

Diploma Recital at Barnett Hall

Sunday, April 2, 2023

1:30 p.m.

Liam Pistor, Clarinet

with

Edward Park, Piano

Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 1

Johannes Brahms

- I. Allegro appassionato
- II. Andante un poco adagio
- III. Allegretto grazioso
- IV. Vivace

(1833-1897)

Five Pieces for Solo Clarinet

W.O. Smith

- I. Vigorous
- II. Flowing
- III. Rhythmic
- IV. Singing
- V. Spirited

(1926-2020)

~ INTERMISSION ~

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Oskar Morawetz

- I. Adagio
- II. Allegro

(1917-2007)

Concerto for Clarinet

Aaron Copland

- I. Slowly and expressively
- II. Rather fast

(1900-1990)

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Diploma in Music Performance.

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Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 1

Johannes Brahms

One of the greats of the Romantic period, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was a German composer, virtuoso pianist, and conductor. He composed works for piano, organ, violin, chamber ensembles, symphony orchestra, voice, and chorus. These works were often rooted in traditional structures and compositional techniques of Classical masters yet were embedded with Romantic motifs. Many of these masterful works remain staples of concert repertoire performed around the world.

A few of these works would not exist if it were not for the masterful playing skills of one clarinetist. By 1890, Brahms felt as if he had exhausted his creativity, so it was time for him to retire from composing. Then he heard Richard Mühlfeld (1856-1907), principal clarinetist of the Meiningen Court Orchestra, play clarinet works by Mozart and Weber in a private performance. Brahms was so impressed he abandoned his retirement plans and set to work composing four chamber pieces for clarinet, including the Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 1 (1894). In each of these compositions, Brahms beautifully explored the sound and tonal colours possible on a clarinet. His completed works then contributed to a revival of interest in the clarinet at a time when compositions for clarinet had been dwindling. They were some of the last chamber pieces Brahms composed before his death in 1897.

Five Pieces for Solo Clarinet

W.O. Smith

William Overton Smith (1926-2020) was an American clarinetist and composer of modern classical clarinet selections, jazz, and 'third stream' (a fusion of classical and jazz). While a composition student of Darius Milhaud at Mills College in Oakland, California, he met pianist Dave Brubeck with whom he intermittently performed as a jazz clarinetist from 1946 to the early 2000s. He ultimately completed bachelor's and master's degrees in composition from the University of California, Berkeley. He then taught music performance and composition for thirty years at the University of Washington School of Music in Seattle. As an academic, he investigated and compiled a comprehensive catalogue of fingerings for clarinet multi-phonics and a wide range of extended techniques.

Five Pieces for Solo Clarinet (1959) is probably W.O. Smith's most frequently performed work for clarinet. It is a short suite, characterized by varying rhythms, atonal melodic

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lines, and frequent wide interval leaps. Smith composed the suite using patterns of the 12 notes in the chromatic scale as the foundation for both the melody and harmony. Thus, it is 12-tone music in which the original (prime) row in each piece undergoes changes through transposition, inversion, retrograde, or retrograde inversion. It is a challenging but fun piece to perform.

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Oskar Morawetz

Oskar Morawetz (1917-2007) was born in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). He studied piano and theory in Prague until 1938, when the Nazis took over his country, and then in Vienna and Paris until he moved to Canada, just before the Nazis invaded in 1940. Once established in Toronto, he taught theory and composition at the Royal Conservatory of Music (1946-1952) and then became a professor of composition at the University of Toronto (1952-1982). Although he frequently performed on the piano early in his career, he later concentrated almost exclusively on composing. Over the course of fifty years, he composed approximately 120 piano, orchestral and chamber works, which generally adhere to a melodic line, yet express a rhythmic vitality that builds to a dramatic climax via colourful and imaginative orchestration.

The Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1980) is an impressionistic work, composed in two movements, which are joined together without interruption in performance. It was commissioned by Ronald deKant, the former principal clarinetist of the Vancouver Symphony, with financial aid from the Canada Council. He premiered the work at the Banff Festival of Music in 1981. Since then, it has been described as an intense, atmospheric work which is difficult to perform due to its rhythmic subtlety and use of altissimo (the uppermost register on the clarinet). For Morawetz, music was an expression of emotion.

Concerto for Clarinet

Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) was an American composer of orchestral works, chamber music, ballets, vocal works, opera and film scores, and later in his career, a conductor of his own and other American music. In the 1930s, he switched from composing orchestral music in a modernist style to composing music which mirrored the German idea of *Gebrauchsmusik* – music that served both artistic and utilitarian purposes.

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Then, in the late 1940s, he was inspired by Arnold Schoenberg's use of twelve-tone (serial) techniques to experiment with the use of tonal material as a source for melodies and harmonies at crucial moments within the structure of his music.

Copland's Concerto for Clarinet (1948) was commissioned by jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman. It is a two-movement concerto comprised of a melodious, lyrical movement, followed by a clarinet cadenza, and then a jazzy second movement, ending with a clarinet glissando. It is considered, by some, to be the first American clarinet concerto to become standard repertoire. The version I will perform today was finished in 1950, following input by Goodman, who requested the simplification of some passages and the shifting of a few passages to a lower tessitura, to better suit his performance tastes and skills. When he performed it, with Copland conducting, Goodman's approach was jazzy in the cadenza and second movement, yet it retained classical elements.

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