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Caitlin Shroyer

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GRADUATE RECITAL, VIOLIN

Mary Pappert School of Music

PNC Recital Hall

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Music

Caitlin Shroyer

May 2012

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2012

## GRADUATE RECITAL, VIOLIN

Caitlin Shroyer

Approved May 2012

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## ABSTRACT

### GRADUATE RECITAL, VIOLIN

Caitlin Shroyer

March 24, 2012

Supervised by Stephen Benham, Ph.D.

Sonata in C Major for Violin

J.S. Bach

Bach began composing his six sonatas and partitas for solo violin while in Weimar, but completed the set during his time as Kapellmeister in Köthen. Although completed in 1720, during a time in which the solo violin repertoire was actively growing, these works were not published until 1802 and did not gain recognition until Josef Joachim began performing them. Today the six sonatas and partitas are an essential part of the violin repertoire and have served as an example for later polyphonic compositions for solo violin.

The Sonata in C Major is the penultimate piece in Bach's set of sonatas and partitas. It is the first of the set written in a major key, although the key area and tonality

are very ambiguous in the first movement, Adagio. The Fuga is the longest and most complex movement, illustrating many contrapuntal techniques, such as stretto, inversion, and double counterpoint. The four movements of the Sonata in C Major follow the typical slow-fast-slow-fast pattern of the sonata da chiesa form.

## Graceful Ghost Rag

William Bolcom

William Bolcom, American composer and pianist, wrote *Graceful Ghost Rag*, in 1970. Although his earliest compositions followed serial technique, this piece follows his mission to embrace a variety of musical styles, in an effort to break boundaries between popular music styles and high art music styles. This philosophy began to influence his compositions in the 1960's. Throughout his career, Bolcom has composed pieces across many genres, including operas, concerti, symphonies, string quartets, sonatas, rags, cabaret songs, and musical theater works.

Bolcom is also an avid performer. He has recorded twenty albums in collaboration with his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris. The couple's most often performed and recorded works include showtunes, parlour, and popular songs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Sonata No. 9 for Violin and Piano in A Major, Op. 47, "Kreutzer"

Ludwig van Beethoven

Although Beethoven's ninth violin sonata is named after the great violinist of the time, Rodolphe Kreutzer, it is rumored that Kreutzer never played it, claiming that it was

too difficult to understand and to play. Beethoven originally dedicated the sonata to George Bridgetower, another prominent violinist at the time, who performed the premiere with Beethoven at the piano. The 8:00am premiere was a success, despite the fact that Bridgetower was sight-reading the piece. However, shortly after the premiere, Beethoven became angry with Bridgetower and rededicated the sonata to Kreutzer when Bridgetower made a disparaging remark about a woman whom Beethoven was fond of. Today, the “Kreutzer” sonata is one of the most loved and demanding pieces of the violin and piano repertoire.

The “Kreutzer” sonata was composed in the period after Beethoven’s Heiligenstadt Testament. In 1800, Beethoven had begun to lose his hearing. Despite a trip to Heiligenstadt to rest in an attempt to reverse or stop his hearing loss, it was now certain that he would suffer permanent and complete hearing loss. In a letter to his brothers, he contemplated suicide but ultimately decided against it, citing the reason for his change of heart as his need to express himself in music. This document was found after his death and is now known as the Heiligenstadt Testament. It is not only an important document used to understand the life of Beethoven but also a chapter in the beginning of the idea of music as self expression, ushering in the Romantic Era.

The third movement of the “Kreutzer” was originally composed for another sonata, but Beethoven felt that it was too brilliant in sound and style; therefore, he saved it for a later composition. Because the three movements are so different in character, it may seem that the third movement was simply added to the end of the first two, but after closer study, it is apparent that the rhythmic motive of the Presto inspired the first two movements. The “up-down” feeling of the rhythm in the Presto can be felt in all

movements, even in the violin chords at the beginning of the piece, which are to be played essentially as two double-stops.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to all of my family, friends, and teachers who kept inspiring and motivating me to reach this point and achieve my goals. I value all that I have learned in my time at Duquesne and look forward to the next steps in my career and my life as a musician.

## PROGRAM

Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BMV 1005

J. S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

Adagio  
Fuga  
Largo  
Allegro assai

Graceful Ghost Rag

William Bolcom  
(1938)

Sonata No. 9 for Violin and Piano in A Major, Op. 47, "Kreutzer"

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

Adagio sostenuto - Presto  
Andante con Variazioni  
Finale. Presto