

Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Faculty Recital

Steven Elisha, Cello

Reena Berger, Piano

Monday, March 8, 2004

McCray Recital Hall

7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

- Sonata for Cello and Piano Claude Debussy
- Prologue: Lent (1862 -1918)
- Sérénade: Modérément animé
- Finale: Animé
- Solo Suite for Violoncello Gaspar Cassadó
I. Preludio – Fantasia (1897 - 1966)
II. Sardana (Danza)
III. Intermezzo e Danza Finale

INTERMISSION

- Sonata for Cello and Piano in G minor, opus 19 Sergei Rachmaninoff
- Lento - Allegro moderato (1873 -1943)
- Allegro scherzando
- Andante
- Allegro mosso

Program Notes

The **Sonata for Cello and Piano by Claude Debussy** stands as a cornerstone in the cello literature in regard to its technical, melodic and harmonic innovations. It is also remarkable for its experimentation in novel sonorities and extreme registers. Written during the summer of 1915, Debussy's productive powers resumed after a long silence. This creative block was attributed to a preoccupation with distressing thoughts about the war at hand, as well as the onset of symptoms of an incurable disease that was to claim his life two and a half years later. These summer months of 1915 proved to be a particularly fruitful period for the Frenchman, whereas amongst other works Debussy composed this sonata for cello and piano "without effort." He claimed to have liked its proportions and forms, which were classical in the true sense of the word.

The sonata is made up of three movements. Its solemn first section is followed by a "Serenade" which is sarcastic, playful and facetious. (The cello duplicates the sounds of a guitar, a tambourine and a flute!) The finale is lively and festive. Filtering through are some strikingly unexpected passages of morbid hallucination.

The **Solo Suite for Violoncello** was written by the Spanish composer, **Gaspar Cassadó**. Cassadó himself was a great cello virtuoso whose compositional output showcased his unique style of playing and colorful musical imagination. Written in three movements, the Solo Suite begins with an improvisational first piece reminiscent of Ravel's opera *Daphne and Chloe*, however, it still retains its distinctly Spanish character. The second movement is a dance offset by a raw bamboo flute beginning. The finale has all the elements of a fanfare and flamenco guitar idioms.

The **Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, Opus 19** is quintessential **Rachmaninoff** in its grandeur, melodic sweep and harmonic richness. A monumental work consisting of four movements, Rachmaninoff pushes the pianists' role to the extreme, modeling it after his renowned piano concertos. The accomplishment of this piano writing, alongside the soulful voice of the cello provides for a breathtaking musical journey.