

She Writes “Like A Man”:
Classical Music for the Cello by Women

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Abstract

In my ten years as a cellist, I have played fewer than 50 works by women, as opposed to thousands by men. I find this situation to be untenable, and I intend to make it my life's work to research and perform music composed by women, as I have done in my senior recital at DePaul University School of Music. In this thesis, I examine the historical context of two composers whose works I performed in my recital, detail some of the challenges that I faced in preparing the recital, and provide some suggestions for continuing to address this inequity.

Keywords: Classical Music, Women, Composers

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Acknowledgements

The title of my thesis is a reference to Margaret Atwood, “On Being a ‘Woman Writer’: Paradoxes and Dilemmas (1976),” in *Second Words: Selected Critical Prose 1960-1982* (Boston, 1982), pp. 190-204.

“I call it the Lady Painter Syndrome because of a conversation I had about female painters with a male painter in 1960. ‘When she’s good,’ he said, ‘we call her a painter; when she’s bad we call her a lady painter.’ ‘She writes like a man’ is part of the same pattern.” (197)

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Introduction

Since I began studying the cello, I have been aware that women composers were almost never included in the concerts and recitals that I attended. Occasionally I would hear a work by a woman on a performance of newer music, but it was always just one. Still, I held out hope that once I began to study music at college in a bigger city this bias would disappear. Throughout my undergraduate studies, however, I have noticed that at least 90 percent of the composers in our music history curriculum are men, and that performances by our ensembles, with the exception of the contemporary ensemble, tend to reflect this imbalance. My senior recital at DePaul University School of Music in January 2019 was an exception to this trend; the program consisted of four pieces written by women. I intend to keep programming recitals and performances in this vein. In this thesis, I examine the historical context of two composers whose works I performed in my recital, detail some of the challenges that I faced in putting together the recital, and provide some suggestions for how to continue addressing this inequity.

Historical Context

The historical role of women in classical music is framed in part by social changes in the 19th century. At least 80 percent of the European population throughout the 19th century was still working class; the middle class was a small part of the remaining 20 percent at the start of the 20th century, but by the First World War the number of people considered to be middle class had grown and was close to 60 percent of that top section (Kocka 784, 799). In 19th-century Europe, monarchs ruled almost everywhere and the aristocracy lived off the labors of the working classes. The Industrial Revolution led to an explosion in the role and fortunes of the middle class. What had been attainable for only those with the “right” background was now available to a larger section of the population -- if one was male, that is. Aristocratic women for

the most part were educated just enough to be a pretty commodity to prospective husbands but not threatening to the same. The character of Princess Maria Bolkonskaya in Tolstoy's epic *War and Peace* is an interesting twist on this: she is learned, talented, and well educated, precisely because she is described as plain, perhaps even ugly, and therefore has no marital prospects. All of the other young women in her circle, for example Countess Natasha Rostova, is beautiful and has just enough education to make her a good match. Women of good birth were meant to have accomplishments, or, in other words, a familiarity with poetry and an ability to play the piano and perhaps sing as well.¹ Actual knowledge and professions were left to the men (Fuller 15). Women who aspired to more than life as a wife and mother were often viewed with suspicion. Performers -- singers, pianists, dancers -- were meant to give this kind of life up and settle down before reaching a marriageable age or run the risk of being considered slightly risqué.² Professional musicians were considered to belong to a lower class as well, adding to the lack of respectability (Fuller 16).

There was a strange double standard, however. Secular conservatories of music were founded throughout Europe in the 19th century, and women were admitted to study performance, particularly piano and voice, but definitely not composition (Tick, Ericson, and Koskoff). By the end of the 19th century, some conservatories opened their theory and composition classes to women, albeit with a different focus to the classes offered to men.³ Of course, this training could still fall under the "accomplishments" umbrella. Although there were some exceptions, most of the women studying in late-19th-century conservatories were from middle-class families, eager

¹ Jane Austen's novels illustrate this perfectly, particularly *Sense and Sensibility*.

