

Program Notes by Leonard Garrison

7:30 p.m., Saturday, June 6, 2015

Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 347

Fritz Spindler

[Note by Chris Dickey] Fritz Spindler (1817-1905) was a German composer and pianist. He originally studied to become a minister but later realized his passion was for music. After years of studying piano privately, Spindler dedicated his life to composition and teaching. During his lifetime, he was productive and wrote in various genres, including trios, sonatas, opera transcriptions, two symphonies, a piano concerto, orchestral works, and numerous teaching pieces for the piano. His compositions are noted for their tuneful melodies and artful construction. This Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 347 is no exception. The first movement expresses a traditional sonata-allegro form, but the music travels to unexpected tonal centers in all three formal areas of the movement. An aria-like middle movement follows and features long, fluid melodic lines for the soloist and pianist. The lively finale is a spirited rondo that brings the sonata to a conclusion. In general, the piano part is especially virtuosic as Spindler himself was a gifted pianist.

Sonata for Cello Solo in C Minor, Op. 28

Eugène Ysaÿe

Belgian violinist, composer, and conductor Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931) studied with his father and Henri Vieuxtemps. He taught a generation of famous violinists at the Brussels Conservatory, including Joseph Gingold, Nathan Milstein, and violist William Primrose. Many of the leading composers of the time dedicated works to him, most notably César Franck's Violin Sonata.

Ysaÿe's best-known compositions are his six solo sonatas for violin, and the *Cello Sonata* makes equal demands of virtuosity. Dedicated to Maurice Dambois (1889-1969), cellist in the Eugène Ysaÿe Quartet and Trio, the Sonata's four movements are linked through related motifs. The most substantial material occurs in the solemn first movement and the brilliant last movement. In between are a charming *Intermezzo* and a dramatic recitative (a style of writing with free rhythm borrowed from operatic dialog), which serves as an introduction to the *Finale*.

***Pictures at an Exhibition* (1875)**

Modest Mussorgsky

[Note by Del Parkinson] Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) viewed an 1874 retrospective exhibition of watercolors and drawings by his recently deceased friend Viktor Hartmann. Mussorgsky selected several of these (augmented by others he had admired on view in his late friend's apartment) for transformation into musical imagery. *The Hut of Baba-Yagá* shows a clock in the shape of the hut of Baba-Yagá, the witch of Russian folklore who cackles as she flies through the air in a mortar. *The Great Gate of Kiev* was Hartmann's architectural design for an ancient-style gate, represented musically by a triumphal procession marching through the arches to the promenade theme accompanied by chanting priests and pealing bells.

***Parable IV for Bassoon, Op. 110* (1969)**

Vincent Persichetti

(1915-1987)

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987) was a prolific American composer known mainly for his works for wind instruments. He taught for decades at the Juilliard School, and the present generation of composers includes many of his students, including Philip Glass and Lowell Liebermann. He composed twenty-five Parables, mostly for solo instruments in the period 1965-1986. Persichetti stated, “The Parables are non-programmatic musical essays ... They are always in one movement, almost always about a single germinal idea.” He also said, “Many of my Parables are music about other things I have written, or personal things that I have become involved with.” The bassoon Parable is in a free style with no time signature, utilizes the entire range of the instrument, and includes the contemporary technique of pitch bending.

Chorale (2013)

Nicholas Walker

Nicholas Walker (b. 1972) brings a broad range of training and experience to the double bass—classical and jazz, modern and baroque, concertos, solo recitals, chamber ensembles, and orchestral work. An Associate Professor of Music at Ithaca College, he leads a rewarding career as a freelance musician, composer, and educator. A Fulbright Scholar, Walker has diplomas from Rice University, the Nadia Boulanger Conservatoire de Paris, and Stony Brook University, earning his Doctorate in early music at Stony Brook University. Walker has been featured on a dozen CDs, three as a leader, and is a first-prize winner of the International Society of Bassists Composition Competition.

