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Liann Cline’s Senior Honors Harp Recital

An Honors Thesis (MUSPE 498)

by

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April 2012

Expected Date of Graduation
May 2012
Abstract and Acknowledgements

Abstract

With the help of Elizabeth Richter, Professor of harp at Bali State University, I have put together a harp recital with pieces from varying genres. The composers of the compositions include Carlos Salzedo, Stephen Paulus, Claude Debussy, Baldassare Galuppi, and Michael Amorosi. The music will include solo works for harp, a duet for Harp and Bass, a duet for Harp and Oboe, and a Harp Concerto for Harp and String Quintet. In addition to the Harp recital, the audience will be able to read program notes providing snippets of information for each piece.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Elizabeth Richter for advising me through this project. She has provided me with all the tools and skills that have helped me through the past four years. I have accomplished many great achievements under her guidance, and will forever be grateful for her wisdom and skills that she has shared with me.
Liann Cline (Music Performance). Honors Senior Harp Recital. Thesis Advisor: Elizabeth Richter

For my Honors thesis, I presented a harp recital with program notes. I gathered information about my pieces from reliable music and harp journals. The purpose of my recital was to fulfill my music performance major, while providing my audience with background information about the music I played. The final project included a harp recital on April 7, 2012 at 5:30pm in Choral Hall, along with detailed program notes.

I wanted to complete the harp recital with program notes because it interests me, personally and professionally. The experience of performing a solo recital offers benefits in all aspects of my life. The determination to learn and memorize my music, and then perform for my peers, family, friends, and teachers, provides a great satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. The addition of the program notes allowed my audience to better understand the music I perform. By researching these pieces, I was able to bring the information I learned to the practice room and to present the information through my performance. Along with the solo harp pieces, I included three chamber music pieces in my recital. These pieces offered me the opportunity to explore the other instruments in my research. Finally, the music from my recital offered a balanced performance of music from different time periods. My recital includes music by Baldassare Galuppi, Claude Debussy, Carlos Salzedo, Michael Amorosi, and Stephen Paulus.

The process of this project, first and foremost, was for myself. The effort, self-motivation and planning that has gone into this project has included hours of solitary work. However, the final project was an ideal opportunity for me to share my work and research with my classmates, friends, family, and teachers.

A Senior Recital represents the effort and determination of at least four years of major study with a music professor. The music chosen for my recital offered a variety of musical styles in addition to various types of ensembles, from solo repertoire, duets, and a larger ensemble consisting
of string quintet with solo harp. Planning and practicing for my recital began well over a year before the actual recital date. Elizabeth Richter and I had a discussion to select standard repertoire that should be learned in an undergraduate setting. These musical selections were rehearsed and finally performed on Saturday, April 7th, 2012. In addition to hours of practicing and harp lessons, I also spent hours working with my fellow musicians for the chamber works. Three separate ensembles rehearsed weekly with me leading up to my recital to prepare our music.

The recital began with Berceuse for Harp by Stephen Paulus. Stephen Paulus, born in New Jersey in 1949, is a prolific American composer. His works demonstrate an influence of Romanticism, specifically with his use of a tonal melodic style. The incorporation of his spiritual ideology creates a sense of mystical journey in several of his works.

Berceuse is an adaptation of the fourth movement from the Divertimento for Harp and Chamber Orchestra, which was commissioned by Betty and David Price and premiered by the Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra in March of 1983. Defined as a lullaby, a berceuse is a soothing, gentle song intended to lull children to sleep. Characteristics include quiet dynamics, compound time signatures, and a “rocking” accompaniment with a simple melody with variations. Paulus, however, adds a minimalist feel to this lullaby. In addition to the hypnotic repetitions of the accompaniment, he also incorporates unexpected forte chords throughout the piece.

The introduction of Berceuse begins with a measure of ¾ followed by a measure of 4/4, and then returns to a measure of ¾. This alternation of time signatures throughout the piece represents a variation of the traits indicative of berceuses. The brief introduction begins with a bass ostinato, and the right hand enters with the melody outlining the pitches A, G, D and E. This two-measure melodic idea continues to expand until a monotonous “tick-tocking” motive appears. From here, the second theme begins, in which the left hand continues the ostinato, while the melodic ideas develop until loud chords abruptly interrupt the music. After this brief interruption, the second theme
second theme begins, in which the left hand continues the ostinato, while the melodic ideas develop until loud chords abruptly interrupt the music. After this brief interruption, the second theme returns, followed again by the tick-tocking motive. A variation of the first theme returns, this time outlining the pitches E, D, G, A\textsuperscript{b}. Transitional measures return us to the original first theme, followed by a variation of the “tick-tocking” motive. The piece continues with fragments of the previous motivic ideas until it ultimately fades away on the pitches E, D, A, and G.