² See also Theodore Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie*, in which the title character moves to Chicago from a rural area, eventually attaining a career as an actress without anything terrible happening to her. Carrie's success is not intended to be seen as a normative occurrence, but rather as an exception that proves the rule.

³ Judith Tick points out, for example, that "[a]t the Leipzig Conservatory, boys took a three-year course in theory, girls a two-year course, 'especially organized for their requirements'. The Paris Conservatoire ran women's classes in solfège and keyboard harmony, barring women from classes in written harmony and composition until the 1870s."

to give their daughters the right kind of education to help them break into the upper echelons of society. And although these women were being educated to be musicians, possibly even professional-level musicians, they were not being educated to have a *profession* as a musician (Fuller 18).

In the early 20th century, women slowly gained admittance to higher education institutions, although for the first half-century progress was slow (Tick, Ericson, and Koskoff). The successive world wars led to an acceptance of women in the workplace, and this began to permeate the arts world as well. By mid-century, women were welcomed into all sectors of classical music study, although it took the concept of blind auditions, first put into practice in the 1970s and 1980s, to make a real difference in the makeup of ensembles (Goldin and Rouse 716), and as of this writing conductors and brass players, especially those in high-profile positions, are still mostly white men.⁴

In my interview for Trinity Laban Conservatoire, the representative told us that as part of the conservatoire's *Venus Blazing* initiative, the music history curriculum has been redesigned to include more women.⁵ He presented this as a novelty, which it is; the vast majority of undergraduate-level music history courses will mention the five or so most famous women composers -- Hildegard von Bingen, Clara Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Jennifer Higdon -- with even the 20th-century portion of the course being mostly dedicated to composers like Stockhausen, Berio, and Cage.⁶

⁴ See <http://www.ppv.issuelab.org/resources/25840/25840.pdf>, Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field, a report by the League of American Orchestras.

⁵ "Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance is proud to announce *Venus Blazing*, an unprecedented commitment to the music of women composers. . . . Drawing on centuries of music past and present, Trinity Laban will ensure that at least **half** of the music it chooses for the multitude of varied public performances it mounts on its landmark Greenwich campus and in venues across London . . . will be by women composers." [emphasis in original]

⁶ See, for example, https://societymusictheory.org/sites/default/files/Nashville_report.pdf, "Addressing the Gender Imbalance."

An article written in the 1940s by Carl E. Seashore could just as easily have been written in the 19th century: “*Woman’s fundamental urge is to be beautiful, loved and adored as a person; man’s urge is to provide and achieve in a career. . . .* from these two axioms arise the countless forms of differential selection in the choice and pursuit of a goal for life. . . . It is the goal that accounts for the difference [why there are no great women composers]. Man and woman both have their choice and both can take pride in their achievements” (88; italics in original).

Women were not made for composition, according to the late-19th-century psychologist Havelock Ellis. In *Man and Woman*, first published in 1894, he wrote: “Music is at once the most emotional and the most severely abstract of the arts. There is no art to which women have been more widely attracted and there is no art in which they have shown themselves more helpless” (cited in Gates 27). Basically, in Ellis’s view, women just were not intelligent enough to be composers.

No less an authority on all things musical, *The Musical Times*, had this to say on the subject in 1887: “That no woman has ever been a great composer is an accepted fact; that she is never likely to become so, more than a probability” (80). Thank goodness that these strictures about women are not always reflected in reality, as neither Dora Pejačević nor Henriëtte Bosmans, nor many of the people who taught and encouraged them, believed this to be so.

Dora Pejačević

Dora Pejačević was born on 10 September 1885 in Budapest, into one of Croatia's most noble aristocratic families, one that had its roots and seat in the small town of Našice. The political climate at the time of her birth was relatively volatile; Croatian nationalism was on the rise because Croats objected to being "Magyarized" by the ruling Austro-Hungarian empire. Based on the belief that Croats were descended from an ancient peoples known as Illyrians, a movement that sought to stir up Croatian nationalism and standardize local literary traditions was formed, called the Illyrian Movement (Kos, *Dora Pejačević*).