[Note by Nicholas Walker] *Chorale* was commissioned by the International Society of Bassists for the 2013 solo competition in Rochester, NY, my hometown. The piece is dedicated to my mother and intended to evoke cheerful nostalgia for the kind of all-American childhood I enjoyed, while also exploring several extended techniques for the player and blending American jazz, pop, bluegrass, and choral sound worlds for the listener.

Sonata for Cello and Piano—*Mir zaynen do!* (2014)

Laurence Sherr

Laurence Sherr (b. 1953) is Composer-in-Residence at Kennesaw State University near Atlanta. Awards include top prizes in the Delius Composition Contest and Association for the Promotion of New Music competition. Ein-Klang in Europe and Capstone Records in the U.S. have released CDs with his compositions. International performances have occurred in Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Finland, Turkey, Japan, Canada, and Mexico. Sherr is active as a Holocaust remembrance music composer, lecturer, producer, and educator, with performances and lectures in the Czech Republic, Germany, England, Israel, New Zealand, and North America. The Florida State University treatise *Laurence Sherr: Chamber Music for Flute* examines his contributions.

[Note by Laurence Sherr] The creation of songs was a widespread activity among persecuted groups during the Holocaust. My sonata includes four songs that originated in ghettos, concentration camps, or among the partisans, and my subtitle—*Mir zaynen do!* (We Are Here!)—is a refrain in one of these songs. It is a Yiddish phrase that signifies identity, resistance, and survival. Each of the creators of the songs used in the sonata has a compelling story. Their songs provide illumination of their circumstances, allow us to gain perspective on lost voices, and help us to understand the Holocaust. By creating a new composition drawing on their work, it is my

hope that the legacy of their cultural contributions will be remembered.

7:30 p.m., Sunday, June 7, 2015

Sonata in C Major, Op. 119 (1949)

Sergei Prokofiev

[Note by Miranda Wilson] “Mankind—that has a proud sound!” These were the words Prokofiev scrawled at the top of the manuscript of the Cello Sonata. The ailing composer had only four years left to live. As one of the victims of the Soviet Central Committee’s 1948 decree against “formalism” in music, alongside his younger contemporary Shostakovich, the formerly ultra-confident Prokofiev never really recovered from his disgrace. But now, at the end of his life, he found inspiration in the dazzling technique of Mstislav Rostropovich, then in his early 20s.

Prokofiev was under considerable political pressure to write music that was accessible and melodic, but in the Cello Sonata he was able to retain many of his signature characteristics—quirky melodic lines, unexpected harmonies, sudden color contrasts, sarcastic juxtapositions—within the confines of the required “optimistic” style.

Romance in F Minor, Op. 11

Antonín Dvořák

One of the most significant artistic movements of the later nineteenth century was nationalism, or a search for a distinct national style, especially in those countries that were at the periphery of European culture. Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904), following the example of Bedřich Smetana, incorporated elements of Bohemian and Moravian folk music into his works. He came to prominence in 1874 when he won the Austrian State Prize for Composition; Johannes Brahms was head of the jury and became Dvořák’s most important supporter. The previous year, the young composer had composed an unsuccessful String Quartet in F Minor, and later in 1877 he revised the beautiful slow movement as the Romance in F Minor, Op. 11 for violin and orchestra. The piece features long melodic lines and interspersed with rhapsodic outbursts.

Quintet No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 5

Victor Ewald

Victor Ewald (1860-1935), a Russian cellist, composer, and engineer, was a pioneer of the brass quintet, and the present work is a standard of the repertoire. Like his more famous acquaintances Modest Mussorgsky and Aleksandr Borodin (also heard this week), he employed Russian folk materials in his works. The present quintet was actually the second to be written, in about 1890. An unusual aspect of the Quintet No. 1 is that its second movement is in 5/4 meter, like the second movement of Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony. In tonight’s performance, the performers use conical instruments to capture the sound of nineteenth-century brass instruments.

