

Civic Morning Musicals

Presents its 129th Season



The Wednesday Recital Series

Concert # 10 2019-2020 Series

Robbie Padilla

Piano

Wednesday, February 19, at 12:15 PM

St. David's Episcopal Church

14 Jamar Dr. Fayetteville, NY 13066

Artist

Robbie Padilla plays solo and collaborative piano throughout the Central New York region and beyond. His keyboard experiences include both solo and collaborative recitals, large ensemble concerts, jazz ensembles, opera and musical theatre pits, and church organist.

Recent musical theatre and opera performances by Padilla include *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Addams Family*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Die Fledermaus*, among others. Padilla played both piano and French horn with the Wind Ensembles of Syracuse University and Fredonia and in a number of other large ensembles. In 2017, Padilla premiered *Valzer tristi, nobili et sentimentali* by emerging Italian composer Marco Giusto.

Padilla was the sole recipient of the 2016 Civic Morning Musicals Performance Award for "outstanding contribution to the Syracuse music community". In the years he has lived in the Syracuse area, Padilla has been both a collaborator and solo artist in the Civic Morning Musicals Wednesday Recital Series. Padilla has also served as a collaborative pianist in the Civic Morning Musicals Competition for Singers and the Syracuse Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition.

Padilla earned his Master of Music and studied Piano Performance with Ida Tili-Trebicka at Syracuse University. His undergraduate studies were in Music Education at SUNY Fredonia where he studied piano with Dr. Anne Kissel. Padilla maintains a private piano studio at his home in Liverpool, NY, where he hopes to spread the love of music in the Central New York community.

Program

Three Preludes (1927)

I. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

II. Andante con moto

III. Agitato

George Gershwin

(1898-1937)

Sonata in E minor (1932)

I. Andante – Allegro

II. Andante

III. Scherzo: Allegro

Florence Price

(1887-1953)

Jeux d'eau (1901)

Maurice Ravel

(1875-1937)

Rhapsody in Blue (1924)

George Gershwin

FUTURE PROGRAMS

The Wednesday Recital Series; 12:15pm

February 26, 2020

St. David's Episcopal Church

***William Strom, tenor; Kristin Strom, violin
Sabine Krantz, piano***

March 4, 2020

Park Central Presbyterian

Timothy Schmidt, guitar

March 11, 2020

Park Central Presbyterian

***Julie McKinstry, soprano
Ian Gallacher, violin; Kevin Moore, piano***

Sunday Live! Concert; 4 pm

April 5, 2020

Park Central Presbyterian

***Reflections:
Music for Soprano, cello and Piano***

***Ivy Walz, mezzo-soprano
Zachary Sweet, cello
Margaret Reitz, piano***

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Solo Piano Music of Gershwin, Price & Ravel

performed by Robbie Padilla



George Gershwin was a major player in both the classical and jazz worlds from the 1920s until his early passing in 1937. He was born in Brooklyn, NY, to Russian- and Lithuanian-Jewish immigrants. Starting from roots of Tin Pan Alley, Gershwin wrote a plethora of songs that became jazz standards along with major works for orchestra including *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924), *Concerto in F* (1925), *An American in Paris* (1928), among others. His music brought the sound of jazz into a classical setting, brewing a new sound for the 20th Century.

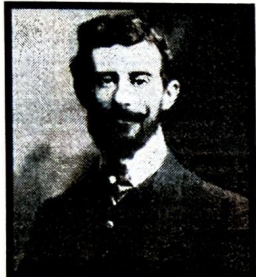
This program of solo piano music begins with the **Three Preludes**, three short and whimsical works. **Prelude I** is crafted from a blue-note melody, chords typically found in blues rather than classical or jazz, and a rhythm representative of a Brazilian dance style. The unique sound is coupled with virtuoso techniques such as large leaps, hand crossing, diminished arpeggios, and scales in fourths. **Prelude II**, commonly known as the *Blue Lullaby*, is our chillaxed piece in the set. The left hand provides a steady motor that the right hand sings to. We still feel the blues here, possibly even more so than in the first *Prelude*. Sit back and enjoy this one. **Prelude III**, the *Spanish Prelude*, brings up the tempo with a rhythmic fuego. It is written in the key of E-flat minor, though phrases are answered in E-flat major, causing some to claim that this piece represents “a battle between major and minor”. This piece may represent conflict or a contest, but there is no doubt that we feel an energy in this piece until its massive left-hand leaps and arpeggiated finale.



Florence Beatrice Price made strides for women in classical music and fellow composers of color. Among her written repertoire are over a dozen orchestral works of which are four symphonies, two piano concertos, two violin concertos, chamber works, choral works, art songs, and a vast selection of solo piano and organ works. Price was raised in Arkansas, studied composition, piano, and organ, at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, then returned to the South to begin her professional career. In the height of racial tension in 1927, Price moved to Chicago where she thrived as someone who would become known as an iconic composer. Her music had been relatively unknown throughout the latter half of the 20th Century, though the bulk of her works were rediscovered in the 2000s. To honor her, the inaugural International Florence Price Festival, colloquially known as Price Fest, will happen in August 2020. More information about the Festival can be found at pricefest.org.

Price's **Sonata in E Minor** follows in the footsteps of the traditional European sonata form dating back to Mozart and Haydn of the late 1700s, yet incorporates a flair of the American spiritual. The massive work is very modern yet conservative. The plethora of musical concepts and themes take the listener through a dense and complex landscape of endless exploration. The first movement starts out with a bang on a forte E minor chord followed by simple yet

effective pentatonic melodies, evoking the sounds of spirituals. We will hear these pentatonic themes carry throughout all three movements in the Sonata. The second movement incorporates jazz and blues chord voicings giving the piece a unique feel. It sparks feelings of the sublime and passion. The third and final movement is a firework display of the previous two movements. The energy is now kinetic with a rhythmic accompaniment followed by moments of soaring descants and jazzy interludes.



Maurice Ravel, our only non-American composer of the program, is credited with having at least some influence on American jazz. As a teenager he studied at the Paris Conservatoire and competed for the Prix de Rome through his late twenties, though he found his niche in a new compositional style set apart from the traditionalists of his time. The bulk of Ravel's works involved the piano or were written for orchestra. He is commonly referred to as an Impressionist, though he detested the term himself.

Jeux d'eau, directly translated to 'water games', is a highly virtuosic piece that defined French music in the early 20th Century. Ravel, with his pianistic texture, allows the performer and listeners to imagine a scene that they can paint in their own minds. This was a very innovative style of music from a 26-year-old in 1901 that still feels just as alive today. Words cannot describe the feelings the music evokes but we have to just sit back and imagine the endless adventures involving water in many environments.



We return to the work of **George Gershwin** with his famous **Rhapsody in Blue**. The version you are hearing is for solo piano, one of many arrangements Gershwin did himself. There is also the original two-piano arrangement along with several piano and orchestra arrangements by Ferde Grofé including the most commonly played 1942 version. Though not officially programmatic, or made to depict a certain narrative, the Rhapsody takes us through a journey in New York City where Gershwin was living most of his life. The exact depictions are up to the listener, but the composer stated that "it was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang" that influenced the sound of the piece. Rhapsody in Blue is the epitome of American music in the early-half of the 20th Century, depicting the rush of everyday life as well as our relaxing moments, and the American dream itself.

