

GRADUATE RECITAL IN VIOLA

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music in Viola Performance

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University of Northern Iowa

August 2014

This Abstract by: John Chiles

Entitled: Graduate Recital in Viola

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music

Date

Dr. Julia Bullard, Chair, Recital Committee

Date

Dr. Alison Altstatt, Recital Committee Member

Date

Mr. Frederick Halgedahl, Recital Committee Member

Date

Dr. Michael J Licari, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: John Chiles

Entitled: Graduate Recital in Viola

Date of Recital: April 4, 2014

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ABSTRACT

John Chiles performed a Master of Music viola recital at eight o'clock in the evening on Friday, April 4, 2012, in Russell Hall's Graham Chamber Music Hall. The program began with an arrangement of Johann Sebastian Bach's Suite originally for solo violincello, transcribed for viola, No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1009, next Mr. Chiles performed George Rochberg's Sonata for Viola and Piano. The final piece on the program was Rebecca Clarke's Sonata for Viola and Piano. Pianist Robin Guy collaborated with Mr. Chiles for the Clarke and the Rochberg.

Johann Sebastian Bach – Cello Suite No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1009

Johann Sebastian Bach is considered to be one of the most influential German composers of the Baroque era. He composed in nearly all the important Baroque instrumental forms, such as the fugue, concerto grosso, mass, and the suite. Bach had a long life and a robust career that led him to several areas around Germany and gave him many venues in which to practice composition. The first of Bach's major appointments was his placement as *Konzerteister* at the court in Weimar in 1708. He was then appointed *Kapellmeister* of Prince Leopold's court in Köthen in 1717, and settled in Leipzig as a cantor and music director for many small churches in the area in 1723.

A suite is a multi-movement work for any number of instruments. Bach's suite is to be performed as a concert work, and even though it contains dance movements, it was not meant for dancing. In Bach's cello suites, each suite contains a prelude and

five dance movements. The order of the movements is: prelude, allemande, courante, sarabande, minuet (or bourrée or gavotte which are all movements that contain two dances), and gigue. Bach's cello suites are considered to be the most famous collection of solo works ever composed for the cello. The exact dates of composition for the suites are unknown; however, we believe that they were written during Bach's Köthen period. Allen Winold claims that "the Köthen period represents one of the richest periods in his [Bach's] creative life, for it included not only the Cello Suites, but other instrumental works such as the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Part 1, and the six *Brandenburg Concertos*."¹

The transcriptions of Bach's cello suites are work well on the viola as both instruments contain the same tuning (the cello being an octave lower). The third transcription of the third suite contains no alterations in pitch, other than octave displacement.

The term prelude is derived from the Latin *pre*, or before, and *ludus*, or play. Thus, the prelude begins each suite and in all of the suites, has an improvisatory style. The prelude from the third suite is a pattern prelude, which simply repeats various rhythmic patterns while constantly shifting through various key centers. Eric Kutz states that "The first two beats of measure one consist of a scale, the third beat of an arpeggio. The interplay between these two is used to organize the movement.... In this Prelude, Bach organically moves from scales at the beginning, to arpeggios over the

¹ Allen Winold, *Bach's Cello Suites: Analyses and Explorations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 3.

dominant pedal, and back to scales to set up the return near the end.”² The character of the prelude is quite triumphant due to the downward scalar motion of the opening. This character is recalled at the end of the movement by a strong ending that utilizes the same C major scale, with a triumphant c-major chord to the end.

The second movement is an allemande (which is French for “German”), which was a dance that was written in two different ways: either for dance or for concert performance. Winold explains “The dance allemandes were relatively simple in rhythmic structure, melodic content, and form; they could be either slow or fast in tempo.”³ The third suite allemande is written in the style of a dance allemande; therefore, it is rather simple in rhythmic and melodic structure. This allemande is in a relatively quick tempo and the themes are characterized by scalar motion. Moreover, the key center remains closely related to the tonic or the dominant throughout the movement.

