

Senior Recital

Taryn Reimschisel, piano

Saturday, May 3, 2025
5:00pm
All Faiths Chapel, Kansas State University

PROGRAM

Prelude and Fugue in B flat Minor, WTC Book 1, BWV 867 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Sonata in C Major, HOB XVI:50 Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

1. *Allegro*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Allegro molto*

INTERMISSION

Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, op. 20 Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

"Troubled Water" Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Music,
Theatre, and Dance

Program Notes

Prelude and Fugue in B-flat minor, BWV 867

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach was a German keyboardist and composer; his music is widely considered to be the premier model of the Baroque style. Bach was born to a musical family, and classically trained from an early age. Never leaving Germany, he held positions at several churches as organist, court musician, choir director, and concertmaster. Bach composed prolifically throughout his career, producing masterpieces in all Baroque forms and genres including sonatas, concertos, suites, and cantatas. His musical style contains complex counterpoint (the simultaneous combination of multiple melodic lines) and intricate harmonies, which have been studied and imitated extensively by prominent composers for centuries.

The Well-Tempered Clavier, BWV 846-893, is among the most influential collections of keyboard music from the Baroque era. It is a set of 48 preludes and fugues for keyboard published in two volumes (1722 and 1742), with each book containing a prelude and fugue for all of the 12 major and 12 minor keys. The “prelude and fugue” is a two-movement musical form in which both movements share the same key. The prelude is an introductory piece; it establishes the atmosphere for the fugue and is generally more freely structured. This prelude in B-flat minor is built predominantly upon the opening figure, which contains a swaying, plodding rhythmic motive. The somber timbre of the key, slow tempo, and continuous 8th note pulse combine to create a sound quality that is meditative and stately.

In contrast, the form of the fugue is strictly set and structured. The fugue is a contrapuntal form (meaning that it is in counterpoint) based upon a main theme - the subject. The subject is introduced in one voice, then imitated one-by-one in all other voices to create a dense and complex polyphonic texture. The subject of the fugue in B-flat minor, BWV 867, consists of a two-note descending figure, which is restated during the exposition in all five voices present in the piece. In the development, the subject is restated and expounded upon in various keys; immediately following is the stretto section, which restates the theme in quick succession to build towards the final cadence in the conclusion. In this fugue the final cadence ends on B-flat

major rather than the original minor key, providing a sense of relief against the otherwise melancholy, brooding nature of the piece.

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: 50

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro molto

Joseph Haydn was an Austrian composer, and a critical figure in the development of the Classical style of the 18th century. Haydn began his formal training in music as a chorister at eight years old. Much of his career as a composer was spent as court musician for the Esterhazy family, one of the wealthiest and most influential families in the Austrian empire. He wrote prolifically while under their employment, and is most widely recognized for his contributions to the form of the symphony (of which he wrote 107), the creation of the string quartet, the piano trio, and the piano sonata. Haydn was a contemporary and friend of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and a mentor to young Ludwig Beethoven.

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: 50, also called the “Grand Sonata,” is of the last three piano sonatas Haydn wrote, all of which were dedicated to Therese Jansen Bartolozzi—a virtuoso keyboardist whom Haydn met in England. The piece was written for the English fortepiano, rather than the Viennese fortepiano, which had a greater range, pedal, and more powerful sound. This is the first piece of Haydn’s in which it is notated to use the sustaining pedal.

The classical piano sonata contains three movements. The first movement follows “sonata form”—containing an exposition, development, and recapitulation—the second movement is generally considered the “slow” movement, and the third is most often fast and lively, returning to the original, tonic key. The first movement of the “Grand Sonata,” Hob. XVI:50, is in C Major, and opens with a witty and playful theme. Contrary to the norm, the first movement is monothematic, rather than having two contrasting themes. The motive of short, descending hops is restated and developed throughout the *Allegro* movement, which boasts sudden dynamic

changes, brilliant virtuosic passages, and contrasting eerie, mysterious interludes. The *Adagio* movement is in F Major, and expressively and ornately written. It contains long, singing lines and free, improvisatory sections. The third movement returns to C Major, and is unconventionally brief. The character is humorous and light-hearted, with surprising, comic pauses scattered throughout.

Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 20

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Clara Schumann was a German pianist, composer, and teacher, and wife to German composer Robert Schumann. She was considered a child prodigy, and had performed throughout Europe before the age of 20. Clara wrote for orchestra, chamber music, vocalists, and solo piano, performing and teaching her entire life. She and Robert had eight children, and were close friends with Romantic period composer Johannes Brahms. Clara's compositional style is deeply Romantic, filled with expressive melodies and rich harmonies. As a virtuosic pianist herself, her solo piano works in particular reveal a deep understanding of the instrument and its unique capabilities.

Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 20 was one of the last pieces Clara composed for the piano. She presented it to her husband, Robert, on the last birthday he spent with his family prior to his tragic institutionalization and eventual death. The piece follows the traditional theme and variation form: it begins with a statement of the main theme, which is then repeated and transformed through various means in each subsequent variation. The theme of this piece is in F-sharp minor, and precedes seven variations. A portion of the theme is derived from Robert's music – the descending line of C-sharp, B, A, G-sharp, and A is referred to as “Clara's theme”, and occurs in several of Robert's own compositions.

The variations progress as a sort of musical narrative, suggesting an array of developing emotions and ideas. Variation I and II alter the theme rhythmically, the first subdividing into triplets and the latter into 16th notes. Variation III presents the theme in the major key. Variation IV presents the melody in the bass voice and is immediately followed by the thundering, frantic

fifth variation in octaves. Variation VI offers a brief calm before the conclusion, and is written in two-voice counterpoint. The piece concludes with Variation VII, which opens in a flurry of 32nd notes, which wander through new, vibrant, and expressive harmonies. After a brief restatement of the major theme, the piece concludes with a shimmering coda which ends in a bright, flourishing, ascending gesture.

Wade in the Water

Unknown (mid 1800s)

Arr. Ronald E. McVey

“Wade in the Water” is an African-American spiritual originating at an unknown date, but likely in the mid-1800s. It is the inspiration for Margaret Bonds’ piece for solo piano - “Troubled Water.” This arrangement for piano contains a refrain, followed by a verse, then a repeat of the refrain. The lyrics of the original spiritual are below:

Refrain:

*Wade in the water,
Wade in the water, children,
Wade in the water
God's a-going to trouble the water*

Verses:

*See that host all dressed in white
God's a-going to trouble the water
The leader looks like the Israelite
God's a-going to trouble the water*

*See that band all dressed in red
God's a-going to trouble the water
Looks like the band that Moses led
God's a-going to trouble the water*

*Look over yonder, what do you see?
God's a-going to trouble the water
The Holy Ghost a-coming on me
God's a-going to trouble the water*

*If you don't believe I've been redeemed
God's a-going to trouble the water
Just follow me down to the Jordan's stream
God's a-going to trouble the water*

The repeated reference in the refrain is to a biblical passage: John 5:2-9. In these verses, Jesus heals a man at the Pool of Bethesda, which serves as a basis for the theme of God's deliverance in the spiritual. The verses of the song reference other biblical passages in which water is significant, including the deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea. While the man in John 9 believed that "troubled water" at the pool would save him, slaves singing the spiritual referred to "troubled water" as the unpredictability and trials of life. The ultimate message of "Wade in the Water" is that of God's redemptive, and healing power. One interpreter writes:

"Do not shrink from moving confidently out into the choppy seas. Wade in the water, because God is troubling the water."

"Wade in the Water" was additionally one of many songs Harriet Tubman utilized for communication in the Underground Railroad. When sung, the spiritual instructed escaping slaves to get off of trails and into water to avoid leaving scents which dogs would be able to track.

Troubled Water

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)

Margaret Bonds was a pianist and composer from Chicago, Illinois. She was musically gifted from a young age, completing her first composition at five years old. Bonds received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Northwestern University, and began writing pieces for the Glenn Miller Orchestra and performing frequently on the radio after graduation. She was the first African-American soloist to appear with the Chicago Symphony. Though classically trained, her work was heavily influenced by jazz and blues; her compositions were performed by a number of concert artists, including Louis Armstrong and Woody Herman. Bonds additionally is well-known for her work with poet Langston Hughes, with whom she shared a lifelong friendship. Her compositional output includes works for orchestra, theater, and African American spiritual arrangements.

Bonds arranged over 50 African-American spirituals for various instruments; “Troubled Water” is one of these, based on the aforementioned song “Wade in the Water.” “Troubled Water” is among Bonds’ most-recognized piano pieces, and is the final movement of her *Spiritual Suite*, which she also arranged for orchestra. The piece is in E minor, and begins with an energetic rhythm in the left hand which leads to the introduction of the theme. An underlying, syncopated rhythm drives the majority of the piece forward, heard in juxtaposition against the melodic, flowing theme which is developed over the course of the work. Moments of thicker textures incorporate jazz and blues-inspired harmonies. The sectional nature of the piece presents a unique challenge in creating a flowing sound; frequent transitions and tempo changes include notated directions *scherzando*, *dolce*, *marcato*, *leggiero*, and *con fuoco*. The continually changing sonorities demand a careful balance between sensitivity and lyricism against virtuosity and rhythmic intensity.