

May 10, 17.00 hrs

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These program notes are written by the student performing and are presented by the student in partial fulfillment of the requirements of their course.

Program Notes

Flavor, texture and aroma. For many, the visceral memories of food are tied into the hands that made it, the friends who shared it, the time in our lives we loved that particular dish. In the same way, music can form a mental time capsule, triggered by a note or the opening chords of a song. These associations are so instinctive that we often link things like music and food to the events in our lives both consciously and unconsciously. We use them to augment our deepest experiences with color and significance.

For example, a dying composer like Claude Debussy (1862-1918) composed his Violin Sonata as part of his final legacy. J.S. Bach, (1685-1750) at the age of thirty-five had lost three children and his first wife, yet simultaneously produced the unaccompanied violin and cello solos, as well the presentation manuscript score of the Brandenburg concertos. Finally, Pablo Sarasate (1844-1908) created a place for the folksongs of Spain in the repertoire of soloists through his own performances and compositions. The pieces of each composer are individual in era and style, yet together they form a treasure banquet of memory and achievement.

Despite the chaos of his romantic pursuits, Debussy grew into a steady love for one thing:

statement before transitioning softly into D major. The D major section provides relief for the tumult of the previous chapter, as if Bach were remembering happier days. After a brief return to the broken chords, the story enters its final chapter with a melancholic *tré* in the minor. Like any good conclusion, these passages review the key elements of the narrative so far. The notes become fierce, content or tragic by turns, as Bach's chromatic line and pedal tone towards the end take on a resemblance to weeping. After a series of dramatic triplets, the movement closes with a third statement of the opening theme, maintaining a triumphant energy to the end.

At this point in the program, one feels comfortably full. One reaches for a napkin and the vision of a cozy bed with ample quilts and pillows arises. However, before one succumbs to the call of the food coma, the final course appears in the form of *de* a Spanish dance, bright and lively, perhaps presenting itself as a cool orange sherbet, smooth chocolate ice cream, or a moist lemon cake with cream cheese icing. Pablo de Sarasate's *Zapateado* instantly brings the sparkle back into the evening. Named *de* the *zapateado* from Andalusia, it opens with a drumroll in the piano which simulates the rapid tapping of the dancer's feet. It also includes syncopation and a degree of coordinated virtuosity in the violin which parallels the original dance.¹⁰ The dramatic opening is followed by a second entrance which begins a pattern of lyrical motifs growing increasingly elaborate before the piece snaps back to the opening theme, and finishes with a cheeky pizzicato and final chord.

This work epitomizes the virtuosity and flair which made Sarasate famous from his earliest days as a child prodigy. Born into the Early Romantic period in 1844, Sarasate was soon recognized for his talent by multiple patrons. At the age of eleven, he was shepherded into the capable teaching of Jean Delphin Alard, a French violin instructor at the Paris Conservatory. After winning the *Prix de Conservatoire* at seventeen, the highest award the conservatory could offer, he went on to a brilliant performing career. Although identifying primarily with France for most of his life, Sarasate's compositions retain the Spanish style of his origins, bringing common Spanish dances to enduring public notice.¹¹

Bibliography

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¹⁰ Harvey, "A...Identity," 53

¹¹ Tao-Chang, "Spanish...Influences"

