

GCSU Department of Music

Senior Recital

“Turning A New Leaf: Seasons Gone By”

Ellie Deener, piano

Monday, April 17, 2023

Max Noah Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Also live-streamed on [Facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment)



Program

Spring Song, *from* Songs Without Words (1844), Op. 62, No. 6 Felix Mendelssohn
(1809–1847)

Sonata in F Major (1798), Op. 10, No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven
I. Allegro (1770–1827)
II. Allegretto
III. Presto

Summerland for Violin and Piano (1935) William Grant Still
(1895–1978)
Sara Carr, violin

Prelude & Fugue in Bb Major (1722), No. 21, WTC I Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Asturias from *Suite Española* (1892), Op. 47, No. 5 Issac Albéniz
(1860–1909)

Rhapsody in b minor (1879), Op. 79, No. 1 Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Nocturne (1834), Op. 15, No. 1 Frédéric Chopin
(1810–1849)

Toccatina from *Eight Concert Studies* (1984), Op. 40, No. 3 Nikolai Kapustin
(1937–2020)

Ellie Deener is a student of Dr. Owen Lovell.

Program Notes

Spring Song, *from Songs Without Words* (1844), Op. 62, No. 6

Felix Mendelssohn

Mendelssohn was an adept prodigy as an early romantic German composer. His style merged the famous predecessors and drew on different aspects of the compositions of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven.

The layers of sound and harmony in this piece give the short melody-driven work its rich and sweet character. A constantly arpeggiating harp-like middle texture adds a technical element that makes it a more fun and challenging performance and experience.

Sonata in F Major (1798), Op. 10, No. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven

Expanding on the tradition of the previous compositional styles, **Beethoven** is known as a key figure and innovator in the transitional period between classical and romantic eras. His developing deafness is well-known for having been impactful in his life and influencing the way he wrote and developed short melodic motifs, utilizing them in creative and compelling ways. There are three time periods of his life and writing which his work is considered to fall into, as he progressed and developed into the incredibly famous artist many widely recognize.

This sonata comes in the timeline of his earlier work. It is presented in a classic three movements, with a slower dance in triple meter dividing two refined but speedy introductory and closing duple ones. Several sections of this piece can be characterized as reflecting a “tempest in a teacup”, with contained chaos and controlled angst.

Summerland for Violin and Piano (1935)

William Grant Still

William Grant Still was an accomplished arranger and composer who left a rich legacy as a black American composer. He was the first to be recognized as such in many different achievements, like having a symphony performed by a major orchestra and winning a series of commissions and performances from major American orchestras. He began studying music as a violinist at the Oberlin Conservatory and gained experience through being taught composition free of charge, after being asked why he wasn't studying and then explaining how he could not afford to explore that option at the time.

This duet is written with a lot of harmonic color and feeling and is a satisfying and rewarding selection to play in a chamber music setting.

Prelude & Fugue in Bb Major (1722), No. 21, WTC I

Johann Sebastian Bach

The most prominent figure in Baroque era composition, **Bach** was a renowned German composer known for his broad collection of works for all different instruments and characteristic counterpoint in his writing style. Coming from a very musical family with many relatives who composed as well, he is remembered as the most popular throughout history.

The collection of Bach's iconic Preludes and Fugues are represented in two sets, The Well-Tempered Clavier I & II. Written in each of the major and minor keys, these pieces include highly technical passages which showcase the writing for keyboard instruments as they were progressing in production and tuning. The preludes serve as introductory and sometimes virtuosic playing which establishes the tonality. Then, the fugues are in a very structured compositional style which takes a theme, or subject, and develops it with countering lines and intricate interlocking moving parts.

Asturias from *Suite Española* (1892), Op. 47, No. 5

Issac Albéniz

Issac Albéniz was a Spanish composer and pianist and is recognized as one of the greatest Spanish composers for solo piano. The *Suite Española* consists of 8 pieces which are each specific to a region or musical style of Spain. “Asturias” is also called “legend” or “leyenda” and is evocative of flamenco guitar and seemingly inspired by the legends in Spanish history. While making use of the styling of traditional playing for classical guitar, this selection was originally written for piano and has been transcribed for any versions where it is not played on the keyboard.

To this performer, the intense, driving A section reflects the canter of a horse, with characteristics of a tormented determination, while the B “copla” section sings out a heart wrenching, impassioned declaration which can be interpreted in whatever way the listener feels speaking to them.

Rhapsody in b minor (1879), Op. 79, No. 1

Johannes Brahms

Brahms was a famous German romantic era composer and pianist whose emotional and harmonically complex pieces draw on classical forms. However, he reinvents and infuses them with a rich romantic style and feel, while still being considered a traditionalist by many. He was known to be mentored by and maintain close relationships with the Schumann’s and drew inspiration from their writing and influence in his life.

This first Rhapsody in b minor, though the less famous of the set, is a tumultuously fun time to play, with a disturbed harmonic progression that is relentlessly affected- until the break of a sparkling contrasting middle section. The drama keeps this piece continually expressive and makes a memorable impression as it is performed.

Nocturne (1834), Op. 15, No. 1

Frédéric Chopin

Chopin was a prominent composer of the romantic era widely known for his incredibly expressive solo piano pieces. All of his compositions include piano, primarily with a solo piano focus, and his collections of polonaises, mazurkas, nocturnes, waltzes, and other styles show his mastery of writing for the instrument.

Out of many types of pieces he composed, nocturnes stand out as unique because they sound differently, specifically inspired by or evocative of nighttime. These “songs of night” are rich with musical imagery that evokes the imagination of the listener. This nocturne is composed with two highly contrasting sections, one extremely lyrical and one stormy and technical, which makes it a challenging yet enjoyable piece to perform.

Toccatina from *Eight Concert Studies* (1984), Op. 40, No. 3

Nikolai Kapustin

Nikolai Kapustin was a Ukrainian jazz composer and pianist. He studied piano at the Moscow Conservatory and has recorded many of his own works throughout his career. This collection of Eight Concert Studies is a technical challenge, with complex rhythms and unrelenting pace through all the pieces. They are a very athletic collection of pieces to perform!

The toccatina has the same stylistic characterization of the larger toccata form which it is based on, with driving phrases of repeated notes and a motoric rhythm that carries through. Use of jazz chord structures and syncopation, all the way through to the piece’s final notes, are Kapustin’s way of taking an etude and making it an epic concert piece.