

The Dr. Bobbie Bailey School of Music presents

Benjamin G. Farrow, horn

Dr. Eric Jenkins, piano

SENIOR RECITAL

November, 28, 2022

6:00 pm, Recital Hall 109

PROGRAM

Canto serioso (1913)

Carl Nielsen
(1865–1931)

Dr. Eric Jenkins, piano

Fantasy for Horn (1966)

Malcolm Arnold
(1921–2006)

Concerto in C minor, Op. 8 (1865)

I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante
III. Tempo primo

Franz Strauss
(1822–1905)

Dr. Eric Jenkins, piano

INTERMISSION

Songs

Bayou Home (1944)
Song for the Lonely (1953)

William Grant Still
(1895–1978)
Edited by Alexa Still

Dr. Eric Jenkins, piano

Concertpiece for Four Horns (1856)

I. Allegro maestoso
II. Andante
III. Vivace

Heinrich Hübler
(1822–1893)

Adam Stillwagon, Charles Bye, and Molly Shannon; horns

Dr. Eric Jenkins, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

This recital is partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Music Performance degree.
Benjamin studies horn with Richard Williams.

Nielsen: *Canto serioso* (1913)

In the spring of 1913, the orchestra of the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen publicly advertised the position of fourth horn with an audition being held on April 24, 1913. Danish composer Carl Nielsen (1865–1931) wrote a short *Andante cantabile* for that audition, as he was a former conductor and member with very close ties to the ensemble. The audition was ultimately won by the young hornist Martin Sørensen.

Therefore, this piece had its genesis after Nielsen had established himself as a freelance composer and, in particular with his Violin Concerto (1911) and the Third Symphony, was increasingly able to attract international attention to his works. That Nielsen did not consider this composition a merely occasional work is shown by the cello version that he released some time after the original, titled *Canto serioso*. Nielsen later added this name to the autograph of the horn work. Though he was very much interested in publication of this piece, the first edition was not issued until 1944, thirteen years after Nielsen's death.

The fact that *Canto serioso* was composed for a low horn player is especially reflected in the middle to low range of the solo part. Longer, low sustained tones and quick-staccato arpeggiations demand technical versatility. Quite apart from these aspects, Nielsen succeeded in writing an intrinsically *cantabile*, expressive composition that has been firmly established in the low horn repertoire, particularly in Middle Europe.

Arnold: Fantasy for Horn, op. 88 (1966)

Sir Malcolm Arnold (1921–2006) was born in Northampton, England and studied trumpet with Gordon Jacob at the Royal College of Music before joining the London Philharmonic in 1941. In 1943, he became principal trumpet and it wasn't until 1948 that he dedicated himself to composition. He wrote fantasies for all orchestral wind instruments. Like many, the *Fantasy for Horn* was commissioned for the Birmingham International Wind Competition in May 1966 and the 'premiere' was historically given by Hungarian hornist Ferenc Tarjani.

The allure of this work is both aesthetic and athletic. The charming character of the piece has been described as a portrait of the pub-faring merriment of the English working-class, though it seems to be more of a tone poem dotting the adventures and aftermath of a night on the town. The "fantasy" aspects of this work could be compared to a lighthearted *ricercar*, as it expands on permutations of motives in no consistent key, exploring various technical aspects of the solo horn, and finally returning to the primary theme in a fiery finale.

The Fantasy for horn calls for agile flexibility and skill in range coverage (C3 to B-flat5). It is thoroughly chromatic, especially after the stopped horn fanfare, and builds energy ceaselessly *al fine*. The ending music is an intense use of the horn's natural harmonic series, recalling qualities of the historic hunting horn. This thrilling yet challenging work for unaccompanied horn holds a beloved place in the recital literature.

F. Strauss: *Horn Concerto in C minor*, op. 8 (1865)

Though better-known as the father of great composer Richard Strauss, Franz Strauss (1822–1905) was famous in his own time as a Bavarian horn player throughout Bismarck (modern-day Germany, and also names for doughnuts). He was a virtuoso hornist—receiving praise from the likes of Wagner, who detested him, and Hans von Bülow—but was also well-documented as a difficult colleague. He was extremely musically conservative, favoring Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. His own son could not even escape his criticism: Franz spoke of Richard's masterwork opera, *Salome* as “a swarm of ants crawling in the seat of your trousers”.

Concerto in C minor for horn and orchestra was premiered by the composer in Munich. Unlike his son's more familiar works, this specifically challenges the player's melodic phrasing, intonation, and technical ability while showcasing the beautiful tone colors of the horn. This was something Franz held on a high pedestal in his own teaching and playing.

