

A GRADUATE CLARINET RECITAL

By

BRENDON S. LUCAS

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

MITCHELL ESTRIN, CHAIR

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A PERFORMANCE IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2012

Summary of Performance in Lieu of Thesis
Presented to the College of Fine Arts of the University of Florida
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Music

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December 2012

Chair: Mitchell Estrin
Major: Music

At 7:30pm on the 6th of November, 2012, a recital was presented featuring works that span a wide range of style periods within the clarinet repertoire. Presented in the room 101 recital hall of the University of Florida Music Building, the recital opened with a collaborative performance of Franz Schubert's famous lied for soprano, clarinet, and piano, *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*. Known in English as "The Shepherd on the Rock", this work was composed in 1828 near the end of the composer's life, and presents poetic melodies representing the calls of a lonely shepherd from a mountaintop as they echo off the hills and valleys rising from below. This work was followed by Claude Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie*, which was completed in 1910, and dedicated to Prosper Mimart, clarinet professor at the conservatory of Paris. With the composer having been recently appointed to the conservatory's board of directors, this work was selected in that year as the primary material for the school's clarinet performance examinations. Though originally written for clarinet and piano, as performed on this program, Debussy later published an orchestration of the accompaniment.

The second half of the performance was opened with Aaron Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet, Strings and Harp*. This concerto, completed between 1947 and 1949, displays a stark contrast both in style and structure to the Debussy, as its two *attacca* movements are filled with a unique blend of

melodies and rhythms infused with elements of both jazz and classical styles. This work represents the second most recent addition to the clarinet repertoire presented on this recital, and is perhaps the most recognized concerto for the instrument written in the 20th century. The finale of the recital took the form of Astor Piazzolla's Argentinian dance oriented work, *Histoire du Tango*. Performed in transcription by a quartet of clarinets, this closing selection demonstrates the diversity of compositional styles for the instrument in comparison with the other works on the program, and is the newest of the four, having been composed in its original form for flute and guitar in the 1980s.

Spanning nearly two hundred years, the repertoire selections on this recital presented a diverse buffet of tastes to the auditory pallet of the listener. The performance encompassed approximately sixty minutes worth of music from several different parts of the globe, with each piece being performed in chronological order of composition.

PROGRAM

A Graduate Clarinet Recital
Brendon Lucas, clarinet
November 6th, 2012 – 7:30pm
MUB 101

Assisted by:
Michelle Fegeas, soprano
Katherine Plympton, piano
Brian Hargrove, piano
Melody Rueger, clarinet
John Divine, basset horn
Jeremiah Adriano, bass clarinet

“Der Hirt auf dem Felsen,” D. 956

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Michelle Fegeas, soprano
Katherine Plympton, piano

Première Rhapsodie

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Intermission

Concerto for Clarinet, Strings and Harp

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Slowly and Expressively
Rather Fast

Brian Hargrove, piano

Histoire du Tango

Astor Piazzolla
(1921-1992)

I. Bordel
IV. Concert d'aujourd'hui

Brendon Lucas, piccolo clarinet, Melody Rueger, clarinet
John Divine, basset horn, Jeremiah Adriano, bass clarinet

*Mr. Lucas is from the studios of Professors Jackie Glazier and Mitchell Estrin
This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music*

PROGRAM NOTES

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen, D. 965
(text after Wilhelm Müller's poem
"The Mountain Shepherd")

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh,
ins tiefe Thal herneider seh,
und singe, und singe,
fern aus dem tiefen, dunkeln Thal
schwingt sich empor der Wiederhall,
der Wiederhall der Klüfte.

Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,
Je heller sie mir wiederklingt,
von unten, von unten.
Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir,
drum seh'n ich mich so heiß nach ih
hinüber, hinüber.

In tiefem Gram verher' ich mich,
mir ist die Freude hin,
auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich,
ich heir so einsam bin,
ich heir so einsam bin.

So sehnend klang im Wald das Lied,
so sehnend klang es durch die Nacht,
die Herzen es zum Himmel zieht
mit wunderbarer Macht.

Der Frühling will kommen,
der Frühling meine Freud,
nun mach ich mich fertig zum Wandern bereit.

The Shepherd on the Rock, D. 965
(Translation: Lionel Salter)

When on the highest cliff I stand,
gaze down into the deep valley
and sing,
and echo from the ravines
floats upwards from the dark valley
far away.

