Preston Chamber Music Series

An Evening of Diamonds II

Shellie Brown, Violin
Veronica Parrales, Cello
Dr. Stephen Sachs, Piano

Tuesday, March 28, 2017 • 7:30 p.m.
Belhaven University • Concert Hall
There will be a reception after the program, featuring Broadstreet Bakery cookies. Please come and greet the performers. Please refrain from the use of all flash and still photography during the concert. Please turn off all pagers and cell phones.

PROGRAM

Sonata for Violin and Piano
I. Allegro vivo
II. Intermède: Fantasque et léger
III. Finale: Très animé

Ms. Shellie Brown, Violin; Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Piano

Claude Debussy • 1862-1918

INTERMISSION

Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello
I. Pezzo elegiaco: Moderato assai – Allegro giusto
II. (A) Tema con variazioni: Andante con moto
   (B) Variazione finale e coda

Ms. Shellie Brown, Violin; Ms. Veronica Parrales, Cello; Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Piano

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky • 1840-1893

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata for Violin and Piano
Claude Debussy's sole violin sonata was completed in 1917. It is the third and final work of a project Debussy planned to entitle Six dossiers pour instruments divers, par Claude Debussy, musician français (Six sonatas for various instruments, by Claude Debussy, French musician.) The Violin Sonata was his last major composition before his death in 1918; the set was never completed. Debussy dedicated the set to his wife Emma and premiered the violin sonata with Gaston Poulet on May 5th, 1917. This was Debussy's last public performance before his death in March 1918.

The context of this composition was one of both national and personal hardship in Debussy's life; the devastations of World War I continued, and the composer faced turmoil from terminal cancer and financial distress. It is evident in his inscription of "...par Claude Debussy, musician français," in the score that this French composer was riding a spirited wave of nationalism for his country in context of the difficult war. Keeping this nationalism in mind, this sonata is designed out of Debussy's French impressionist style, a movement Debussy is crowned the leader of. This style was a subtle but active defense against any stylistic elements of German nationalist music, especially the large forces Richard Wagner composed for, who happened to be Adolf Hitler's favorite composer. French Impressionism is commonly associated with the artist Claude Monet's paintings, which display scenes of extraordinary plays on color and light rather than exact representation. Similarly, Debussy intricately sews together short phrase lengths and out-of-the-ordinary sonorities and tonalities to play with gesture, mood, and color.

Impressionism in this sonata holds deep and contrasting characteristics, though the sounds and colors often associated with the movement come across as ambiguous, airy, and light. This sonata in particular has a wide range of characters and depth: one could consider moods such as melancholy, nostalgia, silliness, sadness, elation, apathy, joy, struggle.

In contrast to a solid and traditional sonata form, the Violin Sonata in G minor is quirky and ambiguous in form, contributing further to Debussy's hold on Impressionism. In three movements instead of a standard four, the first movement, Allegro vivo, begins with a rhythmically ambiguous and melancholy character from the violin, encouraged only by a transparent texture in
the piano. From here, the two instruments quickly take transitional shape and stabilize themselves into a more stately and present second theme. The first movement then travels through development and recapitulation, using hazy atmospheres painted by the instruction sur la touche (over the fingerboard) for the violin and similarly murky textures in the piano. However, by the end of the movement, the world it created is somewhat truncated, interrupted by a flare of sudden passion. The second movement, Intermede: fantasque et léger (light and fantastic), enters the scene with a bold statement, mimicking a playful character like that of a French harlequin. A brief ad lib. Quasi cadenza in the violin sets a mysterious mood before it becomes playful and jolly. Techniques such as pointed articulations and dizzying counterpoint between the violin and piano give this movement a lighthearted feel, with brief languid and melancholy interruptions reminiscent of the first movement. The third and final movement, Finale, provides a third contrast to the preceding movements. Though opening with a tired version of first movement theme, it soon decides to be bold. The violin and the piano initiate a power blast which sends the violin off into an exuberant yell of scalar passagework. There are low points in this movement as well, which explore moods of deep melancholic contrast, an undertone throughout the entire work. The conclusion of this movement and the sonata as a whole ends decisively upwards, turning from low and murky to end in triumph and joy. Debussy wrote to a friend describing this final movement, “Through a quite humane contradiction, it is full of a joyous tumult. In the future, mistrust those works which appear to soar across the sky; often they have wallowed in the dark of a gloomy brain. Such is the finale of this sonata, which goes through the most curious deformations ending up with the simple game of an idea which turns on itself like a snake swallowing its tail.”

Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello
The A minor Piano Trio, Op. 50 was written as a memorial tribute to Nicholas Rubenstein, Director of the Moscow Conservatory, (brother of the pianist and composer Anton Rubenstein). Rubenstein had served as mentor, critic and supporter to Tchaikovsky; he had seen to it that Tchaikovsky’s works got many fine performances. The Piano trio is a monumental large-scale work (45 minutes long and counting!) in three sections, and is marked by an angst that overshadows the joy so fully captured through much of the composition. The first movement, in sonata form, is marked "Pezzo elegiaco" – elegaic piece: melancholy and sorrowful, yet warm, passionate, and filled with Tchaikovsky’s broad and lovely melodies. The second movement of the work consists of a set of variations. The simple folk-like theme is said to have been inspired by the memories of a happy day in the country, where Tchaikovsky and Rubenstein were entertained by peasants singing and playing for them. There are eleven variations of the theme, first introduced by the piano. "Landmarks" to let you know where you are: variation 1 - the violin presents the theme; variation 2 - the cello sings the theme as the violin provides a countermelody; variation 3 - a "scherzo" from the piano punctuated by pizzicato from the strings; variation 4 is in minor; variation 5 – the music box; variation 6 – an elegant waltz led by the cello; variation 7 – big chords from the piano with string punctuation; variation 8 – a fugue of imposing proportions; variation 10 – a lively Mazurka, almost Chopin!; variation 11 – a setting of the original melody that can pluck “heart” strings. The last section, the finale, actually starts out with yet another variation of the theme; festive and jubilant and developed at length. This manic mood eventually but abruptly changes, as if the composer is suddenly brought back to his pain at the loss of his friend. The melancholy opening theme of the first movement returns, orchestral in its force. This gives way to a solemn funeral march, whose characteristic dumdum – dumdum rhythm is given to the piano, while the first movement theme given to the strings dies away. (ref. Joseph Way)
BIOS

Shellie Brown is a violinist from Jackson, Mississippi pursuing her Master’s degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. Shellie grew up studying with various violin and fiddle teachers of the Jackson area and Mississippi Symphony Orchestra starting at the age of five, including Tammy Mason, Tim Avalon, Mickey Davis, and Song Xie. At a young age, Shellie was a member of the Mississippi Youth Symphony Orchestra when they performed in China, London, Paris, Vienna, and Salzburg. She has attended a variety of summer music festivals in the U.S. and has experienced a wide range of chamber and orchestral repertoire with musicians and coaches from around the world. These festivals include Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory, The Masterworks Festival, The Aspen Music Festival and School, and the Summer Music Institute at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. which she attended as a recipient of a National Trustee’s Fellowship. She is also the recipient of a generous grant from Performing Arts Consortium of Hilton Head. Shellie is the first place winner of the high school and collegiate divisions of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition, a finalist in the Coeur d’Alene Symphony Concerto Competition in Spokane, Washington, and received honorable mention at the MTNA 2014 Southern Division competition in Kentucky. During her undergraduate studies at Belhaven University, Shellie received various Music Excellence awards and was selected into Who’s Who Among American Colleges and Universities. Upon graduating from college, Shellie won a contract with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra as a core section violinist during the years 2012-2014. Shellie has played in masterclasses for renowned artists and faculty including Augustin Hadelich, Peter Slowik, and Stephen Redfield. Shellie is currently studying with Paul Kantor at the Shepherd’s School of Music at Rice University.

Shellie plays on a 2009 Gary Rickman violin on generous loan from the Rachel Elizabeth Barton Foundation.

Veronica Parrales is a highly accomplished cellist and sought after teaching artist. She received training at Manhattan School of Music and Purchase Conservatory before obtaining a Master’s degree at Hunter College, and completed the course work for the Doctorate of Musical Arts at Rutgers University while studying with Jonathan Spitz. Growing up in New York City, Veronica was exposed to many wonderful musical resources and had the opportunity to coach with David Geber, Peter Wiley, Timothy Eddy, and Alan Stepansky.

Veronica recently won the position of Principal Cello for the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra and continues to serve as Assistant Principal Cello for the Baton Rouge Symphony. She has collaborated with world-renowned artists such as Paquito D’Rivera, Renee Fleming, and Branford Marsalis in venues including Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, and Lincoln Center. She is versed in a variety of styles including jazz, Latin, and improvisation.

Until her relocation to Jackson, Veronica was a faculty member of the New Jersey Symphony education initiative, the Princeton String Academy, and the Rutgers University Mason Gross School of Music.

Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Dean of Fine Arts, Music Chair and Professor of Music at Belhaven University since 2004, regularly performs as a piano soloist, duet/duo-pianist, chamber musicians and accompanist. Dr. Sachs is a founding member of the Belhaven Piano Trio and the Sachs Piano Duo performing with his pianist wife Mrs. Carolyn R. Sachs. He has appeared as a soloist several times with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra (MSO), the Jackson Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra of Jackson, MS, the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony, the Eastern Mennonite University Symphony, the Cumberland Valley Chamber Orchestra, the Ohio University Symphony Orchestra, and the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra.
Well known in Mississippi, Dr. Sachs has offered countless performances at Belhaven University, Mississippi College, Tougaloo College, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Chamber Music Series in Meridian, MS. the MS Museum of Art for the “Music in the City” series of Jackson, the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of New Orleans, for the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra Chamber Series, for the MacDowell and Chaminade Music Clubs, and as an orchestral pianist for the MSO. He earned the D.M.A. degree in piano performance from the Catholic University of America studying with Dr. Thomas Mastroianni and Dr. Bela Nagy, the M.M. degree in piano performance from Ohio University as Trisolini Fellow studying with Richard Syracuse, a B.A. degree in music and a B.S. degree in music education from Lebanon Valley College studying with Williams Fairlamb and additional study with Dr. Donald Isaac at Arizona State University. Sachs has also coached with Horatio Gutierrez, Lili Kraus, Raymond Lewenthal, Garrick Ohlsson, Gyorgy Sebok, Eugene Jennings, and chamber music with cellist Leighton Conkling.

