

PROGRAM

SONATA FOR TWO PIANOS IN D MAJOR..... W. A. MOZART (1756-1791)
Allegro con spirito
Andante
Molto Allegro

Rachelle McCabe / Craig Sheppard

PAVANE FOR A DEAD PRINCESS..... MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)
Robin McCabe / Craig Sheppard

LA VALSE..... MAURICE RAVEL
Robin McCabe / Craig Sheppard

INTERMISSION

from WEST SIDE STORY:

SYMPHONIC DANCES.....LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1920-1989)
arr. John Musto

Robin McCabe / Rachelle McCabe

RECUERDOS..... WILLIAM BOLCOM (b. 1938)
Choro
Paseo
Valse Venezolano

Robin McCabe / Craig Sheppard

from WEST SIDE STORY:

AMERICA.....LEONARD BERNSTEIN
arr. Derison Duarte

PROGRAM NOTES

(Prepared by Robin McCabe except where noted)

MOZART: SONATA FOR TWO PIANOS

Mozart wrote his Sonata for Two Pianos in the autumn of 1781, a time when he was eagerly working to establish his name as a freelance composer and pianist in Vienna. He played in the concerts and soirées of the aristocracy, in the salons of the bourgeois, and in his series of public concerts, which he organized at his own financial risk. He earned a modest income by teaching three female students, of whom Josepha von Auernhammer showed the most promise. Only two years younger than Mozart, she fell head over heels for her teacher. Mozart, however, was repulsed by her and wrote to his father a sneering account of her appearance and hygiene. Her piano playing nevertheless impressed him: “The young lady is a fright, but she plays enchantingly.” The teacher and student appeared often as duo-pianists and Mozart composed this sonata to perform with Josepha in a concert at the Auernhammer home. She played the *primo* part; Mozart, the *secondo*.

The Sonata is cleverly scored for the two pianos. In *concertante* style, the quasi-orchestral textures create contrasts in sonority while inventive melodic ideas relay back and forth in a perfectly balanced conversation. The first movement is an exuberant *allegro*; the second, an elegant *andante*. The spirited finale brings forth the Turkish style so fashionable in Vienna at the time, a style found in Mozart’s famous *Rondo a la Turk* and in his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, which he was composing at the same time as this sonata.

—Rachelle McCabe

RAVEL: PAVANE FOR A DEAD PRINCESS

Ravel composed the pavane for solo piano in 1899 while studying composition with Gabriel Faure at the Paris Conservatory. Ravel was only twenty-four, but already the piece held the unmistakable stamp of his style—elegance and proportion, subtle change of mood and timbre using harmonic rather than dynamic shifts, and a certain sense of irrevocable melodic motion.

The piece evokes the dignified elegance of a reception at the royal court (the paintings of Velasquez come to mind) as a young princess moves gracefully through the steps of the pavane, a slow processional dance that enjoyed great popularity in the courts of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As an antique miniature, the pavane is not meant to pay tribute to any particular princess from history, but rather expresses a nostalgic enthusiasm for Spanish custom and sensibility, which Ravel shared with many of his contemporaries, most notably Debussy and Albeniz. Indeed, the only real princess involved was the Princess Edmond de Polignac, a noted patroness of the arts, to whom Ravel dedicated the piece.

The work became so popular that Ravel orchestrated it in 1910, though in later years he tried to distance himself from it. Perhaps he tired of amateur pianists trying their hand at it. He told one such performer, “Next time, I hope you’ll remember that I wrote a *Pavane* for a deceased princess...not a deceased *Pavane* for a princess.”

RAVEL: LA VALSE,

Choreographic Poem for Orchestra, arranged for two pianos

The idea of composing a symphonic apotheosis of the Viennese waltz to be named *Wien* occurred to Ravel as early as 1906. The project came again to his mind almost immediately after the armistice of World War I. This time, the great impresario Serge Diaghilev offered to produce Ravel's projected score as a ballet during the 1920 summer season of the Diaghilev *Ballets Russes*.

