



DIAMOND BAR
PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY
ADVANCED MUSIC PROGRAM

Wednesday, March 25, 2020, 8pm
Virtual Recital

Le carnaval des animaux, R. 125 (1886)

Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835-1921)

XIII – Le cygne (The Swan)
XIV – Finale

Ashley Fang, Flute
Hannah Zhong, Oboe
Chris Lee, Clarinet
Michelle Yang, French Horn
Lawrence Wu, Bassoon

Fantasie in B Minor Op. 28 (1900)

Alexander Scriabin
(1871-1915)

Mi-Hyun Suh, Piano

In Celebration of Johann Sebastian Bach's Birthday
(March 21, 1685 – July 28, 1750)

Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor BWV 1403 (1718-1720)

II. Largo, ma non tanto
III. Allegro

Emily Yang, Violin
Kyle Yang, Violin
Dr. Amanda Yang, Piano

Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 in C-sharp Minor S.244/2(1847) Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Andrew Shi, Piano

String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 13 (1827)

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

I. Adagio – Allegro vivace

Kelly Tsao, Violin
Sean Chang, Violin
Gloria Choi, Viola
Clare Choi, Cello

🎻 **Postlude** 🎻

What a Wonderful World (1967)

Bob Thiele
(1922-1996)
Arr. Art Leiby

Alex Hong, Euphonium
Erin Miyahara, Euphonium
Patrick Zhang, Tuba
Alan Lu, Tuba

While vacationing in a small Austrian village, French composer Camille Saint-Saëns resolved to entertain his friends with a “zoological fantasy” by composing *The Carnival of the Animals*. Originally written for two pianos, string quartet, double bass, flute, clarinet, glass harmonica, and xylophone, it was later arranged for many different instrumentations, including woodwind quintet. The piece consists of fourteen movements, each representing a different animal. Although this piece was highly regarded amongst his colleagues, Saint-Saëns considered it too frivolous to be performed publicly, fearing that it would ruin his reputation as a serious composer. Roughly two months after his death, this piece was finally premiered, and immediately became one of Saint-Saëns’ most popular works. During his lifetime, Saint-Saëns had only allowed one movement, “The Swan,” to be performed publicly.

The Swan features a lyrical cello solo, which represents the swan’s ability to glide gracefully on water. The piano accompaniment supports the cello’s beautiful melody with a steady rhythm of sixteenth notes, representing the swan’s feet propelling its body through the water. In the arrangement for woodwind quintet, the melody begins in the horn and is passed to the oboe, with the flute, clarinet, and bassoon serving as accompaniment. The *Finale* revisits motifs from earlier movements, ultimately creating a 19th century carnival-like feel. *The Carnival of the Animals* has undoubtedly earned its reputation as one of Saint-Saëns’ most popular works, attracting audiences of all ages with its whimsical impressions.

Hannah Zhong, Oboe, Class of 2021

In his famous *Fantasia in B Minor*, Scriabin shows off his creative artistry by imbuing different colors into sound. Scriabin had synesthesia, a rare brain condition in which one sense (like sight) is experienced involuntarily through another sense (like hearing). The effect of synesthetic experience is seen in many of his works, including the *Fantasia*.

Interestingly, Scriabin may have even forgotten he composed the *Fantasia in B Minor* — Leonid Sabaneyev recounts playing the piece and Scriabin’s asking “Who wrote that? It sounds familiar.” Sabaneyev replied, “Your *Fantasia*.” In turn, Scriabin’s said: “What *Fantasia*?” Although this story may be false (Sabaneyev, who published a book about Scriabin, faked Scriabin’s death date), there are no recorded accounts of Scriabin performing the piece in public.

Because of his life-long friendship with Sergei Rachmaninoff, Scriabin possesses a similar musical style and phrasing notation. He utilizes intense intervals and chords that progress with a strong

momentum, creating an unsettled push-and-pull effect. Scriabin’s eccentric personality and musical obsession is audible in his music; he was extremely interested in mysticism and imagined a world beyond reality in his music. This is especially apparent in the developmental sections, which feature ethereal dream-like textures. The harmonic colors can be heard through the different elements of the piece, ranging from one of Scriabin’s most beautiful melodic themes to the massive motif in the recapitulation that pushes forward with broadness and ecstatic fervor. Scriabin uses harmonic colors and interweaves the main theme into the music, bringing the audience to literally hear different hues.

Mi-Hyun Suh, Piano, Class of 2021

Though it is one of the most iconic compositions of the entire Baroque period, no one knows when exactly Bach’s renowned **Double Violin Concerto** was composed. Many speculate it was written during his time at the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, an institution largely popularized by Bach and other famous Baroque composers such as Telemann. Others believe, however, that it was composed for the two principal violinists of Prince Leopold’s orchestra in Cöthen, where Bach served as the orchestra’s Kapellmeister. Scholars continue to dispute the history of the piece because the original score of the piece was lost.

