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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

PRESENTS

A SENIOR RECITAL

FEATURING

ERIN STEELE

CLARINETIST

WITH **STEPHEN KARR**, ACCOMPANIST

& **KARA KAWANAMI**, CLARINETIST

ENCORE FEATURING **TONY VAUGHAN**,

BASS CLARINETIST, ARRANGER

& **CELESTE MARKEY**,

CLARINETIST

SATURDAY, MAY 12TH, 2007

11:00 AM

SALMON RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

Sonate fur Klarinette und Piano: I (1939)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo (1919)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Duets Extraordinaire: I, II, (1980)

Tone Kwas (b. 1934)

Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano, Op.29 (1951)

Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006)

ENCORE

Super Mario Brothers Theme (1985)

Koji Kondo (b. 1960)

Arr. Tony Vaughan (b. 1984)

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonate fur Klarinette und Piano: I (1939)

Paul Hindemith wrote his *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* in a mere eight days. 1939 marked a prolific year in which Hindemith put out six sonatas for solo instruments, including the *Sonata for Clarinet*. Hindemith saw potential in the clarinet as a solo instrument and thoroughly explored its voice and capabilities within this four movement work. The piano received a role equivalent to the clarinet, and thus an opportunity to sing with the soloist, as opposed to merely accompanying her. The first movement—characteristically entitled “Lively”—is a three dimensional piece of architecture following sonata form. In the twentieth century, composers reached the edge of tonality; though some kept quietly to the edge, others leapt forth into uncharted territory, and a tentative few only dared venture down the side of the cliff with a rope. Hindemith certainly clung to his rope, and claimed to do so in order not to confound the listener; his neoclassical style (the use of eighteenth century forms and practices), is made of primary colors as opposed to the new hues of pantonality mixed by his twentieth century contemporaries. Hindemith treated tonal harmony as though it was as inescapable as gravity itself. Listen as his composition daydreams into new hues, but then returns to a palette of functional primary colors.

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo (1919)

In Conversations with Stravinsky, Robert Craft inquires about the composer's feelings on symmetry; Stravinsky responds “to be perfectly symmetrical is to be perfectly dead.” As such, asymmetry is the true source of vivacity in Igor Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo*. Whereas in poetry, meter describes the linguistic sound patterns of verse, in music, meter is the presence of stressed and unstressed beats within a measure as designated by the notational symbol of the time signature. In Stravinsky's first movement of *Three Pieces* there are six time signatures represented, twenty changes in time signature throughout the course of the movement, and only one single instance of three consecutive measures in the same meter. Similarly, the third movement is also characterized by a constant shift in meter, utilizing nine different time signatures, and forty-three changes in meter within the one and a half minute time span of the movement. Stravinsky goes a step further and exempts his second movement from the connotation of meter altogether; he completely scraps the time signature, leaving the clarinetist to interpret a series of dialectical statements, unconstrained within the movement's total absence of bar lines. As a result, the second movement in particular is evocative of the

uninhibited, rapid oscillating dialogue of birds. Following his Primitivist period, Stravinsky's stylistic evocation of the eighteenth-century period in music history is referred to as Neo-classicism; yet, this work seems to fall into a number of stylistic categories. While its third movement seems a Stravinskian dance, the first movement is an odd meandering around a tonal center; the movement sandwiched in between is a blur of notes, beginning and ending with voracity. Yet, phrases retain a sense of agreement by motivic unity, and Stravinsky offers a sense of return at the end of each movement, allowing the listener something, albeit slippery, to clutch hold of in an experience that is otherwise a mid-air suspension.

Duets Extraordinaire: I, II (1980)

Tone Kwas was born and raised in New York, where he currently resides. He began taking trumpet lessons at age eleven from, conveniently, a neighbor who played professionally. The majority of Kwas' compositional output is jazz literature, which he recently donated to Westboro High School. His most impressive contribution came as a result of a 1976 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, enabling him to compose *An American Jazz Ballet*. Kwas has written a number of catchy duets, easily transposable from one b flat instrument to the next—*Duets Extraordinaire*, originally composed as a series of exercises, has evolved into charming repertoire for clarinet duo. Kwas' trademark as a trumpeter is evident in the articulate and arpeggiative nature of the duets. Lively and charming, Duet I is characterized by a tuneful motive heard in stretto imitation between the clarinetists; this theme alternates with a second, legato motive that brings a new shade to provide contrast with the first. Duet II in compound time creates a hypnotic effect with its lilting motive played in a minimalistic repetition. Here the listener is offered a minor mode, in which the clarinets intertwine in dissonant suspensions.

Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano, Op.29 (1951)

Born in Northampton in central England, Sir Malcolm Arnold is noted as "one of the towering figures of the 20th century, with a remarkable catalogue of major concert works to his credit." His compositional output includes nine symphonies, seven ballets, two operas, one musical, over twenty concertos, two string quartets, music for brass and wind band, and award-winning film scores. Malcolm Arnold's Clarinet Sonatina (Op.29), written at age thirty, is considered a piano reduction of a concerto; so much occurs in this work—perhaps more so than can be wholly encapsulated by the typical format of a sonata. Arnold makes use of all clarinet registers, including one of the higher notes available to the clarinetist. Arnold creates a bright and vivacious interplay between pianist and clarinetist. The piece is a virtuosic statement of brilliant, good-old fashioned swagger with its memorable sea shanty connotations and vigorous scalar and chromatic passages. The slower second

movement holds an understated position within its more outrageous bookends, acting as a foil to the outer movements.

Super Mario Brothers Theme (1985)

You've heard it in cell phone ring tones, seen it survive over twenty years without losing its catch, and chances are good that you've played to its charming accompaniment on an original Nintendo system—the Super Mario Brothers Theme by Koji Kondo retains its iconic status two decades after its initial release. Kondo, born in Nagoya, Japan, found himself hired for Nintendo as a composer in 1983. Unfortunately for Koji, sound chips in the 1980's limited him to the use of only four voices—two monophonic pulse channels, a monophonic triangle wave channel which could be used as a bass, and a noise channel used for percussion. Despite this constraint, fans and critics alike note Kondo's ability to craft pleasant melodies that remain enjoyable when played through inferior sound equipment, and when looped over long periods of game time. Kondo's upbeat title theme shows Latin and jazz underpinnings in its laid-back, samba-like groove. Appropriately, Kondo cites Henry Mancini as one of his most admired influences.

SOURCES

Conversations With Igor Stravinsky (Stravinsky & Craft)

Selected Letters of Paul Hindemith (Skelton, Geoffrey, ed.)

www.malcolmarnold.co.uk/biog

www.hindemith.org

www.videogamesblogger.com/2007/koji-kondo

www.time.com/time/time100/artists

Walsh: 'Stravinsky, Igor', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy

<<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jesus Christ, who has taught me that nothing I do or don't do can change how He already feels about me. He demonstrated by paying my debt that He would do anything and everything in His power to make a way for me to be with Him; that unmatched and perfect love has lifted me out of my insecurities and given me genuine assurance that I am both capable and beautiful. Moreover, he's assured me for this performance—and for the rest of my life—that I'm a work in progress.

My parents, Carol and Bob, have supported me beyond belief, and have been present at every performance from the first note I squeaked to today's final recital. They have never missed a beat of my life, and as a result of their active involvement I have flourished as their daughter.

My first teacher, Gary Matsuura moved in next door to me when I was a youngster. In fifth grade I decided to play the clarinet, and so naturally I took lessons from Gary, my neighbor. I quickly discovered what might be the only downside to taking lessons from your next-door-neighbor: they can hear you practicing—or not practicing. It was because of Gary that I first came to Chapman as an elementary school student in my first recital, which was held jointly for all of Gary's students, here in Salmon Recital Hall. I distinctly remember playing *Doe a Deer* at a snail's pace. It wasn't until years later that I started to contemplate a college education, let alone Chapman.

I credit Gary with teaching me all of the fundamentals I needed to be successful as a musician. After learning the fundamentals from Gary, though, I acquired a new and extraordinary challenge: my first clarinet student. At that point, Gary began teaching me *how to teach* the fundamentals. I was a high school student at the time, and I felt like the Sorcerer's apprentice; trying to explain how to play clarinet was like trying to explain how to chew. Gary always had the recipe, the explanation, the word choice, the analogy...and all I seemed to do was flood the place with the wrong trick. Hindsight. Gary patiently supplied me with a well of instructional knowledge that I continue to draw from.