The third movement is the courante, which means “running” in French, an accurate description of the agile nature of the movement. In this suite the courante is in the Italian style, signaled by “...fast triple meter with running 16th or 8th notes.”⁴ The constant falling arpeggios personify the running nature of the movement, while harmonically the movement begins in the tonic and moves to the dominant at the end

² Erik Kutz, “Towards a Formal Paradigm for the Bach Cello Suite Preludes: A Study of the History, Theory, Origins, and Organization of Bach's Preludes to BWV 1007–1012.” (Phd diss., The Julliard School 2002).

³ Winold, *Bach's Cello Suites*, 34.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

of the “A” section. The “B” section then begins in the dominant and makes its way back to the tonic to end the work after climbing through the circle of fifths.

The sarabande is a slow dance in triple meter that is thought to be derived from a Spanish dance due to the title. However, the actual origin of the dance is a mystery due to the use of the title for several distinct dances from Europe and Latin America. The dance originally began as a lively dance and it was considered to be too sensual because of the amount of touching. The dance was then replaced with a slower form, as heard in this suite.⁵ The most noticeable attribute of any sarabande is the accentuation of second beat instead of the first beat. Winold states “This accentuation may be harmonic, created by some form of dissonance on the second beat: it may be agogic, created by having a longer note on the second beat; or it may be melodic...”⁶ This suite primarily accentuates the beat agogically and harmonically, as there is usually some form of tension on a sustained chord on the second beat of each measure. However, in a few measures there is also a melodic ornament placed on the second beat, in place of the longer valued chord.

The fifth movement of the dance suite is considered to be an optional movement. Each numeric pair of suites (1/2, 3/4, 5/6) contains the same type of dance for the fifth movement. The third and fourth suites use the bourrée as the optional movement. The bourrée is also a French dance. It is divided into two distinct sections, bourrée I and II. The second section is in the parallel minor and is usually taken at a slightly slower tempo. Just as in previous movements, the bourrée starts in

⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁶ Ibid., 56.

the tonic and the goes to the dominant. Both sections follow this structure in their respective key centers. The theme in both sections is practically the same, yet one is in major and the other in the parallel minor with slight modifications. The first bourrée is repeated after the bourrée II.

The gigue is the most difficult movement to place historically. According to Winold, "It probably came from "jig," the name for a level dance in the sixteenth century British Isles...however, it could have come from the medieval French verb gigue meaning to dance."⁷ The dance was popularized in the seventeenth century by comedians, so it is possible that there is a correlation between "Jig" and "joke." This correlation created the expression "the jig is up" and could also possibly mean, "the suite is over."⁸ The gigue of this movement is written in 3/8 time but the phrasing of the work seems to be in 12/8 due to the four bar phrase groups. This movement can be viewed as frolicking or humorous due to the rapid oscillation of sixteenth notes. This is appropriate, as to the "gig" was associated with the peasant class.⁹

George Rochberg – Sonata for Viola and Piano

George Rochberg was an American composer born in Patterson, New Jersey on July 5th, 1918. During his life, Rochberg taught at many prestigious music schools, culminating in a position at the University of Pennsylvania. Rochberg began his career as a strong advocate of serial music. However, in 1964, the death of his son prompted

⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁹ Ibid., 78.

him to change his tone. He declared that serial music was void of emotion and did not provide the means for him to properly show his sadness and rage over his son's death. After his switch from pure serialism, he caused some controversy in the music world, even though he continued to use elements of the style by mixing "abstract chromaticism with tonal idioms."¹⁰

Rochberg's works are shining examples of a combination of styles influenced by Paul Hindemith, Johannes Brahms, and Béla Bartók. After the death of his son and his dismissal of serial music, Rochberg began to write music using a combination of serial and romantic styles. Clarkson and Johnson claim, "In his music of the 1980s and 90s Rochberg continued to blend Modernist and Romantic elements," Rochberg does this by continuing to use elements of gesture and emotion in his works while at the same time using extended chromatic harmonies within conventional forms.¹¹

