young. Between just 1822 and 1824 he composed three piano quartets and a sextet for piano and strings. After all that in 1832 he expressed the desire to write some piano trios and sure enough in 1839 he composed both the d minor and the C major in only a few months' time.

Mendelssohn was a particularly multi faceted and well-rounded composer. He composed at least one great work in each of the many musical genres except opera (at which he did make attempts). Additionally, he was one of the finest pianists of the day, the greatest conductor, perhaps the greatest organist, and apparently could have been one of the greatest violinists. He had a perfect ear, all-encompassing memory, was cultured, widely read, and was even interested in poetry and philosophy. He was truly a genius however it was not only his genius that turned him into such a broadly exceptional musician. From the time he was a young child, he began work at 5 am studying a multitude of subjects including music. He was able to try his compositions with an orchestra engaged by his parents and on Sunday mornings the Mendelssohns were famous for holding musicales in their home where celebrities of European intellectual and social life came together and all of the children participated in singing and playing instruments. Felix either played piano or conducted. He was exposed to music of all kinds frequently playing four-hand or two-piano music with his also talented sister, Fanny. He even knew the nine Beethoven symphonies by heart and could play them at the piano. Clearly music of all kinds was highly valued and prioritized in the Mendelssohn household.

Eventually Mendelssohn also played a huge role in the development of the orchestra: he increased it from 40-50 players, secured pensions for each member of the orchestra, and was one of the first conductors to use a baton. As a conductor (also as composer and orchestrator) he was sparing in gesture, inclined toward fast tempos, and insistent on accurate rhythm and smooth ensemble. In orchestral repertoire, he shifted the emphasis from composers who are now mostly forgotten, to Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Bach, and Handel and introduced works by Cherubini, Rossini, Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, and Schubert, among others. He got rid of variety programs which were popular at the time and programmed concerts the way they are organized today. Later in his life, he was also responsible for founding music festivals at Cologne, Düsseldorf, Schwerin and Birmingham. While originally a pianist, he was devoted to music as a whole and is even considered responsible for making “musician” a respectable career.

The trio begins its first movement in sonata form. It contains two ardently expressive and memorable themes, both introduced by the cello, a perfect vehicle for delivering the mood of the piece. The piano writing, bursting with an almost constant flow of agitated triplets, is in virtuosic, concertante style. The piano technique in the piece as a whole is due in part to Mendelssohn’s friend, pianist Ferdinand Hiller, who had suggested that he incorporate some of the advanced techniques of the day made popular by Liszt and Chopin. The melodies and harmonies are lush and beautiful, and although some consider this to be one of Mendelssohn’s more romantic compositions, his musical logic and translucent, classical style are prevalent throughout. While the coda, which begins with an exciting triplet solo passage in the piano part, keeps listeners and

performers on their toes, there is a prevailing sense of order and control. There is never a feeling of wildness or unrestraint, and maintaining this poise grace and precision is most definitely one of the highest challenges in performing this piece.

The second movement, marked *Andante con moto tranquillo*, is a beautiful and calm singing movement in ternary form, and has often been compared to one of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* for solo piano. The emotion is in the same calmly composed nature, but has a thoughtful tenderness and a simple beauty unique to Mendelssohn's personal style.

The third movement, a Scherzo, is perhaps the most recognizably Mendelssohnian as it has a remarkable similarity to his famous *Midsummer Nights Dream*. Technically it is almost an etude in ensemble which requires lightness of touch, speed, precision and perfection in tempo. Musically, however, it could never be accused of being an etude in ensemble, as it absolutely sparkles with delicacy and charm. Many a performance of this movement has been topped off with an amused chuckle from the audience at the finish.

The most prominent feature of the fourth and final movement, marked *Allegro assai appassionato*, is the prevalence of the rhythm of the dactyl. In this poetic foot there is a long syllable followed by two short syllables, as determined by syllabic weight. Musically this translates to a quarter note followed by two eighths, or, "long, short short, long" and so on. This is quite obvious in the first two themes, although the characters of the two are different. Although more subtle, the dactyl rhythm is even present in the third theme, which the cello introduces, marking the beginning of the most contrasting portion of the movement. It begins with an echo from the motive in the previous section which

serves to transition into an elongated version of the dactyl. It continues so lyrically that this rhythmic device is less noticeable, nevertheless, the same basic weight and release of pulse binds it to the rest of the movement. The movement is a tour de force particularly for the piano, which alongside its soloistic cello and violin writing and its generally string-friendly style, makes it a classic favorite among chamber musicians and a perfect addition to my dissertational repertoire.

