



Alexandra Medeiros '20, piano (primo)
Gabrielle Wolfe '20, piano (secundo)

2020 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloists – Students of Elizabeth Wright

Francis Poulenc Concerto pour deux pianos in D Minor, FP 61

By 1932 when he created his vivacious, insouciant Concerto for Two Pianos, Poulenc was a pet composer of the wealthy French nobility who ran Paris' most fashionable artistic salons. Chief among them was the Princesse Edmond de Polignac, born Winnaretta Singer, heiress of the American Singer sewing machine fortune. Over her philanthropic career, she championed many of Europe's leading composers, including Ravel and Stravinsky. Commissioned by her and written very rapidly that summer, the Double Concerto was designed to be a work of pure entertainment to be played by two pianists who were close friends: Poulenc himself and Jacques Février. They gave the Concerto's first performance in Venice on September 5, 1932.

With two gunshot chords, the **first movement** explodes into a series of zany melodies linked together by a slyly conspiratorial four-note rhythmic motive. This craziness suddenly subsides into a much calmer middle section in a slow, entranced tempo; here the two pianos dominate with cool, slightly exotic melodies over delicate orchestration. After a return to the zany music comes an abrupt pause. Then with his two pianos Poulenc conjures the magical, bell-like sounds of Balinese gamelan instruments as he remembered hearing them at the 1931 Paris Exposition.

Janet E. Bedell



Leah Rosenman '24, mezzo-soprano

2022 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Kerry Ryer-Parke and Paul La Rosa

Henry Purcell *Thy hand Belinda/When I am laid in earth* from *Dido and Aeneas*

Purcell wrote a number of so-called "operas," but they are nothing more than incidental music to plays or masques, an occasional dance, air, or interlude to vary the spoken text. "Dido and Aeneas" is unique in the list of Purcell's works for the stage, in that it is set to music from beginning to end. Nahum Tate, the librettist of "Dido and Aeneas," pieced out Virgil's brief tale of the lovers, of Aeneas' departure at duty's call to found an empire, and the self-immolation of the abandoned queen, by adding scenes between Dido and her sister, Anna, as confidante, and others in which "weird sisters" plot over their witches' brew the downfall of the royal pair.

*Thy hand, Belinda; darkness shades me,
On thy bosom let me rest,
More I would, but Death invades me;
Death is now a welcome guest.*

*When I am laid in earth,
May my wrongs create
No trouble in thy breast;
Remember me, but ah! forget my fat*



Hanbin Koo '22, flute

2022 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Jacqueline DeVoe

W.A. Mozart Flute Concerto No. 2 in D Major, K.314, *Allegro aperto*

While anxiously biding his time in Mannheim, Mozart was approached by the physician and amateur musician Ferdinand Dejean to compose a set of works with prominent solo flute parts. The set was to include (the numbers vary depending on the source) three new concerti and six flute quartets (for flute, violin, viola and cello). In the end, he produced (these numbers also vary) just two concerti and three quartets. Only half of the fee was earned for this effort and Mozart's letters from the period indicate some frustration with the project. He bristled at the notion of producing so much for an amateur musician who, regardless of generosity, was limited technically. This attitude may account for the fact that Mozart did a bit of borrowing for the second of the two concerti he presented to Dejean in 1778. The K. 314 Flute Concerto was actually a reworking of an Oboe Concerto he wrote in 1777. Mozart had written the piece for the Salzburg court oboist but presented it later to the oboist in Mannheim, who was hugely enamored of it and performed it often in Mannheim over the course of the next year. To Mozart's credit, and the benefit of the flute repertoire, the Flute Concerto was not simply a note for note translation of the oboe original. It is an excellent showpiece for even today's most virtuosic soloists.

