

Music

AT EASTERN

EWU Music Department presents

A Senior Recital



John Crigler, piano

Friday, May 9, 2014

5:00pm

Student from the Studio of Dr. Jody Graves

This recital is presented as partial fulfillment

of the Bachelor of Music Degree

Thank you to everyone for coming out tonight. I appreciate all the support from friends and family. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to perform this recital on this brand new Steinway piano. I have particularly enjoyed this set of repertoire. The second half is very important to me, as these two composers, Maurice Ravel, and George Gershwin have influenced my own musical voice. I have also enjoyed playing this prelude from J.S. Bach's dance suite, as well as this sonata and ballade.

This Beethoven sonata has been nicknamed the "cuckoo" sonata. There is a two syllable cuckoo theme in the development of the first movement. This was written in 1809; Beethoven had recently become completely deaf.

Chopin wrote 4 ballades, each with a specific narrative. This is based off the legend of Ondine, the underwater spirit. Chopin's ballades are among the most profound pieces in all of piano literature. A few words about the second half of the program: Maurice Ravel (from Ciboure, France) and George Gershwin (Brooklyn, New York) heavily influenced each other. There was a famous incident where Gershwin asked Ravel to be his teacher. Ravel told him that there was nothing he could teach him.



This well-known photo is one of the few meetings between the two composers. Ravel is at the piano and Gershwin is on the far right. This mutual admiration is present throughout many of their works. Gershwin's Concerto in F (1925) has many elements/sounds of jazz, blues, ragtime, and...Ravel. This work had a major influence on Ravel who wrote his famous Concerto in G, about 6 years later. Incidentally, they both died in 1937 after unsuccessful brain operations. A tumor had been found in Gershwin's brain, and he died the day after the surgery. 5 months later, Ravel died from a rare neurological disorder called Pick's disease, following a similarly unsuccessful surgery.

Ravel often spoke of his admiration and interest in American jazz. This being said, it is interesting to see the extent to which he influenced the legendary Bill Evans, arguably the most prolific jazz pianist of the twentieth century. The *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* (which can simply be translated as *Noble and Sentimental Waltzes*) is a suite of 8 waltzes that Ravel wrote in 1910. The element of refinement and imagination that is so associated with Ravel is particularly evident in this suite. The epilogue is a dreamy collage of all 7 themes of the previous waltzes, and has a sinister and dark color. It has been said that Ravel achieved a "jewel-like perfection and masterfully disguised irony" in this suite. He quotes the writer Henri de Régnier in an epigraph to this work: "*The delicious and ever novel pleasure of a useless occupation*". The "useless occupation" is life itself, and the delicious and ever novel pleasure refers to (continued)

PROGRAM

English suite in a minor...BWV 807
Prelude

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Sonata, no. 25, G major, op. 79
I. Presto alla tedesca
II. Andante
III. Vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Ballade in A flat major, no. 3, op. 47

Frédéric François Chopin (1810-1849)

Pause

Valses Nobles et Sentimentales
Modéré- très franc
Assez lent- avec une expression intense
Modéré
Assez animé
Presque lent- dans un sentiment intime
Vif
Moins vif
Epilogue : lent

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Swanee
I'll build stairway to paradise
Who cares?
That certain feeling
My one and only

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

the pleasures of life, including music. As the pianist and author Paul Roberts said, "The *Valses Nobles* embodies the irony at the center of Regnier's words and dramatizes the conflict between high art and entertainment".

On a seemingly lighter note are Gershwin's songs. This is a medley selected from Gershwin's song transcriptions. They are his songs, as he would have played them on the piano, with a limited amount of my personal additions. They remain obscure in modern piano literature and are deceptively difficult. Through these transcriptions, we can see more accurately the sources from which Gershwin derives his harmonic language. There are elements of ragtime and jazz, as well as harmonic influence from Ravel and Claude Debussy, who is also in this circle of twentieth century influences. It is because of pieces like these and his two concertos (Rhapsody in Blue and Concerto in F) that we can see what kind of pianist Gershwin was: virtuosic, and with distinguished personality. He was a major contributor to the music of the United States, and is a defining part of our musical voice.

"I always like people who have developed long and hard, particularly through introspection and a lot of dedication. I think that what they arrive at is usually deeper and more beautiful than the person who seems to have that ability and fluidity from the beginning. I say this because it's a good message to give to young talents who feel as I used to. You hear musicians playing with great fluidity and complete conception early on, and you don't have that ability. I didn't. I had to know what I was doing. And ultimately it turned out that these people weren't able to carry their thing very far. I found myself being more attracted to artists who have developed through the years and become better and deeper musicians. I believe in things that are developed through hard work."

---Bill Evans

"You Americans take jazz too lightly. You seem to feel that it is cheap, vulgar, and momentary. In my opinion it is bound to lead to the national music of the United States. Aside from it you have no veritable idiom as yet."

---Maurice Ravel

Spring Term EWU Piano Events

April 23 – Piano Duo Extravaganza; 5:00pm, MRH

April 24 – 6:00pm – Rebecca Hardy, Graduate Recital – Steinway Gallery of Spokane

May 1 – 4:00pm – Jessica Van Dyken, Junior Recital: MRH

May 9 – Piano Convocation Recital – Noon, MRH

May 9 – 5:00pm – John Crigler, Senior Recital; MRH

May 11 – MusicFest – Gonzaga University

May 27 – "Live from KPBX-91.1FM!" *The Piano Bench*, featuring the EWU Piano Majors 11:00am

May 30 – 5:30pm – Joshua Lindberg, Senior Recital; MRH

June 6 – 7:30pm – Andres Jaramillo, Soloist with the EWU Orchestra – Showalter Hall

Stay tuned for updates on our new "Steinway Stars" concert series beginning next Fall featuring faculty, students and guest artists on our new Steinway Concert Grand in our newly renovated recital hall!

<http://www.ewu.edu/cale/programs/music>