***L'Apprenti sorcier* (The Sorcerer's Apprentice) arr. for viola and piano**

Paul Dukas

Paul Dukas (1865-1935) has become a one-hit wonder, his *L'Apprenti sorcier* made famous by Walt Disney’s *Fantasia*, and his other works unknown to the general public. A critic and composer, he taught at the Paris Conservatory and the École Normale de Musique, and his students included Maurice Duruflé, Olivier Messiaen, Manuel Ponce, and Joaquín Rodrigo. He lived at a time of great upheaval in French music and developed a style that combined traditional

elements with influences of more progressive composers such as Claude Debussy (1862-1918). His brilliantly orchestrated *L'Apprenti sorcier* is a symphonic poem written in 1897 based on a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

***Souvenirs, Op. 28* (1953)**

Samuel Barber

One of a handful of American composers to achieve worldwide renown, Samuel Barber (1910-1981) wrote operas, songs, piano music, chamber music, and orchestral works. His *Adagio for Strings* is one of the most universally recognized pieces of music ever written.

[Note by Samuel Barber] In 1952 I was writing some duets for one piano to play with a friend, and Lincoln Kirstein suggested I orchestrate them for a ballet. Commissioned by the Ballet Society, the suite consists of a waltz, schottische, pas de deux, two step, hesitation tango, and gallop. One might imagine a divertissement in a setting of the Palm Court of the Hotel Plaza in New York, the year about 1914, epoch of the first tangos; *Souvenirs*, remembered with affection, not in irony or with tongue in cheek, but in amused tenderness.”

***Shades of Cool* (2015)**

John Harmon

For John Harmon’s biography, see the faculty bios section.

[Note by John Harmon] Rooted in jazz harmonies, *Shades of Cool* features a straight eighth kind of feel with a contemporary, chromatic chord progression that challenges the performers during the improvised sections of the piece. It is scored for alto/tenor saxophone, piano, vibraphone, double bass and drums.

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 9, 2015

***Crashing Through Fences* (2009)**

Timothy Andres

Timothy Andres (b. 1985) grew up in Connecticut, attended Yale, and now lives in Brooklyn, NY. His works have been performed by major ensembles such as the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Attacca Quartet, and eighth blackbird.

[Note by Timothy Andres.] *Crashing Through Fences* is written for two of the highest pitched instruments: piccolo and glockenspiel. I was interested in creating a contrast between these innately unfeasible timbres and a long melody, unspooling over a sweet harmonic sequence. It's an almost uncomfortably intimate sort of piece— the two instruments interact hesitantly at first, then with increasing boldness. And at opportune moments, they savagely kick each other.

***Four Miniatures* (2007)**

Gernot Wolfgang

Gernot Wolfgang was born in 1957 in Austria, trained there and at the Berklee School of Music in Boston and at the University of Southern California, and now lives in Los Angeles. He composes and orchestrates for films and composes concert works in classical and jazz idioms.

[Note by Gernot Wolfgang.] *Four Miniatures* for Bb-clarinet [here soprano saxophone] and acoustic guitar was commissioned by Los Angeles Philharmonic principal clarinetist Michele Zukovsky in 2007. It is a composition in four short movements of approximately ten minutes in length. The first movement, *Uneven Steven*, got its name from the uneven meters prevailing throughout the movement. *Tango Pensativo e Dramatico* and the subsequent *Angular Djangular* reflect some of the commissioner's musical preferences - Michele loves the music of Astor Piazzolla and jazz guitar great Django Reinhardt. Finally, *Exit Strategies* is dedicated to those of us who forever seem to have trouble getting out the door ... a few false starts, firm resolve paired with a failed follow-through, an onset of panic, and - to everyone's relief - a final push and the door closes shut.

Suite en trio, Op. 59

Mélanie Bonis

At a time when few women became professional composers, Mélanie Bonis (1858-1937) was invited by César Franck to study at the prestigious Paris Conservatory. She subsequently married and devoted the next ten years of her life exclusively to her family. In 1894 she started composing again, eventually creating 300 works for solo piano, chamber ensembles (many including flute), chorus, solo voice, and orchestra. Her music, for many years forgotten, is being revived. The *Suite en trio*, composed in 1903, consists of three short movements in the style of Franck.