Pejačević's musical instruction, supervised by her mother, who was a pianist, began at home at a very early age. Pejačević was educated in languages and other subjects by an English governess until she was around 10 years old. At that time, her family moved to Zagreb, and Pejačević began music lessons with several different teachers at the Croatian Music Institute, including violin and theory, and also studied instrumentation and composition privately. In her teenage years she traveled throughout Europe, continuing to study composition, although she was in fact mainly self-taught (Kos, *Dora Pejačević*). She was extremely well-read and moved in artistic and intellectual circles with the leading minds of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although she was part of the aristocracy, she was drawn to the writers and musicians who were active in the Illyrian Movement, particularly the Bohemian poet Rainer Maria Rilke. Koralka Kos examined some of Pejačević's writings as well as correspondence between herself and Rilke. A series of meetings in 1916 between the two of them led to a mutual respect as well as collaboration on several song cycles and lieder (Kos, "Dora Pejačević und Rainer Maria Rilke").

Most of the material available on Pejačević is in Croatian and unavailable in U.S. libraries. There is an article available online in a Croatian historical journal with the intriguing

title “‘Books I’ve Read’: Dora Pejačević as a Reader” (Župan) but sadly this, too is in Croatian. A small number of extracts from Kos 2008 can be found on the Muzicki Informativni Centar website (http://mic.hr/composer/dora/composer_articles/bio), which helpfully has an English translation of sorts, at least enough to get a sense of who Pejačević was and what her life was like. The Maud Powell Society has an English-language biography and select list of works, mostly taken from the Croatian Music Information Center website and Kos 2008. There is a brief Wikipedia article, with a relatively extensive list of Pejačević’s compositions. Grove Online has a brief article, as does the Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers.

Many articles containing lists of important Croatian or Bohemian composers in major late-20th-century reference works such as Grove and Britannica barely mention Pejačević, although her Symphony in F sharp minor is considered to be the first modern Croatian symphony. Her output is impressive, particularly considering the fact that she died at the age of 37 as a result of complications following the birth of her son: 58 opuses, 106 compositions, including lieder, solo piano works, varied chamber works, and several large orchestral works. Her style is characterized as late Romantic with impressionistic elements. All but one of her works are housed in the Croatian Music Institute. It is probable that her aristocratic status encouraged the preservation of her works after her death as well as affording her time to compose during her lifetime.

Henriëtte Bosmans

Henriëtte Bosmans was born into a musical family in Amsterdam on 6 December 1895. Her father, Henri Bosmans, was principal cellist of the Concertgebouw Orchestra.⁷ Her mother, Sarah Benedicts, was a concert pianist who taught piano at Amsterdam Conservatory. Her early piano studies with her mother led to a career as a concert pianist, but by the 1920s she was concentrating on composition and orchestration studies. As Maddie Starreveld-Bartels and Helen Metzelaar write in their article on her in *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, “She was soon considered the most talented Dutch composer of her time” (76). Although her early works are in more of a Germanic Romantic style, she soon began to experiment with Debussian impressionism and bitonality. Her works for the cello in particular display a deep understanding and appreciation of the instrument through her beautifully idiomatic writing.

Bosmans’ father was Roman Catholic and her mother was Jewish; this, coupled with the fact that she was as openly bisexual as someone in the early 20th century could be, meant that she faced a number of challenges throughout her career, particularly in the late 1930s and during the Second World War with the rise of Nazism. The article in Norton/Grove puts it quaintly: “Owing to personal circumstances and World War II, Bosmans stopped composing between 1936 and 1945” (Starreveld-Bartels and Metzelaar 76). Her partner in the 1920s, cellist Frieda Belinfante, was the inspiration for several of Bosmans’ works, including the second Cello Concerto, which Belinfante premiered in 1923.