Jeff Counts



Izaki Metropoulos '22, tenor

2022 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Paul La Rosa

Gaetano Donizetti *Una Furtiva Lagrime* from *L'elisir d'amore*

After being escorted away by the village girls, Nemorino sits alone and thinks about Adina's reaction to the village girls swarming around him. He is sure that he saw a tear in her eye. His thoughts coalesce into the aria (in the form of a ballad-like romanza) "Una furtiva lagrime" (A furtive tear), the crowning jewel of the opera. The plaintive simplicity and spontaneous character of the minor-major melodic line stand in high relief against the vocal fireworks previously employed in the opera. Particularly effective is Donizetti's use of bassoon and harp in the introduction and the genuine sense of pathos embodied in the music.

*Una furtiva lagrima
negli occhi suoi spuntò:
Quelle festose giovani
invidiar sembrò.*

*Che più cercando io vo?
Che più cercando io vo?
M'ama! Sì, m'ama,
lo vedo, lo vedo.*

*Un solo istante i palpiti
del suo bel cor sentir!
I miei sospir confondere
per poco a' suoi sospir!
I palpiti, i palpiti sentir,
confondere i miei co' suoi sospir.*

*Cielo, si può morir;
di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Ah, cielo! Si può! Si può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Si può morir! Si può morir d'amor.*

*A furtive tear
in her eyes appeared:
Those festive young girls
she seemed to envy.*

*What more need I look for?
What more need I look for?
She loves me! Yes, she loves me,
I see it, I see it.*

*For a single instant the beats
of her beautiful heart to hear!
My sighs to blend
for a while with her sighs!
Her heartbeats, her heartbeats to hear,
my sighs with hers to merge.*

*Heavens! One could die!
More I cannot ask, I cannot ask.
Oh, heavens! One could, one could die!
More I cannot ask, I cannot ask.
One could die! One could die of love!*



Sara Stebbins '24, soprano

2022 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Erin Casey

Igor Stravinsky “No Word from Tom” from *The Rake’s Progress*

Perhaps no twentieth-century composer made as many public statements on the role of objectivity in musical composition as Igor Stravinsky. And nowhere does this property emerge more clearly than in his approach to those artistic conventions which, as Schiller maintained, the "naive" composer will not cast aside as a burden but rather embrace as a stimulus to creativity. Or, as Stravinsky put it in his *Poetics of Music* (1942): "The more art is controlled, limited, worked over, the more it is free." In *The Rake's Progress*, the dramatic work that brought Stravinsky's so called neoclassical phase to its climax in 1951, the "controls" are those imposed by the number opera, with its stylized sequence of recitatives, arias, and ensembles. Cast from the template of a grand scena and aria, Anne Trulove's monologue at the end of the first act appears to be a direct import from the realm of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian opera. After a brief orchestral introduction featuring wood-winds, Anne enters with a recitative in which she determines to go in search of her wayward beloved ("No word from Tom"). In the lyrical and affective section that follows she invokes the moon both to caress her lover's heart and light her way to him ("Quietly, night"). Hearing her father calling her from within, Anne wavers slightly

in another recitative ("My father"), but finally, in an exhilarating, C major cabaletta ("I go to him"), resolves to stick to her initial plan. To some listeners, the cut of the themes may recall Mozart; for others, the breadth of the design will suggest Verdi (whom Stravinsky much admired). But at the same time, it would be impossible to mistake the aria for a product of either composer: its spiky dissonances, unexpected rhythmic jolts and melodic turns, and its glittering orchestration are pure Stravinsky, who, not content merely to imitate past conventions, appropriated them in his own distinctive way.

John Daverio

*No word from Tom.
Has love no voice?
Can love not keep a May-time vow in cities?
Fades it as the rose cut for a rich display?
Forgot!
But no! To weep is not enough.
He needs my help.
Love hears, love knows,
Love answers him
across the silent miles and goes.*

*Quietly, night, oh! find him and caress.
And may thou quiet find his heart,
although it be unkind. nor may its beat confess,
although I weep, it knows of loneliness.
Guide me, oh! moon, chastely
when I depart.
And warmly be the same
he watches without grief or shame.
It can not be thou art a colder moon
upon a colder heart.*

*My father! Can I desert him,
And his devotion for a love who deserted me?

