For my recital critique, I attended the graduate recital of Andrew Sohn, which was held at Auer Hall on Monday, October 2nd at eight o’clock. Sohn performed three pieces of music, the first being Nocturne No. 6 in D-Flat Major, Op. 63, by Gabriel Fauré. The second piece was Sonata in D Major, K.311, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This piece is divided into three individual movements, and was the only piece broken up into movements- the first two are the Allegro con spirito and the Allegro con espressione These translate to “lively with spirit” and “lively with expression”, respectively. The final movement is the Rondeau: Allegro. The rondeau form in a piece of music involves the beginning of the piece being repeatedly returned to as the movement progresses.¹ The final piece played at the recital was Sonata in B Minor, S.178 by Franz Liszt.

The earliest composed piece of music played is Sonata in D Major, K.311, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart wrote the piece in 1777. This piece uses comparatively few notes in relation to the other two pieces performed at the recital. The first movement, the Allegro con spirito, is energetic in the beginning, with the left and right hands trading off with series of rapid alternations between higher and lower notes as the other hand either plays chords or an accompanying melody. The tempo of the movement is quick and driving, and the piece moves across multiple octaves. The second movement is a slower tempo and is played softer. The movement switches to an A-B-A pattern. The melody is mostly carried by the right hand while the left hand alternates between spaced out chords and ascending and descending broken chords. The final movement, the Rondeau, alternates in tempo and combines aspects of both previous movements. The piece is sometimes rapid, with quick alternations between notes for both the left and right hand, and at other times the piece slows, with a somber melody with rests interspersed. I enjoyed this piece less than the others, finding parts of the music somewhat repetitive. The fewer notes used is a stylistic choice, clearly, but one that I found didn’t add much to the piece.

The second oldest piece is Sonata in B Minor, S.178, written by Franz Liszt in 1853, the piece the pianist finished the recital with. This piece is the most complex and lengthy piece played at the recital, played as one long piece with the movements connected. It begins ominously and carries this theme throughout. The piece is characterized by fast, intense sections with driving rhythms in both hands, leading to sweeping high melodies through chords in the right hand. This was my favorite piece of the recital- the piano is carrying such a driving rhythm while the melody feels grand and massive through the high chords. The juxtaposition later in the piece of the soft sections transitioning back to the intense, loud movements moving up and down the piano were also very enjoyable to experience and listen to. This sonata was a spectacular finale to the recital.

The shortest and most recent piece performed at the recital was Nocturne No. 6 in D-Flat Major, Op. 63 by Gabriel Fauré, composed in 1894, which was the opening piece of music in the recital. The main melody of the piece is carried through the piece, with the main theme returning throughout the movements and with a calm and haunting middle section with recurring descending notes in the right hand and lower single notes in the left hand. The tempo is consistent and moderate in pace. There are not too many notes used throughout the piece, but the right and left hand work together to carry the melody. The melody was not always

consistent, however, fading out to allow for quieter sections in which each hand carried soft rhythms before transitioning back to the melody.

I felt that the pianist performing the piece did a superb job in his execution, most especially in the Sonata in B Minor. His emotion and expression came through in the piece and complementing the intense parts of the music very well. His movement up and down the keyboard was synced with the music, and his intensity of action was as well. He was tapping along with his foot and adding flairs of his own to ending notes between movements and transitions throughout all of the pieces. The melodies of the pieces stood out clearly even when in a flurry of other notes and rhythms. He played with passion and it clearly showed, and it was a very enjoyable performance to witness.

Word count: 773
Scroll down for recital program.

Andrew Sohn

Piano

Nocturne No. 6 in D-Flat Major,
Op. 63 (1894) ........................... Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Sonata in D Major, K.311 ............ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Allegro con spirito
Andante con espressione
Rondeau: Allegro

Sonata in B Minor, S.178 ............... Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)