

Colors through the Fiddle

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of
Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Artist's Statement

As I envision it, before coming to Bard College, I wanted to enlarge my vision in music by getting in touch with various approaches in music making and music performing, while having a focus in violin studies. Through my explorations in various musical topics in classes and lessons during my 4 years at Bard, I feel more and more inclined to continue this “openness” in embracing all kinds of music in terms of both appreciating and the making of them. Those profitable classes include but do not limit to the studying under Marka Gustavsson’s studio, Erica Kiesewetter’s String Technique Workshop, orchestra rehearsals, baroque ensemble, Matthew Sargent’s classes on electronic music, Joan Tower’s Composition Workshop, Kyle Gann’s Arithmetic of Listening, James Bagwell’s conducting class, and Gwen Laster’s Jazz violin lessons. In these classes, I have had the opportunity to immerse myself in different soundscapes and to work with creative approaches to making music through notions or devices that were not familiar, yet interested me. Specifically, I had the opportunity to perform one of my electronic compositions, *Raindrop on My Window*, in my moderation concert, along with other classical repertoire that I presented on the violin. One important take-away from that process is that I was inspired and encouraged to think more deeply about the creative process through my exposure to unfamiliar and challenging forms of music. I hope to continue the spirit of curious learning and prompt experimentation, after my graduation from Bard College.

My first senior concert took place on December 11th, 2019. I performed music in various styles on the violin, including Taylor-Coleridge Perkinson's "Blue/s Forms" for Unaccompanied Violin, the whole set of Astor Piazzolla's "Histoire du Tango" with pianist John Halle, Biagio Marini's Sonata Variata, op.8, No.58, with cellist Megan Halm and Harpsichordist Lindsey William, and Toru Takemitsu's "Distance de Feé" with pianist Jason Guang Yang. In this program, I am content to have incorporated different styles of music, which draw on my study of baroque, jazz, and contemporary classical violin performance practice and techniques. The music covers nearly four centuries of violin repertoire, and draws a good arch of presentation integrating those music from different origins.

Due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, my planned second senior concert will not be presented in the form of an actual concert; instead, I will be recording my modified program and sending them to my board members as audio files. The original plan for the concert was to perform the whole of J.S Bach's Partita No.2 in D minor for Solo Violin, BWV 1004, and all four movements from Cesar Franck's Sonata in A major with pianist Helen (Yichun) Wu. It was a set of music chosen in order to make a contrast to my first senior concert -- this one being more "conservative", more serious-in-tone, and more unified. With the change of situation, losing the opportunity to collaborate with Helen, I decided to turn the five movements of Bach's Violin Partita into the focus of my work. Spanning nearly 40 minutes over a five-movement,

polyphonically complex form, this piece occupies a unique place among works for the violin. My preparation, including practice time, lessons and performances, has been quite demanding. It is at the same time a wonderful, satisfying, and humbling opportunity to concentrate solely on developing musicality from this monumental work by J.S. Bach.

The recording process will start the week following the day of the submission of this statement, however, I am so far happy about the progress that I am making with my coaches from all of my board members, through online playing or showing them of my practice recordings and getting fruitful comments from them. In addition to the Violin Partita in D minor, I am also planning on incorporating Fritz Kreisler's Recitativo and Scherzo-Caprice, to lighten the tone of presentation, especially through this unusual situation of the pandemic, and also; as a short piece that I enjoy playing.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my advisor, Marka Gustavsson, for guiding me, for her endless support and warm-heartedness throughout my 4 years at Bard. It had been an absolute honor and pleasure to study with you.