The structure of the work, inspired by Vivaldi’s Italian Baroque concerto style, follows a fast-slow-fast movement pattern in ritornello form. The entire piece features an intense yet subtle relationship between the two solo violinists, beginning in the first movement with a brisk melody recognizable by any classical violinist today. In the second movement, the soloists interact in the form of a gentle counterpoint, supported by the ensemble repeating an ostinato. The intense harmonic tension of the movement, sustained throughout by the avoidance of tonic cadences, makes it famous as one of the most emotive movements in music. The final movement returns to a ritornello form similar to that of the first movement, with the soloists occasionally interrupting the orchestra’s thematic refrains.

Karen Peng, Flute, Class of 2021

A popular showpiece for many prominent concert pianists, the *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* is heard virtually everywhere, ranging from animated cartoons to virtuoso performances in major concert halls. Perhaps Liszt’s most famous piece, it is a perfect combination of tearful sadness, suspenseful mystery, and carefree “gypsy-style” dancing.

The piece is divided into two main sections, “Lassan” and “Friska.” The “Lassan” portion of the piece is characterized by a gloomy, hopeless mood; here, the composer is trying to convey the hardships and difficulties of the “gypsy” lifestyle (just imagine living on the freezing streets with no clothes and money!) Contrastingly, the “Friska” section starts out with a ray of hope, a distant voice in the higher registers of the piano whispering mysteriously to the audience. As this section continues, what previously was wretched and sorrowful gradually transforms into a happy jamboree — in just two pages of music (19 pages total), Liszt turns the audience’s world upside down! One can imagine a group of peasants dancing happily, tapping their feet and nodding their heads to the music. To this day, Liszt’s ubiquitous showpiece continues to challenge musicians and thrill crowds around the world.

Andrew Shi, Piano, Class of 2022

For Felix Mendelssohn, music always carried more meaning than words. Mendelssohn’s passionate belief in the communicative power of music can be traced back to his teenage years: it began with a simple *lied* (art song) titled “*Frage*,” German for “Question”. The song poses teasingly romantic questions seemingly directed at an anonymous lover of the eighteen-year-old composer. But composing just one *lied* wasn’t enough — Mendelssohn was so enamored with his lover that he composed an entire string quartet centered around the theme from “*Frage*.”

This **String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor** is among Mendelssohn’s first attempts to communicate his feelings through music. The rich, warm opening of the first movement confidently states what Mendelssohn truly meant to say with the three note motif from “*Frage*.” The remainder of the movement descends into a minor key, with quick, rising themes boiling over in a tumultuous storm. This romantic conflict is juxtaposed with moments of lyrical respite, musically illustrating the instability of juvenile love.

However, the composition has more depth than just its programmatic elements. The string quartet was also published the year that iconic composer Beethoven died. Beethoven’s death drew attention to his final compositions; among them were a number of string quartets. While many musicians were perplexed by them, Mendelssohn appreciated their innovative romanticism. Echoes of Beethoven’s last chamber works can be heard in the slow, introspective introduction of the *Adagio*, the contrapuntal themes in the *Allegro Vivace*, and the three-note motif that appears throughout the work.

Many scholars would say that the String Quartet No. 2 was Mendelssohn’s first mature string quartet, achieved through his study of the late Beethoven quartets, Mendelssohn’s own compositional talents, and the catalyst of romantic infatuation. The String Quartet No. 2 stands as a testament to Mendelssohn’s belief that “What the music I love expresses to me, is not thought too *indefinite* to put into words, but on the contrary, too *definite*.”

Brian Slack, Double Bass, Class of 2020

“**What a Wonderful World**,” now a well-known and widely recorded song, was first recorded by the legendary American jazz musician Louis Armstrong in the late 60’s. Upon its release, the song actually sold less than 1,000 copies in the United States; however, it rose to popularity at breakneck speed in the UK, even topping the pop charts. Written by composer George Weiss and producer Bob Thiele, the song uses simple, sentimental lyrics to dwell on the beauty of life. In the original recording, Armstrong’s iconic deep, gravelly voice sings huskily over a swelling orchestra, reminding listeners of the little things that make life beautiful.

Today, Armstrong’s original recording has a place in the Grammy Hall of Fame. The nostalgia of this iconic tune continues to evoke sentimental memories, and is a timeless melody for many people worldwide.

Carissa Jeon, Oboe, Class of 2022

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Chamber Music Coach

Sakura Tsai

Chamber Music Coach

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