The form of this work unexpectedly varies from the traditional classical concerto form. It begins with an orchestral introduction like a stern march, but the entrance of the solo horn brings a new theme, more lyrical and melancholy. There is no proper development section, but an exchange of new thematic solo material with orchestral interludes. The first movement dovetails into the second, a melodically driving *Andante*. This is where Franz highlighted the long, lyrical phrases his playing was known for. The third movement is the most technically demanding, reprising the first solo theme and then transforming and developing the previous *animato* material. These virtuosic leaps and runs no doubt inspired his son, whose first concerto contains many similarities in material and form.

Still: Songs, edited for Horn and Piano

William Grant Still (1895–1978) was one of the most prolific African-American composers in history. He was the first to conduct a major US symphony orchestra (LA Phil, 1936) and to hear his own symphonic works and operas produced by major companies. Raised in Arkansas, Still was valedictorian of his high school and soon after attended Oberlin Conservatory. He studied composition with George Andrews, Edgar Varèse, and George Whitfield Clark; he was well acquainted with the likes of Langston Hughes and W. C. Handy. Still's style can be described as a lush melding of *Bel Canto*-revival with African-American spirituals along with European and Harlem influences.

Bayou Home sets a poem by Verna Arvey, the composer's wife, who served as his pianist, librettist, and poet. It tells the story of a man leaving his Southern home and lover for an unknown destiny. *Song for the Lonely* (also by Arvey) is the soliloquy of a man waiting out a storm, alone with his thoughts. These songs were composed on separate occasions and have been edited for various instruments by Alexa Still, a contemporary New Zealand-born flutist (no relation, though she also spent time at Oberlin).

The challenge of performing these on a wind instrument is in how the musician portrays the poetic story, depth, and emotion of the lyrics [see *next page*]. These works are rarely recorded, making each performance more unique. On that note, these transformed *Lieder ohne Worte* [English: songs without words] hold very deep meaning for the lonely, heartbroken, and homesick.

Song for the Lonely

Raindrops, soft from the mist,
 Disturb the stillness of my thoughts.
 Raindrops, soft from the mist,
 beat down.
No birdnote breaks the all pervading hush,
 No ray of moonlight cuts the darkness.
 No footstep comes along the graveled
 pathway,
 Nor the sound of a stone displaced.

Soft raindrops, fresh from the mist,
 Dull the pain of loneliness.

Soft raindrops, fresh from the mist,
beat down.
Raindrops, unceasing:
They bring again the breath of a presence.
Raindrops, insistent:
They bring again a long lost dream.
Raindrops, unending:
They fall into my soul,
into my heart,
And mingle with my tears.

Bayou Home

A haunting tune dwells in my heart
Song of the marsh, a world apart
My memory holds this melody
It takes the place of reality
When I embark for distant shores
It stays my tears; my soul restores
This song alone lives with me yet
It's in my veins; I can't forget
I'm leavin' my home on the bayou
I'm paddlin' the stream to the gulf
Gonna go with the tide and put life aside
Gonna answer a call from afar
I'm lookin' my last at the oak trees
I'm seein' no more fields of cane
Gonna miss the old folks with their homely jokes
And pray that I'll see them again
May the good Lord look down on earth
And keep my treasures safe for me
May my homeland stay just the same
When I travel back 'cross the sea
I'm leavin' my home on the bayou
I'm saying goodbye to my Jean
Gonna send her a charm to keep her from harm
Gonna see her face in my dream
Got a new world to mold
A future to hold
'Cause my bayou home waits for me

Hübler: Concert-piece for Four Horns (1856)

Carl Heinrich Hübler (1822–1893) is known only for two works that he contributed to horn literature: his Concerto for Horn and Orchestra, and his Konzertstück, or concert piece, for four horns and orchestra. He

was a hornist in the Dresden Royal Court Orchestra. He was also appointed royal chamber musician and titled “chamber virtuoso” in recognition of his artistry.

In October 1849, Hübler participated in a private performance of Robert Schumann’s *Konzertstück* for four Horns and Orchestra (op. 86) with the composer in attendance. He was inspired to create his own piece for horn quartet and orchestra so in 1854 he began composing his own concert-piece. Hübler drew on his deep working knowledge of horn technique and history, as well as his contemporaries’ *Sturm und Drang* Romantic palette. The work is in many ways similar to Schumann’s, but arguably less awkward. The horns enter with a confident three chord motive that is modulated and varied throughout the work. Especially in the middle movement, Hübler’s virtuosic temperament created many challenging expectations for the soloists: various pedal, near-growling low passages for the fourth horn and in the last movement, an infectious 6/8 rondo, recalling works by Mozart and again, Schumann. Hübler’s command of the horn and delicacy of composition in this dense texture is no doubt why this piece continues to be played today.