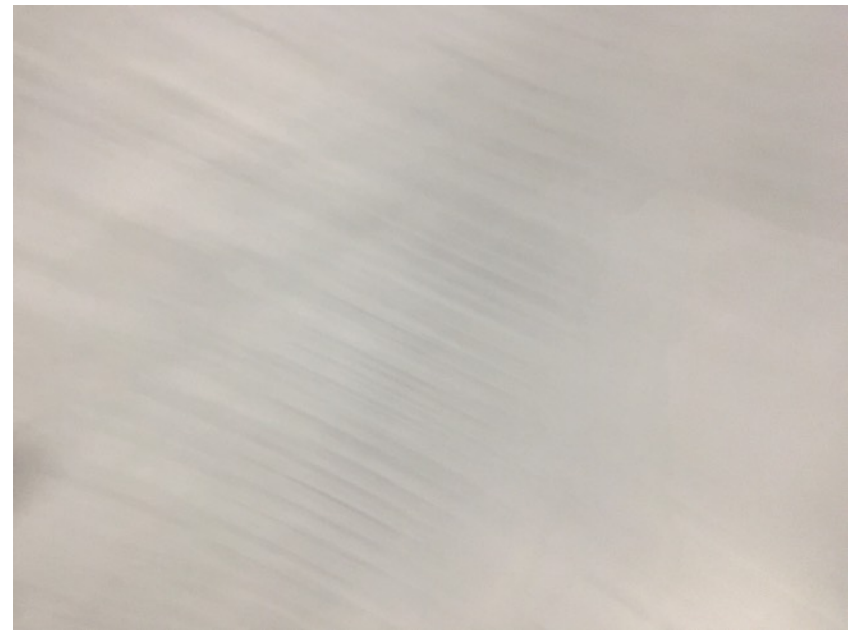
Thank you to Erica Kiesewetter, for your guidance, passion, and your selfless devotion in music education.

Thank you to Renee Louprette, for your kindness and instructions in Baroque music performance.

Thank you to all my friends, especially to Guang, Yan, Yibin, Yuwei, Rock, Ricky, DB, Edwar, Adam, Sam, Alex Parke, for being the best they are as wonderful human beings, and for their love, support, throughout all times.

Senior Concert I

Yidao Ho, violin



December 11th, 2019

8:00 pm

Bard Hall

Bard College

The Program

“The Prelude”

“Blue/s Forms” for Unaccompanied Violin

Taylor-Coleridge Perkinson

I. Plain Blue/s
2004)

(1932 -

“The Dance and Chanting”

“Histoire Du Tango” for flute or violin and piano

Astor Piazzolla

(1921 - 1992)

(arr. Dmitriy Varelas)

I. Bordel - 1900

II. Cafe - 1930

III. Nightclub - 1960

IV. Concert d’aujourd’ hui

John Halle, Piano

“Fluidity”

Sonata Variata, Op.8 No.58

Biagio Marini

(1594 - 1663)

Lindsey Williams, harpsichord

Megan Halm, Cello

“The Enchanting and Mystical”

Distance de Fée 妖精の距離

For Violin and Piano

Toru Takemitsu

(1930 - 1996)

Jason Guang Yang, Piano

Thank you...

To Professor Marka Gustavsson, for your tremendous support, inspiration, and your patience in teaching

To Professor Erica Kiesewetter, for your kindness, passion, and various instructions on orchestra-playing, violin, and music in general...

To Professor Renee Louprette, for your warm-heartedness and instructions on Baroque music and beyond

To Professor Gwen Laster, for all the inspiring moments in playing Jazz repertoire

To James Mongan and Tom Mark, without whom I will not be able to proceed smoothly in setting up this concert

To my Collaborators and friends, Lindsey, Megan, Jason, and Professor John Halle, for your greatest support and wonderful musicianship in every single rehearsal. It is always an absolute pleasure to play music with you all.

Special thanks to Professor John Halle, for your generosity and willingness to take part in this concert.

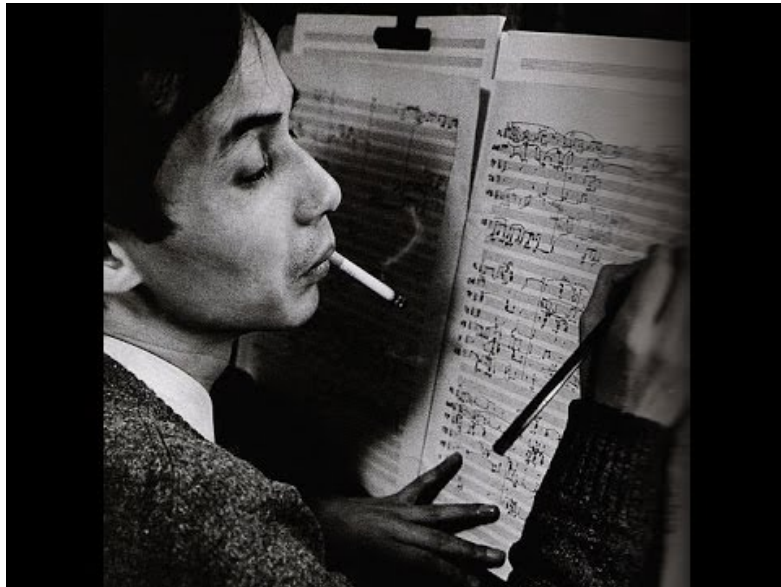
To Alex Parke, who helped recording this concert, for being such a supportive, optimistic friend with excellent musicianship.