Ravel set to work and spent the winter of 1919-20 in seclusion in Lapras, a small country town, working on the score. Early in the new year he wrote his friend Roland-Manuel: "I'm working again at *Wien*. The motor is turning at full speed and at last I've been able to get into high gear." A few weeks later he added "I'm waltzing madly! I began to orchestrate on December 31."

The first concert performance was given on December 12, 1920 by the Lamoureux Orchestra under the direction of Camille Chevillard. The pre-war working title, *Wien*, ("Vienna") was not considered tactful in France so soon after the embers of World War I, so it was changed to the more neutral *La Valse*. Diaghilev, for some reason, never staged the score. The first ballet production did not take place until 1928, at the Paris Opera.

The opulent stage picture that Ravel envisioned is described quite evocatively in his note prefacing the score:

From time to time, through rifts in turbulent clouds, waltzing couples can be glimpsed. The clouds gradually disperse and a huge ballroom is revealed, filled with a great crowd of whirling dancers. Gradually the stage grows lighter. The lights of the chandeliers burst out full. The scene is an imperial court about 1855.

Ravel arranged *La Valse* for solo piano as well as for two pianos. Through his masterful scoring, the pianistic palette expresses all the colors and timbre of the orchestra. As the music unfolds, the veiled seductiveness of the waltz in its beginning stages soon gives sway to giddy, hedonistic passion. The dancers themselves are indeed swept away by the overpoweringly erotic force of the dance itself.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: from WEST SIDE STORY: SYMPHONIC DANCES

arranged for two pianos by American pianist and composer John Musto

West Side Story, considered by some to be Bernstein's best score, opened to generally positive reviews on Broadway on September 26, 1957. By the time the movie was made in 1961, *West Side Story* had taken its place as one of America's great musicals. Fifty-plus years later, it retains toe-tapping vibrancy and heart-tugging resonance, speaking to the enduring values and challenges of the human condition.

Set in a gritty Manhattan, the story's harsh realism comes alive through the use of jazz elements, Latin rhythms, and more traditional Broadway songs in which character and personality are expressively developed. Bernstein's dance music, crucial to the evolving plot, carried added dramatic significance. Bernstein unified the score through frequent and programmatic uses of the tritone, the minor seventh and the angular short-long rhythmic pattern. There is even a

reverent nod of homage to Beethoven, wherein the song *Somewhere* wistfully quotes from the slow movement of the *Emperor* piano concerto.

Many of the key characters of *West Side Story* are based on counterparts in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The extraordinary melodic invention in this music is in service to express the timeless themes of love, loss, alienation, revenge, and regret. Below is a brief synopsis of the work as it unfolds this evening.

Prologue (Allegro moderato)

The growing rivalry between two teenage gangs, the Jets and the Sharks.

Somewhere (Adagio)

In the same dream, the gangs break away from the city walls, suddenly finding themselves in a playful world of space, air and sun.

Mambo (Meno Presto)

In the real world again, the competitive dance at the gym between the gangs.

Cha-cha (Andantino con grazia)

Tony and Maria, star-crossed lovers, see each other for the first time; they dance together

Meeting Scene (Meno mosso)

Music accompanies their first words spoken to one another

Cool Fugue (Allegretto)

An elaborate dance sequence in which Riff leads the Jets in harnessing their impulsive hostility, figuratively "cooling their jets."

Rumble (Molto allegro)

Climactic gang battles, the two gang leaders, Riff and Bernardo, are killed.

Finale (Adagio)

Maria's *I Have a Love* develops into a procession, which recalls the vision of *Somewhere*.

WILLIAM BOLCOM: RECUERDOS,

Three Traditional Latin-American Dances for Two Pianos

Pulitzer Prize winning composer William Bolcom is a native of Seattle, and a graduate of the University of Washington School of Music. In 2003 Bolcom received the prestigious *Alumnus Summa Dignatus* award for the University of Washington. The following notes are his own, with regard to *Recuerdos*.

