

University of Texas at El Paso

From the Selected Works of Dominic Dousa

June 24, 2007

"Evening Piece and Summer Dance" and "The Winds of a Summer Night" for viola and piano (Golden Valley, MN)

Dominic Dousa, *University of Texas at El Paso*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/dominic_dousa/19/

*The Minnesota Viola
Society presents . . .*

*Music for a
Summer Day*

Renée Moore-Skerik
violist

and

Dominic Dousa
composer/pianist

*in a Recital of Chamber Music
for Viola and Piano*

2 p.m.

Sunday, June 24th, 2007

Valley Community Presbyterian Church
Golden Valley, MN



www.minnesotaviolasociety.org

PROGRAM

- I'll Bid My Heart Be Still* Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)
- Märchenbilder*, Op. 113 Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
- I. Nicht schnell
 - II. Lebhaft
 - III. Rasch
 - IV. Langsam, mit melancholischem Ausdruck
- Evening Piece and Summer Dance* Dominic Dousa (b. 1973)

INTERMISSION

- The Winds of a Summer Night* Dominic Dousa
- Sonata in F minor*, Op. 120, No. 1 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
- I. Allegro appassionato
 - II. Andante un poco Adagio
 - III. Allegretto grazioso
 - IV. Vivace

Renée Moore-Skerik, viola
Dominic Dousa, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

- I'll Bid My Heart Be Still* Rebecca Clarke
Composed 1944; United States
Performance time: Approximately 3 minutes

Rebecca Clarke was born in England and received training in violin at the Royal Academy of Music and in composition at the Royal College of Music. Although Clarke's family encouraged her musical studies, her early familial experiences were not altogether happy: her memoirs recount her father's cruelty to her during her youth. Indeed, before she completed her composition studies at the RCM, her father banished her from the family home. To support herself, she took up a performing career as a violist, while remaining active as a composer. Clarke subsequently spent much of her professional life in the United States, where her two brothers lived. Based on an old Scottish tune, *I'll Bid My Heart Be Still* is dedicated to James Friskin, a pianist at the Julliard School and an acquaintance from Clarke's days at the RCM, whom she married shortly after she composed the piece.

(Notes adapted from the Rebecca Clarke Society, Inc. / www.rebeccaclarke.org)

- Märchenbilder*, Op. 113 Robert Schumann
Composed 1851; Dusseldorf, Germany
Performance time: Approximately 16 minutes

The title of Schumann's four-movement suite *Märchenbilder* is often translated as "Fairy Tale Pictures". We can only wonder what tales inspired these pieces: perhaps the distinctive character of the pieces may inspire story lines in our imagination. The suite opens rather somberly, though even in this context the

mood is somewhat relaxed and exudes a dreamy atmosphere. In the second movement, a galloping march-like rhythm marks the main theme, which alternates with two contrasting episodes, both of which maintain an energetic rhythmic pace. The third piece opens with a tempestuous theme, whose somewhat disquieting mood is set by bravura figures in the viola part. This turbulent mood is then interrupted by a section that features an extreme contrast in musical style and character — as if the story has been whisked away into another world — before the agitated opening theme returns. As its tempo marking indicates, the concluding piece takes on an air of melancholy, though its beautiful melodies set in major keys give it an overall feeling of sweetness.

Evening Piece and Summer Dance

Dominic Dousa

Composed Summer-Fall 1995; Rochester, MN / Prague, Czech Republic

Performance time: Approximately 16 minutes

As is the case with much of my music, *Evening Piece* and *Summer Dance* were inspired by the sights, sounds, and scents of the outdoors. These pieces were sketched during the summer after my college graduation, when I spent many beautiful evenings amid the wooded prairies and farmland of southeastern Minnesota. *Evening Piece* begins in a calm and sustained tone. A more unsettled section follows before the music settles back to the quiet opening mood. In these last two sections, there are musical references to the sounds of nature often heard during a summer evening in the Midwest. *Summer Dance* opens with a lively and whirling waltz-like feel, though the minor mode adds a darker element. After a shift to a brisker two-beat tempo and a major key, the middle part takes on a more reflective tone, as if someone has temporarily stepped away from the dance. After this respite, the rhythmically vivacious mood returns, eventually leading to the opening mood and then a final burst of energy that concludes the piece.

The Winds of a Summer Night

Dominic Dousa

Composed June 2006; Sunland Park, NM (El Paso, TX)

Performance time: Approximately 9 minutes

In places where I have spent summers, a nocturnal wind can evoke a variety of feelings. It may signal a calm postlude to a day, or it may be an ominous harbinger of a storm blowing forth furiously in the dead of night. These moods reflect those of the thoughts that at times blow through one's mind like a night wind — sometimes serene, sometimes turbulent, all the while with an element of mystery that the darkness of the night brings. In *The Winds of a Summer Night*, I attempt to capture some of these moods.

