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2024-25



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Doctoral Recital

Wesley Shores, trombone

With:

Bobby Pace, Ben Garcia, Mark Bennett, Scott Underwood and
Sam McDiarmid-Sterling

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2024

Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

Three Medieval Dances

Anonymous

ed. Christian Lindbergh

- I. Danse la Cleve
- II. Amoroso
- III. La Spagna

Colors

Bert Appermont (b. 1973)

- I. Yellow
- II. Red
- III. Blue
- IV. Green

—Intermission—

Ballade

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

Soliloquy

Anthony Barfield (b. 1983)

*Mark Bennett, Sam McDiarmid-Sterling, Scott Underwood, trombones
Ben Garcia, bass trombone*

Sicilienne Op. 78

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

trans. W. H. Squire

PROGRAM NOTES

Three Medieval Dances

Anonymous

ed. Christian Lindbergh

Three Medieval Dances is a collection of three unaccompanied dances from the medieval era which have been arranged in an order to create a compelling performance. The work is written to be performed on alto trombone, an instrument whose ancestors were often used as court instruments. Each of the three dances are placed firmly within C mixolydian, a tonality certainly evocative of the Medieval era.

The first dance, *Danse la Cleve*, is a stately melody in triple time which shows off elegant technical passages paired with soaring, shimmering melodies. The second, *Amoroso*, is a simple, four phrase lament in which each phrase is played through twice: once to establish the baseline melody, and second to provide an opportunity for embellishments. The final dance, *La Spagna*, is certainly the most exciting of the three. This movement showcases an energetic, playful melody that effortlessly alternates between duple and triple meter. The momentum of this work hits a climax as six sets of triumphant triplets lead to a conclusive cadence.

Colors

Bert Appermont

“Belgian composer Bert Appermont has written musicals, symphonies, an opera, oratorio, and more than fifty pieces for wind band, choir, orchestra, and chamber ensembles. His works have been performed and recorded by ensembles on three continents. Recently, he co-wrote the music for the BBC documentary *The Reel History of Britain*, which was recorded by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Appermont is also in demand as a conductor, both in his native country and abroad, and as an educator. His pedagogical publications and related recordings are in use in most Belgian music schools.

The materials have as their aim the stimulation and development of creativity as a crucial element of education.

Appermont certainly utilizes an innate creativity in his work *Colors* for trombone and band, sonically bringing to life four movement titles based on colors and their emotional associations, which he described in the notes for the piece:

- 1) Yellow: inspiring and stimulating (also: wisdom and light)
- 2) Red: dynamic, passionate developing into dramatic, furious and fighting (also: courage and will-power)
- 3) Blue: melancholic, dreamy and introvert (also: truth and peace)
- 4) Green: hopeful and full of expectation (also: balanced power and harmony)

In his merging of sound, sight, and thought, Appermont explores the wide color palette of the solo trombone and the many timbres of the wind ensemble. He uses a three-note motive (C-D-G) that returns in different guises throughout the work. His own movement titles and descriptions provide a narrative for the ever-evolving atmosphere of the work. An

additional source of inspiration for Appermont was the death of an uncle who played the trombone. The work's second movement symbolizes the man's courageous end-of-life struggle.”

— Notes courtesy of Staff Sergeant Russell Sharp, trombonist

Ballade

Eugène Bozza

Born in Nice, France, Eugène Bozza is the premier composer of French chamber music for wind instruments. He quickly established himself as such by winning the Grand Prix de Rome in 1934, the leading composition for chamber composers in France, before he turned 30.

His *Ballade* for trombone showcases his prowess in writing for wind instruments, and for this reason it is a staple solo work for the trombone still performed in many recitals and competitions today.

The piece features a great variety of tonalities, rhythms, and musical styles, and demands many different timbers and articulations from the performer. Throughout the work you will hear legato, pastoral melodies, bold, articulate exclamations, jazz-like quirky riffs, and even a reference to *Die Walküre* towards the end! Bozza truly mastered writing for the trombone, and almost every element of the instrument's musical identity is featured here.

Soliloquy

Anthony Barfield

The name Anthony Barfield is one that often appears alongside trombone performances, and for good reason. Barfield has been a leading composer and advocate for trombone solo and chamber performances for the past two decades, including writing works to be premiered by the instrument's premier performers.

This work, *Soliloquy*, is no exception. Written for and premiered by the principal trombonist of the New York Philharmonic, Joseph Alessi, the solo was written to challenge one of the world's finest trombonists. With this being the case, it is no surprise that the final product is a daunting one. What is surprising, however, is how effortlessly the music shines through the technical challenges this work provides.

Soliloquy is a work for solo trombone and trombone quartet accompaniment, an ensemble that is challenging to write for due to the lack of diversity in timbre. Barfield manages to make this experience an easy and pleasant one, however, using the quartet accompaniment in an organ-like manner. To avoid obscuring the solo line, Barfield's quartet accompaniment provides harmonic padding with occasional countermelodies and interludes.

The soloist's main responsibility is simply to float above this atmospheric, organ-like sound, accentuating the interesting harmonic landscape Barfield has painted. This landscape is largely defined by modal mixture and extended harmonies, which help to cultivate an ethereal, passionate sound.

Regarding structure, the work is broken up into three main sections:

- 1) An introductory, meditative lament
- 2) A brisk, exciting dance
- 3) A reflective and dramatic finish

Within each of these sections, the soloist contemplates different musical ideas comparably to how one's inner monologue sorts their thoughts and feelings, reflecting on each new musical theme, passing it along to the quartet behind them, and moving on to the next one. The overall effect mirrors the title of the work — a soliloquy.

Sicilienne Op. 78

Gabriel Fauré

Born in Pamiers, France, Gabriel Fauré was an acclaimed organist and the face of Symbolist French music. Today, his impact on the landscape of chamber music is immeasurable, and among those chamber works, his *Sicilienne Op. 78* might be the most performed out of all of them.

The origin of this oft-performed work is unassuming, however, having originally been written in 1893 for a theatrical production that was later abandoned. Five years later, Fauré took the music and arranged it for cello and piano — the same version that is to be performed here. However, the story of this music doesn't end here, it actually was adapted into two more settings: incidental music for Maurice Maeterlinck's play *Pelléas and Mélisande*, and finally into part of a suite arranged for orchestra bearing the same name.

Musically, the *Sicilienne Op. 78* is pleasant and strays little from its roots. Written in 6/8 time, in a minor key, and featuring lilting rhythms, the work stays very faithful to its title. However, what interest it may lack in general structure it more than makes up for in its harmonic interest and beautifully crafted melodies. The piece is a joy to performers and listeners alike, and perhaps that is the key reason for its longstanding popularity.

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