Recital III

Bahar Ossareh, Guitar

August 4, 2023 at 7:30 PM
Walter Hall

PROGRAMME


   I. Moderato
   II. Andante
   III. Presto
   IV. Calmo
   V. Scherzando
   VI. Tremolo
   VII. Vivace

Introduction & Variations on a Theme from Der Freischütz Karel Arnoldus Craeyvanger (1817-1968)

INTERMISSION

Variations on a Finnish Folksong (1993) Bryan Johanson (1951)

Sonate in D-moll FRWV VI 1/30 Ferdinand Rebay (1880-1953)
   I. Allegro
   II. Variationen über ein Thema von Schubert
   III. Scherzo. Presto - Trio
   IV. Finale. Alla breve

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

Bahar Ossareh is a student of Jorge Caballero.

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.
In my third and final DMA recital, I explore the form of “Theme and Variations” in different styles of guitar writing. This musical structure has captivated composers throughout history, allowing them to explore and develop a musical idea by subjecting a theme to various transformations and elaborations. In fact, its inspiration can be traced back to the Renaissance practice of “divisions” or “diminutions”. From the expressive variations on themes by Schubert and Weber to the imaginative transformations of Finnish and Japanese folksongs, this recital will feature works that highlight the richness and versatility of the classical guitar in the hands of different composers.

**Minyo, Variations on a Japanese Folksong Op. 50d (1990) - Carlo Domeniconi**

Carlo Domeniconi, an Italian guitarist and composer, has made significant contributions to the classical guitar repertoire through his compositions and performances. Born in Cesena, Italy in 1947, Domeniconi has been fascinated by different musical traditions and cultures. His travels around the world have had a profound influence on his musical style. As a composer, Domeniconi has written over 150 compositions, spanning solo and ensemble pieces, chamber music, concertos, and educational works. His music is highly regarded for its ability to synthesize elements from diverse cultural backgrounds and national traditions, including Turkish, Indian, Japanese, Brazilian, and more, resulting in unique and captivating sonorities.

**Minyo, Variations on a Japanese Folksong** was commissioned by Gendai Guitar of Tokyo. The term “Minyo” refers to a genre of traditional Japanese music that encompasses both orally transmitted songs and contemporary compositions. In this composition, Domeniconi presents a series of evocative variations that artfully blends the essence of Japanese music with improvisational gestures.

**Variations (1989) - Annette Kruisbrink**

Annette Kruisbrink, a Dutch composer and guitarist, is known for her diverse musical explorations spanning contemporary classical music and world music influences. Kruisbrink’s idea for the Variations was to create a musical exploration without a specific
profound motif, allowing for an intuitive and organic development of the themes. This approach gives the Variations a sense of spontaneity and freedom, allowing the music to take shape naturally.

Comprising seven distinct variations, each variation presents its own unique character and expressive qualities. From the introspective Moderato to the agitated Presto, and from the lively Scherzando, to the tranquil Calmo, Kruisbrink’s composition is a dynamic and captivating composition that embraces a wide range of moods, guitaristic effects, and textures. The final movement, Vivace, serves as the grand culmination of the composition. With its virtuosic and exhilarating nature, it showcases Kruisbrink’s technical prowess on the guitar and leaves the listener with a thrilling and memorable conclusion.

**Introduction & Variations on a Theme from Der Freischütz - Karel Arnoldus Craeyvanger**

Karel Arnoldus Craeyvanger (1817-1868) was a Dutch composer, singer, violinist, and guitarist whose work remained unknown until recent discoveries of guitar historians and scholars. Introduction & Variations on a Theme from Der Freischütz is one of the two known guitar works by the composer, the other being Trois Nocturnes. A third piece, Fantasy on a Schubert's Lied, was mentioned in a recital program in 1865 but remains undiscovered.¹

During the 19th century, opera enjoyed immense popularity, resulting in numerous arrangements of solo and chamber music, including adaptations for the guitar by famous composers such as Fernando Sor (1778-1839) and Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829), as well as lesser-known figures like Craeyvanger. Der Freischütz (The Free-shooter) is an opera by Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), first published in 1821. The theme used by Craeyvanger is from the Aria, Leise, leise, fromme Weise (Softly sighing, day is dying) from Act II, Scene 1. In this scene, Agathe, the hero’s fiancé, gazes out the window, captivated by the moonlit night, as she tenderly sings prayers for her beloved, Max.

