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Rebecca Flank

March 31, 2015

Senior Honors Recital

By

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2015

Senior Honors Recital

By

Rebecca Flank

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An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Music

2015

Abstract

Senior Honors Recital

By Rebecca Flank

On Saturday, March 28, 2015, at 5:00 pm Rebecca Flank performed her Senior Honors Recital. The recital took place in Emerson Concert Hall in the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts at Emory University.

The program included Brahms' *Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 120 no. 2 in E flat Major*, and

Shostakovich's *Sonata for Viola and Piano Op. 147*. Flank performed on the 2013 Voss viola. Elena

Cholakova accompanied her on the piano, and the recital was approximately an hour long.

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MUSIC AT EMORY CONCERT SERIES

2014–2015 SEASON

**REBECCA FLANK, VIOLA
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL**

ELENA CHOLAKOVA, PIANO

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2015, 5:00 P.M.

**EMERSON CONCERT HALL
SCHWARTZ CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS**

PROGRAM

Viola Sonata, op. 120, No. 2

Johannes Brahms

Allegro amabile

(1833–1897)

Allegro appassionato

Andante con moto—Allegro

Elena Cholakova, piano

—INTERMISSION—

Viola Sonata, op. 147

Dmitri Shostakovich

Moderato

(1906–1975)

Allegretto

Adagio

Elena Cholakova, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Brahms Viola Sonata, op. 120, No. 2

Johannes Brahms published one hundred twenty-two opus number works in his estimable career. The last eight works are a stroke of fate, as Brahms vowed to retire from composition in 1890, with just more than one hundred published works. That same year, he met the clarinetist Richard Mühfeld and was inspired to compose again. In 1890, the clarinet was criminally under utilized as a sonata instrument, and Brahms resolved to solve this issue—of his final eight works, three focus on the clarinet. The opus 120 clarinet sonatas (Brahms's last chamber works), written in 1894, are considered two of the greatest masterworks of clarinet repertoire. The life of Brahms's two clarinet sonatas does not end here, however. Late in 1894, the publishing company Simrock expressed an interest in a transcription of opus 120 for viola, the sister voice instrument of the clarinet. By 1895, the Brahms Viola Sonatas, op. 120, Nos. 1 and 2 had been written and published. They have since become an integral part of the viola repertoire, beloved for their expression and technical excellence.

The first movement, *Allegro amabile*, is often cited as Brahms's subtlest and most fluid sonata form. The main theme stated in the exposition and exactly rewritten in the recapitulation is a warm and gracious line in E-flat major, paired with the secondary theme of the exposition: the hesitant and ambiguous *sotto voce*. The development transforms these themes, and adds a gorgeous conversation of arpeggio triplets between the viola and piano. The second movement scherzo, *Allegro appassionato*, is the last Brahms wrote. It explores a restrained yet potent and dark theme, seeming to be the exact opposite of the lush first movement theme. Brahms's signature rhythmic phasing is evident here, especially at cadences. The final movement, *Andante con moto*—*Allegro*, is a theme and variations, which not only employs themes from the development of the first movement and key signatures from the second, but also alludes to the theme of Brahms's op. 120, No. 1 F Minor Sonata first movement. The body of op. 120, No. 2 rounds out both itself and the entire op. 120 publication.

Shostakovich Viola Sonata, op. 147

The op. 147 Viola Sonata is the last work ever published by Dmitri Shostakovich. He completed it just weeks before his death, in July 1975. Shostakovich never saw the premiere of the work, which was performed by the work's dedicatee Fyodor Druzhinin in October 1975.

It was received with a standing ovation, which Druzhinin received on the composer's behalf by raising the score aloft—perhaps Druzhinin's feeling that Shostakovich was present still through his work.