The main sources for information on Henriëtte Bosmans are the Grove Online and Norton/Grove articles. There are just four references cited in the Bibliography to the Grove Online entry, all in Dutch. The list of her compositions in both articles is described as “selective,” so it may not include all of her works. There is a biography in Dutch, some sections

⁷ Henri Bosmans died when his daughter was just a few months old (Baars).

of which can be found online, but for the most part information about Bosmans and her life can only be gleaned through program notes from rare performances, and this information is often given uncited.⁸

Henriëtte Bosmans was given a name, accidentally or not, which to an extent could remind other musicians in her lifetime of her father.⁹ Clara Schumann is remembered under her married name, because her husband Robert was also a renowned musician; Fanny Mendelssohn is remembered under her maiden name, not because she never married (her husband was the painter Wilhelm Hensel) but because her brother Felix was a well-known musician. We refer to Alma Mahler by the most famous of her married names, even though Gustav disapproved of her composition and prevented her from being artistically active during their marriage. In the second season of Amazon's series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, set in 1950s New York, Susie Myerson tells a girl who's thinking of changing her name so she'll know that she's succeeded without the help of her well-known father, "Don't. Use that shit." (season 2 episode 6).

When trying to understand how this extremely highly regarded and famous composer fell into relative obscurity, it is perhaps relevant that she died at the age of 56 from undiagnosed stomach cancer. In addition, her break from composition and performing in the 1940s may have meant that it was easier to forget her. Had she lived into her seventies or even her eighties, perhaps she would have gained a wider audience and would also have been a sort of "elder statesperson" in the latter half of the 20th century, when women composers in Europe began to gain more recognition.

⁸ The biography is Metzelaar, Helen. *Zonder muziek is het leven onnodig: Henriëtte Bosmans [1895-1952], een biografie*. Zutphen, NL: Walburg Pers, 2002. There have also been some recent performances of Bosmans' vocal compositions in Canada (<https://artsfile.ca/a-time-to-remember-the-music-of-henriette-bosmans-made-in-defiance-of-nazism/>), and there is some biographical detail in the interview with the singer who organized the concert).

⁹ It is unlikely, however, that many contemporary musicians would think of her father when hearing her name; Googling Henri Bosmans reveals just one late-19th-century person with that name, a Belgian Jesuit priest.

It is difficult to find many live performances of Bosmans' music advertised online. The Dutch-Canadian mezzo-soprano Pauline van der Roest is one performer trying to raise Bosmans' profile. An American cellist living in Canada is trying to raise funds to record Bosmans' cello and piano works.¹⁰ What is particularly interesting, however, is that there do not appear to be many live performances of her works in the Netherlands today.¹¹ The Henriëtte Bosmans Prize for composition has been awarded to a young composer since 1994, and since 2003 as part of a competition organized by the Genootschap van Nederlandse Componisten (Geneco), which holds the copyright to Bosmans' compositions. This, sadly, seems to be the main way that she is remembered today.

¹⁰ <https://www.gofundme.com/henriette-bosmans-cd>.

¹¹ I make this bold statement following an extensive Internet search for performances of her works; the majority that I can find are in North America, particularly Canada, followed by the United Kingdom. Although there are Dutch recordings of some of her compositions, I could only find two live performances in the past several years of her music in Holland, in April 2018 (<https://www.concertgebouworkest.nl/en/hope-for-lasting-peace-resonates-in-all-the-orchestra-s-april-concerts>).

Preparing the Performance

Given all this to work with, how does one program and perform works by unknown women?

The first step is choosing the repertoire. I began with a Google search for woman composers from the 19th and 20th centuries. Results included Wikipedia, of course, but also some very obscure message boards and blogs, some not in English, giving me an opportunity to brush up on my Google Translate skills. There were several dead ends and after a few weeks of off-and-on searching and pondering, I narrowed down the not-very-extensive list to two sonatas from the early 20th century, one by Dora Pejačević and the other by Henriette Bosmans.

The next step was to present an informal proposal to my applied teacher. The guidelines for the senior recital are not particularly strict, as is evident in the Recital Procedures document on the DePaul University School of Music website (<https://music.depaul.edu/resources/performance-office/Documents/Classical%20Degree%20Recital%20Procedures%2018-19.pdf>). I knew, however, that I was stepping outside the usual canonical box -- that is, not performing a work by Beethoven, Brahms, Prokofiev, or another well-known male composer. My teacher was very supportive of my programming choices throughout my process and seemed excited to learn about the works and their composers.

