

SONOKLECT '02-'03

A Concert Series of Modern Music

Terry Vosbein, Director

ALEXANDER FITERSTEIN - clarinet

DAVID RILEY - piano

Washington and Lee University
Keller Theatre • 8:00 p.m. • 24 January 2003

PROGRAM

Sonata in E-flat Major for Clarinet & Piano Camille Saint-Saëns
Op.167 (1921) (1835-1921)
 Allegretto
 Allegro Animato
 Lento
 Molto Allegro

Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet (1918) Igor Stravinsky
 (1882-1971)

Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano (1956) Bohuslav Martinu
 Moderato (1890-1959)
 Allegro
 Andante
 Poco Allegro

— INTERMISSION —

Scherzo for Clarinet and Piano (1996) Terry Vosbein
 (b. 1957)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962) Francis Poulenc
 Allegro Tristamente (1899-1963)
 Romanza
 Allegro Con Fuoco

Solo de Concours (1900) Andre Messager
 (1853-1929)

PROGRAM NOTES

Camille Saint- Saëns

Sonata in E-flat Major
for clarinet and piano, Op. 167

Shortly before he died at the age of eighty-six, Camille Saint- Saëns (1835-1921) composed three sonatas for wind instruments. The present sonata is one of these, and was dedicated to Auguste Perier, professor of clarinet at the Paris Conservatoire. Saint- Saëns was one of the leading figures in the regeneration of French instrumental music; these sonatas for wind instruments composed at the very end of his career are of interest especially for their transparency and lucidity.

The main features of the *Clarinet Sonata* are its unusually simple piano part—he himself a gifted pianist, Saint-Saëns generally wrote piano parts of considerable technical difficulty—and the lyrical melodic lines of the clarinet. The work consists of four movements. The first has a main section featuring an expansive theme which appears on either side of a florid central section; the second presents lively music in A-flat major. The third is noteworthy for its restrained beauty, and the fourth is a lively finale which ends with a return to the melody appearing at the beginning of the first movement.

Igor Stravinsky

Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet

Stravinsky wrote these *Three Pieces* for and dedicated them to Werner Reinhart as a token of gratitude for the generous way he had financed the first production of *The Soldier's Tale*. Reinhart himself was an amateur clarinetist; and Stravinsky had already shown a predilection for the instrument, particularly in the *Cat's Cradle Songs*.

An extended composition for a solo instrument is always difficult to handle; but Stravinsky seems to have welcomed the challenge. In the Tango of *The Soldier's Tale* he had already come very close to writing a movement for a violin solo (with percussion); but here he was writing for a wind instrument that could not emulate the violin's double-stopping, and there was no accompanying percussion. The last of these *Three Pieces* resembles both the Tango and the Ragtime of *The Soldier's Tale* in style. The other two pieces are more original. The first exploits the lower range of the instrument in a mood of meditative tranquility; and the second is written without bar lines in an improvisatory vein with fast-flowing arpeggios and arabesques, slightly reminiscent of the ebullient opening of 'Mazatsumi' (in the *Three Japanese Lyrics*), framing a slower, quieter, lower-pitched middle section.

Bohuslav Martinu**Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano**

In the line of composers who founded Czech music such as Smetana and Janacek, Martinu holds a special place in that he did not delve into folk music traditions. Instead, he chose a more individual road and retained a thoroughly Czech spirit, one of happiness, humor, creativity and a sense of reality (as opposed to the dreamlike fantasies which characterize composers such as Chopin and Liszt). Living abroad for most of his life, Martinu was a violinist and organist, and in his music can be heard extremely varied influences, from Renaissance motets to 1920's jazz.

Terry Vosbein**Scherzo for Clarinet and Piano**

This one-movement work is developed entirely from the opening figures in the first four measures. The duo of clarinet and piano moves through numerous shifts in character, from long flowing legato melodies to rhythmically driving strains. The texture is mostly contrapuntal, frequently imitative counterpoint, with several canons appearing throughout the work. Of course, there is a cadenza, full of wide-ranging swoops of up to three octaves. And what would a cadenza be without a few trills, before the piano rejoins for the fiery conclusion? This composition was commissioned by clarinetist Heather Millette who premiered it at a Sonoklect concert in 1996.

Francis Poulenc**Sonata for Clarinet and Piano**

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) composed this work in 1962 in answer to a commission from Benny Goodman and in memory of Arthur Honegger, a fellow member of "Les Six" who had died in 1955. By an ironic turn of fate, Poulenc died the year after composing the *Sonata*, which was premiered at a memorial concert for Poulenc himself.

The work begins with a movement entitled "Allegro tristamente." The second movement, "Romanza," features a theme marked *tres doux et melancolique*; one senses in it the feelings of Poulenc for his deceased friend. The third movement, "Allegro con Fuoco," is another lively piece featuring dynamic rhythms.

Andre Messager**Solo de Concours**

A student of Faure and Saint-Saëns, Messager is chiefly known as a composer of French operettas, as many of his works have remained as classics in the repertory. He was also a respected conductor in his day, particularly in the works of Wagner, Mozart opera and Russian music. In an age of musical specialization, one can appreciate the all-encompassing gifts of Messager with this quote by Faure: "... [Messager was] familiar with everything, knowing it all, fascinated by anything new ... one of the first pilgrims to Bayreuth and able to play Wagner by heart when the latter was still unknown in Paris."

Alexander Fiterstein



Clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein won First Prize in the 2001 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Recent performances include debut recitals in the Young Concert Artists Series in Washington DC at the Kennedy Center, in New York at the 92nd Street Y, and in Boston at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, as well as a concert in Washington DC on the "Music at the Supreme Court" Series.

During the 2002-2003 season, Mr. Fiterstein performs the *Mozart Concerto* with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, makes his New York concerto debut with the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Alice Tully Hall, and appears in the Young Concert Artists Series at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall as recipient of the Summis Auspiciis Prize. He gives recitals in Europe at The Louvre in Paris and in Jerusalem, and in the U.S. at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, Iowa State University, Washington State University, the Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center in Birmingham, for the Springfield (OH) Arts Council, and for the JCC of Greater Washington. In addition to his New York concerto debut, Mr. Fiterstein solos with the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony and the Mansfield (OH) Symphony this season.

Alexander Fiterstein was born in Minsk in the former Soviet Union and emigrated with his family to Israel when he was two years old. He has studied at the Israel Arts and Science Academy and received his high school diploma from the Interlochen Arts Academy. Mr. Fiterstein received a Bachelor's degree and a Graduate Diploma from The Juilliard School, where he worked with Charles Neidich.

David Riley



David Riley has extensive experience as a solo and collaborative pianist, having performed at the Dame Myra Hess Series in Chicago, the Gardner Museum in Boston, the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, the 92nd Street Y, Bellas Artes in San Juan PR, and Salle de Concert Pollack in Montreal, among others. He has performed for dozens of radio broadcasts throughout North America including CBC National Radio, NPR Performance Today, and WQXR in New York City.

This concert season Mr. Riley is performing most notably at the National Art Gallery in Washington DC, Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall on two occasions, the Sonoklect Contemporary Music Festival in Virginia and at Merkin Hall with the New York Philharmonic Chamber Players.

He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Anne Epperson and Jean Barr respectively. A native of Boston, Massachusetts, Mr. Riley currently resides in New York City.

2002-2003 SONOKLECT Season

SATURDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER
The Two Trios of Glenn Ferris

FRIDAY, 24 JANUARY
Alexander Fiterstein - clarinet
David Riley - piano

SATURDAY, 22 MARCH
Jesús Morales - cello
The University-Shenandoah Symphony Orchestra

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