Rochberg's study of Bartók's scores had a clear influence on this sonata. Rochberg writes in his book *Five Lines, Four Spaces* that Bartók's "way with chromaticizing an extended form of tonality" opened up a new direction for composition. He says that these "tonal extensions" bled into how he heard music. Rochberg tended to think of the twelve chromatic pitches as an equal set of notes, allowing him to reach outside of typical harmonic convention while still remaining in a tonal center. His preoccupation with the melodic and harmonic use of the tritone,

¹⁰ Austin Clarkson and Steven Johnson, "Rochberg, George" *Grove music online. Oxford music online* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹¹ Clarkson and Johnson, "George Rochberg."

providing for equal division of the octave and as a means of connecting melody and harmony, is a prominent feature of this sonata.¹²

The creation of the viola sonata began when Rochberg was commissioned by the American Viola Society to write a piece in honor of William Primrose's seventy-fifth birthday. This work was originally a sketch of a violin sonata. After revisiting the score, Rochberg decided that the work would be much better suited for the viola. The second movement was originally the conclusion of the piece. However, after playing it for his wife, she proclaimed that it was not finished. He did not want to compose a third movement for the sake of show. Instead, he wrote an epilogue that recalls material from the prior movements.¹³ The premiere of the work took place on July 14, 1979 in Provo, Utah at the 7th annual International Viola Congress. The performer was Joseph de Pasquale, the principal violist of the Philadelphia Orchestra at the time, with Vladimir Sokloff as the pianist.

The first movement of the sonata is in a loose sonata-allegro form. Rochberg begins the work with a perfect fourth gesture that resolves to a tritone in the viola part, which functions as first. The movement begins in F for a short time then immediately moves toward C major, and then to C minor, mixing modes. The second theme that enters is centered in the dominant of C. After the conclusion of the second theme, an extended development section begins at measure 68, and is followed by the recapitulation. Thus the piece follows all of the conventions of sonata form. However,

¹² George Rochberg, Gene Rochberg, Richard Griscom, *Five Lines, Four Spaces: The World of My Music* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

¹³ Clarkson and Johnson, "George Rochberg."

the harmonic motion is unusual: the recapitulation starts in F again and the transition begins in C again, but the second theme this time is in the subdominant instead of the dominant, and uses the parallel minor. A coda begins around measure 231, and the work ends in F minor.

The second movement is a slow movement that has somber character because of the extended ternary chords (Dm7) presented in the opening chords of the piano. The movement is in an extended ternary form with cadenza. The work begins with a beautiful lyrical melody in the viola that then echoes with the piano in the second statement of the A section. The A section seems to be a reflection of sorrow and pain. The B section is turbulent and could be a representation of anger. Before the return of the A section, a short viola cadenza that recalls the main theme. This cadenza may be thought of a connection between the B and A sections at this point in the work. The simple and harmonic clear structure allows the listener to truly experience the lament.

The final movement was an addition after the works reception was taken as an incomplete work. The movement is an epilogue that recalls thematic material from the first and second movements. This movement was written in a free, improvisatory style, almost like an added cadenza. The sonata ends on a somber note, gives a sense of resolution, as it ends quietly in a major mode.

Rebecca Clarke – Sonata for Viola and Piano

Rebecca Clarke was born in Harrow England on August 27, 1886 into a music-loving family. Her father was American and her mother was German. She was the oldest of four children with two brothers and one sister. The Clarke family children were all given musical lessons by their parents. Clark as an adult became a performing violist and eventually married pianist James Friskin after which she mostly stopped composing.¹⁴

Clarke is considered a romantic composer who was heavily influenced by French impressionism. Impressionism was a movement in French art that was characterized by the use of seemingly random colors and shapes instead of a picturesque scene. In music, this equated to extended harmonies (such as the ninth, eleventh, thirteenth chords and augmented triads), modal scales, and varied colors and effects.