Next, I performed *Iridescence* from *Five Preludes* by Carlos Salzedo. Salzedo is recognized as the leading figure in establishing the harp as an important instrument of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. In addition to composing an extensive amount of works for the harp, he was a virtuoso of piano and harp, and an important pedagogue of his time.

Losing his mother at the age of five, Salzedo formed a deep attachment to his family’s housekeeper/governess, Marthe Bideberripe. She was Basque, and thus influenced Salzedo’s deep association with musical traits reflective of Basque dance music; specifically, the five-beat meter typical of the Basque dance, the Zortzico.

*Five Preludes for Harp Alone* was composed in 1917. *Iridescence* is the second movement of this set and is dedicated to Eve Horan. In this piece, Salzedo plays with the melodic patterns to create a shimmering illusion representative of musical iridescence. Although Salzedo died in 1961, his compositions still project a sense of modernism to this day.

Following the first two solos, I played *Sonata in D* by Baldassare Galuppi. Unlike the first two pieces that I played from memory, the *Sonata in D* I played with music on a stand in front of me. Baldassare Galuppi was born in Venice in 1706. He wrote many works during his lifetime and was largely influential in the genre *drammi giocosi* (comic opera). His other works include sacred and keyboard music. The *Sonata in D* was originally composed for cello and piano, and it is
representative of music composed in the late Baroque period. The sonata consists of four
movements: Adagio, Allegro, Maestoso Animato, and Presto con fuoco.

To conclude the first part of my recital, I accompanied Sean Muzzi on the double bass as we
played Meditation from Thaïs by Jules Massenet. The opera Thaïs was first performed in Paris in
1894. It is set in Egypt during the Byzantine rule, where a monk aims to convert Thaïs, a courtesan,
to Christianity. The monk realizes too late that his obsession with her is lustful. From this point in
the opera, the monk discovers his true nature, while Thaïs struggles with the superficiality of her
life.

Meditation is the entr’acte played between scenes of Act II. The music portrays the
transformation of Thaïs’s heart from her role as seductress to wanting to begin a religious life. It
was originally composed for violin and orchestra; however, it has been arranged for several
different instruments. Carlos Salzedo transcribed the orchestral accompaniment for harp.

Following a brief intermission, Katie Garringer and I played the Adagio for Oboe and Harp
by Michael Amorosi. Born in 1947, Michael Amorosi was a harpist, composer and arranger. He
studied music theory and composition at the Manhattan School of Music, and received a Bachelor’s
degree from SUNY Buffalo, and a Masters from SUNY Potsdam. He died in Buffalo, New York in
2000. He was the music coordinator for eleven episodes of the TV series “The Bold and the
Beautiful” and four episodes of “Capitol” during the 1980s.

The Adagio begins with a relaxed entrance of the oboe accompanied by lush chords in the
harp. Melodic ideas with constantly changing moods are developed throughout the entire work.
From the relaxed beginning, it moves to a lyrical section, travels through a brief harp interlude,
arrives at a faster, upbeat section, until it fades away into a mysterious ending. This work is heavily
influenced by jazz and includes syncopated rhythms and extended tertian chords.

Finally, the recital ended with the Danses Sacrée et Profane by Claude Debussy.
The *Danses Sacrée et Profane* was originally written for the chromatic harp. This type of harp had a string for every semitone as opposed to the pedal harp, which uses pedals to adjust the pitch of the strings. Pleyel, the manufacturers of chromatic harps, hoped to improve their sales by commissioning new pieces for this harp. One commission came from Debussy in 1904. The competing harp manufacture, Erard, responded to this sales technique by commissioning Ravel to write a piece, *Introduction and Allegro*.

Debussy based the first movement, *Danse Sacrée*, on a keyboard piece by Portuguese composer Francisco de Lacerda. The mood of this movement is solemn, invoking the feeling of ancient harps. The *Danse Profane* follows the first movement without pause. The repeated harp notes at the end of the first danse set the pulse for the second danse. The second movement contains a Spanish melody, which Debussy used in two of his other piano works. The feeling of this movement is much more extroverted than the first movement.

Finished within an hour, my recital demonstrated many months worth of daily practicing and performing. I had one opportunity to play each piece for family and friends, while I had had countless run-throughs in my practice room. I was pleased with the outcome; however, it's amazing that so much work leads up to a single hour of performing.
Works Cited


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