

COLORADO COLLEGE

S M I f

Summer
Music
festival

Program Notes
by
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FESTIVAL ARTISTS CONCERT

June 12, 2022

2:30 PM

Packard Hall

Notturmo in E-flat Major, Op. 148

Franz Schubert
(1768-1827)

Franz Schubert is often considered one of the first composers who was fully engaged in the early manifestations of musical romanticism; he liked to write intimate works for piano and voice (the Lieder) and small chamber music groups. And while he did this early in his youthful career, he was still engaged in these intimate works in his last year as witnessed by this single-movement trio for violin, cello and piano from 1827. Scholars speculate that it may have been intended to be the slow movement of a large work, but there is no proof, or other single movements that may have been a part of a larger design.

Regardless, this work stands on its own as a little gem. It was originally titled *Adagio* by the composer; the *Notturmo* designation was added later by a publisher. During the years between Schubert's death and the publication of the work, Chopin had begun to publish his iconic nocturnes for solo piano. Perhaps the publisher hoped that this new interest in the nocturne, spawned by the romantic interest in the aura of night, would stimulate sales of the Schubert work. And it is noteworthy that the opening section of the trio, with its heavenly texture of harp-like arpeggios in the piano supporting a hypnotic melody intoned in close harmony by the two stringed instruments, does conjure up images of nighttime serenity.

Trio for oboe, horn and piano, Op. 61

Heinrich von Herzogenberg
(1843-1900)

Allegretto

Presto

Andante con moto

Allegro

Heinrich von Herzogenberg, although not widely known today, was a very successful composer with a solid reputation in major musical capitals such as Leipzig and Berlin. Through his close friendship with Johannes Brahms, he also knew other leading figures like Robert and Clara Schumann. As was typical of romantic composers, he began his studies in law and philosophy, but abandoned those courses to pursue his passion in music.

This trio was composed in 1889 after a prolonged illness. Herzogenberg noted that it was for "an eccentric combination of instruments." And indeed, the combination of oboe, French

horn and piano was very unusual. The variety of instrumental tone colors was, however, a typical romantic trait.

The first movement, *Allegretto*, opens with an amicable melody heard first in the horn, answered by a more decorative statement by the oboe, and further decorated by the piano. Throughout this movement, and the remaining three as well, the audience can enjoy Herzogenberg's part writing and the way in which he creates a sparkling interplay between all the instruments. As a listener, imagine yourself as one of the instruments and what fun you are having in the charming dialogue. The second movement, *Presto*, is a lively hunting tune introduced by the piano and then shared by the horn and oboe. There is a brief slower "trio" section separating the two statements of the main tune. The third movement, *Andante con moto*, is a lovely slow melody shared by the winds and the piano. Often the latter answers or echoes the winds. There is a notable middle section in which a new melody is given to the mellifluous color of the horn with more delicate decorations by the piano and oboe. The fourth movement, *Allegro*, opens with a fast and playful theme heard in still more masterful combination of the three instruments. They converse, trade motives, and nimbly seem to play with one another. This main theme becomes a little ritornello, returning idea, that gives the movement a sense of unity and charm.

Chant de Linos

André Jolivet
(1905-1974)

At the head of the score, Jolivet inserted the following note:

"The 'Chant de Linos' was, in ancient Greece, a type of threnody, a funereal lamentation, a plaintive ballade interrupted by cries and dances."

This statement informs us just how Jolivet perceived this poetic genre. His work is set for the unusual and charming ensemble of flute, violin, viola, cello and harp. The strings and the harp provide an often-airy atmosphere for the silver timbre of the flute. The latter, then, may be considered the primary voice of lamentation. The work opens with some rhythmic and slightly dissonant chords in the strings and harp, answered by plaintive solos in the "crying" flute. After an extended calm duet for the violin and harp, the flute breaks out with more impassioned weeping. Various textures ensue, each suggesting either the "cries" or "dances" Jolivet noted in his opening epithet on the nature of a "Chant de Linos." The music in general is representative of early 20th-Century French modernism, influenced by Debussy and other turn-of-the century French composers.

Vignettes for trumpet and percussion

James Stephenson
(b. 1969)

Running with Lionel

Chasing Igor

Chuck's March

Dinner with Andre

Waltz in Berlin

Leandro Perpetuo

MAX

James Stephenson's works have been performed by leading American orchestras, instrumentalists, and wind ensembles around the world, always to critical acclaim and

the delight of audiences. The *Boston Herald* raved about “straightforward, unabashedly beautiful sounds,” suggesting “Stephenson deserves to be heard again and again!” As was noted in his website, “a formal sense of melody and tonality characterize his music, each embedded in a contemporary soundscape.” These qualities, coupled with the composer’s keen ability to describe in his music many various occasions, have led to his great success as a living composer.