No,
My father has strength of purpose,
While Tom is weak,
And needs the comfort of a helping hand.
O God, protect dear Tom,
Support my father, and strengthen by resolve.*

*I go to him.
Love can not falter; Can not desert;
Though it be shunned, or be forgotten,
Though it be hurt, if love be love,
It will not alter.
Should I see my love in need,
It shall not matter what he may be.*



Rebecca Christainsen '21, viola

2020 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Ah Ling Neu

Béla Bartók Concerto for Viola and Orchestra

During the last years of his life, Bartók lived frugally in a tiny apartment on Manhattan's upper West Side. But he was hardly alone or neglected, as romantically inclined commentators would have us believe. He had the companionship of his wife, the pianist Ditta Pásztory, and he had work, i.e., commissions from some musical heavyweights. If he could also have had his health, Bartók might have lived to see the acclaim his music would receive by the late 1950s, to say nothing of the near-worship it inspires today,

when his name is linked with those of Stravinsky and Schoenberg as one of the three inviolable giants of modern music.

Early in 1943, after some years in which the composer had every right to be depressed over the paucity of performances of his works, and the consequent lack of royalties, a turnaround began. 1943 saw the creation and successful premiere by the Boston Symphony of his Concerto for Orchestra, commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky. In the wake of that success, several violinists – most notably, Yehudi Menuhin – suddenly “discovered” and began to play Bartók’s neglected Second Violin Concerto (written in 1938), which was enthusiastically received throughout the U.S. and in Britain.

After the Concerto for Orchestra, he tackled commissions from Menuhin for a solo violin sonata and from William Primrose for a viola concerto. The knowledge by the music world at large that artists of such distinction as Koussevitzky, Menuhin, and Primrose were championing the composer made his stock, and spirits, rise – although happiness, like health, was always relative for this reserved, basically morose man.

He did complete the sonata for Menuhin and write his Third Piano Concerto (as a legacy for his wife), the latter lacking all but the final 17 measures, which were supplied by his friend and musical executor, Tibor Serly (1901-1978). Serly would subsequently prepare for performance and publication the far more fragmentary Viola Concerto.

On September 8, 1945, less than three weeks before his death, Bartók wrote to Primrose: “I am very glad to be able to tell you that your viola concerto is ready in draft, so that only the score has to be written, which means a purely mechanical work... If nothing happens, I can be through in 5 or 6 weeks, that is, I can send you a copy of the orchestra score in the second half of October... This work will be rather transparent, more transparent than in a violin concerto. Also, the somber, more masculine character of your instrument executed [exerted?] some influence on the general character of the work. The highest note is ‘A,’ but I exploit rather frequently the lower registers. It is conceived in a rather virtuosic style. Most probably some passages will prove to be uncomfortable or unplayable. These we will discuss later according to your observations.” There was, of course, no “later.”

The composer must have had a good deal more of the Concerto in his mind than he had committed to paper. The “draft” that Bartók left turned out to be 15 unnumbered manuscript pages, undecipherable to all but those most familiar with his methods, and hardly easy even for them, as Serly quickly discovered. Serly next had to fill out harmonies and, finally, to orchestrate the whole, which, he noted, “presented the least difficulty, for the leading voices and contrapuntal lines upon which the background is composed were clearly indicated in the manuscript.” What Bartók referred to as “a purely mechanical work,” which it would have been for him, required over two years for another man to execute.

In December of 1949, the Viola Concerto was performed for the first time. Primrose was the soloist and Bartók’s one time pupil, Antal Doráti, conducted the Minneapolis Symphony.