Sonata in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1

Johannes Brahms

Composed Summer 1894; Bad Ischl, Austria

Performance time: Approximately 24 minutes

Brahms's late works are often described as having an "autumnal" feeling, suggesting moods of introspection, inner peace, and reconciliation as one enters that part of one's life cycle that involves calming down, reflection, and coming to terms with past experience. The term "autumnal" seems particularly appropriate in describing the F minor sonata, which was originally written for clarinet and piano, but which Brahms himself adapted for viola and piano. The work still includes stormy, orchestral textures that are common in Brahms's chamber compositions, though overall the piece has a clearer, more transparent sound and exudes a radiant warmth and self-assuredness. The first movement opens with a dark, ominous tone. Throughout the movement, we hear some of the more turbulent and tempestuous moods typical of Brahms, though they are tempered by quiet moments of calm and tender beauty. Toward the end of the movement, the tempo slows down, and the music takes the mood of a reflective elegy. Yet at the end, we hear a ray of evening sunshine coming out after the storm, as if one has come to terms with the tumult that one has just endured. While each of the remaining movements has a distinct character, overall they all convey a sense of ease and serenity. The slow second movement is a beautiful song with moments of passion and calm reflection, while the third movement is a graceful waltz with a gently introspective middle section. Even in the lively and spirited fourth movement, there is a sense of warmth and assuredness that underlies its sprightly and vivacious mood.

Program notes by Dominic Dousa.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Renée Moore-Skerik lived in the Twin Cities area for 10 years, performing as a free-lance violist and a member of the Artaria String Quartet and teaching viola students of all levels, including pre-conservatory. She also was the first president of the Minnesota Viola Society (a chapter of the American Viola Society), which has invited her to perform this afternoon.

Skерik became Assistant Professor of Viola at Texas Tech University and violist of the Botticelli String Quartet in 2004. She holds degrees in viola performance from the University of Michigan (M.M.) and the Eastman School of Music (B.M.), and has pursued additional studies at the University of Minnesota with Korey Konkol. Her primary teachers include Heidi Castleman, Jeffrey Irvine, Yizhak Schotten, and Ellen Rose. Skerik has served on the faculty of the MacPhail Center for the Arts, Carleton College, the Quartet Program at Bucknell University, and was Artist/Teacher for two summers at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. She was the co-founder of the Stringwood Summer Chamber Music program in Lanesboro, MN and has served there as artist-teacher.

As a free-lance violist, Skerik has performed with renowned artists and organizations such as Luciano Pavarotti, the Bolshoi Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet. She has been Assistant Principal Violist of the Dallas and Ann Arbor Chamber Orchestras and has also performed with the San Antonio, Columbus, Grand Rapids, and New World Symphonies.

This May, Skerik appeared in solo and chamber music performances throughout Brazil. With the Botticelli String Quartet, she has toured throughout the United States and Europe, and was a featured performer at the 33rd International Viola Congress in Reykjavik, Iceland. In May 2006, Skerik taught and performed at the "Cuerdes de Enlace" festival in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In addition to performing with the Artaria Quartet, she also has performed with the Mendota String Quartet and the Nidon String Quartet, with whom she gave a four-month tour of Japan including nationally televised concerts. Her chamber music collaborations include performances with Janos Starker, Raphael Hillyer, Arnold Steinhardt, and Charles Castleman.

Dominic Dousa, a native of Rochester, Minnesota, has been a member of the faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso Department of Music since August of 2004. There he has taught courses in 2nd-year theory and aural skills, seminars on specialized topics in theory, and all levels of composition.

He holds degrees in music from Ball State University (D.A.), Central Michigan University (M.M.), and Harvard University (A.B. *summa cum laude*) and in statistics from Iowa State University (M.S.). He also has studied composition in Prague. His primary composition teachers include Jody Nagel, David Gillingham, Craig Weston, and Milan Slavický.

Dousa's compositions have received performances at recitals, festivals, and conferences in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Peru, China, the Czech Republic, and Finland. Two of his song cycles, *With a Song in My Heart* and *Six Songs on the Poetry of Langston Hughes*, have been recorded by baritone Gerald J. Blanchard (with Dousa at the piano) and released on the CD "With a Song in My Heart" by Blue Griffin Recording. This CD features art songs set to texts of African American poets. In 2005, Dousa became Composer-in-Residence for the El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras.

In addition to his activities as teacher and composer, Dousa has remained active as an accompanist and chamber musician. He has performed in numerous recitals with faculty and students at the University of Texas at El Paso, Central Michigan University, Ball State University, and St. Mary's University, and served as an official accompanist for the 4th Annual International Singing Competition in Trujillo, Peru in August of 2000.