Recuerdos was inspired by a volume of turn-of-the-century dances given me by the critic and translator Michael Feingold. Falling in love with these wonderful dance pieces from Ecuador, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and other Latin American countries, I became aware of the fact that the Scott Joplin ragtime tradition was only part of a larger tradition of piano dance-music that flourished through the First World War. The three pieces are evocation of that style-period which, I hope, capture the flavor of that music and the time.

The first, *Choro*, is in the style of Ernesto Nazareth, who invented the form, and is written in memory of the great French popular musician, Jean Wiener, a friend of my teacher, Darius Milhaud. The second, *Paseo*, is in honor of Louis-Moreau Gottschalk and partakes of his untrammled romanticism.

The composer I most want to evoke in *Valse Venezolano*, Ramon Delgado Palacios, is not well-known, but is considered to be one of the seminal composers of the Venezuelan musical tradition. Palacio's pieces are full of surprising leaps, modulations, and phrase lengths, and quite often are in 5/8 time.

—William Bolcom

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: from WEST SIDE STORY: "AMERICA"
arranged for piano, six hands, by Derison Duarte.

Brazilian born Derison Duarte, now on the faculty of North Carolina Central University, has crafted this most unusual arrangement for one piano and six hands! Suffice it to say that the close proximity of 30 hyper-active digits poses some interesting challenges, and the "air traffic," so to speak, needs careful management!

ROBIN McCABE

Celebrated American pianist Robin McCabe has enthralled audiences on four continents with her virtuosic performances, and has established herself as one of America's most communicative and persuasive artists. McCabe's involvement and musical sensibilities have delighted audiences across the United States, Europe, Canada, South America, and the Far East.

Critics respond both to McCabe's prowess and to her expressive intensity. As noted by the New York Times, "What Ms. McCabe has that raises her playing to such a special level is a strong lyric instinct and confidence in its ability to reach and touch the listener." The Tokyo Press declared her a "pianistic powerhouse," and a reviewer in Prague declared, "Her musicianship is a magnet for the listener."

Her recordings have received universal acclaim. Her debut album featured the Guido Agosti transcription of Stravinsky's Firebird Suite, a premiere recording of that piece. Critics praised it as "mightily impressive." Stereo Review described her disc of Bartok as "all that we have come to expect from this artist, a first-rate performance!"

McCabe, a Puyallup native, earned her bachelor of music degree summa cum laude at the University of Washington School of Music, where she studied with Béla Siki, and her master's and doctorate degrees at the Juilliard School of Music, where she studied with Rudolf Firkusny. She joined the Juilliard faculty in 1978 and then returned to the UW in 1987 to accept a position on the piano faculty. In 1994 McCabe was appointed Director of the School of Music. She continues to teach as Professor of Piano and head of the school's keyboard division, and was one of two Ruth Sutton Waters Professors of Music for 2002-05. In addition, McCabe is a persuasive arts ambassador and advocate for arts audi-

ence development, addressing arts organizations across the country on a regular basis.

The winner of numerous prizes and awards, including the International Concert Artists Guild Competition and a Rockefeller Foundation grant, McCabe was the subject of a lengthy *New Yorker* magazine profile, "Pianist's Progress," which was later expanded into a book of the same title.

She was honored in 1993 at Seattle's Association for Women in Communications annual Matrix Table dinner, at which outstanding women of achievement in business, the arts, and community service are recognized. In 1995 McCabe presented the annual faculty lecture, a concert with commentary, at the University of Washington. She was the first professor of music in the history of the University to be awarded this lectureship. The November 1997 issue of *Seattle* magazine selected McCabe as one of seventeen current and past University of Washington professors who have had an impact on life in the Pacific Northwest.

McCabe performs regularly throughout the United States, and in 2007, she made her fifth concert tour of Japan. She appears often as an invited jurist for international piano competitions, most recently in New Orleans, San Antonio and Vancouver, Canada.

On June 30, 2009, after completing fifteen years of service as director of the School of Music, McCabe will return to full-time teaching, performing, and faculty involvement at the University of Washington. She will do so honored by carrying a Donald Petersen Endowed Professorship in the School of Music (2009-2012).

