



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Matt Assis, bassoon
Andrew Packard, piano

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

8:30 pm

PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

Sonatine pour Basson et Piano (1952)

I - Allegro con moto

II - Aria

III - Scherzo

Alexandre Tansman
(1897-1986)

Romance for Bassoon (1909-10)

Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)

The Dark Eyed Sailor (1913)

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)

Dorian Holley, bassoon
Coby Gratzner, bassoon
Harrison Collins, bassoon

Quintett, op. 16 (1796)

IV - Rondo

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Demitri Halasa, clarinet
Lauren Hanifan, oboe
Joe Harris, horn

****Intermission****

Concerto da esperimento (1845)

I - Allegro

II - Largo

III - Rondò

Gioachino Rossini
(1792-1868)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Degree
in Music Education (Instrumental) Major. Matt Assis is a student of
Charles Hall.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited. Please
silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

Program Notes

Sonatine pour Basson et Piano - A. Tansman

Alexandre Tansman, a French-Polish composer, was heavily influenced and mentored by notable composers such as Igor Stravinsky and Maurice Ravel, as highlighted within his works through the similar harmonic implications and defining rhythmic features. Written in 1952, the Sonatine for Bassoon and Piano is a precise example of how his music combines both neoclassical and French elements of music. Initially the piece features aggressive and rhythmic interplay between the piano and bassoon as the piano forcefully pulses eighth notes and the bassoon maniacally exclaims the main melodic motif. The second movement presents a contrasting, gentle melodic section that gives way to the even more frantic third movement. Amusing and exhilarating for performer and audience alike, this work exemplifies some of the best of what 20th-century composers contribute to the standard bassoon repertoire.

Romance for Bassoon - E. Elgar

Composed in 1910 for the principal bassoonist of the London Symphony Orchestra – Edwin F James – this work is from Edward Elgar’s most creative periods. *Romance for Bassoon* was composed between two of Elgar’s largest works, the *Violin Concerto* (1910) and the *Second Symphony* (1911). In contrast to these two large-scale works, the *Romance for Bassoon* is much gentler and shorter in length. What is really poignant about this work is the portrayal of the bassoon as a solo instrument. This is obviously not saying that solo works for bassoon had not been done in the past, however, this particular work shines a delicate light on the often comedic-sounding instrument. Unlike a concerto, this work is not a showpiece for the bassoon, but more of a musical interlude. The opening burst of musical material from the orchestra is unmistakably in Elgar’s style at the time, with other works also using this same technique. The bassoon enters and plays through the main theme of the work. This opens up a balanced dialogue between the orchestra and soloist.

The Dark Eyed Sailor - R. Vaughan Williams

Vaughan Williams arranged Dark Eyed Sailor, a Scottish ballad, as a drama. This song was sung to him by Mrs. Horsnell and her daughter on December 4th, 1903. He later found other versions elsewhere. The song begins with the chorus as narrator, describing a sailor and his ladylove out walking. The tenors/basses become the young man, and the sopranos/altos become the young woman, as they engage in dialogue about their situation. The altos then become the narrator, describing how the young lady’s sailor lover left, taking half a gold ring as a token.

Quintett - L. van Beethoven

This work is often said to have been modeled on Mozart's Quintet, K. 452, which is scored for the same ensemble (oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn, plus piano), but there are as many differences as similarities between the two scores. Mozart was already an acknowledged master in 1784 when his Quintet appeared, while the 26-year-old Beethoven had published piano trios and sonatas by this time, but his fame had come primarily from his dazzling displays of improvisational skill and keyboard virtuosity. He was still exploring instrumental sonorities before setting out on his voyage of symphonic composition. Opus 16 offered a chance for him to showcase his composing and his performing prowess. The Rondo's nonchalant theme soon picks up speed as it is embellished and embroidered by the piano and the winds in a whirl of activity.

Concerto da Esperimento - G. Rossini

The story goes that Rossini had written the work for Nazareno Gatti, a bassoon student, for his final examination. Rossini was an advisor at the music school in Bologna where Gatti attended, but scholars aren't sure how much Rossini was involved with writing the concerto. He may have sketched it out for someone else to finish, as he did with many of his compositions during his retirement. Some say Gatti finished it, or Gatti may have written the entire work and put Rossini's name to it. In any event, scholars agree it was written in the 1840's and in the style of Rossini. If it truly was written by Rossini, it would represent his final work for orchestra, as the aforementioned *Péchés de vieillesse* were chamber works or solo piano. The work opens in the key of B-flat major with the orchestra stating the themes of the movement as per usual in a concerto, especially this movement that is built more in Classical era form and techniques than Romantic. In the second movement, the music shifts from B-flat major to C minor, a key quite distant from B-flat major. In this lyrical movement the bassoon sings as if it is a soloist in a scene from an opera. The tonal range of the movement showcases the bassoon's unique timbre changes in its registers. The plethora of notes for the soloist doesn't let up in the finale, nor their extreme ranges. The music is in the key of F major, something different than many concertos of this time as it isn't in the same key of the first movement.