Program

Prelude and Fugue No. 9 in E Major, Well Tempered Clavier, Book II – J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Sonata in D Major, K. 576 – W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
   I. Allegro
   II. Adagio
   III. Allegretto

Rain Tree Sketch II – Tōru Takemitsu (1930-1996)

Reflets dans l’eau – Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jesus, XIII. Noel – Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Ballade No. 4 in F Minor – Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
This set of pieces has been my audition repertoire throughout the year as I’ve been applying to various Performance Master’s programs across the continent. As per the requirements of most auditions, there is a piece from each major stylistic period. The Prelude and Fugue is a wonderful example of Bach’s masterful Baroque counterpoint. Mozart’s D Major Sonata was his last for solo piano, completed in 1789 two years before his death. Its incorporation of contrapuntal elements into a Classical sonata form is typical of Mozart’s later style, particularly in the miniature canons based on the opening horn motif of the first movement. The third movement also contains a great deal of contrapuntal “noodling” (a nice technical term I picked up in my piano lessons). Like the Mozart Sonata, Chopin’s 4th Ballade is also the composer’s last piece in the genre and arguably the most complex. Two main themes are introduced near the beginning – first a yearning, nocturne-like melody over a strummed accompaniment, then a warmer, more static melody harmonized as a chorale – and are developed and transformed in increasingly elaborate ways as they recur throughout the piece.

The Takemitsu, Debussy, and Messiaen pieces are what remains of my original idea for a recital program based on exploring connections and mutual influence between French and Japanese aesthetics and music in the 20th century. I had to abandon this theme in order to prepare for auditions, but during the program I will talk briefly about the relationship between these three composers and their music as they relate to the slides below.

It’s been a challenging year, and I’ve learned a tremendous amount from my studies, travels, and auditions. Nuggets of wisdom include: time management is the key to effective practicing; I really should sleep the night before an audition; and finally, I should never eat poutine by myself. I sincerely thank everyone in the Haverford music department for their understanding, encouragement, and support, which has enabled and inspired me to pursue my goals throughout the year. I hope you all enjoy the program!

Moving Away from Romanticism
Le Japonisme: Japanese Prints and Impressionism

On Ukiyoe (and Impressionism): “The illuminated air of the scene of the action.” – John Lafarge

Monet: “Everyone discusses my art and pretends to understand, as if it were necessary to understand, when it is simply necessary to love.”
Debussy: “Realities – what imbeciles call Impressionism.”

Takemitsu on Debussy and Messiaen
From Confronting Silence:

- “I tried to create a structure of tempo strongly influenced by the traditional idea of ma . . . Such a concept, which gives mode and rhythm to individual parts like characters in a play, comes out of the tradition and musical spirit of Messiaen and Debussy.” (96)
- “I learned much from the music of Debussy. (Of course, I studied in my own way, but I think of him as my great mentor.) While his music can be analyzed in different ways, his greatest contribution was his orchestration, which emphasizes color, light, and shadow . . . His music is unique in that, rather than emphasizing one principal theme, it displays multiple aspects of sound.” (110)
- On ma: “A single strum of the strings or even one pluck is too complex, too complete in itself to admit any theory. Between this complex sound - so strong that it can stand alone - and that point of intense silence preceding it, called ma, there is a metaphysical continuity that defies analysis.” (51)