Recital Program #2

Sonata No 2 in Bb minor Op. 36

Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

Grave-Doppio Movimento

Scherzo

Marche Funebre: Lento

Finale: Presto

Sonata for piano and violin in A Major

Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

Allegro moderato

Allegro

Recitativo-Fantasia

Allegretto poco mosso

Recital Program #3

Piano Concerto no. 2 in g minor, op. 16

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Andantino--Allegretto--Andantino

Sonata in A, op. 47 (*Kreutzer*)

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Adagio sostenuto--Presto

Andante con variazioni

Presto

Café Music

Paul Schoenfield (1947-)

Allegro

Rubato

Presto

Recital #3 Program notes

Born in Ukraine in 1891, Sergei Prokofiev was one of the most talented and interesting pianists/composers of his time. He became a student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory when he was 13 and from then on his musical life was quite tumultuous. He apparently had a somewhat abrasive personality. He was candid with his thoughts and opinions, infamous for his sharp judgements and terse demeanor, and his music at that time was as disagreeable to most people as his manner. He was nevertheless quite successful and developed a completely unique compositional style and approach at to keyboard. He wanted nothing to do with the musical trends of Chopin and Liszt insisting that the piano was a percussion instrument and should therefore be played percussively. Unlike many of the other great idiomatic composers for piano (such as Rachmaninoff and Chopin), Prokofiev composed in a wide range of genres. In addition to his sonatas and other successful piano music, he wrote symphonies, concertos, string quartets, and duo sonatas, all of which are commonly accepted in the repertoire. In reference to the first violin sonata, Abraham Loft says in his book *Violin and Keyboard The Duo Repertoire Volume II*, "Prokofiev had that essential knack of the chamber-music writer: to make it seem that the instruments of the ensemble converse with each other." This element of Prokofiev's compositional style contributed to my choosing his Second Piano Concerto in g minor op. 16 as one of the central pieces in my dissertation repertoire.

According to the New Harvard Dictionary of music, the term “concerto” comes from the Italian word “concertare”, to join together or unite, which is related to the Latin “concertare”, to fight or to contend. I find these origins fascinating as they have each held varying degrees of relevance at different points in musical history. The soloist can be thought of as contending with or uniting with the orchestra depending on the time period, the composer, and the piece, but I feel that to a degree there is generally truth in both. The piano concerto as a genre has long been one of my favorites. The beautiful clear tone of a piano cushioned by the warmth and color of an orchestra has an enchanting effect and I feel that, with the right approach, the concerto (especially the modern concerto) is a large-scale form of chamber music. While the concerto is intended to showcase the soloist and to provide an opportunity to be virtuosic, I feel that at its core, it represents is simultaneous uniting and contrasting of the soloist and the orchestra. This is arguably also true of any chamber piece from instrumental duo to piano quintet. To perform successfully, chamber musicians must be able to create a unified whole, yet remain individuals. Finding an individual voice while taking into consideration the functions and needs of those around you is one of the loftiest responsibilities of any complete musician. I wanted a piece at the top of the repertoire technically, but one that involved a high level of substance and interaction between orchestra and pianist as well. This concerto most definitely serves both purposes well.

Originally composed in 1912-13, the second concerto was lost in a fire during the 1917 Revolution. It was actually completed in 1924, after the completion of the third piano concerto, and was dedicated to Prokofiev’s friend and fellow student Max

Schmidth who had committed suicide in 1913. Prokofiev's first concerto had been criticized as having mere surface brilliance and so with the second, he was striving for greater depth. He succeeded and in the process composed one of the most challenging and athletic concertos in the repertoire.