RACHELLE McCABE

Rachelle McCabe, concert pianist and professor of music at Oregon State University, enjoys an international career as artist-teacher and is well known to audiences throughout the Pacific Northwest where she appears frequently as a solo recitalist and highly respected chamber musician. McCabe has performed extensively in the United States, Canada, Southeast Asia and England. In addition to solo piano recitals in Singapore, Cambridge (UK), Malaysia, Seattle, Atlanta, Detroit, Portland, Ore., and Washington, D.C., she has been heard on NPR's *Performance Today*, the CBC, and PBS television. As concerto soloist she has played with many North American orchestras including the Seattle, Pittsburgh, Oregon and Victoria symphonies. She is also a frequent soloist with the Corvallis-OSU Symphony Orchestra. McCabe has appeared in many summer festivals including the Victoria International Festival, The Johannesson Summer School of the Arts, The Highlands Festival in North Carolina, Chamber Music Northwest and the Chintimini Chamber Music Festival. She adjudicated in the annual Hong Kong Piano Festival in 2008. As artist in residence at LaSalle, a school of the arts in Singapore, she was named an affiliate artist of the school. She is also an experienced harpsichordist and fortepianist.

At Oregon State University, Rachelle McCabe directs the piano program and teaches the music history sequence for undergraduate music majors. She is director of the *OSU Steinway Piano Concert Series* as well as the bi-annual

Piano Power! camps for high school piano students in Oregon. On the basis of outstanding teaching, she was named a master teacher in the College of Liberal Arts. She holds a doctorate (D.M.A.) from The University of Michigan where she studied with Theodore Lettvin and Gyorgy Sandor, a master's degree from The Juilliard School where she studied with Ania Dorfmann, and a bachelor's degree from The University of Washington where she studied with Bela Siki.

CRAIG SHEPPARD

The Donald E. Petersen Endowed Professor of Piano at the School of Music of the University of Washington in Seattle, pianist Craig Sheppard has maintained a strong and enduring presence in the classical music world for nearly forty years, with his unique combination of ebulliance and passionate energy, allied to a technical mastery and scholarly objectivity.

In May, 2008, he gave solo recitals and master classes in four major cities in The Peoples' Republic of China—Beijing, Shanghai, Xiamen and Shenzhen. In March 2008, Sheppard appeared once again in the Hunter Council Chambers of Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, performing Book II of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*, a work he recorded subsequently in Seattle's Meany Theater in April (released on Romeo Records, November, 2008). Sheppard has made seven trips to the Far East since June, 2002—four to Japan, one to Taiwan, and one each to China and to Korea—giving lectures and concerts in major venues and universities in the region.

On May 18th, 2004, he wound up a seven-concert series in Seattle's Meany Theater that was dedicated to the 32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas, a popular series that met with great critical acclaim. In April 1999, he gave his long-awaited recital debut at the Berlin Philharmonic, also to great critical acclaim. In 1999, he was presented by the Seattle Symphony in a highly acclaimed series of lecture/recitals at the Benaroya Hall. He appeared with the Seattle Symphony in 1998 in their inaugural season at Benaroya, and was also previously featured with the orchestra in the opening concerts of the 1996-97 season at the Opera House, along with the violinist Midori.

Sheppard's repertoire is extensive, encompassing more than forty solo recital programs and sixty concerti. In the past several seasons, in addition to the both book of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* and the 32 Beethoven sonatas (in a series entitled *Beethoven: A Journey*, Sheppard's recital programs have included the complete *Études* of Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Debussy, and such major works as the *Goldberg* and *Diabelli Variations*, the complete Schumann Novelettes, and Ravel's *Miroirs* and *Gaspard de la Nuit*. Over the years, his work with singers such as Victoria de los Angeles, José Carreras, and Irina Arkhipova; trumpeter Wynton Marsalis; and ensembles such as the Cleveland, Bartok, and Emerson string quartets, has also constituted an important and ongoing element in his musical life.

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Rachelle McCabe
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