Once I had decided on the Pejačević and Bosmans sonatas, I did some more research to work out how they might fit into a senior recital program. Together, the two sonatas add up to about 45 minutes of music; shorter works provide contrast and help the flow. I commissioned a 7-minute piece from a friend, Hannah Barnes, and for a second short piece, I spent hours poring over databases and clicking through to websites only to find that this composer and that had written nothing for cello, or that her works for cello weren't on her website. None of the works

for cello written in this century had easily accessible recordings, so it was impossible to know for sure what I was buying. In the end, I chose a piece written by Zae Munn, with whom I have a personal connection through her daughter, cellist Emily Munn-Wood. Trained as a cellist and composer, Munn is currently Professor of Music at Saint Mary's College, South Bend, Indiana. The piece I chose, *Garavaglia Dances*, stood out to me for a few reasons; it was written for Emily in 2012, the year my cello was made; it was written for an instrument made by luthier Gary Garavaglia, who made my cello; and its playful and sparkling character seemed an excellent contrast to the other works on my program. Clearly, Munn knows the cello very well, as is evident in this work, which is difficult enough to present a challenge without being so difficult as to be discouraging.

The next step is obtaining the parts. Pejačević, famous in her lifetime, is now almost completely unknown outside her native Croatia; the parts were only available from a Croatian publishing company, to which I wrote using (you guessed it) Google Translate. The company had to print the parts especially for me, as they'd been out of print, and the printing costs were almost as much as the shipping costs. When I received the Pejačević, I discovered that the company had thrown in some other music for free: a clarinet quartet by Frano Parac, six bagatelles for piano by Srećko Bradic, a dance for violin by Miroslav Miletić, and a madrigal and two motets by Francesco Usper.

The Munn was available for purchase as a pdf file, linked from her website. However, the cello part was not available; I could only buy a score. I emailed her and asked for a cello part, which she sent to me. I assumed that what I have is what the composer intended to write, minimally (if at all) edited; I ended up with very few interpretive questions for her.

This was not the case with Pejačević or with Bosmans. I assume that the edition of Pejačević which I purchased is the only edition currently in circulation; I am not sure if and where a manuscript exists. This edition is full of contradictions both between the parts and in the cello part; at one point, two options are given, but it isn't clear where each came from.

The Bosmans, from what I've seen, exists in at least three different editions, and here again there are problems. An example of this is that throughout the sonata, she (or the editor) writes a crescendo-diminuendo under a measure, with an accent on the first note of the measure. Is this Bosmans' style -- if so, it's impossible to realize fully without making a multi-year study of her works -- or is it a decision made by the editor? To answer these questions, the performer must purchase all available editions, which requires a lot of research and can also be cost-prohibitive, especially for students. I was only able to buy one of the three different editions of the Bosmans, as one was prohibitively expensive and one was currently out of print. I was at least able to order the music from an English publisher.

Getting the physical scores was only part of the process, however. The next hurdle was finding recordings to get an idea of style, interpretation, and so forth. Numerous searches uncovered only one recording, on YouTube, of the Pejačević sonata (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-chTjgzSkQs>). At the time that I was preparing for my recital, there were only two recordings of the Bosman sonata available, one professional recording and one live performance (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DIC7KXa3jk> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfogN7SXhH8>). There were no recordings of the Munn piece, not even a MIDI available.¹²

¹² I plan to share the recording of *Garavaglia Dances* from my recital with Zae Munn, as it is so important for composers to have more than just the score or a computer-generated MIDI to help publicize their output.

The lack of available editions and recordings makes it more difficult to make interpretive decisions. This is exciting! However, being the first, or one of the first, to make these decisions is something that requires time, years of study, and advanced technical skills, which is a slightly frightening position to find oneself in as a 22-year-old planning a senior recital. For example, in my junior recital, I performed the Prokofiev Cello Sonata. There are more than a dozen recordings on YouTube, many by the most highly respected cellists of the 20th and 21st centuries. Part of my study included listening to these recordings, deciding what I agreed with, what I liked, what I didn't like, and discussing all of this with my applied teacher before arriving at my own interpretation. The absence of these valuable resources for the works on my senior recital meant that I had to take a much more proactive role in interpreting the composer's intentions for all of the works.

