

Music @ St. Alban's

Sunday Concerts in Davidson

Concert Notes – January 16, 2022
Earle Cheshire-Wood

Sonata in G Major, BWV 1027 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
(Originally for viola da gamba and obbligato harpsichord)

Written to be part of a set of three, Bach's *Sonata in G Major* has survived as a piece of its own. The accompaniment is given more melody than in a typical sonata, as this piece was arranged from one of Bach's prior trios for two flutes and an accompaniment. Bach distributed one of the flute's melodies evenly between the harpsichordist and viola da gambist (in this case the pianist and violist). It is guessed that the flute version was performed at coffeehouses by students and local musicians in the 1730s, during the time in which Bach directed the Leipzig Collegium Musicum. *Adagio* opens in triple time, possibly alluding to the Holy Trinity. The fugal style of the second movement turns the piece towards a minor key, leading into the *Andante* where the two instruments enter a sorrowful imitation. The closing *Allegro moderato* movement spins this imitation into a more cheerful one, with a rhythm mocking that of a bourrée.

Phantasy Pieces for viola and piano, op 117 Robert Fuchs (1847-1927)

Experiencing these magical selections, you'll come to understand Brahms' praise of Fuchs' music, "...everything is so fine, so skillful, so charmingly invented that one always derives pleasure from it". These are the final two of Fuchs' six phantasies, all of which were published the same year as his death. No. 5, *Mäßig bewegt* (moderate motion), sinks into a melancholy waltz, its depth of emotion extracted by the rich viola. Fuchs masterfully crafts this gloom before lightening the piece towards its finish. Its echoes ease it into the *Allegro con delicatezza*, a more comfortable and joyful ending.

Sonata in A minor, D821 Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
(Originally for arpeggione and piano)

Sonata in A minor was written for the piano and arpeggione, an instrument also known as the "guitare d'amour": a cello-guitar hybrid, with frets and six strings, but bowed in between one's legs like a cello. Listen for the tenderness of this piece, evidence of Schubert composing it during his struggle with syphilis, which was eventually the cause of his death. The sonata's fragile

intimacy is part of what has allowed it to endure so many generations into the modern day. Now, the music has been transposed for many instruments, including the viola, cello, double bass, flute, euphonium, and clarinet in place of the arpeggione, and can be accompanied by the guitar or harp instead of piano. This lasting emotional and instrumental range is what makes Schubert's sonata so personal and beloved to musicians.