***Unterkagner Ländler* for violin and tuba, Op.87, No.2 (1981)**

Jan Koetsier

Jan Koetsier (1911-2006) was born in Amsterdam and attended the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. He was Assistant Conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Music Director of the Bavarian State Radio Orchestra, and then professor of conducting at the Hochschule für Musik in

Munich. Of his many instrumental and vocal works, his brass music is most often performed. The *Ländler* is an Austrian folk dance in triple meter. Koetsier's set is at times elegant but as one would expect from the unusual pairing of instruments, comic.

***Spring: Season of Promise* (2015)**

John Harmon

For John Harmon's biography, see the faculty bios section.

[Note by John Harmon] Written for string quintet, the piece is in a buoyant rondo form (a-b-a-c-a-d-a). Each of the contrasting sections feature violins, tutti pizzicato, viola, cello and double bass in that order and concluding with a return to the joyful opening a-section.

***Petite Suite* (1888-89) arr. for flute, clarinet, and piano**

Claude Debussy

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) wrote the *Petite Suite* in 1889, early in his compositional career. As a result, his later practice of breaking the rules of tonal writing is not evident in this charming collection of character pieces. The opening of "En Bateau" suggests whole tone scales, which would become a regular feature of his non-traditional tonal approach, but the work as a whole retains the style of French composers Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), Georges Bizet (1838-1875), Jules Massenet (1842-1912) and Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894). He originally composed his *Petite Suite* for piano four hands, and clarinetist Michael Webster has provided an effective transcription. The first movement depicts boats gracefully sailing on placid water. "Cortège" is a festive processional. The Menuet captures the baroque dance, updated with Debussy's harmonic palate. The work ends with the energetic Ballet.

Trio in G Major, Hob. XV: 25

Joseph Haydn

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) made significant contributions to the history of the symphony, the string quartet, and the piano trio. In his early trios, following the fashion of the time, the violin and cello are secondary to the piano, but in later works the three instruments are closer to equal partners. In 1795, Haydn dedicated three trios to Rebecca Schroeter, a widow to whom he, caught in an unhappy marriage, took a fancy. The Trio in G Major is the second of this set and is the most famous of all Haydn's trios. Its opening movement is a set of variations alternating between G major and G minor. The slow movement with its gorgeous melody is in the distant key of E major. The Finale is a *Rondo all'ongarese* or *Gypsy Rondo*, played at breakneck speed, in G major with episodes and G minor.

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 10, 2015

***Suite Buenos Aires* (1995)**

Máximo Diego Pujol

Argentinian composer and guitarist Maximo Diego Pujol (b. 1957) is strongly influenced by his compatriot Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992). Pujol uses the tango in colorful, melodic works that make full use of the expressive powers of the guitar. Each movement of his Suite depicts a neighborhood of Buenos Aires. Nueva Pompeya, central to the early history of tango, is a working-class barrio on the city's south side. Palermo is filled with lush parks, an appropriate setting for a tranquil movement. San Telmo is the city's oldest neighborhood with well-preserved cobblestone streets. "Microcentro," or downtown, depicts the frenzied bustle of this financial hub dominated by skyscrapers.

Trio in E-flat Major, K. 498

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

In July 1786, Mozart (1756-1791) wrote that he had composed twelve duos, K. 497 while playing skittles (not the candy, but a game of bowling). About a week later, he composed K. 498, and although there is no evidence that he was still playing the game during its composition, this trio is known as the "Kegelstatt" or Skittles Trio. The piece was dedicated to his Viennese friends, the Jacquin family, and first performed in their home by pianist and Mozart's student Franziska Jacquin, famous clarinetist Anton Stadler, and Mozart himself playing the viola. The order of the movements is unusual, starting with an Andante rather than an Allegro. The first movement is dominated by a gruppetto or turn figure, heard many times in varying contexts. The second is a traditional Menuet and Trio, both sections in binary form with repeats. The Trio pits the clarinet's brief chromatic phrase against virtuosic triplets in the viola. The third movement takes the unusual appellation Rondeaux (plural in French), signifying its extended seven-part form: A-B-A-C-A-D-A. Its main theme is derived from the second theme of the first movement.

