

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Roy Barnett Recital Hall

Sunday, March 26, 2022

10:00 a.m.

MASTER'S STUDENT RECITAL*

RIO LAGOS DAVISON

with

Daniel Ketter, clarinet

Isabella Wark, flute

Sayako Leznoff, oboe

Maddie Davis, horn

Lyla Lee, cello

Eric Li, guitar

Zin Cho, harpsichord

Wind Quintet, Op. 43

i. Allegro ben moderato

ii. Menuet

iii. Prelude – Tema con variazioni

Carl Nielsen
(1865-1931)

Daniel Ketter, *clarinet*

Isabella Wark, *flute*

Sayako Leznoff, *oboe*

Maddie Davis, *horn*

Sonata for Bassoon and Cello, K. 292

i. Allegro

ii. Andante

iii. Rondo: Allegro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Lyla Lee, *cello*

– INTERMISSION –

Histoire du Tango

ii. Café 1930

Astor Piazzolla
(b. 1962)

Eric Li, *guitar*

Bassoon Sonata, TWV 41: f1

- i. Triste
- ii. Allegro
- iii. Andante
- iv. Vivace

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1767)

Lyla Lee, *cello*
Zin Cho, *harpsichord*

- * In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree with a major in bassoon.

We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people

PROGRAM NOTES

Woodwind Quintet – Carl Nielsen

“The quintet for winds is one of [my] latest works, in which [I have] attempted to render the characters of the various instruments. At one moment they are all talking at once, at another they are quite alone. The work consists of three movements: a) Allegro, b) Minuet and c) Prelude – Theme with Variations. The theme for these variations is the melody for one of C.N.’s spiritual songs, which has here been made the basis of a set of variations, now merry and quirky, now elegiac and serious, ending with the theme in all its simplicity and very quietly expressed.”¹

Carl Nielsen, a prolific Danish composer who lived from 1865 until 1931, created one of the most popular pieces for wind quintet. Regularly performed by groups of the highest standard, this piece is a beautifully intricate piece. Each instrumentalist is challenged both technically and musically by the complex layers found within it. The communication required between each player combined with the knowledge of how each voice works together make this piece more than just a chamber music work. This Quintet has ascended to the top of many lists for its natural beauty, triumphant peaks, and sorrowful valleys.

There are 3 movements in this quintet, each with its own hidden treats for your ears. In the first movement, be sure to listen for the proud introduction of the main theme from the bassoon, followed by a fascinating conversation between each of the voices. The themes are often broken up and passed amongst the voices as though each instrumentalist were taking turns telling the same story. However, there are times when each voice agrees and comes together and there are times when perhaps the voices do not agree. Regardless of what discussions happen during this movement, it ends on a beautiful E major chord, showing a lovely agreement and providing closure to this entertaining conversation.

The second movement is a tale of two’s, with a starting pastorage duet between the clarinet and bassoon, echoed next by the flute and oboe. The comparatively simple second movement is full of life as well, but this time it has a lighter, simplistic view. The middle section of this movement again features a conversation-like passage involving all the musicians; however it is much clearer than in the movement before.

¹ “Nielsen’s Wind Quintet.” *Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra*, 7 May 2021, <https://saskatoonsymphony.org/nielsen-wind-quintet/>.

In the third and final movement, be prepared to encounter a prelude followed by a theme and variations. Each variation is complex, both harmonically and technically. This affords each musician an opportunity to show a flourish of skill and musicianship, before coming back into the group texture as the piece winds itself to a close. There is a new type of sound in this movement, that of the English horn, which adds a unique colour to the sound. For the bassoon, the piece ends on a written low A, a pitch which is impossible to play on an unmodified German bassoon. This means that the bassoonist must insert an extension into the bell of the instrument in order to lengthen the instrument and lower the pitch. This adjustment must be compensated for by the player, something we call an extended technique, as it changes how the whole instrument plays. Keep an eye out near the end to see if you can spot the bassoonist performing this extended technique which is very rarely found in the classical repertoire.

Sonata for Bassoon and Cello – W.A. Mozart

Perhaps the most well-known composer of all time, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart lived a fruitful musical life from 1756 to 1791. He is well known for his many compositions, over 600 in total. With so much documented about his illustrious life, musicologists are very certain about most aspects of Mozart's life. However, there is one thing that they are not sure about: This duet. It has been credited to Mozart; however the original autographed manuscript was lost with time and so there is no proof that this composition is his. There is a theory which suggests that this piece was a commissioned work for Baron Thaddäus von Dürnitz, a regular commissioner of Mozart's work.² While this makes plausible sense, there is yet to be any proof of this connection, and the Dürnitz collection catalogue has no mention of such a piece. The second uncertainty about this piece is about the intended instrumentation. While titled as a sonata for bassoon and cello, this piece does not have the balance between the two voices as was typical with other sonatas of this time. Instead, the bassoon takes a much more dominant role, suggesting that this may have been intended to be written for bassoon and basso continuo, as more of a traditional solo work.³

This work acts as a representation of the classical tradition where the bassoon first started to thrive. I personally have always loved playing music from the classical tradition. I will often compare it to a cold glass of water on a hot day, something that is simple, yet extraordinarily eloquent. The harmonic framework underlying this style is so pleasing to the ear, making it easy to see why Mozart is considered a master of his craft.

