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UNH Music Professor Releases New CD

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July 29, 2009

DURHAM, N.H. - Arlene Kies, professor of music at the University of New Hampshire, has released a new CD "Portraits and Pictures" which features the pianist's performance of Schumann's *Carnaval, Op. 9* and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

"Although I have had both *Carnaval* and *Pictures at an Exhibition* in my repertoire for many years, the idea to pair the two pieces in a performance came to me only recently. As with many epiphanies, this idea suddenly seemed so obvious that I wondered how I had missed seeing it for so long, for, despite their many differences, both pieces are true musical depictions of scenes, people, and memories close to the spirits of the composers," Kies said.

According to Kies, Mussorgsky and Schumann possessed the uncanny ability to reincarnate the image and very spirit of their subjects in their music. By entering the soul of their subjects, she says each composer captured both the inner and outer details with brilliant clarity and unmistakable precision.

In recording the CD, Kies seeks to remind the listener to appreciate the genius in Mussorgsky's and Schumann's music. "Pianistically, these works are masterpieces, urging from the instrument not mere imitations of personalities but rather actual replications of personalities," she said.

Kies notes the distinctiveness of the compositions, such as Mussorgsky's *The Marketplace of the Limoges* with its "incessant cackling triads and seemingly random side-stepping", and the hilarity of the *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks*, where "quirky grace notes accompany the lurching of the left hand as it trips its way uphill." Schumann's *Chopin* "appears musically as the most poetic of melodies and with the most tender of accompaniments while the fiery *Paganini* is captured as both musical wizard and devil-incarnate via frenetic, diabolical octaves fling out every which way."

"Of course no one can explain genius, and in the end, music is best enjoyed heard rather than described. Nonetheless, it is easy to forget, in the listening, the unabashed brilliance that led to the creation of these masterpieces. I hope that this recording will remind my listeners of the great gift that these composers have left for all of us for all time," she said.

Kies performs widely as a recitalist, concert soloist and chamber pianist. She studied piano with Stanley Siok, Wayne Farrell, and Theodore Lettvin, and received her bachelor's and master's in music degrees in piano performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. She has been a member of the UNH piano faculty since 1995.

"Portraits and Pictures" was recorded in January 2009 in the UNH Johnson Theatre.
The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

IMAGE: Cover of "Portraits and Pictures"
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/kies_CD.jpg