



Donald F. Cook Recital Hall
M.O. Morgan Building
Thursday, 5 October 2000 at 8:00 p.m.

Kristina Szutor, piano

Bookends in Time

A concert of piano music from the beginning and the end of the 20th century

1900-1910

Prelude in Bb Major	Sergei Rachmaninov
Prelude in g# Minor	(1873-1943)
Three Hungarian Folk Songs from the Csík District	Béla Bartók
Bagatelle #4	(1881-1945)
Bagatelle #5	
Burlesque #1 "The Quarrel"	
Un Barque sur l'Océan	Maurice Ravel
Alborada del Gracioso	(1875-1937)

PAUSE

1990-2000

Last Dance	Clark Ross
	(1957-)
Prelude	Marjan Mozetich
Adagietto	(1948-)
Desperate Measures (Variations on a Theme by Paganini)	Robert Muczynski
	(1929-)

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Kristina Szutor began piano studies at the age of three under the tutelage of her father who, along with her mother, emigrated to Canada from their native Hungary as refugees from the revolution of 1956. She has always treasured her Hungarian heritage; she speaks the language fluently and has a native speaker's insight into the particular rhythms and emotions of Hungarian music. After early studies in Vancouver, Kristina went on to the Kodály Musikschule in Zürich, Switzerland, followed by undergraduate studies in music at the University of British Columbia and a master's degree from the Juilliard School. She completed her doctoral degree while on leave from her position on faculty at Memorial University where she is currently associate professor.

While Kristina enjoys performing a wide variety of traditional repertoire, she has a special flair for the performance of twentieth-century music and has in recent years been active in premiering and commissioning many new works. Her CD *Bookends in Time* for example, features three premier recordings as well as a new commission. Kristina has concertized throughout Canada and in New York, Switzerland and Spain and she can be heard frequently on CBC radio both locally on *Musicraft* as well as nationally on shows like *Two New Hours* and *Take Five*. She is also a featured performer on Newfoundland composer Michael Parker's CD entitled *Lyre*.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Concept

The first and last decades of the twentieth century are two periods of time linked by a common spirit of exploration and compositional freedom in classical music. As a result, there is an astonishing variety of musical styles that coexist in both of these time periods.

In the first decade of this century, composers like Rachmaninov continued to write in the German romantic style that had dominated classical music for much of the 19th century, while others sought to strike out in radically new directions. Hence the exploration of true folk idioms by composers such as Bartók, Kodály and Mussorgsky or the interest in old church modes and other "exotic" scales by composers such as Debussy and Ravel. Today there is a similar sense of freedom in musical composition. Liberated from the yoke of serial composition whose influence was inescapable roughly half a century ago, contemporary composers seem to be creating their unique sounds by drawing from and combining an unprecedented variety of musical styles including everything from world music, jazz, ragtime and minimalism to impressionism, romanticism and classicism.

While the selections you'll hear within each decade exhibit great stylistic diversity, it may be interesting to note that there are subtle musical ties between pieces across the decades: the romantic spirit of Rachmaninov alive and well in the *Adagietto* by Mozetich for example; the impressionistic textures of Ravel's *Barque* echoed in the same composer's *Prelude*; or Bartók's angularity and penchant for harmonies in 4ths surfacing in both the music of Muczynski as well as that of Clark Ross to some extent. These and other influences reach across the span of time to unite the opening and closing decades - "bookends in time" - of this remarkable century.

The Music

Written between 1901 and 1903, Rachmaninov's *Prelude in Bb major op. 23 #2* with its sweeping torrents of sound is a glorious example of the romantic tradition which persisted well into the century alongside all the musical currents intended to eclipse this "old style". Contrasting with this full-bodied and extroverted piece is the yearning and lyrical *Prelude in g# minor* which is taken from the composer's later set of preludes, op. 32 written in 1910.

Béla Bartók's opportunity to break free from the German romantic tradition came in 1906 when he made the first of his many ethnomusicological tours into the Hungarian countryside. During these trips he collected and recorded thousands of genuine folk melodies whose wealth of fresh rhythmic and melodic ideas completely transformed his own compositional style in the years to come and provided the foundation for one of the most unique and powerful musical languages ever created in the twentieth century. *Three Hungarian Folk Songs from the Csik District* are amongst the earliest of Bartók's ethnomusicological finds. The composition features original folk melodies together with Bartók's own modal harmonic settings. Similar arrangements of folk material appear in *Bagatelles #4 and #5* written in 1908. Although the following piece, *Burlesque #1* (subtitled "The Quarrel") dates from the same year as the *Bagatelles*, you'll notice it sounds radically different from these folk settings. The *Burlesque* shows Bartók's rapid development of an abstract musical language that's based on folk elements but no longer features them in a clearly recognizable form. They have been broken down and their constituent scales and rhythms used to create music of arresting freshness and vitality.

Maurice Ravel's distinctive musical language also developed well outside the Germanic sphere of influence and could be viewed as a fusion of nationalistic styles (Spanish, Russian and Javanese for example); impressionism, and neoclassicism. These elements are abundantly evident in *Miroirs*, a set of five piano pieces written in 1905 from which you'll hear the following two works: *Un Barque sur l'Océan* which depicts the many moods of the sea with uncanny colouristic imagination and *Alborada del Gracioso* in which a Hispanic mood pervades, as sleeping lovers are awakened by a song announcing the arrival of dawn.

The Spanish flavour of *Alborada* is retained in *Last Dance* by composer Clark Ross. This piece brings us into the last decade of the twentieth century and like the other two works representing this period, it maintains a strong tie to the past while incorporating and/or juxtaposing contemporary elements in striking ways. Here the outer sections feature a luscious and melancholy tango that unfolds in a series of melodic variations over a hypnotic bass while, in inimitable Clark Ross fashion, a funky middle section interrupts the trance-like mood. My thanks to the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council who provided a generous grant to commission this work.

Composer Marjan Mozetich is probably somewhat familiar to those of you who are avid CBC listeners. His works are receiving a great deal of attention these days. I first heard his music when the St. Lawrence String Quartet came to St. John's as winners of that year's Banff competition. They played a work commissioned for the competition from Mozetich entitled *The Trampled Garden*. I was captivated by the piece, its richness and its depth of feeling. Mozetich has gone through many stylistic changes as a composer before arriving at what can be called a kind of "lush postmodern romanticism", a very apt description for both the *Prelude* and the *Adagietto* from *Three Pieces for Piano Solo*. In the *Prelude* glittering textures reminiscent at times of Ravel or Rachmaninov emerge from a subdued and murky opening. The *Adagietto* wears its heart on its sleeve. It's a deliciously anachronistic piece that sounds as though it was written in the 19th century except for one particular passage where an apocalyptic crescendo betrays the work's 20th-century origins.

Robert Muczynski is one of the best known and most successful American composers of his generation. His music is known for its rhythmic vitality and inventiveness. In *Desperate Measures* he takes a fresh and decidedly jazzy look at the violin virtuoso's famous tune.