

Clara Liera

About the Title:

Nevertheless, there is Hope. If one really takes time to reflect on the present and current timeline that is currently running, it is not that much different from what these various composers had lived through. Although these composers are held in high regard, they too are regular people that have their personal battles and victories. Their compositions carry the heart and mirror the histories which also shaped their childhood and life. These works are the recording of history. Although we categorized composers now, none of them had done this out of the desire to be the best at their 'categories'. Rather, it is the outcome of their dedication in pursuing the excellence and refinement of their art.

Four Fleeting Pieces, Op. 15 no. 1, Larghetto

By Clara Wieck-Schumann (1819-1896)

Clara Wieck-Schumann (1819-1896), a famous German female pianist performer in her days. Although her influence in music includes the normalization of a one instrument kind of concert and a memorized performance, her musical journey was not started to turn her into an accomplished musician. Wieck-Schumann's father started her strict piano education to make sure that she was not deaf. Similar to many prodigies such as Einstein among many, Wieck-Schumann experienced a delayed speech followed by virtuosic ability. However, at one of her journals, she wrote

“My father had to put up with being called a tyrant; however, I still thank him for it every day; I have him to thank for the freshness that has remained with me in my old age (at least in my art). It was also a blessing for me that he was exceedingly strict, that he reprimanded me when I deserved it and in so doing, prevented me from becoming arrogant from the praise the world showered on me. At times the rebuke was bitter, but it was still good for me!”

This piece is part of four brief compositions for solo composition which was written in 1840 and published in 1845. Constructed to be freer than the structural norm of the Wieck-Schumann's contemporary compositions, these character pieces presented distinct movements of contrasting moods which can be seen in the first “Larghetto,” in F major, is sweetly reflective, in remembrance of Chopin like gentle and wistful melodies. The second, “Un poco agitato,” in A major, is nervous in character, along with spirited lines that rise and fall. “Andante espressivo,” in D major, is the longest of the four pieces which also returns to the nocturnal spirit of the “Larghetto.” Which the set then concludes by the playful mood of the “Scherzo,” in G major.

Transcendental Etude no. 9 ‘Ricordanza’ (1826) - Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Although Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was the one of the greatest Hungarian piano virtuosi at his time, Liszt originally desired to be a priest as a teenager. As a child, Liszt received his first piano lesson from his father which developed into interest in church and folk music. At age of eight, Liszt began composing and at age nine, Liszt had his first public concert which led to the funding of his musical education in Vienna for six years by the impressed Hungarian magnates on his playing. At a later year in Rome, Liszt increasingly became occupied with composing religious music that would be more direct and moving rather than sentimental in character.

As a musician, Liszt was active in promoting, transcribing, and performing other composers' works, such as J.S Bach, L.v. Beethoven, Hector Berlioz, and others, especially when some of their music was

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underappreciated. He invented the symphonic poem for orchestra, extending harmonic language, and anticipating the atonal music of the 20th century. Liszt wrote books on Frédéric Chopin, Richard Wagner's Lohengrin and Tannhäuser, and John Field's nocturne as well.

Ferruccio Busoni described the ninth etude, "Ricordanza" ("Remembrance") as "faded love letters." In the placid key of A-flat major, Ricordanza is wistful, bittersweet, tinged with melancholy, yet at times bursts into the moments of intense emotions that accompanying such strong memories. Filled with lengthy quasi-improvisatory passages announcing the principal melodic ideas the piece suggests memories of happy and joyful times filled with moments of uneasiness, yet nostalgic ending.

Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, Op. 101- L.v. Beethoven (1770-1827)

Born in Bonn, Germany, L.v. Beethoven's (1770-1827) is one of the names that most if not all people would recognize. His life was anything but extraordinary; full of hardships and brilliances. A character that has been known to be rather difficult to get along with, his life journey can easily be traced through his musical compositions throughout his years. Typically, his life known to be divided into three different eras: early, middle, and late eras. In his early years, Beethoven was under Haydn and Mozart's influence, which can be found in the style of his early composition. This is the time where he intergrades as one of Vienna's musical elites as both pianist and composers. His contemporary accounts noted of Beethoven's tremendous power, character, and unheard-of bravura and facility playing along with frequent requirement for assistant to pull out broken strings out the instrument he played. Along in this period, Beethoven bear the loss of losing his loving mother and assuming the head of the household position due to his alcoholic father. By his late 20s his hearing started to decline as well followed by his brother death 20 years later and a custody battle over his nephew. His deafness, among many was one of the biggest factors that drove him to be more isolated from the society. The Sonata Op. 101 was composed in one of his most productive years. This is around the time Beethoven was Germanized the musical Italian vocabularies, which can be reflected in the piece's titles. This piece has a free-form, a quasi fantasia style similar to his 1801's Op. 27. Opened with warm intimate poetic melody in the first movement, this Op. 101 is quickly followed by the aggressiveness of the *idée fixe* rhythmical march of the second movement. Then, although the third movement seems to purports the march of the second movement, it actually is the introduction to the final movement; a noble expressive opening heightened by the brief appearance of the first movement's main theme.

