



# Marc Stern

piano

Graduate Recital

Tuesday, June 1, 2010

5:30 pm

Recital Hall, School of Music



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**

*Program*

**Partita No. 2 in C minor, BWV 826 (1725-1730)**

Overture  
Allemande  
Courante  
Sarabande  
Rondo  
Capriccio

**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
(1685-1750)

**Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 (1804)**

Allegro con brio  
Introduzione: Adagio molto  
Rondo: Allegretto - Prestissimo

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
(1770-1827)

*Intermission*

**Three Intermezzi, Op. 117 (1892)**

Andante moderato in Eb  
Andante non troppo e con molto espressione in Bb minor  
Andante con moto in C# minor

**Johannes Brahms**  
(1833-1897)

**L'isle Joyeuse, L.106 (1904)**

**Claude Debussy**  
(1862-1918)

Marc Stern is a student of Dr. Andrew Willis

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In partial fulfillment of the degree requirements for the  
Master of Music in Performance

### ***Program Notes***

#### **Johann Sebastian Bach – Partita No. 2 in C minor, BWV 826**

This Second Partita from the set of six published from 1725-30 contains the standard set of allemande, courante, and sarabande, but is unique in its inclusion of a rondo and a capriccio instead of the typical gigue movement that is used to conclude the other five partitas. The Partita opens with a sinfonia in French overture style that is very orchestral in nature. This dramatic introduction concludes open-endedly and is followed by a subdued section of lighter texture. After a short improvisational cadenza, the final section of the first movement bursts forth with a two-voice fugue using melodic material from the middle section as its subject.

The Allemande is a serious, but calming movement that can be characterized by flowing two and sometimes three-part textures and a falling motivic idea that is prevalent in both parts throughout.

The Courante is a lively piece, full of energy with very rich counterpoint that few but Bach could deliver. The melodic interest flows from one voice to the next in a manner that seems most natural.

After the fast-paced Courante, a slow, singing Sarabande emerges in a simpler duet like texture. The opening melodic activity can be recognized from the middle section of the opening movement, but perhaps the real interest lies in the sophisticated harmony found in the second section.

To conclude this Partita, a Rondo and a Capriccio are presented. The Rondo is fast and playful both melodically and rhythmically. One of the interesting melodic ideas in this movement is the use of ascending and descending scales stretched out over several measures with much embellishment. Another is the hemiola effect created through groupings of notes in the accompanimental bass figure.

The Capriccio is another playful movement but with thicker texture than the Rondo and several technical challenges. The melody from the opening of this movement is used again in the second part, but the intervals are inverted.

#### **Ludwig van Beethoven – Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53**

This work is known as the “Waldstein” sonata because it was dedicated to Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, a friend and patron to Beethoven. Completed in 1804, it is known as one of the greatest of his 32. By 1804, Beethoven was suffering from hearing loss, but he was not deaf. The first movement is marked Allegro con brio and opens with a driving rhythmic theme. The energy remains in force until the second theme arrives in E major. This theme provides a short relaxing interlude before the energy returns with added rhythmic syncopation. The motives are further developed and presented in fragments and sequences that create a growing sense of agitation until the original theme returns with a surprising alternate ending.

Beethoven originally intended to include what is now known as the Andante favori in F Major as the second movement to this work, but ultimately decided that it was too lengthy. Instead, he included a short introduction marked Introduzione: Adagio molto that prepares the final movement.

The Rondo: Allegretto moderato emerges smoothly out of the slow introduction. A peaceful melody begins this movement over gentle accompaniment that is repeated in octaves and then repeated again over a continued trill and scale passages. The minor episodic section gives a taste of what is to come in the extended middle section. Just before the final return to the theme, a dreamlike section of flowing arpeggios and gentle scale passages arrives abruptly at a dominant pedal point. The prestissimo coda provides a dramatically intense conclusion for both performer and audience.

### **Johannes Brahms – Three Intermezzi, Op. 117**

All three of these op. 117 intermezzi were composed during the summer of 1892. In the same year, Brahms lost his sister Elise and also Elizabeth von Herzogenberg who was a close friend. In a conversation with a friend, Brahms once called these Intermezzi “three lullabies to my sorrows.”

The first Intermezzo in Eb is headed with a quote from Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament, a Scottish Lullaby – “Sleep softly my child, sleep softly and well! It hurts my heart to see you weeping.” This intermezzo contains three sections in ABA' form. The first section marked *andante moderato* begins with a soft, soothing melody. At the end of this section, the melody is repeated in a darker version that leads into the slower sorrowful Eb minor section. The work ends with an embellished reprise of the original melody.

The Bb minor intermezzo begins in a darker tone but is still smooth and calming at first. The melody is in the slurred pairs of thirty-second notes that sound above somewhat dissonant arpeggios and a steady bass line. The Db major section uses the same melody in a new and expressive context. Following the Db major section is a developmental section that leads back into the original Bb minor material in an altered recapitulation.

The C# minor intermezzo might have been inspired by the words of one of Herder's folksongs. Brahms marked the poem, and the rhythm fits the 3<sup>rd</sup> intermezzo melody. Like the first Intermezzo in Eb, this work is in ABA' form. It begins with a murmuring of the melody in octaves. This melody comes back and is repeated several with a thicker texture. The middle section brings in a sense of floating and a welcome sense of relaxation to the heavy opening section. The ending reaches a new depth of sorrow with its slower tempo, dramatic character, and extreme low register for the bass.

### **Claude Debussy – L'isle joyeuse, L. 106**

One of Debussy's main inspirations for this work is known to be Antoine Watteau's *L'embarquement pour Cythère*. This painting is said to depict a departure for the island of Cythera, the birthplace of Venus. While it is believed that this work was mostly composed at an earlier date, *L'isle joyeuse* (The Joyous Island) was revised and expanded during the summer of 1904 on the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel. The work was published later that year. Debussy's future wife, Emma Bardac, was with him in his time spent on the island. Coded and direct love messages to Emma are found in pages of the manuscript.

This work uses several of the compositional devices that are frequently associated with Debussy and impressionistic music. The whole-tone scale is prominent in the melodic figuration of the opening idea and throughout the piece as a whole. This use of whole tone figures and sequences gives sections of the piece a somewhat dreamlike quality. The music is just flowing on without any tonal goal. Debussy also makes use of the Lydian mode in several places including his second theme in A. A fanfare section begins the final journey into a joyous fortissimo arrival at the final return of the second theme in A. The energy remains until the dynamic conclusion.