I have included only the first of the four movements in my recital as there was not room for the work in its entirety. Fortunately, the first movement is all that is needed to illustrate the broad range of skill required for this piece. The cadenza alone is a mammoth undertaking and one critic complained after the debut performance, "one might think [the cadenzas] were created by capriciously emptying an inkwell onto the page." The piece was far from well-received in the early years of its conception however it has grown in success and while still not often performed, it has remained important in the repertoire. After a short two-measure introduction of tip-toeing minor thirds in pizzicato, the piano enters with the main theme marked "narrante". Already, at the start, the orchestra and piano are in conversation, the strings commenting on each part of the phrase that the piano has narrated. Part of what makes this movement appealing to me in the context of my dissertation is how often the piano has a monologue, while the orchestra falls completely silent. The piece is quite literally solo playing combined with ensemble playing. Except for when it is completely alone, the piano line must always be shaped in the context of how the orchestra has completed the picture and there are even moments when the piano is completing the picture for another instrument which has temporarily received the melody.

The contrasting second theme is angular and dry but marked “con eleganza” providing a quirkiness typical of Prokofiev’s style. Whether battling or uniting, the orchestra and piano are definitely participating one with the other. Most of the development however takes place during the epic cadenza which is possibly the largest cadenza in any concerto, lasting more than half the length of the movement. After what seems like millions of notes have flown by, the piece finally climaxes as the orchestra rejoins the piano, the brass storming in with a colossal version of those hushed and foreshadowing minor thirds from the two measures of the long-ago introduction. This is one of my favorite moments in any concerto. The movement then quietly closes with the subdued return of the opening melody and fades off into the distance.

Ludvig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany, December 16th, 1770. He first came to fame as a pianist and while his skill and innovation were unparalleled, to view him from a primarily pianistic perspective does his compositions a great disservice. He was a creator, an artist, a revolutionary, a sort of musical tragic hero. As Schonberg figuratively puts it in *The Lives of the Great Composers*, “Beethoven kicked open the doors, stormed in, and made himself at home.” He knew he was writing for posterity and shoved his way through life demanding that everything in his path adapt to his confidence, his genius, his high-voltage personality. It is not surprising to learn that he looked with suspicion on the rules of harmony. There is an anecdote in which a friend pointed out his incorrect series of parallel fifths. Beethoven’s response? “Who forbids parallel fifths?!...I admit them!”

Beethoven revolutionized piano playing - from the orchestral sonority he aimed for at the keyboard, to his groundbreaking strides in technique, even to his influence on the development of the modern piano. But this was not because he was a pianist. Beethoven revolutionized everything with which he came in contact.

It is widely agreed that Beethoven is considered to have three main stages in his compositional life. His early phase is thought to include works up to the groundbreaking Eroica Symphony, which marks the onset of his middle period, a time which produced many of his most famous works. His late stage is a world all to itself and it is believed that there has never been and will never again be any music quite like it. The sonata in A, op. 47 (Kreutzer) technically falls into Beethoven's early phase, as it was published two years previous to the Eroica, however it definitely falls into a grey area as it is surrounded on both sides by some of Beethoven's smaller, less serious works up until the Waldstein Sonata and the Eroica Symphony. If a pianist should still wonder how significant it is to the general piano repertoire, it can be noted that when it came into print it bore the following title, "Sonata for piano and violin obbligato, written in a very concertante style, quasi concerto like". While Abraham Loft has humorously and correctly suggested that these sonatas are "with violin" as a mother is "with child", it is clear that Beethoven considered them equal partners.

Like Brahms, when Beethoven wrote for ensemble, it was always a true partnership. The piano and violin take turns playing alone, but more importantly, are in dialogue, equally contributing to the conglomerate product. For example, the first movement opens with a notoriously difficult and stunning introduction by the violin. The

piano reiterates this, at first alone, but soon the two instruments are in open discussion, echoing and enhancing each other's lines and then joining in a rhythmically united foreshadowing of the fiery exposition of this movement. This pattern continues throughout the movement alternating between portions of call and response, of dialogue, and of united declamation, all of which propels the movement forward from one section to the next.

