



DMA Recital II

**Marie Haines, Piano**

Thursday, September 21st, 2023 at 7:30pm  
Walter Hall

**PROGRAMME**

- Ten Preludes, Op. 33 (selections) Sergei Bortkiewicz  
(1877-1952)
- I. Maestoso
  - II. Vivace
  - IV. Molto agitato
  - VII. Andantino
  - VIII. Andante sostenuto e cantabile
  - IX. Andantino
  - X. Patetico
- Six Etudes, Op. 16 (selections) Nina Makarova  
(1908-1976)
- I. Allegro
  - II. Moderato
  - III. Allegro
  - IV. Allegro
- INTERMISSION**
- Nostalgia for Airs Unheard Kati Agócs  
(1975- )
- Basso Ostinato Rodion Shchedrin  
(1932- )
- Artless Pages: Seven Impromptus for Piano Rodion Shchedrin  
(1932- )
- I. Romantic Etude (Staccato Etude)
  - II. Unforgotten Micaela
  - III. Music to Chekhov's Play
  - IV. The Tsar's Cortege
  - V. Aria
  - VI. Reminiscences of Old-Age Romances...
  - VII. The Politician Speaks...!

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

Marie Haines is a student of Lydia Wong.

Marie holds a Bachelor's degree from McGill University, and a Master's in Piano Performance from University of Toronto which she completed in 2018 under the tutelage of Marietta Orlov. As a current doctoral student, her dissertation focuses on researching humour in Rodion Shchedrin's solo piano works.

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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 the Mississaugas of the Credit. 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.

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**Program Notes**  
**DMA Recital II – Marie Haines**

**10 Preludes, Op. 33, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 7-10 (1926) – Sergei Bortkiewicz**

Born in Kharkiv, Sergei Bortkiewicz was a composer, pianist, and teacher. Frequently uprooted by political unrest in Eastern Europe followed by the First and Second World Wars, his influences are rooted in the music that was performed around him. His style stems from his training within the Lisztian tradition, and he drew heavily from works by Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and late Romantic compositions by Scriabin and Rachmaninoff.

*Ten Preludes*, Op. 33 was written in 1926, the year that Bortkiewicz was able to settle permanently in Austria. The set feels biographical; it narrates the emotions of loss of one's homeland and the nostalgia for a life once lived, but it also displays the serenity and triumph at finally finding home. The preludes rely on principles of beauty, extreme lyricism, and transparent imageries and emotions that encompass the Russian romantic tradition. Bells can be heard in the distance of the first prelude, along with the stillness and harshness of the Russian landscape. The fourth prelude personifies the turmoil of war and personal upheaval, while the seventh and eighth preludes are moments of comfort and elation at a newfound home. The final prelude voices what much of Europe must have felt throughout the twentieth century: despair for what once was, and what has been lost along the way.

**Six Etudes, Op. 16, Nos. 1-4 (1938) – Nina Makarova**

Nina Makarova was a pianist, composer, and conductor. Her musical career was undoubtedly overshadowed by her husband, Aram Khachaturian, as she became his translator during his travels, but she was co-composer to several of his works and continued to write music for film. Makarova's works portray a developed personal musical language; she writes intense and expressive melodies, imaginative harmonic colouring, and a unique blend of Romantic and 20th century aesthetics.

The *Etudes* require technical finesse and rhythmic intensity from the performer. Each piece exemplifies a specific character based in folk music and dance, landscape, and nostalgia, and their virtuosic natures are accentuated through sudden accelerandi. Etude No. 1 is based on a repeated shimmering or strumming figuration. It is expressive, yet energetic and at times intense. Etude No. 2 is oddly thin in texture, resembling the tiptoeing and stomping of a mischievous

cartoon character. The ruggedness and brilliance of Etude No. 3 is followed by the vast scenery of Etude No. 4. The arching motive in that begins in the right hand of this etude paints a broad, mountainous scene, while the left hand sighs longingly. Eventually, the two concepts intertwine.

### **Nostalgia for Airs Unheard (2007) – Kati Agocs**

Commissioned by CBC Radio to honour of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Glenn Gould's birth, *Nostalgia for Airs Unheard* is a reworking of the conventional prelude and fugue genre. In Agocs's own words, "the fugue interrupts the prelude and the prelude invades the fugue, which finally collapses under its own weight and dissolves upward". Agocs's motivic basis for both the prelude and fugue is derived from the available notes in Gould's name (G-E-G-D). Additionally, the piece carries two important themes: interruption and regeneration. Ideas are repeatedly unfinished, either disrupted by the beginning of a new thought, or restarted in attempt to rebuild to an ideal peak which curiously never occurs in this piece. The work is an allusion to the artist's plight, characterizing the endless, frustrating search for perfectionism. Agocs's work expresses one's relentless motivation toward a desired outcome, and voices the inner conflict of this process.

### **Basso Ostinato (1961) – Rodion Shchedrin**

In the early sixties, when censorship under Nikita Khrushchev became somewhat relaxed, artists gained the opportunity to explore new means of expression. When exposed to the new trends in Western music, composers often began by imitating these new ideas and reinventing them to suit their own needs. It was during this time that Shchedrin travelled to America with a delegation of USSR composers where he discovered jazz, a style that intrigued him for decades to come.

*Basso Ostinato* is a character piece formed from juxtapositions of old and new ideas, which is a notable characteristic of his compositional style. The work imitates and recreates the American jazz feel in its rhythmic and melodic elements while drawing from the baroque idea of a repeated bass line. Shchedrin has a particular knack for characterizing his compositions quite literally; the Italian term "basso ostinato" translates as "stubborn bass", which dictates the relentless, satirical tone of this piece. Several musical elements nag at the listener throughout,

including the insistent staccatissimo octaves in the bass, and the consistent appearances of repeated notes and chords throughout the work.

### **Artless Pages: Seven Impromptus for Piano (2009) – Rodion Shchedrin**

Hinting at inspiration from Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15, *Artless Pages* is constructed using autobiographical and cultural references drawn from Shchedrin's own life and compositions, which he reimagines from afar through a dream-like trance – until the dream is shattered. *Artless Pages* uses programmatic titling to indicate an array of recollections, including references to Bizet's *Carmen* in “Unforgotten Micaela” and Shchedrin's own ballet, *The Seagull*, in “Music to Chekhov's Play”. However, the dream aesthetic shapes the listener's experience more than the understanding of these obscure ties, which are purposely too distant to grasp.

The search for meaning in a world full of absurdity is constant throughout Shchedrin's compositions, and this duality comes to light particularly towards the end of this cycle. In the sixth impromptu, the main theme of a Romantic-era romance by Aleksandr Varlamov, titled “The Red Sarafan”, serves as the melodic basis for this improvisatory movement. The original song, which embraces symbolist values of idealism, dreams, and imagination is a source of comfort and tranquility. But the following impromptu annihilates this point of view with its starkly contrasting character and cutting philosophical outlook. The seventh impromptu is full of parodic satire, depicting our beloved world leaders who grapple so violently with their scandals and public images, only to have us laugh at them.