



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Demitri Halasa, Clarinet
Dr. Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, Piano

Saturday, November 16, 2024,

7:30pm

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

Program

Sonata No. 1 in F minor, op. 120

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

- I. Allegro appassionato*
- II. Andante un poco adagio*
- III. Allegretto grazioso*
- IV. Vivace*

Cantilène

Louis Cahuzac
(1880-1960)

Intermission

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Klezmer Medley

Takeda, Sperling, Musiker

- I. *Kumi Ori/Uri Tzion*
- II. *The Blessing Nigun*
- III. *Sammy's Freilach*

Holt Lee, Bass
Zach Bourgeois, Percussion

Program Notes

Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, op. 120

Composed in 1894 for clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, Brahms' *Sonata No. 1 in F minor* is one of his last works, reflecting both his mastery of chamber music and his admiration for the clarinet. Written during his late period, the sonata blends emotional depth with structural clarity and remains a cornerstone of the clarinet repertoire.

I. Allegro appassionato

The opening movement is passionate and dramatic, featuring a stormy dialogue between clarinet and piano. Brahms' characteristic interplay of lyrical and virtuosic elements is on full display.

II. Andante un poco Adagio

This slow, tender movement offers a serene contrast. The clarinet sings a warm, lyrical melody, supported by a gentle piano accompaniment, showcasing Brahms' introspective late style.

III. Allegretto grazioso

Light and playful, this movement evokes a Viennese dance, with graceful rhythms and charming exchanges between clarinet and piano, providing a moment of elegance and ease.

IV. Vivace

The finale brings the sonata to a fiery conclusion, with a lively tempo and spirited interplay. It combines lyrical beauty with virtuosic flair, closing the piece on a thrilling note.

Cantilène

Cantilène is a beautifully lyrical work for clarinet and piano, composed by French clarinetist and composer Louis Cahuzac. Renowned for his exceptional skills as a performer, Cahuzac was one of the leading clarinet virtuosos of the 20th century. His deep understanding of the instrument is evident in his compositions, which often explore its full range of expressive possibilities. The title *Cantilène* refers to a song-like piece, and this work lives up to its name with its long, flowing melodic lines that highlight the clarinet's ability to sing. The music is deeply expressive, with a sense of French elegance and charm. The clarinet weaves a delicate and wistful melody over a supportive and gentle piano accompaniment, creating a serene atmosphere that evokes both introspection and tenderness. *Cantilène* is often performed for its lyrical beauty and technical subtlety, allowing the performer to focus on phrasing, tone quality, and expressive nuance. It remains a favorite in the clarinet repertoire for its graceful simplicity and emotional depth, offering a brief but poignant moment of reflection in any recital.

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra

Composed between 1947 and 1948, Aaron Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra* was commissioned by the famous clarinetist Benny Goodman. The work is a unique fusion of classical traditions with elements of jazz and American popular music, reflecting Copland's ability to capture the American spirit in his compositions. The concerto is structured in two connected movements, beginning with a lyrical, slow movement followed by a faster, more rhythmic second movement, linked by a solo cadenza. The opening movement features a serene, pastoral quality, with long, expressive clarinet lines that convey a sense of spaciousness and introspection. This is followed by an improvisatory cadenza that leads into the lively, jazz-

inflected second movement. Here, Copland's playful syncopations, irregular rhythms, and hints of Latin American dance rhythms come to the forefront, showcasing the clarinet's agility and versatility. The combination of classical structure and jazz-inspired elements makes this concerto a standout in the clarinet repertoire. Copland's fresh approach to melody and rhythm, along with the virtuosic demands of the piece, make it a favorite for both performers and audiences alike. In fact, the original rendition was so demanding that Benny Goodman requested Copland to rewrite parts of the concerto. The work closes with a vibrant and energetic finale, underscoring Copland's uniquely American musical voice.

Klezmer Medley

I. Kumi Ori / Uri Tzion

Kumi Ori / Uri Tzion is a medley of traditional Jewish liturgical tunes, deeply rooted in the call for spiritual awakening and redemption. "Kumi Ori" translates to "Arise, Shine," a reference to a verse in Isaiah, while "Uri Tzion" calls upon Zion to awaken. These melodies convey hope, resilience, and the yearning for light in times of darkness, embodying a core theme of klezmer music: the expression of both sorrow and joy. The clarinet's soulful voice is perfect for bringing out the nuances of these ancient tunes, merging devotional intensity with musical exuberance.

II. The Blessing Nigun

A *nigun* is a wordless melody, often used in Jewish spiritual practices to evoke deep emotions and connect the singer with the divine. *The Blessing Nigun* captures a quiet, introspective moment, where music takes the place of words in expressing gratitude and reverence. Through delicate ornamentation and flowing lines, this piece embodies a meditative blessing, drawing the listener into a personal reflection. The clarinet here serves as a vessel for spiritual dialogue, with its ability to sustain lyrical phrases, mirroring the human voice.

III. Sammy's Freilach

A *freilach* is a lively, celebratory dance tune, and *Sammy's Freilach* is no exception. Full of energy and joy, this piece is rooted in klezmer tradition, often performed at weddings and festive gatherings. The fast-paced rhythms, playful ornamentations, and frequent shifts in tempo highlight the clarinet's versatility and the infectious spirit of klezmer. With *Sammy's Freilach*, we conclude the recital on an exuberant note, inviting the audience to share in the jubilant celebration of life that klezmer music embodies.

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. Demitri Halasa is a student of Dr. Corey Mackey.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.

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