***Calls and Echoes* (1984)**

Verne Reynolds

Verne Reynolds (1926-2011) was born in Lyons, Kansas. He held degrees in composition from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Wisconsin and studied at the Royal College of Music in London. As hornist, he was a member of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the American Woodwind Quintet, and the Eastman Brass Quintet and served as Professor of Horn at the Eastman School of Music. As a composer he received commissions from many orchestras, universities, chamber music groups and solo performers and published over sixty works. *Calls and Echoes* was written in 1984 for Barbara Butler and Charles Geyer, at the time professors at the Eastman School of Music and now at Rice University. The title recalls the function of early brass instruments in the hunt and the military.

***Silhouette* (1992)**

John Harmon
(b. 1935)

For John Harmon's biography, see the faculty bios section.

[Note by John Harmon] Commissioned by world-class tuba virtuoso Sam Pilafian, *Silhouette* explores the oft-neglected lyric capabilities (especially in its upper register) of the instrument.

Scored for tuba and piano, the piece glides through a number of chromatic sections before coming to its gentle conclusion with softly sustained high notes.

“Petite complainte” from *Das Märchen vom Aschenbrödel*

Frank Martin

Frank Martin (1890-1974) was a Swiss composer with a Huguenot background; thus, his name is pronounced with two nasals. He did not attend a conservatory but rather studied privately with Swiss composer Joseph Lauber (1864-1952). Martin’s style is not easily classified and was influenced by Johann Sebastian Bach, Arnold Schoenberg, and modern French composers. *Das Märchen vom Aschenbrödel*, or “The Tale of Cinderella,” is a ballet on the Grimm brothers’ story. Its instrumentation is unique: flute, oboe, trumpet, trombone, two saxophones, piano, percussion, and strings. Throughout the ballet, the oboe represents Cinderella’s humility. According to Martin, “The oboe seemed to me the obvious choice; with its rustic yet profound sound.” The “Petite complainte” or “little lament” was originally a section of the ballet called “Aschenbrödel allein,” or “Cinderella alone.”

Drittes Gesellschafts Quartett, Op. 72

Hermann Berens

German pianist, conductor, and composer Hermann Johann Berens (1826-1880) lived in Stockholm from 1847 until the end of his life. He taught at the Swedish Royal Academy of Music and composed several operas and much piano music. His music has recently been revived. The *Drittes Gesellschafts Quartet*, or “Third Society Quartet,” is cast in a traditional mold of four movements as follows:

- I. *Allegro molto* in 3/4 in A minor
- II. *Andante con moto* in 2/4 in F major
- III. *Scherzo (Vivace)* in C major and *Trio* in F major, both in 3/4
- IV. *Finale (Allegro vivo e scherzando)* in 2/4 in A minor

Tonight’s performance features the third and first movements.

***La Oracion del Torero, Op. 34* (1926)**

Joaquín Turina

Joaquín Turina (1882-1949) was born in Seville, studied in Paris where he was influenced by Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy, and taught at the Madrid Royal Conservatory. Like his contemporaries Isaac Albéniz, Manuel de Falla, and Enrique Granados, he drew upon Spanish folk music. *La Oracion del Torero* or “The Bullfighter’s Prayer,” originally scored for four lutes, has an appropriately devout mood.

7:30 p.m., Saturday, June 13, 2015

Concerto for Brass Quintet (1995)

Daron Aric Hagen

Daron Aric Hagen (b. 1961) lives in upstate New York and has composed many operas and instrumental works.

