

Senior Recital
Drew Baddeley, Double Bass

Accompanied by

Professor Mizue Fells

Saturday, April 13th 2013

Northwest University Butterfield Chapel

Program

Concerto in G Major
Domenico Dragonetti

Vocalise, Op. 31, No. 14
Sergei Rachmaninoff

Libertango:
Astor Piazzolla
Arr. Mizue Fells

Intermission

Bach Unaccompanied Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, BMV 1007
Johann Sebastian Bach

Concerto No. 2 in A Minor
Giovanni Bottesini

About the Composers

Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846)

Domenico Dragonetti is considered one of the first virtuosi to play the double bass. Born in Venice, Dragonetti's adeptness was quickly noted, becoming principal bassist at the Opera Buffa in Venice at the age of thirteen, followed by principal bassist for the Grand Opera Seria a year later. He moved to London in 1794 where he became slightly acquainted with such notable composers as Ludwig Von Beethoven and Joseph Haydn. Dragonetti became a famous figure in London, playing with the Philharmonic Society of London between 1816 and 1842, and also establishing himself as a premier soloist. He was known for his strong hands and ability to play the bass with the strings twice as high as the other bassists. The *Concerto in G Major* is originally written and performed in A Major for the purpose of solo tuning.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943):

Sergei Rachmaninoff is one of the few composers to make the transition between Romantic and 20th Century music. Born in Semyonovo, Russia, Rachmaninoff's parents moved him and his family to St. Petersburg in 1882. After the death of his sister and separation of his parents, Sergei's mother decided to send him to the conservatory in Moscow at the age of twelve, where he began tedious studies under Nikolai Zverev. After his intense musical and compositional training, Rachmaninoff's first claim to recognition came in 1893 when his one-act opera *Aleko* premiered at the Bolshoi Theater. After a disastrous premiere in 1897 when his *Symphony No. 1* received gruesome reviews, Rachmaninoff took three years off from composing, sticking to piano performance and teaching until he finished his *Piano Concerto No. 2* in 1900. After a Leninist regime took place in Russia, Rachmaninoff moved his family to Denmark, and finally New York in 1918 where he performed and conducted in the U.S. until his death. Rachmaninoff's appearance was far from the norm, standing at six-foot-six with hands large enough to play a thirteenth on the piano. Known for his rich piano and symphonic works, his *Vocalise* written in 1912 was intended for soprano voice, and at the time was a vocal exercise rather than a performance piece. The vocalist was to perform the piece without words, set to one or more vowel sounds; today it is performed on a number of solo instruments.

Astor Piazzolla (1921- 1992)

Astor Piazzolla was born in Argentina before his family moved to New York in 1925. Exposed to classical and jazz music at an early age, Astor first began his musical endeavors on the bandoneon, a type of concertina used in tango styles. Becoming immersed in the tango musical genre, Piazzolla moved to Buenos Aires in 1938, where he was making enough money as a musician to pay for lessons from accomplished Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera, who was recommended by pianist Arthur Rubenstein. After exhaustive study of orchestration, Piazzolla formed a group called Orquesta Tipica in 1946, which fell apart in 1950. From then on Piazzolla traveled everywhere from Paris to New York, where he struggled with his family as a musician and arranger. He spent the latter years of his life performing and composing music based upon his nuevo tango, a different style of tango which incorporates the use of jazz harmonies, dissonances and counterpoint. The *Libertango* is one his most

well known pieces which was published and written in Milan in 1974, and has been performed worldwide by musicians such as Al Di Meola and Yo Yo Ma.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach still stands as one the greatest classical composers that ever lived, if not the greatest composer of the Baroque period. Bach was born in Eisenach to a family of professional musicians and organists. Both his parents died by the time he was nine years old; Bach later moved to Ohrdruf to live with his brother Johann Christoph. At the age of 14, Bach traveled to Luneberg to study at St. Mikel's on a vocal scholarship. He made his markings as an accomplished organist, being appointed the organist of the Neue Kirche in Arnstadt from 1703-1707. A year later, Johann Sebastian Bach returned to Weimar where he became court organist and a chamber musician to the Duke until 1717. The latter years of Bach's life were spent in Cothen from 1717-1723 where he was a chapelmaster and chamber music director to the Prince of Anhalt, and from 1723 until his death in 1750 as a organist and director of music at two main churches in Leipzig. Most of Bach's orchestral and chamber works were composed during his stay in Cothen, and the larger portion of his church music was composed in Leipzig. Johann Sebastian Bach was a master in the art of counterpoint and the fugue style, and he never strayed from writing for the secular genre. Even though the amount of music for which Bach composed is exhaustive to this day, few of his works were published and brought to notoriety during his lifetime. Bach's abilities as a composer were not fully recognized until 1829 when Felix Mendelssohn performed his *Saint Matthew Passion* in Leipzig. There are Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello, each containing six movements. The Prelude to the First Cello Suite in G Major is one of the most recognizable movements of all the suites, and has been performed by countless musicians, transcribed on different instruments.

Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889)

Along with Dragonetti, Giovanni Bottesini stands as one of the very first double bassists to take the instrument to the solo level. Born in Crema, Bottesini started his musical training on the violin. His father sent him to the Milan Conservatory and due to financial strain, Bottesini needed a scholarship to attend. He had to choose between either the double bass or the bassoon, and after a few weeks was able to perform a successful audition to get him accepted. After his studies in Milan for four years, Bottesini was already being paid for solo performance, acquiring the title "the Paganini of the Double Bass." Bottesini's musical career includes his travelling around the world from spending time in America, to being the principal double bassist for the Italian Opera in Havana. As a composer, Bottesini wrote twelve operas, his first being *Cristoforo Colombo* in 1847. Giovanni Bottesini was also a well-known conductor, performing fantasies during intermission when he conducted opera. He was highly received in London after his first appearance in 1849, making frequent visits thereafter to display his excellent command of the double bass. His final appointment was as director of the Conservatory of Parma at the request of Giuseppe Verdi before his death in 1889. His *Concerto No. 2 in A Minor* stands as one of the most accomplished of the double bass works to this day. Written in B Minor, the piece was first performed on a three-string bass instead of the modern four-string double bass. The *Concerto No. 2* displays the double bass's vast range and allows the listener understand the dexterity to which Bottesini possessed on the instrument.

Northwest University Music Department

Spring 2013 Events

Piano Recital

Free of charge

Tuesday, April 16th, 2013, at 7:30 PM

Jazz Concert

Friday, April 19th, 2013 at 7:30 PM

**Tickets available at the Music Department office
or at the door**

Voice Recital

Free of charge

Tuesday, April 23rd, 2013, at 7:30 PM

Choral Concert

Free of charge

Friday, April 26th, 2013, at 7:30 PM

All Events Held in Butterfield Chapel

Questions? Contact 425-889-5255