The music unfolds with a captivating introduction that sets the mood for the audience. Following the presentation of the Aria, Craeyvanger embarks on a series of virtuosic variations that offer a fresh perspective to the theme, each employing various guitaristic

textures and techniques to create an engaging transformation of the original material. Notably, the inclusion of the Allegro and Adagio between the 2nd and 3rd variations introduces originally composed elements that deviates from the theme, where the harmonies and lyrical motifs occasionally evoke the styles of Craeyvanger’s contemporaries such as Johann Kaspar Mertz (1806-1856) and Giulio Regondi (1822-1872).

**Variations on a Finnish Folksong (1993) - Bryan Johanson**

Bryan Johanson, a distinguished composer and guitarist from Portland, Oregon, has garnered acclaim for his diverse body of work that encompasses both solo and chamber music compositions. His compositions have gained prominence through performances by renowned artists, including David Starobin and the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet.

*Variations on a Finnish Folksong* holds personal significance for Johanson as it pays tribute to his Finnish heritage, specifically his father, who was a Swedish-speaking Finn. In this evocative piece, Johanson takes an ancient Finnish folk melody, traditionally sung with texts from the *Kalevala*, a renowned collection of folk tales and a cornerstone of Finnish literature. The *Kalevala*, filled with stories of transformation and magic, was often accompanied by instruments such as the kantele (a zither-like instrument) and the ancient Finnish harp. Johanson creatively blends artificial and natural harmonics of the guitar with dissonant chords and percussive effects to evoke the resonant sounds of the kantele, lending the composition a unique and captivating quality.

**Sonate in D-moll FRWV VI 1/30 - Ferdinand Rebay**

Ferdinand Rebay (1880-1953) was a pioneering composer among non-guitarists who began writing for the guitar in the 1920s. Despite his prolific output of nearly 400 solo and chamber music for the guitar, Rebay's contributions to the guitar repertoire have been regrettably overlooked. He played a central role in the Viennese guitar movement, closely associated with the establishment of the Vienna Academy’s guitar program in 1923. Rebay’s music was performed by notable Austrian guitarists of his time, including Luise Walker. However, it was his niece, guitarist Gerta Hammerschmid (1906-1985), who championed
and premiered the majority of his works. Rebay composed seven sonatas for solo guitar, which, along with sonatas by Manuel Ponce (1882-1948), Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968), and others, hold historical significance as they bridge the gap between the earlier nineteenth-century guitar sonata and the post-Beethovenian sonata.²

_Sonate in D-moll_ is a remarkable four-movement work, that blends late Romantic elements with influences from Neoclassicism. The first movement, _Allegro_, adheres faithfully to the conventional sonata structure. But, Rebay surprises the audience by introducing a clever arrangement of harmonies that thoroughly exploits the guitar’s entire tonal spectrum, leading to unexpected modulations, especially during the development. The second movement, _Variationen über ein Thema von Schubert_, is of particular interest, as the composer presents a fascinating reinterpretation of a theme from Franz Schubert’s Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D.960. Through nuanced transformations and expressive depth, Rebay pays homage to Schubert’s melodic material while infusing it with his own artistic voice. The third movement, _Scherzo and Trio_, in large ternary form, incorporates rapid passages and playful motifs followed by a trio reminiscent of the Viennese waltz, as found in Rebay’s other sonatas. The lighter final movement, _Finale, alla breve_ brings the sonata to a brilliant conclusion, with a sense of grandeur and closing the sonata in a contemplative way— a signature characteristic of Rebay’s style.

_Bahar Ossareh_ is an Iranian-Canadian guitarist. Since moving to Canada in 2016, she is rapidly emerging as an ambassador of underrated music in the guitar repertoire, and Persian guitar music in particular. She has been featured as a performer and lecturer by established organizations such as the Guitar Society of Toronto, Austin Classical Guitar, Florida International University, tonebase, Classical guitar Society of Calgary, and Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. She holds a Master of Music in Guitar Performance from the Art University in Tehran, and is currently a Doctor of Musical Arts Candidate at the University of Toronto. Bahar conducts her doctoral research under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey McFadden, where she explores new approaches to guiding non-guitarist composers.