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Carolyn Goldstein, Baroque Violin: Renée Crown University Honors Capstone Recital

Carolyn Goldstein

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Carolyn Goldstein, Baroque Violin

Renée Crown University Honors Capstone Recital

Setnor Auditorium
February 26, 2016 8:00PM
The performance tonight features Baroque tuning on a period instrument, modern cello with Baroque bow, and harpsichord. In the usual tuning of the time period A was set as 415Hz, which is roughly a half step lower than today's A 440Hz. The major differences between a Baroque violin and a modern violin are that the Baroque violin is strung in lamb gut strings, lacks a chin rest, and has an octave shorter finger board. Additionally, the Baroque violin body, bridge, sound post, and bass bar are smaller in comparison. The Baroque bow is lighter in weight and has a convex arch, whereas a modern bow is heavier in weight and has a concave arch. Throughout both sonatas, I embellish the written music with my own ornaments (notes that are not written on the page) using strategies developed during the Baroque period.

The first half of the recital showcases the music of Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), who was an influential violinist and composer of string music at the turn of the eighteenth century. Despite only publishing six collections of works, Corelli was regarded as a master of the “modern” virtuosic Italian playing style and his compositions were popular throughout Europe. The Op. 5 Violin Sonatas were published in Rome in 1700 and were purposely printed in a skeletal form of notation, which encouraged the violinist to embellish the music with skillful ornamentation. Sonata No. 9 from Op. 5 is a four movement work; movements 1, 2, and 4 are composed of an A and B section which are repeated during the performance to form the pattern A A’ B B’. The A and B sections are initially played with minimal ornamentation, but during the repeats the performer would have been expected to ornament the lines to provide appropriate variety, an approach that I have adopted this evening. The third movement is a mere eight measures long. I have chosen to heavily ornament this short movement and will play it without repeats.

The second half of the performance this evening features the music of Antonio Vivaldi, a prolific composer and violin virtuosi during the early eighteenth century. During his lifetime, he was most respected as a violinist, though he is most remembered as a composer today. The Op. 2 Violin Sonatas display one of Vivaldi’s typical compositional tricks: the use of recurring rhythmic motifs. The repetitive rhythmic pattern of a long note followed by a short note connects the three movements of Sonata No. 10 from Op. 2 together, as each movement has a variation on this pattern. Exaggeration of the long-short rhythmic pattern is easily played with a Baroque bow because the convex arch allows for the clarity of the rhythm to be realized. Unlike the Corelli sonata, Vivaldi’s notation precisely indicates the desired ornamentation.

Carolyn Goldstein

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of Renée Crown University Honors. Ms. Goldstein is a student of Paul Miller, Duquesne University.