

From the composer's journal.

Dec 10, 2010

I studied Beethoven's cello sonata today. He keeps both parts in complementary registers and rhythms so everything is balanced yet dramatic. I need to do that.

Franck keeps the cello in the highest positions in his sonata. The piano part doesn't have a lot of notes. This makes for a modern yet ethereal effect. I'm struck by the elasticity of his bowing. I need to bow like that.

Brahms gives the cello air by keeping the piano writing simple. Brahms is all melody all the time.

Dec 29

My sonata has to be singable by the human voice from beginning to end. It has to be complex enough not to pale after two or three listenings--yet not so complicated nobody wants to play it. I need to write fewer but better notes. Most of all, I need a good theme--actually I need two.

Dec 31

Michelangelo wrote,

"Borne in a fragile bark upon a stormy sea, I complete the course of my life."

Delacroix, "What moves men of genius, or rather, what inspires their work, is not new ideas, but their obsession with the idea that what has already been said is still not enough."

Jan 4, 2011

I began work on the cello sonata, 26 measures. I went with the Franck idea.

Jan 5

Slow day. I did another 26 measures but this time, instead of sounding like Franck, it sounds like Rachmaninov--so at least I'm progressing.

Jan 6

I finished the first section up to measure 75 and sketched the next, a funeral march. Now I know what the piece is about. It's about roads not taken, but not in a nostalgic way.

Jan 7

I worked through to measure 100. The funeral march ended up as some sort of peasant dance. It was fun writing the piano part in the lowest tessitura but I'm not sure it will balance the cello in rehearsal. I hope Ben can manage the C string as high as I ask. I don't want to fuss with it. I played Buxtehude and Frescobaldi in church.

Jan 8

I wrote 16 measures, finishing the movement, ending in a refrain in C major, either glorious or you've-got-to-be-kidding-this-is-absolute-schlock.

Jan 11

I wrote a cha-cha in a minor key. I woke up with the melody in my head and worked on it for two days.

Jan 13

I wrote a scherzo to place between the first part which ends in a refrain and the work I did previously, the cha-cha. The scherzo is the first part speeded up with different accompaniment, all minor.

Jan 15

I finished the *Mournful Bells* section. The piano is all juxtaposed minor, augmented and diminished chords--lots of pedal. There's a big melody in the cello all minor, big bowing. Pretty straightforward.

Jan 18

I spent the day writing a few pages but was so unfocused I decided to do the whole thing over. The first 5 variations of the funeral march are finally right.

Jan 19

I wrote a variation, tossed it, rewrote it, tossed that. Then I went to sleep, woke up, and finally got the variation right. Then I wrote another variation. I played through the *Art of Fugue*.

Jan 20

I finished the twelve variations of part one (not 13 variations--life's depressing enough). I have to bow the cello part and pedal the piano part. It turned out Beethoven-esque because the development was achieved by classical means.

I've already written *Melancholy Bells* which attaches onto the variations.

The further variations are to be in b minor, a deathly key. The second series of variations needs to be much more stark, like Copland almost or Bach.

Variation form is difficult. It calls for endless invention. New ideas don't come easy, to me so normally when I get one idea I hold on to it and develop it as best I can. But with variation form everything has to be new. Too often I've written a variation then torn it up because I needed a new idea. Then I had to wait until something came--though once I get an idea, the execution is easy.

Winter--so little light. Is the work dark because the heart is dark or does the dark outside darken one's inside?

Jan 21

I finished all 8 variations. I knew exactly what I wanted I just had to do it. It's more to the point that the first 12 variations, very strong. Now I can write the *Glorious Bells*--a great relief after all that minor.

I've given Ben a technical part, full of half positions and all the way to seventh position and above on the A string. Will anyone be able to play these high chromatics in tune?

I didn't realize until today how much I've been influenced by the spectral composers, particularly Grisey.

I already know the ending. It's the refrain again in C but ending with a big gliss on both instruments, then an F# major chord.