[From Note from Daron Aric Hagen.] My point of departure with the Concerto was that contrasting harmonic systems organize a large-scale form. It is called a concerto because, although there is no accompanying orchestra, each player's part demands the endurance and technique of a soloist. Structurally, the quintet's five movements surround the central *Invention* in the manner of concentric parentheses. *Sennets* were the fanfares sounded for the entrance of royalty. In this movement, solos for each player alternate with far-off, muted, close canons for the entire ensemble. *Melodia* includes five variations and a coda. The harmonic language is traditional and triadic. The mood is nostalgic: I allude to the music I sang in church on holidays as a child. *Invention* has an ABA arch form. [For this performance, the fourth movement, *Romance*, is omitted.] Like the *Invention*, it has an ABA arch form. Choral outer A sections utilize strict quartal harmony. The B section utilizes triadic harmony. The last movement returns to the mood and pitch set organization of the first. The title *Tuckets* is drawn from the great Saint Crispin's Day speech in Shakespeare's *Henry V*: "Let the trumpets sound the tucket sonances and the note to mount." Tuckets accompanied the exit of royalty. In this movement, the virtuosic fanfares, which unfold the pitch groups horizontally, are juxtaposed with stuttering accompaniments that present the same pitch groups vertically. The first movement's canons return, as well as fragments of the second movement's tune, before the fanfares again take center-stage, climaxing in a recapitulation of the *Invention's* coda. Commissioned to celebrate the University of Wisconsin School of Music's 100th Anniversary, the quintet is joyfully dedicated to the members of the Wisconsin Brass Quintet.

Sextet (1957)

Gordon Jacob

British composer Gordon Jacob (1895-1984) taught for four decades at the Royal College of Music. A conservative in an era dominated by the avant-garde, he said, "I personally feel that the day that melody is discarded, you may as well pack up music altogether." He wrote his Sextet for winds and piano for the Dennis Brain Ensemble (Dennis Brain was the most famous horn soloist of the twentieth century). The Elegiac Prelude features delicious melodic solos for all of the instruments. In the playful Scherzo, the flutist takes up the piccolo to brilliant effect. The Cortège is based on the first theme of the first movement, and the somber color is enhanced with the use of English horn. The Minuet is reminiscent of Debussy and Ravel, and the final Rondo has a touch of Prokofiev.

Piano Quintet No. 1 in A Major, Op. 5

Antonín Dvořák

The program notes for Sunday evening refer to the launch of Dvořák's international career in 1874 with his winning of the Austrian State Prize for Composition. Even earlier in 1872, he had composed his first piano quintet, although he was to revise it extensively in 1887. Unlike most late Romantic large-scale chamber works, the quintet is in three movements, as Dvořák was

experimenting with combining the traditional scherzo and finale. The work is marked by a wealth of melodic writing, especially in the middle movement, where the various melodies are clothed in agitated accompaniments.

String Sextet in D minor, Op. Posth

Aleksandr Borodin

Enthusiasts of music history like to link composers together in groups; there are “Les Six” in twentieth-century France and “The Five” in nineteenth-century Russia, or more picturesquely “The Mighty Handful.” The Russian group includes Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky (heard earlier this week), Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Aleksandr Borodin (1833-1887). The aim of this group was to forge a uniquely Russian style. Borodin made significant contributions in two separate careers, as a chemist and a composer. Only two of four planned movements from his string sextet survive, the first and second, and the piece was not published until well after his death. Of this work, he wrote, “Very Mendelssohnian in character and written to please the Germans,” and the Mendelssohn model is audible in its structure and style.

Overture to *William Tell*

Gioacchino Rossini

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868) was the most successful opera composer in history when he wrote his last of thirty-nine operas, *Guillaume Tell*, in Paris in 1829. He was only thirty-seven, and his substantial earnings enabled him to live the rest of his life in high style, enjoying the best *haute cuisine*. Although Rossini is best known for his comic Italian operas, *William Tell* has a serious French libretto based on a play by Frederick Schiller. The famous overture is notable for its colorful orchestration and vivid scene-setting. The first section, “Dawn,” is a chorale for six solo cellos, double basses, and timpani. A dramatic “Storm” follows, featuring the trombones. Then comes the tranquil “Ranz des vaches,” or Call to the Cows, a duet for flute and English horn. The rousing “March of the Swiss Soldiers” became famous as the theme to the radio and television series *The Lone Ranger*. Our gallant pianists will perform only the last two sections.