The further my voice travels,
the clearer it returns to me
from below.
So far from me does my love dwell
that I yearn for her more ardently
over there.

With deep grief I am consumed,
my joy is at an end;
all hope on earth has left me;
I am so lonely here,
I am so lonely here.

So longingly sounded the song in the wood,
so longingly it sounded through the night,
drawing hearts heavenwards
with wondrous power.

Spring is coming,
Spring, my joy;
Now I will make ready to go journeying.

Composed during the final months of **Franz Schubert's** life, *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* is foremost in the selection of literature for clarinet and soprano, and is believed to be the last work the composer ever put to paper. Known in English as *The Shepherd on the Rock*, this 19th Century lied was requested of Schubert by Pauline Ann Milder-Hauptmann, an operatic soprano who frequently performed with the Berlin Court Opera. Though the work was completed in 1828, it was not premiered or published until early in 1830, more than a year after the composer's death. The multi-sectional lied provides beautiful melodies for both the clarinet and soprano, and represents a wide variety of emotions accessible by a diverse audience, which was the request of Milder-Hauptmann.

The Shepherd on the Rock is more like an operatic aria in comparison with Schubert's other lieder, as the vocal and clarinet lines weave closely together, creating a homogenous yet playful sound.

Broken down into three sections, the song opens with solo clarinet, setting the stage as the lonely shepherd high on the mountaintop, yearning for his lost love. The soprano enters enforcing this theme, while the clarinet begins to echo her melody lines, embodying the sounds rising from far below the mountains. The middle section turns darker, bringing to the listener a tale of grief and sadness accented by a few telltale minor mode phrases. Moving into the final section, the clarinet and soprano interweave the melody lines quite playfully as the shepherd begins to sing of the coming of spring, and ultimately seeks a sign of hope and rebirth with the new season. The final lines of this concertante aria are delivered by the clarinet, in the form of a robust and fast moving melody, delivering an exciting push towards the concluding cadence.

In 1904, a vacancy at the Paris Conservatory of Music resulted in clarinet pedagogue Prosperé Mimart being selected as the new instructor of clarinet at this prestigious school for musicians. Several years later in 1909, **Claude Debussy** was asked to join the governing council of the same conservatory. After having sat on the jury for the conservatory's annual woodwind concours, or exit examinations, Debussy was asked by Mimart to compose a test piece for the examinations the following spring. This request was filled with *Première Rhapsodie*, a virtuosic work written in its original form for solo clarinet and piano. In July of 1910, eleven clarinet students performed the work for Debussy as part of their exit examinations, much to the composer's pleasure, and in fact he described it as "one of the most charming [pieces] I have ever written."

The aim of a 'solo de concours' was to provide a challenge to the clarinet player by way of both lyricism and virtuosity. As a result, most solos written for the Paris Conservatory followed a slow-fast blueprint. *Première Rhapsodie* follows this blueprint, opening with a slow, pensive melody marked "dreamily slow." This opening thematic material, which is presented several times

throughout the work, is followed by a “moderately animated section” filled with moving rhythmic structures and flourishes across the range of the instrument. After a few brief cadenzas and many shifts of tempo, the work is concluded with a fast moving and playful “scherzando.” Debussy enjoyed the work so much that he eventually orchestrated the piece, forming one of his very few concerto-like pieces for soloist and orchestra.

Best known for his widely performed ballet scores *Appalachian Spring* and *Billy the Kid*, composer **Aaron Copland** is one of the quintessential creators of the American voice of orchestral music. His works cover many genres, including film scores, ballets, chamber pieces, works for band, and of course, his prolifically performed orchestral compositions. One of his more famous works for a solo instrument is his *Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra with Harp*. Indeed this work has become so popular within the clarinet repertoire that world renowned virtuoso Stanley Drucker has given more than a hundred performances of the concerto throughout his career. The origin of the piece stems back to 20th Century Jazz clarinetist, Benny Goodman. After hearing Copland’s third symphony in 1947, Goodman commissioned him to write a concerto for the clarinet. His requests were quite vague:

“I made no demands on what Copland should write. He had completely free rein, except that I should have a two-year exclusivity on playing the work. I paid two thousand dollars and that's real money. At the time there were not too many American composers to pick from...”

Goodman, who is also responsible for the commission of Béla Bartók’s *Contrasts* for clarinet, violin, and piano, had a diverse repertoire of performance style, ranging from big band and bebop, to more classically oriented works such as those of Mozart for the clarinet.