To All of my friends, who might or might not be able to attend this concert, for all of your endless support and love. You guys made who I am. I love you all.

Program Note

Toru Takemitsu was a Japanese composer and writer. What was amazing about his career was that his musicality and composition skills were vastly obtained by self-teaching. He is famed for his special voice in compositions for his distinctly use of dissonance, colors in chords, and combinations of “western” aesthetics with those of his own Japanese culture.

Many of his early works, including *Distance de Fée* (“Distance of the Fairy”), demonstrate a unique use of silence and tranquility. His timbre in these early works might recall colors of those works by French composers such as Debussy and Messiaen, for the use of modes, suspension of irregular meters, and an indescribable sensitivity in music flow. All of these are noticeably traceable in his tranquil miniature of “Distance de Fée”, which for me, if I were to give an analogy, the touch of sounds in the piece resembles the echoing quality of deep-voiced ringing bells in snow, falling and flying in an infinitesimally slow speed — delicate but tranquil, where would the fairy appear?



Program Note

Taylor-Coleridge Perkinson was an American composer, classically trained in Manhattan School of Music, where he studied composition with Vittorio Giannini and Charles Mills. He also had a profound interest in conducting, that he studied with Franco Ferrara in the Netherlands. As a music director, he cofounded the Symphony of the New World in New York 1965, which was the first racially integrated orchestra in the United States. Despite his achievements in writing classical music, he was equally interested in Jazz and popular music; thus he is also well-known in the realm of film music, which he had contributed a number of works, including *Amazing Grace* (1974), and *Montgomery to Memphis* (1970), a documentary about Martin Luther King.

His music incorporated elements of Baroque counterpoint, blues, spirituals, and black folk music; and rhythmic ingenuity.

In this brief movement of his “Blue’s Forms”, strong emotional pulses of lamentation in contrast, or in harmony, with the tension of the exuberant liveliness, for me, is the most featuring trait of this piece. It is a touching experience to feel the genuineness of Perkinson’s character through his music.



Program Note

Astor Piazzolla was an Argentine Composer who is the “giant head” in the compositions of tango music. His compositions of tango music incorporated elements of Jazz and of classical music, which formed the new style which was termed *nuevo tango*. He himself as a virtuoso bandoneon player started to exhibit distinctive musicianship since his early ages. One of the most important figures in tango music, Carlos Gardel, invited young Astor to go with his tour and play bandoneon in his ensemble. Piazzolla’s father, the old Piazzolla, decided that he was too young to go on for a tour. It was eventually proved that it was a fortunate decision, that Gardel’s group had a tragic airplane crash during the tour.

Piazzolla would not be composing such delightful and profound tango-classical music, if it was not because of one of his most influential teachers, Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger inspired him when he was endeavoring to hide his tango tradition, which might not have been considered something of “high status”. He was trying hard to hide it and endeavor learning sonata forms and counterpoints, until Boulanger discovered where his true passion and soul lies for music, by a chance she heard him play the bandoneon. She inspired him to unleash such restraint and embrace his real passion. As such, We are able to see and hear the “real” Piazzolla today because of his encounter with Boulanger.



Program Note

Biagio Marini was a Baroque Italian virtuoso violinist. He travelled throughout his life in Europe, and was one player in Monteverdi’s group at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Italy.

He is best known for his instrumental music, and especially for violin music, in which he had been making innovations in terms of the instrument’s technique to be played, such as the expansion of the range of the violin to be covered, double-stopping, triple-stopping, and most novelly, the introduction of the first noted tremolo of violin and string music in history.

These are evident in his Sonata Variata, in which Marini was able to showcase many of the violin’s musical possibilities through variations of different musical approaches.

