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Critique #1  
Word Count: 655

On February 18 at 7:30 in Williams Hall, I attended a piano concert by Yoonie Han. She performed five songs: *Sonata in E flat Major* by Haydn, *Tango* by Albeniz arranged by Godowski, *Swan* by Saint-Saens arranged by Godowski, *La Campanella* by Liszt, and *Rhapsody in Blue* by Gershwin. Her music was able to encompass a broad range of styles and emotions, even though the same composer arranged two of her pieces.

I really appreciated the introductions she gave in between the songs because I felt like it helped to understand why she chose the pieces out of her vast repertoire. It also helped her performance reach a more personal level with the attendees. My favorite song from Ms. Han was the Haydn Sonata because I could really see that she let her personality flow into the piece. While watching her performance, I could see that her facial expressions changed with the tone of the music as well. In the Allegro beginning, which she characterized as grand, her expression was bold and serious. In the Adagio, the dynamics were much quieter and her body movements were subtler to convey the romantic undertones of the music. In the presto ending, which was more jocular and light, her face also reflected that airy attitude. Though I only described her body movement in the Haydn Sonata, in all of her songs, I could see the continual motion, which really further emphasized the point that she truly did enjoy playing music and I think also helped me enjoy her performance more and really get into the music with her.

I thought it was very interesting that she chose such pieces all from different genres in music. Each of her chosen artists was of a different country. Haydn was from Austria, Albeniz was Spanish, Saint-Saens was French, Liszt was Hungarian, and Gershwin was American. I think that she specifically chose to touch base on such a wide range of composers because she was probably hoping to enlighten listeners and get the audience to interact and try to hear the stylistic differences among the artists. Of course, each of the composers used their lives and cultures as a means of inspiration and I think that especially in the Spanish piece and in the American jazz piece, the culture differences were truly noted. The *Tango* had a lot of Spanish flair and was characterized by the quick beats that one thinks of in traditional Spanish dance music. The Jazz Rhapsody had a lot of syncopation and changes in dynamics, which emphasized the ideals and musicality of Jazz artists at that time.

I do, however, wish that Ms. Han chose a different piece to finish off with. I feel that her classical training and practice in playing the piano did influence her Jazz playing. When she was performing the Jazz Rhapsody, I felt like she lacked a sense of musical freedom when she played. Though I could tell that she was enjoying the music, there was still something about the music that seemed stiff. Jazz music is supposed to be more about the feeling than the notes themselves. There is a sort of freedom that is supposed to come with playing jazz music and I think that Ms. Han hasn't reached that point yet.

Overall I thoroughly enjoyed the concert and am so grateful that the Oxford College staff was able to bring her on because I think that it is important for students, especially these days, to be immersed in the piano culture that is constantly developing. With so much music online and ready to be downloaded within seconds, many people lose the more personal connection that a concert can bring and I think that is something that is important to bring back for students. They need to experience different types of culture, and at least understand all types of music so they can truly know what kind of music they prefer.