The concerto was completed in 1948 to Copland’s satisfaction. Goodman however, had qualms about the difficulty of certain segments of the work, and repetitively postponed the premier until Copland made adjustments. The piece was debuted in New York City on an NBC radio

broadcast with the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner, on November 6th, 1950. The first public performance was given on November 28th by Ralph McLane and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. Instantly popular, Copland received a request from Serge Koussevitsky to arrange the concerto's first movement as an elegy for strings for the Boston Symphony, and within a year, choreographer Jerome Robbins constructed a ballet entitled *The Pied Piper* to the music of the concerto.

The compositional period of Copland's life from which the clarinet concerto originates is characterized by a synthesis of both popular and serious styles of music. Including elements from both Jazz and Classical traditions, the concerto presents a unique balance of characters for the listener, and there are numerous unconventional elements within the pieces structure and orchestration. In the words of the composer,

The instrumentation being clarinet with strings, harp, and piano, I did not have a large battery of percussion to achieve jazzy effects, so I used slapping basses and whacking harp sounds to simulate them. The Clarinet Concerto ends with a fairly elaborate coda in C major that finishes off with a clarinet glissando – or “smear” in jazz lingo.

Though it is performed as a continuous work, the concerto is actually composed in two movements connected by a rather lengthy solo cadenza. The first, marked “slowly and expressively” explores a beautifully lyrical set of melodies separated by large intervals and flowing dynamics in ebb and flow. The cadenza, one of the most unique challenges in the clarinet repertoire, displays the full gambit of articulations and range. The second and final movement is entered *attacca*, and presents the aforementioned unique blend of Jazz and Classic styles.

Histoire du Tango is one of **Astor Piazzolla's** more ambitious multi-movement works, and is intended to depict the history of tango style music in four movements styled at thirty year intervals. The piece was originally composed for flute and guitar in the 1980s, and has since seen a fair share

of transcriptions and arrangements for various instrumental duos. The performance on this program has transcribed the original solo line into shared melodies between four instruments of the clarinet family forming a quartet: the piccolo (Eb) clarinet, the soprano (Bb) clarinet, the basset horn, and the bass clarinet. Led by the piccolo clarinet, each instrument shares the melody in turn, while serving to fill out the accompaniment lines as necessary. The first and last movements depict respectively Piazzolla's impressions of both the origins of tango music, and where it will move to in the "performance of tomorrow." The work is characterized by heavy rhythmic syncopation, fast dynamic alterations and light, playful melodies indicative of Piazzolla's trade as a bandoneonist, and his experience with the tango orchestra.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brendon Lucas is a teaching assistant at the University of Florida, and the adjunct instructor of clarinet and saxophone at the College of Central Florida. Hailing from New York, Mr. Lucas is concurrently a music educator and multiple woodwind doubler in the northeast tri-state region. He holds a bachelors degree in clarinet performance and music education from Ithaca College, and is presently a Master's candidate at the University of Florida. His teachers include Mitchell Estrin, Jaclyn Glazier, Michael Galvan, Dennis Joseph, and Charles Yassky.

As a performer of the clarinet, saxophone, and flute, Mr. Lucas has held permanent and substitute positions with the Ridgewood Concert Band, South Orangetown Concert Band, Ocala Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, and various other ensembles. With these performing groups, he has premiered works by Dana Wilson, Donald Grantham, Diego Vega, Paul Moravec, and others. Mr. Lucas has also performed with an assortment of jazz ensembles, and as a doubling theater musician for over 30 musical productions across the northeast. Recently, he has performed on master-class and clinic programs with performers including David Schifrin, Carol Wincenc, Robert Spring, James Campbell, and Stanley Drucker.

Mr. Lucas's other activities include serving on the staffs of assorted northeast summer music programs, maintaining a private studio of woodwind students, and participating in a variety of national and international music competitions. He has also contributed to studio ensemble recordings for emerging film score composers, and can soon be heard on multiple ensemble recording albums under the Mark Masters record label.

Mr. Lucas is a member of the Pi Lappa Lambda music honors society, and a decorated member the men's music fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, having received awards at both the collegiate and national level for musicianship and scholarly study. He is also actively affiliated as a music educator with such organizations as NAFME and NYSSMA, and holds memberships with the International Clarinet Association and World Clarinet Alliance.