But it was last year that Gary made a comment to me that has stuck in my memory more than feeling like a flustered teacher; at the end of a clarinet jury, Gary told me that I was "*this close to singing*" through my clarinet. It sounds funny, but it wasn't until I heard his observation that I realized I could actually sing while playing an instrument. I had always separated song from instrument, placing each in its own corner of the room. Gary opened my mind to understand that a good instrumentalist's music sounds like singing—and likewise a good vocalist sounds like an instrument! Just ask Zoot Sims or Joe Pass or Billie Holiday.

George Lucas & Diane Brand—my junior high school instrumental music and musical theater teachers. What brilliant minds. George is the only teacher I've ever had that instructed the class to do something as backwards as playing a musical exercise in reverse. I really think he had something on John Cage. On the other side of the music building was Diane, of whom I have particularly fond memories; it was Diane who told me as an eighth-grade student something that I never forgot—she said she saw potential in me. She nudged me to try high school choir. If it weren't for that highly personal vote of confidence, I might never have found my voice.

This brings me to my high school instrumental and choral directors, **Brad Van Patten and Zach Halop**. They were the ideal blend of mind and heart in music education; it was under their instruction that I found myself enamored with Copland's *Clarinet Concerto*, Percy Grainger's *Children's March*, and Holst's *First Suite*; and it was there that I fell in love with *Berkeley Square*, *Glory Road*, and the Thompson *Alleluia*. Within those rehearsals, I discovered my voice...and as a result, I hardly knew what to do with myself. I was face to face with beautiful music literature, and the tools to bring it to life;

It was these educators who challenged me to think critically about music in order to give it meaning beyond its ink and paper.

Of equal importance, I never forgot that both Brad and Zach handed me buckets of leadership opportunities. For example, Brad put a guitar in my hands, not to mention his own A Clarinet and his own baton. Zach also gave me the podium, four years of honor choir, an unforgettable Chamber Singers tour in Hawaii, and some serious in-home conducting sessions with him and his wife Keiko. I need to highlight here that Zach was the one to give me my first vocal solo. I sang "Whistle a Happy Tune" from *The King and I*. What a moment. I was terrified, so a solo about fear was a natural fit.

These individuals allowed me to experience challenging roles before hitting adulthood...and I struggled in those roles, feeling as though the clothes I were handed were far too big and too ridiculous looking on me. And there were tears and there was awkwardness—and that was healthy. But these teachers had to take the risk of letting *me* take the risk...and that taught me that education is not about success or failure, but about facilitating growth.

Dr. Robert Frelly and Dr. Mark Laycock—my college band and orchestra directors. It has been a pleasure to play the clarinet under their direction. These individuals modeled to me how to respect students and how to show confidence in their musicality. I will always carry that with me as I learn to see the musician in my students—this, also, facilitates growth. But really, I have to credit **Dr. Lea Steffens** with making me *bloom*. She is the only teacher I've ever had that I have not felt wary of disappointing. Every lesson starts and ends with an air of positivity and encouragement. It is in this rich environment that I never remained stagnant as a clarinet player. Under Lea's direction I saw that a student's transformation begins where a teacher's criticism is packaged and offered as gifts. Lea's style will color my perspective as an educator for the rest of my career.

Certainly I can't fail to mention the man that is the monumental highlight of my memories in this hall—**Augusto Rivero**, who proposed to me in here so beautifully at the end of our Chamber Winds concert last December. Augusto has been the most consistent listener in my life, and I want to thank him, my love, for his ears—he has been a sounding board, and a counselor, and my deeply patient most close friend. And what a relief, now, to his ears that he won't have to hear me practicing Stravinsky's bird tunes anymore. I doubt closing the door was ever enough.

Last but certainly not least are the dear **friends and family** that are here to show their support and enthusiasm and love for me—because of you I don't walk alone, and I'm grateful that I get to be a part of your lives.

It has been my privilege to share this musical experience with you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being a part of my recital, and much more importantly, my life.

ERIN M. STEELE



AFTER SILENCE
THAT WHICH COMES NEAREST
TO EXPRESSING THE INEXPRESSIBLE
IS MUSIC.

ALDOUS HUXLEY