In Stephenson’s words,

“I composed these eight *Vignettes* (7 + “Encore”) for Eric Berlin and Eduardo Leandro for performance at the ITG (International Trumpet Guild) Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2005. The only requests I was given before writing these was to be aware of Mr. Leandro’s traveling needs (in other words: aside from the marimba and vibes, which would already be in Thailand, I shouldn’t include too many percussion instruments that would need to be carried all the way there), and to use several different trumpets, including Mr. Berlin’s ‘flumpet’ (a cross between a flugelhorn and trumpet).

“Eric and I were at the New England Conservatory together, and, in fact, it was our living quarters that inspired the main ingredient of these *Vignettes*. I remember very often hearing the sound of Eric practicing below me in the dormitory, and thus I decided to use the musical form of a “lower neighbor” as my driving force for most of the eight short pieces in this set. The pieces are arranged only by the order in which they were composed; I leave the decision up to the performer to arrange them according to their preference. I also would imagine that several mini-“suites” could be derived from this set, depending again on the performer’s wishes.”

Today, we will hear seven *Vignettes* without the Encore:

- “Running with Lionel” celebrates the great jazz vibraphonist Lionel Hampton.
- “Chasing Igor” for trumpet and snare drum, captures the wild and aggressive rhythms of Igor Stravinsky in his famous ballets like *The Rite of Spring*.
- “Chuck’s March” is for solo flugelhorn and percussion
- “Dinner with Andre” is set for piccolo trumpet and tambourine
- “Waltz in Berlin” is a waltz for trumpet and percussion
- “Leandro Perpetuo” is a solo for marimba
- “MAX,” based on “Where the Wild Thing Are,” is for Flumpet and Marimba

Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114

Allegro

Adagio

Andantino grazioso

Allegro

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

Johannes Brahms was one of the most intriguing composers of the 19th Century. Often thought of as a contemporary of the other great German master in the second half of the century, Richard Wagner, he could hardly have been more different from his fellow countryman. While Wagner was writing his revolutionary music dramas, Brahms continued with the symphony and various kinds of chamber music that, in the eyes of most critics, seemed to have taken up where Beethoven left off in 1827, and to have been composed as if Wagner had never lived. Wagner and his followers certainly let Brahms have it with negative press salvos, but the latter remained steadfast in his adherence to his own musical ideal.

If one were to take advantage of hindsight and ascribe a musical ideal to Brahms, it would have something to do with his concern for the classical balance between form and content. Musical form is the structuring of music so that certain events recur to give the composition a sense of order; in a sonata form, for example, there are generally two melodic themes which are presented at the beginning, subsequently developed by being broken into fragments, and finally recalled at the end in what is known as the recapitulation. Musical content, on the other hand, refers to the actual melodies, harmonies and rhythms themselves, generally charged with some kind of feeling that is expressed to the listener as the music is played.

As one approaches the music of Brahms, one must remember that he lived and composed in the midst of torrid 19th-century romanticism, a time when most audiences wanted their feelings to be moved, if not overwhelmed, by the emotional content of art. And although he usually does not tell the listener just what the specific emotions are, and he may not even know himself, one can always sense a depth of feeling in most of Brahms' music. His melodies, harmonies and rhythms all have a kind of urgency and power that are the trappings of romantic expression. Yet at the same time, his music is always controlled by the steady hand of Brahms the formalist. Musical ideas are interrelated by recapitulations and by evolutions that seem to tie the end of a work back to its beginning. As in Greek tragedy, there is unity, and there is a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Brahms composed this trio in 1891, seven years before his death. There is a curious similarity to Mozart, who turned to the clarinet in two famous late works (the quintet and the concerto), inspired by the playing of a particular musician (Anton Stadler). Brahms included the clarinet in his last four chamber works and was inspired by the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, principal clarinetist with the Meiningen orchestra. Brahms especially admired the sensitivity, intimate expressive quality, and beautiful tone of his playing. These characteristics are all manifest in the clarinet parts he wrote in his late years.

The opening movement of this trio, *Allegro*, begins with the cello alone playing in a high register, answered shortly by the clarinet. One notices frequently in this trio that Brahms uses the higher registers of the cello so that it seems to converse with the clarinet in its own range. And converse they do! Although most listeners would catch this, the second themes of both the first and last movements are presented as a canon between the two melody instruments. But when the cello answers the clarinet with the theme, it plays it upside down! It should be noted that the entire trio is full of such complex gestures which perhaps only the musical performer and scholar will comprehend and hear, but which gives a quality of classical unity and control that can be sensed by most listeners.

The second movement, *Adagio*, expresses mature and deep feelings. The clarinet and cello again unfold purely musical moods in sensitive dialogue with now occasional comments by the piano as well. This is chamber music in its most pure form as a conversation between individual interlocutors. The third movement, *Andante grazioso*, is as gracious as the tempo suggests. Opening with a disarmingly simple waltz melody in the clarinet, the movement unfolds with a striking development of this innocent first theme. The final *Allegro* brings the work to a close in a somber wintry mood first with some tight imitation between the clarinet and cello, and then finally in a stark and somewhat tragic-sounding final cadence.