Jan 31

I finished the *Jarantellu* for the finale. The trick was not to put in too much so it can move. Then I just added the end. Now I have to check accidentals, bowing, dynamic and expression marks. This will take days of close work.

Feb 2

Finished and scanned the piece.

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May 18

I'm thinking of writing a sonata for clarinet, the whole piece in the clarion register. It's difficult writing a good tune within an octave. *Singing in the Rain* seems to have a huge range because of all the octave leaps, but the range of the whole song is just an octave. That's good technique.

June 30

Up to today I've been sketching a sonatina for clarinet and piano on little bits of paper during my breaks from rehearsing with Ben. It's mainly Mozartian things I can't get out of my head.

July 1

I finished a first movement. The second movement I wrote at juilliard waiting for a rehearsal. I sketched out the melody on a piece of scrap and wrote in the piano chords on another scrap--real simple. The theme for the third movement was something that just came to me in a dream (literally). I didn't know what to do with it so I just stuck it in at the end and it worked. I added a Minuet to the mix as a Haydn homage.

July 7

Finished the clarinet sonata. The first and second movement wrote themselves. The third was a pain because of all the counterpoint, but it's the richest. It should be a fun piece.

Benjamin Capps' Capps' recently released recording of Andrew Violette's Songs and Dances (innova 780) won raves from the Holland Times which hailed Benjamin as a "young cello phenomenon [with] dazzling technique and a fearfully mealy tone." His playing has been praised as "most appealing" by the New York Times and "rich...and human" by the New York Sun. He has appeared as soloist and principal cellist with the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas, whose recent CD on Sony went gold. His performance of the Schumann Cello Concerto at the 2010 Music Festival of the Americas in Vermont was hailed as "virtuosic and impassioned" (Barre Montpelier Times). Performance highlights in include recital tours, by invitation, to the Peoples' Republic of China, with performances in Xiamin, Fozhou and Gulangyu, and recital appearances in New York, Athens, Greece and Burgos, Spain. An avid chamber musician, he has participated in the Bowdoin, Schlem Int'l (Italy), Burgos Int'l (Spain) and Summit Summer Festivals, the Perlman Music Program, and the ChamberFest and FOCUS! Festivals in Lincoln Center. Mr. Capps has made numerous appearances on Manhattan's Tactus Series, and has performed on Trinity Church's Music at One series, and at Bargemusic, and founded the Capanglia Trio, the Sonar Players, and the New York Chamber Collective.



First Prize winner of the 2009 Freiburg International Clarinet Competition in Germany, clarinetist **MORAN KATZ** performs extensively as a soloist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the China Philharmonic Orchestra, the SWR sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden and Freiburg, the Collegium Musicum Basel, the Albany Symphony, the Midland-Odesa Symphony and Chorale, the Haifa Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Sinfonietta and the Tel Aviv Soloists Ensemble. She has collaborated with the Ariel, Carmel, Contemporary, Tesla, Benaim and Old City String Quartets, as well as with artists such as Mitsuko Uchida, Richard Goode, Vera Beths and Arnold Steinhardt. Active in the contemporary music scene, Ms. Katz has soloed with the New Juilliard Ensemble, as part of the FOCUS! 2005 and 2006 Festivals. In summer 2007, she appeared on the MoMA Summergarden Series in solo recital. She often collaborates with the internationally acclaimed new music ensemble "Continuum" and with the jazz ensemble of pianist Uri Caine. She is also a founding member of "Shuffle Concert", a newly formed audience-interactive ensemble. Ms. Katz can be heard on tracks of three CDs: she performs Richard Wilson's Timeshare with cellist Sophie Shao for Albany Records' "Brash Attacks" (all Richard Wilson CD), music by Andy Laster for the Tzadik label and music by Roberto Sierra and Ursula Mamlok for the Naxos label (both released in 2011).



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innova is supported by an endowment from the McKnight Foundation.
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