Herbert Glass

Emily Ham '22, mezzo-soprano

2020 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Erin Casey

Camille Saint-Saëns “Mon cœur s’ouvre à ta voix,” from *Samson et Dalila*

Camille Saint-Saëns is best known for his dazzling piano pieces and colorful orchestral scores, but he also composed a large body of choral and solo vocal works, many of which remain popular concert pieces today. The only genre Saint-Saëns seemed to struggle with was that of grand opera, with one notable exception: *Samson et Dalila*. It is the only one of the composer’s 13 operas that is still regularly performed. While Saint-Saëns began work on *Samson et Dalila* in 1867, it was not until Hungarian composer Franz Liszt, who admired Saint-Saëns’s work, offered to produce the opera that Saint-Saëns was able to seriously devote himself to its composition. He completed it in 1876 and it finally premiered in Weimar in 1877, where it proved an immediate success.

Samson et Dalila relates the Biblical story of Samson, a Hebrew leader whose love for the deceitful seductress Delilah brings about his own destruction. Delilah sings her famous second-act aria “Mon cœur s’ouvre à ta voix” (My Heart Opens to Your Voice) as a response to Samson’s declaration of love for her. She sings that her heart opens to Samson while attempting to seduce him into revealing the secret of his great strength. The aria’s sensuous melody and lush orchestration combine to form a work of supreme musical beauty. It remains a landmark of French grand opera as well as one of the most popular and often performed mezzo soprano recital pieces.

*Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix,
comme s'ouvrent les fleurs
aux baisers de l'aurore!
Mais, ô mon bienaimé,
pour mieux sécher mes pleurs,
que ta voix parle encore!
Dis-moi qu'à Dalila
tu reviens pour jamais.
Redis à ma tendresse
les serments d'autrefois,
ces serments que j'aimais!
Ah! réponds à ma tendresse!
Verse-moi, verse-moi l'ivresse!
Dalila! Dalila! Je t'aime!*

*Ainsi qu'on voit des blés
les épis onduler
sous la brise légère,
ainsi frémit mon cœur,
prêt à se consoler,
à ta voix qui n'est chère!
La flèche est moins rapide
à porter le trépas,
que ne l'est ton amante
à voler dans tes bras!
Ah! réponds à ma tendresse!
Verse-moi, verse-moi l'ivresse!
Dalila! Dalila! Je t'aime!*

*My heart opens to your voice
Like the flowers open
To the kisses of the dawn!
But, oh my beloved,
To better dry my tears,
Let your voice speak again!
Tell me that you are returning
To Delilah forever!
Repeat to my tenderness
The promises of old times,
Those promises that I loved!
Ah! respond to my tenderness!
Fill me with ecstasy!
Delilah! Delilah! I love you!*

*Like one sees the blades
Of wheat that wave
In the light wind,
So trembles my heart,
Ready to be consoled,
By your voice that is so dear to me!
The arrow is less rapid
In bringing death,
Than your love is
By flying into your arms!
Ah! respond to my tenderness!
Fill me with ecstasy!
Delilah! Delilah! I love you*



Christopher Chung '22, violin

2020 Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist – Student of Joanna Kurkowicz

Henri Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5

Henri Vieuxtemps was born in Verviers, Belgium, February 17, 1820 and died at Mustapha-les-Alger, Algeria, on June 6, 1881. Vieuxtemps began the composition of this concerto in the summer of 1860 at Baden-Baden. The concerto was written at the request of his friend, Hubert Leonard, for the prize competition of the latter's pupils at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. Leonard received the concerto in April, 1861. The proportions of the work are more modest than those of the preceding concertos of Vieuxtemps, and it can easily be seen that the composer was concerned especially with the purpose for which the work was designed. Vieuxtemps played the concerto in September of 1861, at a concert organized to celebrate the anniversary of the independence of Belgium. He played it in Paris on December 3, 1862, when Berlioz and Elwart praised it to the skies, and Adolphe Botte accused the violinist/composer of "breaking consecrated forms." Berlioz wrote that the "magnificent concerto" was wholly new and great; that the ensemble was admirably contrived to bring into the light the solo instrument; that the orchestra spoke with rare eloquence,—' it does not send forth vain rumors of the people, and, if there is a crowd, it is a crowd of orators."