Will Rowe

Secessionist Subjects

for violin and piano

- 2013 -
Composed for my talented friend,
Clare Longendyke.
Program Notes

This piece was written after returning home from 4 months in Vienna, Austria. Coincidentally, I was studying there during what would've been the year of Klimt's 150th birthday, so all of the museums were featuring his work. I got acquainted with some of his paintings during my time there, and chose to feature 5 of them as character pieces.

I. **Der Kuss** (The Kiss) - This is possibly Klimt’s most famous work, noted as "the height of Klimt's golden period", and features spectacular gold leaf covering nearly the entire canvas. While most art critics tend to debate about the nature of the kiss and the attitude of the woman, what struck me most about this painting was the perspective. The couple seems so small in comparison to the way Klimt sets up their surroundings, almost like they're "kneeling at the edge of the universe" (to use the words of my Austrian art history teacher, Dr. Beatrice Ottersböck). The vastness really emphasizes how tender the kiss actually is, and the piece alternates between the glittering landscape and the kiss itself.

II. **Bildnis Sonja Knips** (A Portrait of Sonja Knips) - At first, this painting really only seemed special to me because of how much it contrasts with the body of Klimt's work, but what really stuck with me was the horse. In the background of the portrait, Klimt painted the horse that weighed heavily on Knips' conscience. It was a gift from her to her brother that ultimately killed him in a riding accident at a young age. The piece I wrote for this portrait is a speculation of sorts, balancing the pleasant, aristocratic presentation she had to give to other members of high society with the remorse, regret, and guilt she felt about her brother's death.

III. **Judith I (und der Kopf des Holofernes)** Judith I (and the Head of Holofernes) - This is another painting from Klimt’s golden period, and ultimately the reason why I decided to write this piece in the first place. I went to a concert shortly after I'd returned from Vienna, featuring a piece by a composer (Jiesun Lim), called *Secret of Golden Color*, based on Klimt's Judith (who she consistently referred to in her program notes as "Klimpt"). Almost everything about the piece rubbed me the wrong way - she depicted Judith in such a sweet and tender way, which is the opposite of how Klimt viewed her. He was very much infatuated with the idea of the powerful woman, and I wanted to do my best to depict Judith in a way more congruent with Klimt’s ideals, combining stark power, sexuality, and the grotesque.

IV. **Tod und Leben** (Death and Life) - There’s not much to this one, really. Death is observing Life, which is almost oblivious (except for one figure) to Death. However, Death looks more curious than malicious according my interpretation, and life is full of energy and motion. In this piece, I decided to depict them as two separate entities that don't really interact, aside from the very end of the life cycle.

V. **Die Braut [unvollendet]** (The Bride [unfinished]) - This was one of Klimt's last works, and signifies a progression towards a much more expressionist style of painting. The painting shows a bride surrounded by a dream of her wedding. In this piece, I seek to combine elements of the dream state with those of a wedding, as well as Klimt's death and the unfinished nature of the painting.
Der Kuss, 1908
Secessionist Subjects
5 Character Pieces for Violin and Piano Based on Paintings by Gustav Klimt

I. Der Kuss

Allegro \( \text{\textit{j} = 138} \)

Violin

Allegro \( \text{\textit{j} = 138} \)

con fuoco e leggiero

Piano

ff \( p \) sub.

f \( p \) sub.

ff

pp

\( \text{ pedal ad lib. } \)

Vln.

Pno.

legato e cantabile

\( \text{ poco } f \) sub.
Vln.

11

molto f    f

Vln.

14

fmp     ff

agilito e leggero

poco mf     mf

leggiero

Pno.
Vln. | Pno.
---|---
53  | pesante e legato
     | poco f
55  | leggiero
     | f
58  | leggiero
     | poco f
     | mf sub.
     | mf f sub.
     | f mf sub.
     | f mf
Bildnis Sonja Knips, 1898
II. Sonja Knips

Allegro Maestoso \( \frac{4}{4} \) = 126
Noble, in the style of a romantic-era Lied

Violin

Piano

Noble, in the style of a romantic-era Lied

Vln.

Pno.
Poco Meno Mosso $\textit{p} = 100$

Vln.

Pno.

Come Prima $\textit{p} = 126$

Vln.

Pno.
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Judith I (und der Kopf des Holofernes), 1901
III. Judith

Adagio Pesante \( \dot{=} 69 \)
grotesque, erotic

\[ \text{Violin} \]

Adagio Pesante \( \dot{=} 69 \)
powerful, grotesque

\[ \text{Piano} \]
Tod und Leben, 1915
IV. Tod und Leben

Adagio $\frac{d}{=} 72

\begin{align*}
&\text{Violin} \\
&\text{Adagio} q = 72 \\
&\text{Vln.} \\
&\text{Pno.} \\
&\text{Con moto} q = 144
\end{align*}

Con moto $\frac{d}{=} 144

\begin{align*}
&\text{Vln.} \\
&\text{Pno.} \\
&\text{Pno.}
\end{align*}
Come Prima \( \text{\textit{j} = 72} \)

Con moto \( \text{\textit{j} = 144} \)
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Die Braut (unvollendet), 1917
V. Die Braut

Adagio \( \text{\textit{\textbf{d} = 63}} \)

Vln. 

\[ p \quad mp \quad p \quad mf \quad p \]

Piano 

\[ mp \quad f_{\text{sub.}} \quad p \quad mp \quad p \quad mf \]

\[ \text{dolore} \]

\[ \text{ethereal} \]

\[ \text{p} \quad \text{ethereal e leggiero} \]

\[ \text{pesante e maestoso} \]

\[ \text{adagio} \quad \text{\textit{\textbf{d} = 63}} \]

Vln. 

\[ \text{accel.} \quad \text{poco f} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{poco f} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{mp} \]

\[ \text{molto f} \quad f \]

\[ \text{accel.} \quad \text{poco mf} \]

\[ \text{Andante} \quad \text{\textit{\textbf{d} = 100}} \]

\[ \text{ethereal e leggiero} \]

\[ \text{pesante e maestoso} \]

\[ \text{adagio} \quad \text{\textit{\textbf{d} = 63}} \]
con espressione e fuoco

rit.

Andante \( \frac{d}{\text{mf}} = 100 \)

Come Prima \( \frac{d}{\text{pp}} = 63 \)

rit.

riportare

Andante \( \frac{d}{\text{pp}} = 100 \)

leggiero e agitato

Come Prima \( \frac{d}{\text{mf}} = 63 \)

dolore

pizz.

arco

pizz.