

Olivia Lemmelin, Violin

Dongfang Zhang, Piano

Graduate Recital Series
Recital Hall | November 19, 2015 | 5:00 p.m.

Program

Sonata for Violin and Piano

John Corigliano

I. Allegro

1963

II. Andantino (with simplicity)

III. Lento (quasi recitativo)

IV. Allegro

Intermission

Serenade after Plato's "Symposium"

Leonard Bernstein

I. Phaedrus; Pausanias (Lento; Allegro marcato)

1954

II. Aristophanes (Allegretto)

III. Eryximachus (Presto)

IV. Agathon (Adagio)

V. Socrates; Alcibiades (Molto tenuto; Allegro molto vivace)

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Music

Program Notes

Sonata for Violin and Piano by John Corigliano

"The Sonata for Violin and Piano, written during 1962-63, is for the most part a tonal work, although it incorporates non-tonal and poly-tonal sections within it as well as other 20th century harmonic, rhythmic and constructional techniques. The listener will recognize the work as a product of an American writer, although this is more the result of an American writing music than writing 'American' music — a second-nature, unconscious action on my part. Rhythmically, the work is extremely varied. Meters change in almost every measure, and independent rhythmic patterns in each instrument are common. The Violin Sonata was originally entitled Duo, and therefore obviously treats both instruments as co-partners. Virtuosity is of great importance in adding color and energy to the work which is basically an optimistic statement, but the virtuosity is always motivated by musical means. To cite an example: the last movement rondo includes in it a virtuosic polyrhythmic and polytonal perpetual motion whose thematic material and accompaniment figures are composed of three distinct elements derived from materials stated in the beginning of the movement. The 16th-note perpetual motion theme is originally a counterpoint to the movement's initial theme. Against this are set two figures — an augmentation of the movement's primary theme and, in combination with that, a 5/8 rhythmic ostinato utilized originally to accompany a totally different earlier passage. All three elements combine to form a new virtuoso perpetual motion theme which is, of course, subjected to further development and elaboration."

— John Corigliano

Serenade after Plato's "Symposium" by Leonard Bernstein

On August 8, 1954, the day after completing his score, Bernstein wrote the following descriptions for each movement as a suggested series of "guideposts" for the listener:

I. Phaedrus; Pausanias (Lento; Allegro marcato). Phaedrus opens the symposium with a lyrical oration in praise of Eros, the god of love. (Fugato, begun by the solo violin.) Pausanias continues by describing the duality of the lover as compared with the beloved. This is expressed in a classical sonata-allegro, based on the material of the opening fugato. [The second theme of this sonata movement incorporates disjunct grace-note figures and dissonant intervals in the elegant solo violin part.]

II. Aristophanes (Allegretto). Aristophanes does not play the role of clown in this dialogue, but instead that of the bedtime-storyteller, invoking the fairy-tale mythology of love. The atmosphere is one of quiet charm. [Aristophanes sees love as satisfying a basic human need. Much of the musical material derives from the grace-note theme of the first movement. The middle section of this movement incorporates a melody for the lower strings (marked "singing") played in close canon.]

III. Eryximachus (Presto). The physician speaks of bodily harmony as a scientific model for the workings of love-patterns. This is an extremely short fugato-scherzo, born of a blend of mystery and humor. [This section contains music that corresponds thematically to the canon of the previous movement, *Aristophanes*]

IV. Agathon (Adagio). Perhaps the most moving speech of the dialogue, Agathon's panegyric embraces all aspects of love's powers, charms and functions. This movement is a simple three-part song.

V. Socrates; Alcibiades (Molto tenuto; Allegro molto vivace). Socrates describes his visit to the seer Diotima, quoting her speech on the demonology of love. Love as a daemon is Socrates' image for the profundity of love; and his seniority adds to the feeling of didactic soberness in an otherwise pleasant and convivial after-dinner discussion. This is a slow introduction of greater weight than any of the preceding movements, and serves as a highly developed reprise of the middle section of the Agathon movement, thus suggesting a hidden sonata-form. The famous interruption by Alcibiades and his band of drunken revelers ushers in the Allegro, which is an extended rondo ranging in spirit from agitation through jig-like dance music to joyful celebration. If there is a hint of jazz in the celebration, I hope it will not be taken as anachronistic Greek party-music, but rather the natural expression of a contemporary American composer imbued with the spirit of that timeless dinner party.