



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Faculty Tuesday Series

Wind Camerata: CU Faculty and Friends

Yoshi Ishikawa, director
Gary Lewis, conductor

with

Faculty

Christina Jennings, flute; Peter Cooper, oboe; Daniel Silver, clarinet
Yoshi Ishikawa, bassoon; Terry Sawchuk, trumpet
Justin Bartels, trumpet; Bill Stanley, trombone

Friends

Kristen Weber, oboe; Emily Wangler, clarinet
Daniel Mills, basset horn; Annaka Hogelin, basset horn
Daniel Nester, bassoon; Gyungsun Im, bassoon
Chandler Spoon, horn; Noelle Limbird horn
Josh East, horn; Maggie Rickard, horn
Jose Leonardo Leon, bass trombone; Brett Armstrong, bass

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Imig Music Building

Be engaged. Be inspired. Be here.
Be Boulder.

Program

Octet for Wind Instruments

- I. Sinfonia
- II. Tema con Variazioni
- III. Finale

Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

*Christina Jennings, flute · Daniel Silver, clarinet
Yoshi Ishikawa, bassoon I · Gyungsun Im, bassoon II
Terry Sawchuk, trumpet I · Justin Bartels, trumpet II
Bill Stanley, trombone · Jose Leon, bass trombone*

—Pause—

Serenade in B-flat Major, K 361, “Gran Partita”

- I. Largo—Molto allegro
- II. Menuetto—Trio I—Trio II
- III. Adagio
- IV. Menuetto. Allegretto—Trio I—Trio II
- V. Romance. Adagio—Allegretto—Adagio
- VI. Tema con Variazioni—Tema. Andante (six variations)
- VII. Finale. Molto allegro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

*Dan Silver, clarinet · Emily Wangler, clarinet
Daniel Mills, basset horn I · Annaka Hogelin, basset horn II
Peter Cooper, oboe · Kristen Weber, oboe
Yoshi Ishikawa, bassoon I · Daniel Nester, bassoon II
Chandler Spoon, horn I · Noelle Limbird, horn II
Josh East, horn III · Maggie Rickard, horn IV
Brett Armstrong, bass*

Program Notes

Notes by Carlo Caballero

Octet for Wind Instruments

Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky's three-movement Octet combines four woodwinds with four brass instruments (flute, clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets, and two trombones), a nearly even match that gives the piece a brassier timbre than Mozart's K 361, even beyond the more obvious differences in their musical languages.

Both composers seem to have had the intention to amuse and delight their audiences, but Stravinsky's wit is thornier. And the peculiar essay he wrote about the Octet is no fun at all. "My Octet is a musical object," the composer declared in "Some Ideas about My Octet." "My Octet is made for an ensemble of wind instruments. Wind instruments seem to me to be more apt to render a certain rigidity of the form I had in mind than other instruments—the string instruments, for example, which are less cold and more vague ... In general I consider that music is only able to solve musical problems and nothing else; neither the literary nor the picturesque can be in music of any real interest." This waspish bit of modernist posturing was probably ghostwritten by his assistant Arthur Lourié, but Stravinsky signed it. Perhaps he even believed in the anti-romantic rhetoric of the essay, insofar as it promoted his desire to obtain "executions" rather than "interpretations" of his music.

We may take all this, like Stravinsky's crackpot scientific references to the "specific gravity" of the Octet, with a big grain of salt today. What remains is a small masterpiece of wind and brass writing that combines features of Stravinsky's Russian roots with his special approach to the "Back to Bach" Parisian fad of the 1920s. A nod to the swung rhythms of Euro-American jazz of those years also makes its appearance at the very end of the finale.

The genius of the Octet lies in the way Stravinsky convinces the listener that this music has returned to the premises of 18th-century style when it is only using its outward gestures symbolically, not

organically. As Stephen Walsh puts it, Stravinsky "apes the grammar of tonality." The opening Sinfonia stands comparison to the first movement of Mozart's K. 361, but its notated key signature of E-flat major only tells us what the music is referring to, not what it is. The composer exploits outward traits of tonality and counterpoint familiar from baroque and classical style while transforming and parodying those procedures in a very personal way. For example, what begins as a regular, classical 3/4 meter in the Sinfonia soon becomes an irregular Stravinskian melée of 2/8, 3/16, 5/16, and 3/8 meters. Similarly, the pseudo-D-minor harmonic underpinning of the Thema of the second movement is forced onto a purely octatonic melody sounding above it. The start of the Finale, where the second bassoon plays a "walking bass," calls to mind an invention or sinfonia by J. S. Bach, but this "bass" is a mechanical ostinato circling through a C major scale without regard for the upper parts. Such "counterpoint" might have come straight out of *The Rite of Spring* or *Petrushka*. The impression of a composition in the style of Bach is a brilliantly calculated aural illusion.

Musicians with time on their hands may relish the deliberate "structures of deceit" in the Octet, but any listener with attentive ears has access to its rhythmic energy, humorous contrasts, and deft handling of mixed brass and woodwind timbres. Stravinsky was especially pleased with what he called the "ribbons of scales" in the second movement, a special refrain-variation that recurs before each new variation and contains fiercely difficult ensemble writing, not least for the two bassoons in very low register.