The second movement is divided into a theme and four variations. In the theme Beethoven employs this same technique. It's as if he is saying, "look what the piano can do", then, "look at what the violin can do", and "now, see how they can sound together" This is of course an over-simplification of the masterful way in which Beethoven exploits the abilities of these instruments, however it is difficult not to notice how much better they are together after one has been admiring them individually. As the movement continues, so does this pattern on a larger scale, as the first variation primarily features the piano. Still, even the violin's seemingly unimportant repetitive chirpings add a sparkle and charm that are vital to the energy of the movement, especially when they are played with shape and personality instead of treated as merely monotone fillers. Then, as expected, the second variation features the violin and this time the piano is left with the challenge of providing liveliness and shape, aiming to enhance the violin part without getting in the way. The third variation begins again with the piano, but this time the violin joins before the first statement has even completed and the impression throughout is far more unified than the previous variations. Finally, the fourth variation is by far the most intricately crafted in ensemble. Every part of this variation contains intimate

communication between the piano and violin. Every detail of nuance is echoed or enhanced by the other instrument, creating a chain of exquisite sounds. Just as you are admiring the beauty of one moment, Beethoven delivers another until, as a listener or performer, you are absolutely overwhelmed by its loveliness.

The third and final movement is quite a marathon for both instruments, who after a brief introductory chord (reminiscent of the first movement) are triumphantly off and running. It can be challenging to feel united when the parts are independently difficult as well as fantastically interdependent and interlaced with each other, but once mastered, the effect is joyous and energetic.

Paul Schoenfield is a contemporary American composer known for integrating American and Jewish folk music and popular music with concert music. I originally became aware of him through my teacher, Professor Sloan, who has known him since her youth when they both were studying with Julius Chajes. Born in Detroit, Michigan in 1947, Schoenfield began piano at the age of 6 and wrote his first composition at the age of 7. I chose him in part because I wanted to include a chamber piece by a living composer, specifically one that crossed genres a bit, but as it turns out, Schoenfield also is an example of the kind of complete musician whom all pianists should aspire to be. Although as a composer he now rarely performs, at one time he concertized both as a soloist and with groups, and, for example, recorded the complete violin and piano works of Bela Bartók with violinist Sergui Luca. Like these venerated composers of the past, Schoenfield's music represents a combining of all of his experience, hobbies and passions. He is a dedicated scholar of Talmud and mathematics, previously having lived

on a kibbutz in Israel where he taught mathematics to high school students. Most importantly, his music spans not only classical music genres but draws on many international styles from various times in history. Distinguished music commentator Klaus George said it well in a tribute he delivered in 1994,

“Paul Schoenfield writes the kind of inclusive and welcoming music that gives eclecticism a good name. In the tradition of Bach, who never left German soil but wrote French suites, English suites and Italian concertos, and in the tradition of Bartók, who absorbed and transformed not only Hungarian music, but that of Romania, Bulgaria and North Africa, Paul draws on many ethnic sources in music, assimilating them into his own distinctive language.” I was delighted to have found someone who so thoroughly demonstrated these musical values.

Café Music, the final piece in my dissertation repertoire, was premiered at a St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Concert in January, 1987. Schoenfield says, "The idea to compose Café Music first came to me in 1985 after sitting in one night for the pianist at Murray's Restaurant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Murray's employs a house trio which plays entertaining dinner music in a wide variety of styles. My intention was to write a kind of high-class dinner music -- music which could be played at a restaurant, but might also (just barely) find its way into a concert hall. The work draws on many of the types of music played by the trio at Murray's. For example, early 20th-century American, Viennese, light classical, gypsy, and Broadway styles are all represented. A paraphrase of a beautiful Chassidic melody is incorporated in the second movement.” Schoenfield has also been quoted as saying that he doesn't consider himself an art-music composer and

that his music only shows up in concert halls because folk musicians don't have enough "technique, time, or desire to perform my music." The Milken Archive of Jewish Music however certainly seems anxious to claim him and says, "If Paul considers himself essentially a folk musician, it is surely a highly sophisticated one. His rich and multi-branched musical tree grows from strong and well-nourished roots." Music critic Raymond Tuttle described his compositions as "some of the most life-affirming music [he's] heard in a long time". He is considered by many a composer whose work combines exuberance and seriousness, familiarity and originality, lightness and depth and whose work is inspired by the whole range of musical experience.

Café Music is divided into three movements. The first has a strong ragtime flavor to it, the second, a sentimental folk-like flavor, and the third, that of a driven, chaotic, Dixieland dance. Throughout, however, there is just a little bit of everything from counterpoint to Charles Ives, to Gershwin and the character ranges from witty to sardonic, to sentimental, to just plain fun. To top it off, this music while sounding accessible, is extremely technically challenging, and learning and putting it together has been one of the most gratifying experiences I've had playing chamber music.

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