

Stasia Kulsa, Flute
Senior Recital
January 17, 2020
3:10pm
Bryan Hall Theatre

Program Notes

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was an Austrian composer during the Classical period. Both of his parents both loved music. Despite not reading music, his father would play harp and accompany his mother. As early as five years old, Haydn's musical talent began to show. He was employed as a choirboy for a while; however, he lost the position after pranking another singer. Haydn was a known prankster and well known for his sense of humor. Eventually Haydn did secure long term employment with the Esterhazy family in 1761.

The London Trios were written when Haydn travelled to London. In 1794, Haydn visited the Baron of Aston and his wife. As a hostess present, Haydn brought with him four trios for two flutes and cello. These four trios eventually became known as the London Trios. The instrumentation was considered unusual at the time; however, Haydn recognized the growing popularity of the flute in England. It was second only to the harpsichord in popularity as an amateur instrument. The trios were well received at first but eventually grew out of style. They came back into the chamber repertoire after being republished in 1909.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), an Italian composer from the eighteenth century, came from a musical family. His father was a professional violinist. Out of all nine of his siblings, Vivaldi was the only one to pursue a career in music. Two of his nephews became music copyists while another one started as a singer and then also became a copyist. Originally, Vivaldi was not meant to become a musician as he was training to become a priest. His career as a priest ended after he exhibited behavior that was unbecoming for a priest. Vivaldi turned to a career in composition. He quickly rose in fame and popularity as a composer. He composed a number of works for the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for girls. Orphanages such as these provided musical training for girls that showed the aptitude for music. Their concerts, featuring works by Vivaldi, drew in crowds and continued the employment of Vivaldi.

Concertos seemed to be a specialty for Vivaldi as he composed over 400 during his life. Three of these concertos were written for the piccolo or "little flute." What is interesting about these concertos is that the solo part is more virtuosic and demanding than what Vivaldi would usually write. The Concerto in C Major, RV 443, is considered the most challenging of the three. The Concerto in A minor, RV 445, is more restrained in pace. It opens with a ritornello that sets the pacing for the rest of the piece. This is followed by a solo episode that utilizes divided chords as the base. The piece progresses through passages in C major and E minor until it reaches a solo section of triplet figures. This triplet section ends in trills before the final orchestral ritornello. The second movement follows in the form of a slow aria. The third movement brings back the energy of the first movement. There, the soloist plays increasingly difficult passages before reaching the final conclusion.

Carl Reinecke (1824-1909) was a German composer, teacher, pianist, and conductor who was educated by his father. In 1846, Reinecke was appointed as the court pianist in Copenhagen, Denmark, which brought him much success. Eventually, he became the director of the Conservatory in Leipzig, Germany. Although he retired from teaching entirely in 1902, Reinecke did not retire from composition. He continued to compose works until his death in 1910.

Sonata “Undine” was composed in 1882. It is considered to be a programmatic work since is based on the German tale by Friedrich de la Motte Fouque. Most of the events of the story can be associated with different elements of the sonata; however, Reinecke did not specify which elements of the story are being represented in the various sections of the piece. This differs from most programmatic works where the composer will specify what is happening in the story within the various sections of the music. In this instance, it is entirely subjective. Reinecke wrote several programmatic pieces yet this is the only one where he does not notate within the work how it corresponds with the original story.

The first movement begins the story of Undine, a water nymph. The undulating rhythms of the flute are meant to depict the watery world the Undine lives in. The melody shifts as Undine leaves her kingdom. She wishes to find love with a mortal man as that would give her a soul. Upon leaving the water, Undine is found by a fisherman and his wife who had recently lost their daughter. The fisherman and his wife decide to adopt Undine and raise her as their own.

The second movement depicts Undine as she is growing up. The flute and piano chase each other with fast melodic lines that are representative of Undine’s wild nature. Eventually the piano plays a solo that is more folk-like in the melody. This depicts the knight Huldebrand as he seeks shelter at the house of the fisherman and his wife. A slower, gentler melody appears in the flute to show the love that then begins to grow slowly between Undine and Huldebrand.

In the third movement, the couple gets married. They happily return to Huldebrand’s home. There, they befriend Bertalda, the woman that Huldebrand was originally meant to marry. Undine, Huldebrand, and Bertalda live peacefully in the castle until a fountain is uncovered. Undine’s uncle, a water spirit, emerges and urges Undine to end her marriage to the mortal knight. At Undine’s request, Huldebrand covers the fountain up with a boulder and piece returns.

In the fourth movement, Undine, Huldebrand, and Bertalda take a trip along the Danube river. This rouses the anger of the water spirits. Undine pleads with the water spirits to not make trouble. This is shown within the melodic line of the flute as it alternates between the angry water spirits and the gentle pleading of Undine. The waters cannot be calmed though and Huldebrand states that he wishes that he had never married Undine as the water spirits have caused nothing but trouble in his life since. Undine collapses in shock and falls overboard where she sinks to the bottom of the river. Believing Undine to be dead, Huldebrand makes plans to marry Bertalda. On the night of Huldebrand’s wedding to Bertalda, Undine returns as a spirit and kills Huldebrand with a kiss. The flute shows this with the return of the love theme from movement two; however, the melody is altered. Rather than being in a major key, the melody is in minor to show the sad ending to Undine’s tale.

Ian Clarke (1964) is a British composer, flutist, and Miyazawa Performing Artist that performs all over the world as a featured artist. Clarke mainly composes for the flute and uses many extended techniques. His works have been performed across six continents and have helped initiate a new genre of flute music. Clarke also works extensively with the musician and composer, Simon Painter, writing, producing, and performing music for film and television under the name Diva Music.

Deep Blue, composed in early 2012, was inspired by the ocean and whale song. Clarke premiered it at various international flute courses in that same summer. Clarke lists the official premiers as being at the NFA convention in Las Vegas that summer and in Manchester at the BFA convention.