Serenade in B-flat Major, K 361, “Gran Partita”

Wofgang Amadeus Mozart

The title *Gran Partita* appears on the first page of Mozart’s autograph score of the magnificent Serenade for 13 Instruments, K 361, but it is not in Mozart’s hand. Whoever penned this title, which we might informally translate as “Big Suite,” got it right: the work is grand in forces (twelve wind instruments and double bass), grand in scope (seven movements), and big in musical richness. Austrian Emperor Joseph II favored music for wind ensemble (*Harmoniemusik*), whose makeup generally did not exceed an octet of paired oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons, with a double bass sometimes added for reinforcement of the lowest line. Mozart was aware of this imperial Viennese taste and had already written such octets. The *Gran Partita*, however, with its 13 instruments, shows every sign of an effort to surpass public expectation and do something extraordinary.

Mozart scholars have been unable to establish a definite date of composition for the *Gran Partita*. The composer may have started it as early as the winter of 1781, when he was in Munich for the premiere of his opera *Idomeneo*. Yet other historical facts suggest it may not have been composed until 1783.

Mozart’s clearly meant to exploit, to the full extent of his imagination, the coloristic or timbral possibilities of the 12 wind instruments in all combinations. The basset horn is a member of the clarinet family, and so the serenade effectively embraces a clarinet quartet alongside a horn quartet. To this rich middle register, Mozart adds two pairs of double reed instruments in the soprano and bass (2 oboes and 2 bassoons) as well as string bass (a part sometimes performed on contrabassoon). By listening to the different combinations of instruments, the listener will find immediate rewards on the opulent surface of this music.

The outer movements of the work are standard in form: an Allegro molto (with slow introduction) and a jolly rondo finale. The five movements in between show how generously Mozart squandered the riches of his melodic genius on his audience. After all, they were not in the habit of attending to serenades or any other sort of music with constant attention,

and so Mozart seems ready to seduce them at any moment. The second movement is a Minuet. An Adagio forms the third movement, a second minuet the fourth, a lyrical Romanza the fifth, and the next-to-last movement is a rather complex theme with six variations. In all respects, Mozart provides more music than one could reasonably expect. Not only are there two minuets where one would have sufficed, but each includes two trios rather than one. In a Trio, composers customarily used fewer instruments than in the Minuet itself, and the two trios of Minuet I show off specific timbres to wonderful effect. Trio I is most unusual, given over entirely to the clarinet quartet, while Trio II highlights the two oboes in counterpoint now with the first bassoon, now with the basset horns. These sudden splashes of primary colors (single reed, double reed) retain their capacity to surprise audiences even today. The trio sections of the second Minuet rely on a more mixed orchestration but still highlight Mozart’s beloved clarinets and basset horns. Trio II of the second Minuet is a country dance (contradance) whose rolling, popular style would have especially delighted Viennese audiences at the time.

The playwright Peter Shaffer famously featured the sublime Adagio of the *Gran Partita* in his play (and later film) *Amadeus*. Its entrancing lyric beauty sends the character Salieri into ecstasy harrowed by self-doubt; he cannot believe what he is hearing: “It seemed to me that I had heard a voice of God.” Shaffer was not wrong to draw attention to this movement as a special one. In addition to the lyrical interplay of the first oboe, first clarinet, and first basset horn, almost like an operatic trio, Mozart never interrupts the background figuration he sets up in the second measure. Mozart’s music normally changes patterns often, but here he adheres to a single figuration throughout the movement—and keeps the listener in a state of suspended wonder.

One may be permitted to find just as much beauty in the sixth movement, the theme and variations: Mozart’s joy at the kaleidoscopic coloristic possibilities of his 13 instruments seems almost inexhaustible.

Finnish Celebration

our next Faculty Tuesday concert

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2017
Grusin Music Hall

Join us for a musical feast celebrating the 100th anniversary of Finnish independence! Jennifer Bird, Paul Erhard, Hsing-ay Hsu, Yoshi Ishikawa, David Korevaar, Margaret McDonald, Harumi Rhodes, Daniel Silver, Michael Thornton and the Ajax Quartet perform. The program features a world premiere by composer Conor Brown.



CU PERFORMING ARTS
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Upcoming Faculty Tuesdays

Schubert and More!

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Wetherbee/Korevaar

Masques and Dances!

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Kellogg/Cooperstock/Hsu/Ishikawa/
Nims/Requiro/Rhodes/Silver/Spera

ClimateKeys

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Hsu/Cooperstock/Nims/Mestas

Signs Games+Messages

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Rhodes/Walther/Requiro/Korevaar

Legacies

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Hayghe/Rhodes/Requiro

Two Pianos +

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Nguyen/Lin/Hayghe/Thornton/Requiro/Weiss/
Tetreault/Kenzie

American Celebration

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2018
Grusin Music Hall
McDonald/Dunn/Jennings/Requiro

Faculty Tuesdays

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018
Grusin Music Hall
Korevaar

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