

Zuly Cardenas, clarinet
Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

April 22, 2021

8:30pm

PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

Clarinet Concerto No.2 Op.74

Carl Maria von Weber(1786 - 1826)

- I. Allegro
- II. Romanze: Andante con moto
- III. Alla Polacca

Intermission

Light and Shadows for unaccompanied clarinet

Theresa Martin (1979)

Croatian Trio
Clarinet, Trumpet and Piano

James M. Stephenson (b.1901 - 1971)

- I. Dances for Insecure Nobility
- II. Ruby
- III. No Re-morse

Jhoan Garcia, trumpet

Program notes

Clarinet Concerto No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op.74.

“Weber is known primarily for his opera *Der Freischutz*, a Romantic opera in the grand manner. In fact, he is credited with the invention of Romantic opera in general, and German nationistic opera in particular. He had a great impact on Richard Wagner. He had the Romantic's preoccupation with the idea of painting tonal pictures, together with a nostalgia for by-gone times, and the mythology of his country. The writer Harry Halbreich suggests that Weber was the first to use the horn and the clarinet to express the voices of nature.

His Romantic tendencies were, however, tempered by a love of classical order. He idolized Mozart, and he was strongly influenced by his teacher, Michael Haydn. He even criticized Beethoven for a lack of classical restraint. One might, therefore, expect Weber's music to be an admirable blend of innovation and tradition. It is indeed surprising that it has not gained a wider audience.

Weber was a child prodigy, his huge hands contributing to his piano virtuosity. He wrote his first opera when he was fourteen, and became music director of the Breslau town theater when he was seventeen. No doubt he acquired a great deal of stage experience as he accompanied his father on theatrical tours throughout Germany. His interest in the clarinet began in 1811, when he met Heinrich Barmann, the greatest clarinetist in Germany. He wrote a Concerto for Barmann, which met with immediate success and spawned a series of commissions for the clarinet and other wind instruments. The two clarinet concerti followed the Concertino very closely, and the second was first performed (to "frenetic applause") in November of 1811.

The second concerto, is described as the more symphonic of the two. But there is a strikingly operatic character to it, especially in the second movement, the *Romance*. In the second half of that movement, the clarinet could be mistaken for a vocal solo, with the orchestra playing short chords in the manner of *recitativo secco*, as used by Mozart in *The Marriage of Figaro*. This is another reflection of Weber's love of classical form in general, and that of Mozart in particular.

The final movement, the Polonaise, makes spectacular demands on the soloist. Leaving aside problems of embouchure and breath control, ignoring the need to hit the *right* keys, just imagine hitting *any* keys that fast for that long, and you have a small idea of the difficulty of that piece.”

Program Notes by James R. C. Ada.

Light and Shadows

“I came up with the title, *Light and Shadows*, after researching Goethe’s *Theory of colours*(1810), particularly his description of light and darkness and its relationship to color. Unlike his contemporaries, Goethe didn’t see darkness as an absence of light, but rather as polar to and interacting with light; color resulted from this interaction of light and shadow. For Goethe, light is “the simplest most undivided most homogenous being that we know. Confronting it is the darkness.” (Letter to Jacobi) Conceptually, *Light and Shadows* plays with the ideas of Luminance and Chrominance, or a measure of brightness/light and the resulting color. Originally I had thought to make them separate movements, but as the piece was composed, the interaction between the two concepts became more interesting. Musically, the concept of luminance is depicted with frequent changes in register and dynamics. The contrast between fast and slow sections as well as diatonic verses chromatic passages represent all the contrasting colors that result from the dynamic interplay of darkness and light.”

Program Notes by Theresa Martin.

Croatian, Trio for Clarinet, Trumpet and Piano.

“In May of 2009, I had the distinct pleasure of assuming the role of Composer-In-Residence for a Music Festival in Zagreb, Croatia. The invitation had come more than a year earlier from Tomislav Spoljar, one of the nicest men I’ve had the pleasure of meeting - and a trumpet player too!

In addition to the performance of many existing works of mine, I offered to write a new piece for the festival, composed for the somewhat unusual combination of flute, trumpet and piano. The piece would be for Tom’s wife, Ana, on flute, and would also include an old friend of mine from college days on trumpet, Andrew Balio, now the principal trumpeter of the Baltimore Symphony.

The first movement, Dances for Insecure Nobility, begins with four rather ambiguous jazz chords. This immediately launches into an off-kilter gavotte, with sudden dynamic outbursts (a la Berlioz) and a feeling of someone always lurking, adding to the insecurity of the noble dance. The jazz chords intrude again, and variations occur, first with a gigue, and later an up-tempo almost ‘Can-Can-esque’ drive to the finish.

Next comes Ruby, whose title was inspired by a photo of the same name, depicting the roofs of many homes and buildings in Dubrovnik, awash in the bold, vivid and fiery red color. I chose to use a flugelhorn in this movement, to add to the mystical music reflecting an Asian character, where the stone is held in high-esteem.

The last movement, No: ReMorse, is, of course, a musical pun. A bright, rhythmical pattern is repeated many times, and as one might guess from the title, it has significance in Morse Code. If decoded, the long-short patterns do in fact spell out C-R-O-A-T-I-A! I chose to use the piccolo trumpet to further support the bright and energetic character of the movement, and to play against the inherent qualities of the flute.”

Today you will be able to listen to the version for clarinet instead of flute.

Program Notes by James Stephenson