The Sonata for Viola and Piano is one of the most frequently played works of Rebecca Clarke's oeuvre. In the year 1919 Elizabeth Coolidge asked Clarke to participate in the Berkshire Chamber Music Festival Competition. Clarke accepted, and entered the viola sonata, but the sonata and ended up in a tie with Ernest Bloch's Suite for viola and piano. After Coolidge cast the tiebreaking vote, Bloch actually won

¹⁴ Liane Curtis, "Clarke, Rebecca" *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. (Oxford University Press 2014).

the competition. However, Clarke's piece received amazing reviews and has since become a staple of the viola repertoire.¹⁵

The sonata is in three movements and Clarke "tended to favor long melodic lines in this sonata, with themes consisting of several smaller motives that are developed and recalled throughout the work."¹⁶ The first movement is in sonata form and is marked *impetuoso* (impulsive). It begins with a fanfare-like motive (Theme I) in the viola followed by a sustained chord in the piano. After the chord is struck the viola has a cadenza-like passage until the return of the fanfare idea leads into the main body of the work. In the first thematic area, Clarke uses bits of the fanfare rhythm as the main motivic idea, which is, in turn, expanded and developed. The primary mode of the section remains is E-Dorian. In this A section she uses bits of the "trumpet call" rhythm and disperses it between the piano and viola until arrival at the B section. As we would expect in a sonata form movement, the B section, beginning at measure 39, is far more lyrical than the A section. The section ends with a fragmented version of the B theme that leads down to an open C at the development. The development, which begins at measure 75, repeats both themes in various keys as expected, eventually returning to the first theme. When presented in the recapitulation, the B theme is far more intense. In a short coda, the viola plays an arpeggiated accompaniment while the piano repeats the B theme one last time before the final concluding phrase.

¹⁵ Curtis, "Clarke, Rebecca."

¹⁶ Julia Bullard, "The Viola and Piano Music of Rebecca Clarke," (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2008).39.

The second movement is a scherzo in compound duple meter in a ternary form. The harmonic structure of the piece includes the use of “modality, chromaticism, bitonality, special effects, and impressionist harmonic language and tone color.”¹⁷ The A section begins with the piano playing the theme while the viola plays pizzicato chords along with the theme. There are two primary motives in this theme; each is played by the viola after having been introduced by piano. The B section of the work features a new contrasting lyrical section. The tritone interval is used frequently in this section. After this section there is a transition and a return to the A theme.

The third movement is formally ambiguous. It takes the motivic ideas of the first two movements and transforms them into new themes. The movement begins with a three note motive, distilled from the first movement’s main theme, which is extended and developed in a long, lyrical A section. After this section has passed there is a very long transition to a faster B section, and then a dark, modal “night-music” section. Another transition takes us to the end of the work, which repeats the fanfare theme from the first movement in various keys and creates a sense of closure on a large E major ending. The character of the movement changes frequently, from an aria like beginning to a loud and dramatic ending.

The three works on the recital represent a variety of styles and techniques, and are important works in the viola literature. Each work requires technical proficiency and stylistic awareness. The works with piano also require excellent collaborative

¹⁷ Bullard, “Rebecca Clarke,,” 49.

skills. These works showcase the viola as a virtuosic solo instrument and demonstrate the breadth of technical and expressive accomplishment of the performer. It is hoped that the audience will develop a new appreciation for the viola as a solo instrument.

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John Chiles

Viola

With

Robin Guy

Piano

April 4, 2014, 8:00 p.m.
Graham Recital Hall, Russle Music Building

Program

Cello Suite No. 3 in C major BWV 1009
Transcribed for Viola

J.S Bach
(1685 – 1720)

- I. Prélude
- II. Allemande
- III. Courante
- IV. Sarabande
- V. Bourrée
- VI. Gigue

Sonata for Viola and Piano

George Rochberg
(1918 – 2005)

- I. Allegro moderato
- ii. Adagio Lamentoso
- iii. Allegro moderato,
ma un poco parlando

Sonata for Viola and Piano

Rebecca Clarke

(1886 - 1979)

- I. *Impetuoso*
- II. *Vivace*
- III. *Adagio*

The recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Master of Music.
John Chiles is a student of Dr. Julia Bullard.