



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Felicity Constance Mazur-Park, composer

Thursday, March 23, 2023

7:00 PM

Ed Landreth Auditorium

Program

Jesu, du mein liebstes Leben (2023)

Felicity Constance Mazur-Park, organ

The Seagull - Act III: Loving, Troubled Relationships (2022)

Aubrey Bosse - Nina
Billy Valentine - Konstantin
Charleen Andújar Ortiz - Irina
Andres Losada - Trigorin

Joey Tullis, Chase Morrison, and Daniel Compton – violins
Lyndsey Walker – viola
Nicolas John Vincent Mirabile – violoncello
Jace Mankins – double bass
John David Cope - percussion
Vincent Yang – piano

Directed by Debbie Seitter

La Verité (2021)

Diminished Cube (2010)

Phebe Cox, Maranda Fey, Annie Vaughan - soprano
Aubrey Bosse, Maddie Purvis - alto
Felicity Constance Mazur-Park, Nicolas John Vincent Mirabile - tenor
Kevin Bernauer, Caleb Gottry, Jace Mankins, - bass

Directed by Debbie Seitter
Accompanied by Vincent Yang

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Composition.
Mrs. Mazur-Park is a student of Dr. Blaise Ferrandino.

The use of flash photography is prohibited. Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

Program Notes

Jesu, du mein liebstes Leben (2023)

Jesu, du mein liebstes Leben is a chorale prelude based on a Lutheran chorale melody by Johann Schop. Johann Sebastian Bach used this chorale in many of his pieces, including his *Christmas Oratorio*. Shown below is the text of the first verse by Johann Rist. The English translation is by Charles Sanford Terry.

**Jesu, du mein liebstes Leben,
Meiner Seelen Bräutigam,
Der du dich vor mich gegeben
An des bittern Kreuzes Stamm;
Jesu, meine Freud und Wonne,
All mein Hoffnung, Schatz und Teil,
Mein Erlösung, Schmuck und Heil,
Hirt und König, Licht und Sonne:
Ach, wie soll ich würdiglich,
Mein Herr Jesu, preisen dich?**

Jesu, Thou my dearest treasure,
Bridegroom of my loving heart,
All Thou didst for me I measure
By Thy Passion's cruel smart.
Jesus joy beyond all other,
All my heart and soul hast won.
Thou'rt my Master, Light, and Sun,
Saviour, Lord, and sweetest treasure.
Ah, how can I worthily
Jesu, sing my praise to Thee?

The chorale prelude begins with the chorale harmonized in four-parts. I changed the harmonization, so it differs from J.S. Bach's chorale setting. My harmonization resists modulating to major keys (B flat major and F major) and instead uses chromatic chords for dramatic effect. This harmonic landscape results in an overall darker mood.

The middle section and heart of the composition features a gigue-like motive which begins in G minor but gradually transitions into chromaticism. At the height of the chromaticism, there are pedal solos interrupted by loud, accented chords in the manuals. As the chromaticism and dissonance build the music moves away from the G tonal center. The return of "G" is delayed until the final statement of the chorale.

At the end, the chorale returns combined with the gigue-like motive. The return is dramatic and flamboyant. The chorale prelude finishes with a dramatic pedal solo followed by a subdued penultimate phrase. The loudest registration of the work is reserved for the final phrase.

The Seagull - Act III: Loving Troubled Relationships (2022)



Act III: Loving Troubled Relationships is taken from my opera *The Seagull*, which is based on the Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) play of the same name. Chekhov was a Russian playwright, who was famous for his tragicomedies, including *The Seagull*. It has been adapted for many other mediums including ballets, operas, and musicals. In this play, Chekhov uses the symbol of the doomed seagull to represent the fate of the characters.

The younger characters, Konstantin, and Nina, begin the opera as lovers, but by Act IV are estranged from the world and each other. Arguably, the older lead characters, Irina and Trigorin, have a destructive effect upon their younger counterparts. Both Konstantin and Nina are aspiring artists. The drama raises the question: what responsibility do experienced; professional artists have to their younger counterparts?

In Act III, I intimately explore the most troubled relationships in the opera (Trigorin and his ill-fated love-interest Nina, as well as Konstantin and his domineering mother Irina). In scene one, Nina and Trigorin are playing a friendly game of dice in the garden. Nina is debating whether she should elope with Trigorin to the city to pursue her dream of being a famous actress. Trigorin, more interested in seducing Nina rather than giving her any meaningful career advice, half listens as they play their game. In Scene 2, Konstantin and Irina are waiting for the doctor to arrive. In Scene 3, Nina and Trigorin are saying farewell with the hopes of seeing each other again.

La Verité (2021)

La Verité speaks of the power of learning the truth many years after an event. It is even more validating to discover the truth after years of research and investigation. From most people's perspectives, the validity of truth is unimportant. Humans view the world through emotion and external validation. Often justification for the truth is more important to people than the truth itself. Once the truth is made evident the atmosphere becomes uncomfortable. This music presents this uncomfortable moment of truth. This piece may speak to you on a personal or intellectual level. Alternatively, you may choose to ignore the programmatic elements and enjoy the Medieval-inspired sound world.

The piece is based on chant by Hildegard von Bingen, who was both a composer and scientist. She is recognized as the first female composer in the Western musical tradition. I am honored to carry on her legacy through my own style. I chose to set the chant to a French text by the philosopher, Jules Renard. The text talks about how truth is more satisfying and meaningful if it takes a long time to find. This idea was particularly meaningful to me during my mid to late twenties, when I was searching for a path in life and reevaluating the relationships I had formed during my college years. Throughout our childhood and adolescence, we build up expectations for our lives. The truth is that life is never straight forward, especially for those of us who are different in certain ways and cannot fully conform to our designated stereotypes.

La vérité vaut bien qu'on passe quelques années sans la trouver. - Pierre-Jules Renard

Truth is more valuable if it takes you a few years to find it. This amounts to the notion that if something comes too easily it is not meaningful. – Translation by Felicity Mazur-Park

Diminished Cube (2010)

Diminished Cube is a choral piece based on a tone row of an octatonic scale (0,1) juxtaposed against the remaining non-scalar pitches. I initially adopt the dictates of, and sound world associated with, a serial composition, but, as the piece progresses, my “ear” is affirmed as the driving compositional force. The resulting conflict gives us the sense that humanity (the ear as the driving compositional force) is working against inhumanity (the octatonic and serial elements).

The piece has a cubist structure in the abstract sense of the word. The unconventional piano part is accompanied by the SATB chorus singing non-octatonic tetrachord: B A flat, F, and D. Each pitch is assigned a word or syllable. The text is intended to have a cubist structure. It is meant to look upon itself from different perspectives during the composition. When listening, the audience is faced with the question of what the music says in the absence of meaningful text. I believe the music asks questions about the procedure that created it originally. What meaning can be found in a composition created from two conflicting techniques: serial composition and composing from ear?

I composed the first version of *Diminished Cube* for flute, snare drum, piano, two violins, viola, and violoncello as part of the Form and Analysis class I took at The Boston Conservatory in the Spring of 2010. *Diminished Cube* was a highly successful project, and I quickly recast it as a choral piece that same semester. Over the years, the work has had multiple performances by vocal quartets and piano, but this is the first performance with full choir and piano. I hope you enjoy the concert!