The responsibility for this is huge. A poor performance of one of the Beethoven Cello Sonatas will be seen as just that -- one single poor performance. There are so many wonderful recordings and opportunities to hear Beethoven live that his reputation will not take even the slightest hit due to this. But Bosmans is virtually unknown to contemporary audiences, and a subpar performance could lead audiences to blame the composer rather than the performer. Ruby Newell-Legner's contention that "It takes 12 positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience" (<http://www.7starservice.com/>) may be about customer satisfaction, but it could easily be applied to a classical music performance as well.

Performing more works by women is only one way to combat the gender discrepancy in programming, however. There is more to be done.

Looking Forward

Forgotten music must be made accessible, and that means that it should be published. The difficulties that I had in finding and obtaining the two sonatas for my senior recital is a good example of this. If musicians cannot find the music, then they can't program it, then it won't be heard, then people won't ask for it, and the circle continues. I'm researching how to start a small music publishing company committed to publishing works by women, transgender, and nonbinary composers. In addition to publishing contemporary works, I would plan to publish editions of historical, forgotten, and hard-to-find music by such composers, and would make these scores available at a reasonable price in order to encourage performances. There are a few small music publishers that also are committed to historical as well as contemporary music publishers (e.g., Hildegard Publishing, Furore Verlag, Arsis Press), but there is so much to be discovered and published, and this is a definite case of "the more the merrier."

We must also redefine what is considered "standard" repertoire. This will involve activism: directly or indirectly altering the content music history courses in conservatories and colleges; pressuring music publishers to revise texts to reflect the contributions made throughout history by women composers and performers; and persuading large ensembles and classical music organizations to program more works by historical as well as contemporary women composers. In Chicago, the 5th Wave Collective is just one example of a new organization dedicated to this: their homepage states, "She must be heard to be known. -- Bringing music by women to the world."¹³ I believe strongly that more young people will attend classical music concerts if they feel that the composers represented are not mostly white/western European, mostly men, and mostly dead.

¹³ I was fortunate to perform in a 5th Wave Ensemble concert of orchestral works in September 2018; the program included works by Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) and Florence Price (1887-1953), both of whom are rarely, if ever, heard in the United States.

Conclusion

I am excited that I can be part of the movement towards this change in programming and education. My recital was just the beginning. I am already studying and planning to perform more works by forgotten and marginalized women composers, and I . The increase in concerts being programmed with music by women composers is a positive step. Soon, I hope, we won't be talking about "composers" and "women composers": we will just say "composers."

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Appendix: Recital Program and Recording Link



Saturday, January 12, 2019 • 7:00 p.m

Aurora Lawrie

Senior Recital

Brennan Recital Hall
2330 N. Halsted Street • Chicago

Saturday, January 12, 2019 • 7:00 p.m
Brennan Recital Hall

Aurora Lawrie, cello

Senior Recital

SeungWha Baek, piano

PROGRAM

Dora Pejačević (1885-1923)

Sonata in E minor for Violoncello and Piano (1913)

I. Allegro moderato

II. Scherzo. Allegro.

III. Adagio sostenuto

IV. Allegro comodo

SeungWha Baek, piano

Zae Munn (b. 1953)

Garavaglia Dances (2012)

SeungWha Baek, piano

Intermission

Hannah Barnes (b. 1997)

Landscapes (2018)

Aurora Lawrie • January 12, 2019
Program

Henriëtte Bosmans (1895-1952)

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano (1919)

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Un poco Allegretto
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro molto e con fuoco

SeungWha Baek, piano

Aurora Lawrie is from the studio of Stephen Balderston. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Bachelor of Music.

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted. Thank you.

