

Honor's Creative Project: Senior Piano Recital

Victor Morman

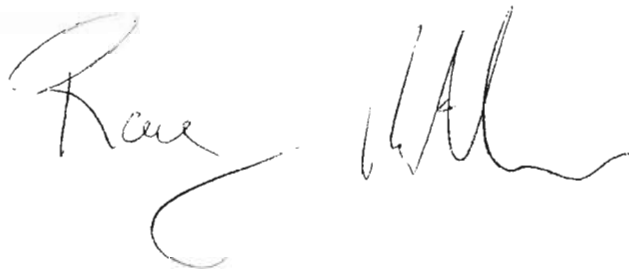
Senior Piano Recital

An Honors Thesis (MUSPE 498)

by

Victor Morman

**Thesis Advisor
Dr. Ray Kilburn**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Kilburn", written in a cursive style.

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

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Expected Date of Graduation

May 2011

Spice
Winter

Abstract

This project consists of a program of piano music featuring music from the Baroque period through the 20th century. It exhibits the musical ability and technical skill I have learned while studying piano here at Ball State. The program is roughly 45 minutes in length and will be performed in a recital on March 1, 2011. A recording of the recital will be submitted along with an author's statement.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Ray Kilburn for advising me while I worked on this project. His patience and guidance meant more than I can say, and without his instruction over the past four years, I would not be the musician I am today.

Author's Statement

The task of putting together a program for a piano recital is a process that takes time. My senior recital reflects what I have learned during my time in the piano department at Ball State. It also gives me the chance to share with an audience a program of pieces with which they may or may not be familiar. As a musician, the latter is very important to me, and it is the main reason I chose to make this recital my creative project.

The pieces in my program were selected by me with input from my piano instructor. As my teacher, Dr. Ray Kilburn was instrumental in guiding me and assisting me in choosing appropriate repertoire. The goal was to find a collection of works that I enjoyed playing but that also fit well with my musical and technical abilities. If I had chosen pieces that were too demanding, this would have been reflected in the quality of my recital. Instead Dr. Kilburn helped me find pieces that were challenging yet manageable.

One key element of creating a program is finding pieces that complement each other well but that also contrast so to keep the program fresh and interesting. The most common way to do this is to program pieces from different periods in history. This also demonstrates knowledge of performance techniques from these periods. Another is to include a set of pieces by the same composer that work well together. Both ways can be found in my senior recital.

My program is anchored around the French Suite No. 6 in E Major by J.S. Bach which is a set of dances from the Baroque period. The French Suites are a well-known part of the piano repertoire, and having worked on several of the dances last year, performing the whole set was a manageable way for me to include a substantial but not overly difficult piece of the literature in my recital. Rather than opening with the Bach, however, I chose to play a short sonata by Franz Joseph Haydn. The brevity of this piece contrasts nicely with the combined length of all eight dances in the Bach suite. It also gave me the chance to include a work from the Classical period.

The second half of my program consists of *Sposalizio* by Franz Liszt and two preludes by Dmitri Kabelevsky. Perhaps my favorite piece on the program, *Sposalizio* is the first piece from the *Deuxième Années de Pèlerinage "Italia"* by Liszt. It was inspired by Raphael's painting *The Marriage of the Virgin*. The piece is very lyrical and the romanticism in it contrasts nicely with the preceding baroque dance movements. The two Kabelevsky preludes are much shorter with the first having a lyrical quality and the second a more fiery character. They are the only pieces from the twentieth century on my program, and while they may exhibit more dissonance than any of the other works, both have a certain charm and are easy to listen to.

While I could end here with the two preludes, I have decided to round out the program with one final piece that might have been matched with *Sposalizio* but will instead conclude my recital. The *Solemn March to the Holy Grail* by Liszt is a transcription from Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal*. Sections of the piece are technically demanding but it is not a virtuosic work; rather it is more fervent yet also introspective. The ending is not fully satisfying and this was attractive to me. Adding this piece at the end of the program gives the audience something unexpected, and whether successful or not sometimes programming is about taking risks and trying new things.

The program for my senior recital spans the most important periods of composition for the piano and gives the audience a variety of different works to listen to. This recital has given me the opportunity to find pieces that I enjoy spending time learning and also reap the benefits of my efforts by sharing those pieces with others.