The work is sparse in texture mainly because of Shostakovich's failing health. He was going blind by this point, was suffering the effects of arthritis, heart attacks, broken legs, poliomyelitis, and lung cancer. Writing was a struggle, and the works he completed in this late period showed a preoccupation with mortality. The first movement of the sonata unfolds like the unfaltering ticking of a clock—neither the composer nor the performer may slow down or pause. The first movement continues always with haunting certainty. The second movement scherzo raises the memory of classic Shostakovich ire; the movement is pointed and acerbic. However, it is the last movement that is transcendent. Shostakovich gave it an unofficial title: *Adagio in Memory of Beethoven*. The movement quotes the *Moonlight Sonata* in numerous places, creating a luminous tapestry through which the composer and performer consider death, and what comes after. The closing statement is decidedly out of character for Shostakovich. It is hopeful, displaying Shostakovich's own description of the work: "The music is bright, bright, and clear."

—Program notes by Rebecca Flank

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Rebecca Flank is a native of Atlanta who began playing viola in the Gwinnett County Public School System at age eleven. She began private study at age twelve and started private studies with Adam Crane at age fourteen. In high school, she participated in the Gwinnett County Youth Symphony (2007–2009) and the Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO, 2008–2011). She was principal violist of EYSO from January 2010 through May 2011. She was also a member of the Emory Youth Chamber Music Program in her senior year of high school. Flank was awarded the J. Kimball Harriman Scholarship from Collins Hill High School in 2011 in support of her musical endeavors.

At Emory, Flank has played in the Emory University Symphony Orchestra since fall 2011, serving first as assistant principal before becoming principal violist in fall 2013. She sits on the Student Music Advisory Board for the Department of Music, and she received the Friends of Music Award for Excellence in Music as a junior in 2013. Flank double majors in music performance and Renaissance and Medieval studies, with an emphasis on art, architecture, history, language, and literature. She is a member of Phi Eta Sigma and Phi Beta Kappa.

Flank would like to thank her family for supporting her dreams of becoming a professional musician, her friends for reminding her that the world is full of opportunities, her teacher Yinzi Kong for inspiring her to work hard, and the faculty of the Emory Department of Music for tirelessly cheering her on.

Bulgarian pianist **Elena Cholakova** has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in Eastern and Western Europe, South America, and the United States. She has given solo recitals at the Liszt Academy and the United States Embassy in Budapest, Hungary; Bulgaria Hall and Sofia Conservatory in Sofia, Bulgaria; Aosta Concert Hall in Aosta, Italy; Fellbach Musicschule in Fellbach, Germany; Fazioli Salon in Chicago, and many more. Her performances have been broadcast live on NPR, Atlanta's WABE, Chicago's classical music radio station WFMT, and on Bulgarian TV and radio.

As a member of the Atlanta Chamber Players, Cholakova has appeared in the International Chamber Music Festival in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; has regularly performed in Atlanta's premier Spivey Hall; and has premiered commissioned works by leading American composers. Cholakova was featured in the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival in North Carolina as well as the International Days of Music Festival in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Cholakova is a recipient of Rislov Foundation Scholarship of the University of Michigan, awarded to musicians nationwide, for their high achievements in the field of music. A dedicated educator, Cholakova holds a special interest in teaching. Her students have won top prizes at a number of national and international competitions. Cholakova has both an MMus and a DMus from Northwestern University.



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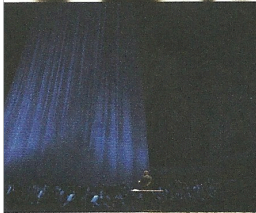
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COUGH DROPS In lobby, courtesy of Margery and Robert McKay.

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EVENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION Available online at arts.emory.edu.

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER CREDITS **Front:** Piano in Emerson Concert Hall, *Mark Teague*
Back (top to bottom): Emory Big Band, *Bill Head*; Atlanta Master Chorale: *Eric Richards*;
Timothy Albrecht as Dracula: *Carl Christie*; Vega String Quartet, *Dorn Brothers*; Emerson Concert Hall,
James Crissman; Roy Harran, *Dan Smigrod*; Emory University Symphony Orchestra, *Mark Teague*



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