Sarah's Hope - Lisa Carter (1997-Present)

A Washington-Los Angeles based musician, Lisa Carter (1997-Present) is an active artist, writer, pianist, harpist, educator, and composer. Upon hearing the program's theme of *Hope*, Carter arranged her orchestral piece Sara's Hope for piano as a part of this program. Having been blessed with the friendship and instruction of great musicians, such as Mike Watts, Jonathan David Neal, Dr. Robert Denham, hit songwriter Adam Watts for composition and Dr. Jiayi Shi and Rique Pantoja for piano, Carter continues to write her own music, including concert music, cinematic music, and commercial music.

On the Composer's personal notes:

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“Sara’s piece started as a string, oboe, and piano piece. It was, ironically, started on a hot summer day while my Dad was vacuuming the house. Even through all the noise and the heat, I wanted something that alluded strongly to night, stars, and rain. It was also written with a character of mine, who I called Sara, in mind. She is questioning her circumstances while gazing at the stars. I didn’t plan for the song to end so happily, in such a major tonality, but it felt right to end it that way, so that’s how I decided to keep it. Sara finds peace at the end, and the hope that comes along with it.

Clarinet Sonatas Op. 120 no. 1 - J. Brahms (1833-1897)

A German composer and pianist J. Brahms (1833-1897) spent his early days by playing his compositions in the inns, brothels, and city docks in Hamburg, Germany. It was only after his encounter with the Schumanns and Robert Schumann’s article in the *Neue Zeitschrift Musik* (music journal) that Brahms became a well-known composer. By March 1891, having no new compositions written out for more than a year, Brahms’ creative impetus appeared to have faded away. Brahms being acquainted with clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld (1856-1907) in his visit to Meiningen, who performed privately for Brahms inspired his compositions of Trio Op 114, Quintet Op 115 for clarinet and strings, and two clarinet and piano Sonatas Op 120 no. 1 and 2, which also transcribed and became a staple repertoire for the viola. The Clarinet Sonatas Op. 120 no. 1 features an assertive statement in its first movement main melody and a reflective second movement.

Romance Op. 23 - Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Amy Beach (1867-1944) is known as the first female composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra (In 1896 the Boston Symphony Orchestra premiered Beach’s “Gaelic” Symphony), as one of the first U.S. composers to have her music be recognized in Europe, as well as the first classical U.S. composer to achieve success without the benefit of European study. Yet, if it was not for Adrienne Fried Block, an advocate of women in music from historical erasure and obscurity in the 70s-90s, Beach would have been forgotten despite all of her works and achievements. Born into a musically gifted cotton and paper mill owner family in New Hampshire, Amy Beach began taking piano lessons from her mother when she was six years old. Despite never having a formal musical education, Beach did not let her circumstances stop her pursuit of music. Prior and after her marriage years, Beach spent her times studying harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and orchestration on her own; absorbing orchestration treatises by Berlioz and Gevaert as well as closely examining Wagner’s operas and attended Boston Symphony concerts with scores in hand. Beach was able to write out Bach fugues and entire symphonic works by memory. Upon Beach’s marriage, in which she was made to promise to no longer teach piano and to be limited to perform two recitals a year and behave appropriately as a doctor’s wife, her name became known as Mrs. H.H.A Beach, which were the initials of her husband. When he died, however, she dropped the three initials and simply went by “Amy Beach”. The “Romance for Violin and Piano” is a piece Beach wrote as a dedication to Maud Powell, who was a violin prodigy and a pioneer female performing violinist. In Romance Beach portrays a passion filled love story from beginning to end full of soaring high notes and calming passages that pull the listener in to the love story.

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