Aurora Lawrie • January 12, 2019

PROGRAM NOTES

Dora Pejačević (1885-1923)

Sonata in E minor for Violoncello and Piano (1913)*Duration: 28 minutes*

Croatian composer Dora Pejačević is perhaps best known by scholars for her orchestral writing; she was one of the first to introduce the orchestral song to Croatian music, and her Symphony in F-sharp minor is thought of as the first modern Croatian symphony. Born to aristocratic parents, her musical training began with the piano (her first lessons were from her mother) and progressed to violin and composition.

This sonata, her only work for cello and piano, concisely sums up her relatively traditional approach to tonality during an era of radical change. Its four movements each tell a distinct story which, when put together, form a picture of Pejačević's unique compositional voice. The first movement's sweeping, lyrical melodies set the tone for the rest of the piece. The second movement, a scherzo in ABA form, references the first movement in the melodic nature of its trio section, contrasting that with the more angular and brittle outer sections. The slow movement's main theme is melancholy, and the sonata ends with an Allegro comodo which is reminiscent of the first movement in its sweeping qualities.

Zae Munn (b. 1953)

Garavaglia Dances (2012)*Duration: 5 minutes*

One of the reasons this piece stood out to me is that I play an instrument made by Gary Garavaglia in 2012. Munn wrote the piece for her daughter, Emily Munn-Wood, now a graduate of DePaul, who premiered it playing a cello also made by Garavaglia. In the composer's words, "*Garavaglia Dances* is a virtuosic, high-spirited dance with lots of asymmetric beats, with playful slides and high-register double stops in the cello part."

Aurora Lawrie • January 12, 2019
Program Notes

Hannah Barnes (b. 1997)

Landscapes (2018)

Duration: 7 minutes

Hannah Barnes is a senior composition major at DePaul University. She's also a competitive Irish dancer and a fellow lover of memes. I met her in an orchestration class last year, and when I was putting together my recital program, asking her to write a piece for me felt almost inevitable. Our collaboration process has been a lovely experience for me (and I hope for her as well).

When I asked Hannah for a program note, she wrote, "*Landscapes*, composed in August 2018 for Aurora Lawrie, was inspired by the different geographical and musical landscapes I saw during my travels throughout this past year. I spent a significant amount of time in rural areas - first in Ireland for part of February while I was there competing in the All-Ireland International Irish Dance Championships, and then in upstate New York in July on my cousin's farm. I was struck by the silence and how much more significant sounds can be when surrounded by silence. I wanted to incorporate this silence in a meaningful and different way rather than literal silence. The piece ends with a lively traditional jig in G minor, an unusual key for traditional Irish music but fitting for this setting, called 'Crabs in the Skillet,' which was taught to me by Johnny Harling and has one of my favorite names of a tune. These different landscapes interact and modify each other, at times static and at times a rhythmic passacaglia."

Aurora Lawrie • January 12, 2019
Program Notes

Henriëtte Bosmans (1895-1952)

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano (1919)

Duration: 24 minutes

Born in Amsterdam to a cellist father and a pianist mother, Henriëtte Bosmans became a well-known pianist and composer, collaborating and maintaining friendships with artists such as conductor Pierre Monteaux, soprano Noémie Pérugia, and Benjamin Britten. Since 1994, the Society of Dutch Composers has awarded the Henriëtte Bosmans Prize, consisting of €2500 and a performance, to promising young Dutch composers.

Bosmans' early works, including this sonata, are in a German Romantic style. Throughout the four movements she focuses on divisions of the octave, in particular the perfect intervals of the fourth and the fifth and the dissonant interval of the tritone. Much like Prokofiev's sonata, written exactly 30 years later, the theme presented at the beginning of the first movement returns at the close of the fourth, although in this case the recap is straightforward and without much elaboration. The two inner movements are where the soul of the piece lies. The second movement bears little resemblance in content or contour to the other three movements; its incongruity is reminiscent of a lullaby that doesn't really want its listener to go to sleep. The slow movement is about the space between the notes; its beauty is in what it leaves unsaid, for the audience to decide.

Notes by Aurora Lawrie.

Recital recording link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ihvqbalzfd0m7ll/AAB4vPcJ1pzuQwEcSWWuVmp0a?dl=0>