² Eric Bromberger. *Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival - 46th Season Program Notes*, SFCMF, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2018, https://www.santafechambermusic.com/?media_dl=16416. Accessed 11 Mar. 2023.

³ Ballam-Cross, Paul. "Finding New Repertoire: Transcribing Mozart's Sonata, K. 292 (196c) for the Guitar." *Context: A Journal of Music Research*, vol. 43, 2018, pp. 47–67.

Histoire du Tango – ii. Café 1930 – Astor Piazzolla

Astor Piazzolla was an Argentine composer who lived from 1921 until 1992. As a child Piazzolla was given a *bandoneón*, a type of German free-reed concertina, looking like a small square accordion.⁴ While this instrument was produced in Germany, it has become closely tied with tango music and dance. Piazzolla became well known for his prodigious playing of this instrument, and his musicality led him towards composition. He was able to pursue his passion for composing in 1951, when he went to Paris to study with the great Nadia Boulanger. Here Boulanger was able to inspire Piazzolla to pursue his love of tango.⁵ This has become a turning point for the genre, as Piazzolla went on to create what has been dubbed “Tango Nuevo,” a combination of tango, fusion, jazz, and classical influences.⁶ Piazzolla and his more than 3000 compositions are remembered as an influential part of music in the 20th century.

One of the pieces for which Piazzolla is most famous is *Histoire du tango*. This 1985 work was composed to honour the changes that had occurred within the tango genre over the course of Piazzolla’s lifetime. Originally for flute and guitar, the piece is now often performed in many variations, including today’s version for bassoon and guitar. The piece itself is divided into 4 movements, *Bordel 1900*, *Café 1930*, *Nightclub 1960*, and *Concert d’aujourd’hui*. Each movement represents a time of new sonic development in tango. Today you will hear the second movement, *Café 1930*. Piazzolla had this to say about the changes in tango represented in this movement in particular; “People stopped dancing it as they did in 1900, preferring instead simply to listen to it. It became more musical, and more romantic. This tango has undergone total transformation: the movements are slower, with new and often melancholy harmonies.”⁷

I chose to perform this piece as I love tango. With family from central america, Latin music has always been an important part of my life and I am excited to share this with my audience. I chose this movement as I personally relate to this idea of total transformation. I have changed greatly over the course of my musical education, and I am proud of where I have come from and what I have achieved. I am eternally grateful to my family, friends, and teachers over the years for affording me the opportunity to change over time into who I am today.

⁴ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Astor Piazzolla". Encyclopedia Britannica, 7 Mar. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Astor-Piazzolla>. Accessed 11 March 2023.

⁵ Eales, Andrew. “Finding Your Unique Voice.” *Pianodao*, 27 Jan. 2023, <https://pianodao.com/2016/05/28/piazzolla-unique-voice/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Vial Jaffe, Jane. “Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992).” *Parlance Chamber Concerts*, <https://www.parlancechamberconcerts.org/parlance-program-notes/histoire-du-tango/>.

Bassoon Sonata – Georg Philipp Telemann

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) had a long and successful musical career. His name has long since been synonymous with baroque excellence. During his life, Telemann was regarded as one of the greatest composers of his time.⁸ Thanks to his compositional success, he was appointed *kapellmeister* of several different courts.⁹ During his time as an active musician, he would become friends with George Frideric Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach respected Telemann to such a degree that Telemann would become the Godfather of Bach's children.¹⁰

Telemann's Bassoon Sonata in f minor is a masterwork for the bassoon. Composed soon after the invention of the baroque bassoon, it is one of the earliest true virtuosic solo works for the instrument. The emotions that are present in this piece are deeply moving. The sadness evoked from the first movement, marked *triste*, is marked by sighing figures and hesitant entries.¹¹ The second movement quickly changes from a sad state of mind to a flurry of excitement and drive. The quickened pace of this movement brings with it excitement and flourishes of virtuosic runs and quaint ornamentation. Immediately following this bit of hope, another tragic voice takes over. The lamenting third movement follows in the themes of the first; tragic sadness and sorrow. Throughout this movement you will again hear distinct sighing motifs and uncertainty, ending with a half cadence, perhaps the most uncertain way to end of all. After this brief, emotional statement, we are transported to the lighthearted and uplifting final movement. Here we get another burst of energy, as the piece finishes with a completely different feeling than it started, one of optimism and joy.

This piece is one of my favourite pieces of music ever written. I have often thought of the symbolism found throughout it, moving through the sad and difficult times in a way that always leaves optimism for the future. I hope that this piece brings you the same ideas, and that you enjoy it as thoroughly as I do.

⁸ "Georg Philipp Telemann." *Naxos Music Library*, https://www.naxos.com/Bio/Person/Georg_Philipp_Telemann/23879.

⁹ "Georg Philipp Telemann: Biography." *Www.deutsche Grammophon.com*, <https://www.deutsche Grammophon.com/en/composers/georg-philipp-telemann/biography>.

¹⁰ "Georg Philipp Telemann." *Naxos Music Library*, https://www.naxos.com/Bio/Person/Georg_Philipp_Telemann/23879.

¹¹ Chiu, Yi-Chen. "An Examination of Stylistic Mixture in Four Bassoon Sonatas, 1720–1760." *University of Cincinnati*, 2017.

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