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT

The Music Department seeks to produce transformational leaders in the musical arts who will have profound influence in homes, churches, private studios, educational institutions, and on the concert stage. While developing the God-bestowed musical talents of music majors, minors, and elective students, we seek to provide an integrative understanding of the musical arts from a Christian world and life view in order to equip students to influence the world of ideas. The music major degree program is designed to prepare students for graduate study while equipping them for vocational roles in performance, church music, and education. The Belhaven University Music Department exists to multiply Christian leaders who demonstrate unquestionable excellence in the musical arts and apply timeless truths in every aspect of their artistic discipline.

The Music Department would like to thank our many community partners for their support of Christian Arts Education at Belhaven University through their advertising in “Arts Ablaze 2016-2017.” It is through these and other wonderful relationships in the greater Jackson community that makes many of our concerts possible at Belhaven. We praise God for our friends and are truly thankful for their generosity. Please mention The Arts at Belhaven University when you visit our community partners.

For a complete listing of Music Department scheduled fall semester programs, please visit our website at http://www.belhaven.edu/music/recitals.htm. A complete listing of major Belhaven University arts events may be found at http://www.belhaven.edu/arts/schedule.htm.

Thank you to those working behind the scenes to make today’s program a success: music faculty supervisor, Dr. Stephen Sachs; student workers — Lighting, Anne Hilleke; Sound, Daniel Jones; Videographer, Rachael McCartney; Photographer, Tripp Stewart; House manager, Miranda Kunk; Stage manager, Hannah van der Bijl; Ushers, Maddi Jolley & Ella Castro; Stage Hand, Qichao Cen; Reception Hosts, Lauren Barger & Ebony Sutton.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, April 11, 7:30pm, Concert Hall
Thursday, April 20, 7:30pm, Concert Hall
Monday, April 24, 7:30pm, Concert Hall
Monday, May 1, 7:30pm, Concert Hall
Tuesday, May 2, 7:30pm, Concert Hall

Student Composers Concert
Instrumental Arts Concert
Choral Festival Concert
Best of Belhaven II
Choral Arts Concert: “Songs for Slaying Giants”
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Stephen Sachs, dean of fine arts, music chair, pianist • Dr. Paxton Girtmon, director of bands, woodwind specialist • Dr. Andrew Sauerwein, composer, theorist • Song Xie, violinist, director of string ensembles • Adam Almeter, low brass adjunct • Nancy Bateman, cello adjunct • Dennis Bonds, jazz guitar adjunct • Richard Brown, string bass adjunct • Sybil Cheesman, flute adjunct • Carol Durham, organ adjunct • Sarah Elias, piano and music theory adjunct • Doug Eltzroth, worship arts adjunct • Dr. Rebecca Geilshler, vocal and music history specialty instructor • Kenneth Graves, clarinet adjunct • Christina Hrivnak, vocal adjunct • Richard Hudson, french horn adjunct • Margaret Ingram, jazz piano adjunct • Amanda Mangrum, harp adjunct • Randy Mapes, double reed adjunct • Dr. Tanja Miric, classical guitar adjunct • Christopher Phillips, vocal/choral & worship arts specialty instructor, director of choral ensembles & Singing Christmas Tree • Dr. Owen Rockwell, percussion specialty instructor, director of percussion ensembles • Carolyn Sachs, piano adjunct • Elizabeth Taylor, viola adjunct • Lloyd Turner, trumpet adjunct • Sarah Anne Waters, vocal adjunct • Grace Anna Lane, administrative assistant

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, MUSIC MAJORS

Timber Alexander • Joanna Ayers • Lauren Barger • Hannah Bonner • Rachael Boxill • Bailey Bradshaw • Gabriella Castro • Qichao Cen • Stephen Craig • Deon Crawford • Miracle Gee • Dorothy Claire Glover • Byron Hammond • Brittany Haynes • Kierra Haynes • Samantha Hidalgo • Tracy Hilaire • Anne Hilleke • Silvanus Johnson • Madeline Jolley • Daniel Jones • Lenard Jones • Zakary Joyner • Deborah Kim • Miranda Kunk • Savannah Lamb • Jordan Locke • LaDeshia Lonie • Rachael McCartney • Rebekah Miller • Charity Ross • Jessica Schmidt • Taylor Scrivner • Seth Shelton • Susan Smallwood • Tripp Stewart • Ebony Sutton • Mariah Taylor • Hannah van der Bijl • Mandy Williams • Hannah Wilson

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, DECEMBER GRADUATES

Daniel Bravo • Justin Nipper • Brandon Smith • Elizabeth Walczak