

F32
1979
1-30

THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND THE OFFICE OF LECTURES AND CONCERTS

Present

MONTERRAT ALAVEDRA, *soprano*
DONALD McINNES, *viola*
FELIX SKOWRONEK, *flute*
PAMELA VOKOLEK, *harp*

in a

CD 14, 836

FACULTY CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL

Tuesday, January 30, 1979

Meany Theater, 8:00 PM

Tape No. 9263

PROGRAM

LC-175

Sonata flute, viola, + harp

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
(1862-1918)

Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp (1916)
Pastorale
Interlude
Final

INTERMISSION

Howard
WILLIAM SCHUMAN
(b. 1910)

In sweet music

*"In Sweet Music," Serenade on a setting of
Shakespeare, for Flute, Viola, Voice and Harp
(1973)

*West Coast Premiere

Program Notes

DEBUSSY: Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp

This work was the second of three sonatas he wrote during the last years of his life, while his country was in the midst of the First World War. He had intended to write a group of six sonatas for various combinations, but only three appeared before his death in 1918; this work, a 'cello sonata and a sonata for violin.' The three works present a new aspect of Debussy's style. His customary 'impressionism' has largely disappeared, to be replaced by a conscious looking-back to classical seventeenth and eighteenth century French models, and to those values of gracefulness, formal balance and logic which the earlier composers considered so important. The Sonata No. 2 is in three movements: Pastorale (Lento dolce rubato), Interlude (Tempo di minuetto), and Finale (Allegro moderato ma risoluto). Debussy revealed his own feelings about the work in a letter to Godet: "It is so terrible melancholy that I can't say whether I should laugh or cry. Perhaps both?" The work is as much a triptych as a sonata. In fact, Debussy himself compared its form with that of the "Nocturnes". A melismatic quality characterizes much of the writing. The flute, in particular, plays extended florid passages punctuated by comments on the harp and echoed (fragmentarily for the most part) on the viola.

SCHUMAN: "In Sweet Music", Serenade on a Setting of Shakespeare, for Flute, Viola, Voice and Harp

The composer has provided the following notes:

In the early 1940's the late Billy Rose commissioned a score for a production he was planning of "Henry VIII". There was a postponement due to the death of Laird Cregar, who was to have played the lead and, in consequence, I did not complete the score. Two pieces, however, were published independently and are today still widely performed, a choral "Te Deum" composed for the coronation scene, and a setting for voice and piano of "Orpheus With His Lute". In 1961, in fulfilling a commission from the Ford Foundation, my friend, Vincent Persichetti, suggested that I turn to "Orpheus With His Lute" as the starting point for the composition I was about to engage upon. The result was "A Song of Orpheus", Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra. Now, years later, I found myself drawn again to the Song, and the Fantasy, too, in planning the present work commissioned by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. This work may be said to be an outgrowth of both the Song and the Fantasy, but naturally the chamber music setting renders the new work a complete departure.

The voice is used as a member of the ensemble except when the words themselves are sung, in which case the role is soloistic. For the textless portions I have gone back to the fascination I had in my earliest compositions of writing appropriate phonetics for conveying the spirit of vocal music without words.

It is my hope that the music itself is sufficiently clear not to require any verbal aids. I might mention that the flutist performs on alto flute in the opening and closing sections of the work, changes to the regular flute during much of the faster middle section, and then switches to the piccolo for the final portion of the fast section. In composing the harp part, I had the considerable advantage of sympathetic editorial guidance and encouragement from the distinguished American harpist, Pearl Chertok.

Since knowing the words in advance should enhance listening pleasure, the poem, from William Shakespeare's "Henry VIII", is printed below:

Orpheus With His Lute

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze,
Bow themselves, when he did sing:
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.
Everything that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

This work is gratefully dedicated to all my associates - the artists, administrators, and patrons - who made possible the realization of my dream for a permanent organization at Lincoln Center devoted to chamber music.

"In Sweet Music" received its world premiere performance by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City on October 29, 1978.