

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Roy Barnett Recital Hall

Sunday, March 19, 2023

1:30 p.m.

Saxophone a l'après midi*
For Alto

Baylie Kristina Adams, *alto saxophone*

“A man doesn't need a crowd to profess his love, shout his hopes or sing his hurts,
anyway. Furthermore, there are times when a man must cast his own shadow – alone.”

Bill Quinn on *For Alto* (1971, Delmark Records) by Anthony Braxton

Tango-Etude, No. 4
Lento-Meditativo

Astor Piazzola
(1921-1992)

Neuf Études, Book I
Savane

Christian Lauba
(b. 1952)

Night Bird

Karen Tanaka
(b. 1961)

Composition No. 245

Anthony Braxton
(b. 1945)

– INTERMISSION –

Violin Partita I BWV 1002
Allemande
Double

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)
arr. Raaf Hekkema

Caprice en forme de Valse

Paul Bonneau
(1918-1995)

* In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree with a major
in Saxophone.

*The University of British Columbia is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded
territory of the Musqueam people*

– Program Notes –

Astor Piazzolla, Tango-Etude No. 4, *Lento Meditativo*
(1989)

Much like performing a work by J.S. Bach, Piazzolla's notation is a guide to the music. The performance practice of these etudes relies on references to mannerisms not implicitly stated on the paper. For example, Piazzolla marks several ways for a performer to play with expressive rubato. One technique he uses, originally for guitar, is called *bordoneos*¹ which accentuates the downbeat of embellished notes such as glissandos, appoggiaturas, and chromatic upbeats.

Christian Lauba, Neuf Etudes, Book I, *Savane*
(2008)

Savane, translated from French to English means savanna, a rolling grassland. This biome is commonly associated with parts of Africa and South America. Born in Tunisia, Lauba represents themes depicting African music and nature in the name of each etude from Book I; *Balafon*, a West African xylophone, *Savane*, *Sanza*, a kalimba, and *Jungle*. These etudes explore an extended woodwind technique, multiphonics, which are several notes produced at once on a monophonic instrument. *Savane* also uses extended techniques that make use of distinct woodwind timbres called subtones and microtones. Similar to multiphonics marked piano, the timbre of subtones are soft, breathy, and low-volume. A microtone is ambiguous, usually played at an interval of a quarter-tone higher or lower than a fixed pitch, or a slightly sharp or flat. I first heard this technique in the improvisations of my favourite saxophonists like Anthony Braxton, Pharoah Sanders, Albert Ayler, and Ornette Coleman.

Karen Tanaka, Night Bird
(1997)

Night Bird, commissioned by the French saxophonist Claude Delangle, is based in the style of Japanese folk music with open tonality, erratic rhythms, and improvisational in character. The backing track creates a meditative ambience for the performer to play, almost improvising, to a stopwatch timer rather than a fixed time signature. Tanaka's program notes state, "Night Bird is a love song filled with tender whispers of lovers...". It's interesting to note that the word "Bird" has become associated with the saxophone by virtue of Charlie Parker's famous nickname, his improvisatory skill, and virtuosity.

"Anthony Braxton is also a blackbird, a blackbird against the night sky, -- very high and very far away.", Bill Quinn on *For Alto*

¹ Reyes, Asis. "A Performer's Guide to Astor Piazzolla's *Tango-Etudes pour flute seule: An Analytical Approach*." University of New York, 2018

Johann Sebastian Bach, Violin Partita I BWV 1002

(1720) arr. Raaf Hekkema

Douglas R. Hofstadter discusses the philosophical freedom of interpretation in the performance practice of Bach's music in his book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: The Eternal Golden Braid*. He asks whether music is, "a sequence of vibrations in the air, or a succession of emotional responses in a brain?" While Piazzolla's Tango-Etudes give specific indications for the performer to play with rubato, Bach's Partitas indicate only a sequence of notes and phrase articulations for the performer to interpret. In this sense, performing Bach offers more freedom for the performer in terms of interpretation.

Anthony Braxton, Composition No. 245: Second Species Ghost Trance Music (2000)

In the discography of Braxton's album *For Alto*, Bill Quinn answers the question, "Who is Anthony Braxton, though, man?" by describing him as, "... a painter of sounds; a sculptor of vibrations; a tonal dramatist. He becomes all this with his instrument, and more." Composition No. 245 is modelled after a concept Braxton calls Ghost Trance Music (GTM). The idea of GTM exists at the intersection of a Native American traditional ritual practice called The Ghost Dance and a performer's musical interpretation in performance practice. While a dancer may choose to momentarily depart from the ritual circle during the Ghost Dance and improvise their own physical movements, a performer of Braxton's Composition No. 245, written for any instrumentation, might depart from the written notation to improvise on their musical instrument. The structure of the composition consists of a Primary Melody, what is notated on the score, and visual cues to mark where the performer might depart from the "dance" and refer to external directional materials that Braxton calls the Tri-Centric Model.

Paul Bonneau, Caprice en forme de Valse (1950)

Paul Bonneau wrote for films, light orchestral music for radio, and for military bands. *Caprice en forme de Valse* was well received for its versatility, jazz influence, and technicality. This piece is based on a dance in 3/4 time called *Valse a trois temps*. This dance, marked Valse rubato, can be interpreted as a waltz robbed of time. Rubato allows the performer to stretch time, phrasing, and expression as they please within the triple metre waltz. Bonneau incorporates chromatic embellishments to the dance along with virtuosic passages marked Presto that explore the entire chromatic and dynamic range of the saxophone.