



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

**Eric Liu, Corno da Caccia  
Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, Piano**

March 27, 2025

5:30 PM

PepsiCo Recital Hall

**Program**

Concerto in E-flat Major

Jan Křtitel Jiří Neruda  
(1708-1780)

- I. Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Vivace

Concerto in E-flat Major, QV 5:Anh.13

Johann Joachim Quantz  
(1697-1773)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio cantabile
- III. Allegro

Élégie in E-flat Minor, Op.3, No.1

Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff  
(1873-1943)

Arranged by Miriam Hickman

Assisted by Mr. Dhruv Patel, trumpet

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This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Artist Diploma in Trumpet Performance. Eric Liu is a student of Dr Jon Burgess.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.

Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

## Acknowledgements

This is a recital featuring the Corno da Caccia, an instrument I just acquired two months ago. The term *Corno da Caccia* is Italian for Hunting Horn. Its tubing is conical in shape, placing it within the horn family. Originating from hunting, it was initially used as a signal instrument. Thanks to its mellow tone, it grew to become one of the most popular brass instruments in the 18th century, appearing in works by composers including Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel. I have long struggled to distinguish between the hunting horn, the post horn, and other lesser-known conical-bore brass instruments. To me, they seem both identical and distinct at the same time. In fact, there is no strict academic definition separating them — especially since many modern versions of these instruments, equipped with valves and resembling horns, bear little resemblance to their 17th- and 18th-century counterparts. Many videos show the German trumpet virtuoso Matthias Höfs performing on the Corno da Caccia. He once said:

*I use it for Mozart's post horn serenade, Mahler's post horn solo and exposed horn parts in pieces by Bach, to name a few.*

In his view, the timbre of the Corno da Caccia lies somewhere between that of the French horn and the flugelhorn. After several months of practice, I have increasingly come to feel that the relationship between the Corno da Caccia and the French horn is much like that between the trumpet and the piccolo trumpet. For all intents and purposes, it would not be inappropriate to simply call it a soprano French horn.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Burgess, Dr. Kao, and the trumpet virtuoso Pacho Flores for their extensive advice on repertoire, style, and performance.

I am also grateful to Mr. Dhruv Patel for performing two works with me. Our collaboration has been enjoyable and efficient, and it has shown me the vitality and energy of the younger generation of trumpeters — a source of genuine inspiration and encouragement for me.

## **Program Notes**

### **Concerto in E-flat Major – Jan Křtitel Jiří Neruda**

Neruda's Concerto in E-flat Major is one of the most frequently performed works in the early trumpet repertoire, representing the stylistic transition from the Baroque to the Classical period, but in fact, this work was originally composed for the Corno da Caccia. Composed around 1750 in Dresden for Johann Georg Knechtel—the first hornist of the court orchestra and a renowned high-register specialist—the concerto's solo part aligns perfectly with the 4th and 5th octaves of the natural harmonic series, confirming it was written for a high horn. In the 18th century, the terms "corno" and "corno da caccia" were likely synonymous; modern performances often use small high-pitched horns, which bear a similar relationship to the standard horn as the piccolo trumpet does to the standard trumpet, and notably, no one has yet performed this work on the original long valveless instrument from Neruda's era. Blending elegant formal structure with brilliant virtuosity, the concerto showcases both lyrical phrasing and technical agility: its outer movements highlight the instrument's brilliance and clarity, while the central movement offers a more expressive and cantabile character, solidifying its status as a cornerstone for trumpet players that embodies both historical significance and enduring musical appeal.

### **Concerto in E-flat Major – Johann Joachim Quantz**

Quantz, a prominent flutist, composer, and teacher at the court of Frederick the Great, was a central figure in late Baroque music. Although primarily known for his flute works, his Concerto in E-flat Major reflects the refined and elegant style associated with the galant aesthetic, emphasizing clarity, balance, and graceful melodic lines, along with a strong sense of dialogue between the soloist and ensemble. Ornamentation plays an important role in this work, allowing performers interpretive freedom while maintaining stylistic authenticity, exemplifying the expressive yet controlled character of mid-18th century instrumental music. With a relatively high range, this piece has been slightly edited by me and will be performed on the Corno da Caccia.

### **Élégie in E-flat Minor, Op.3, No.1 – Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff, arranged by Miriam Hickman**

Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the world's preeminent composers, pianists and conductors, composed *Morceaux de fantaisie* (Op. 3) for piano in 1892. This landmark five-piece set, premiered by Rachmaninoff himself in Kharkov on December 27 that year and dedicated to his Moscow Conservatory harmony teacher Anton Arensky, became one of his most enduring works. Its *Élégie in E-flat minor* (Op. 3, No. 1) is the poignant core, a distillation of his early artistic voice shaped by Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, and imbued with the rich color and expressive depth that defined all his compositions.

Rachmaninoff's early creative success was forged amid profound personal tragedy and adversity. Born into a wealthy Russian aristocratic family, he started piano lessons with his mother at four and later studied with Anna Ornatskaya, only for his father's gambling addiction to leave the family destitute and force a move to St. Petersburg. At 10, he lost paternal support, entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory and mourned his sister Sofia's death from diphtheria the same year; his gifted ballerina sister Yelena later died of pernicious anemia. Plagued by academic neglect after these losses, he transferred to the Moscow Conservatory to study with Nikolai Zverev, graduating with honors in piano in 1891 and laying the groundwork for Op. 3's creation in 1892.

The version we perform today is Dr. Miriam Hickman's masterful arrangement for B-flat trumpet, flugelhorn and piano. It preserves the original's lyrical tension and emotional core while fully exploring the unique timbral expressiveness of brass instruments and piano. The piece features a rich tapestry of dynamic shifts, ranging from delicate pianissimo and diminuendo to impassioned crescendo, appassionato and fortissimo, paired with expressive markings such as *con affetto* and *Più vivo*, demanding performers to fully convey the work's elegiac mood and dramatic warmth.

## **Passion Dance – Erik Morales**

*Passion Dance* is a dynamic modern tango-inspired work, shaped by Latin dance styles, modern harmonies and the legacy of Astor Piazzolla. Originally scored for B-flat trumpet, violin and piano (and once revised for string orchestra, harp and percussion), this adaptation reimagines the piece for B-flat trumpet, Corno da Caccia and piano. Defined by driving syncopated rhythms, dramatic contrasts and technical demands—including shifting meters and expressive extremes—it features a distinctive 8/12-bar trumpet opening, tango hallmarks like rhythmic ostinato, and builds relentlessly in intensity to an electrifying finish. This version highlights the tonal versatility of the trumpet and Corno da Caccia, challenging performers to blend precision with bold musical personality for a thrilling program conclusion.