

**Jay Roberts, Bass Trombone**  
**Aimee Fincher, Piano**

Katzin Hall  
DMA Recital  
March 29, 2013 • 7:30PM

*Concerto for Bass Trombone and Orchestra*

Christopher Brubeck (1952-)

- I. Paradise Utopia
- II. Sorrow Floats
- III. James Brown in the Twilight Zone

*Suite for Unaccompanied Bass Trombone*

Eric Culver (1943-)

- I. Fantasia
- II. Dance of the Delicate Sorrow
- III. Ballade
- IV. The Jubilant Gallop

*Rhythm in Blue for Bass Trombone and Piano*

Daniel Schnyder (1961-)

**\*\*Intermission\*\***

*Scherzo*

V. Smirnov (?)

(Adapted for Bass Trombone by Jay Roberts)

*Vocalise*

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1963)

*Small Suite No. 2*

Vladislav Blazhevich (1881-1942)

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Lento Lugubre
- III. Allegro
- IV. Allegro Moderato

Ryan Miller & Jason Roseth, Tenor Trombone

*Sonata for Trombone*

Tatyana Chudova (1944-)

(Adapted for Bass Trombone by Jay Roberts)

**ASU Herberger Institute**  
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS  
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

**School of Music**

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Trombone Performance. Mr. Roberts is in his second year, studying with Professor Douglas Yeo.

### Concerto for Bass Trombone – Christopher Brubeck

The 1st Movement, "Paradise Utopia", is sizzling with American expansionist energy. Imagine a Donald Trump-like figure maniacally rebuilding the New York skyline. The 2nd Movement, "Sorrow Floats", is a reflective Adagio; Brubeck was inspired to name the movement after a chapter title from one of his favorite novels by John Irving. The name of the 3rd Movement, "James Brown in The Twilight Zone", refers to dual compositional elements used throughout; 2 bars from the "turn-around" of the God Father of Soul's "I Feel Good", and an ascending chromatic passage which is reminiscent of the music used in Rod Serling's innovative TV anthology. In addition to these very American cultural influences, Middle Eastern threads can be heard weaving through the music because the First Gulf War was being waged when the piece was being composed.

### Suite for Unaccompanied Bass Trombone – Eric Culver

This suite of four pieces is structured along the same forms as found in the Bach Unaccompanied Cello Suites. The melodies are directly related to the harmonic and, as in the Bach Suites, unmistakably outline the harmonic direction.

One particular characteristic of the suite is the many interval leaps in the melody. This was the only direction suggested by Robert F. Sanders, who commissioned this work. Sanders asked Culver to include lots of interesting, fun, and nearly impossible interval jumps to make the work more challenging. As a result, the four pieces within this suite should provide the performer with ample room to cover the complete range of his or her instrument.

### Rhythm in Blue for Bass Trombone and Piano – Daniel Schnyder

Daniel Schnyder currently resides in New York City and is a Swiss composer/performer with a dynamic reputation in both jazz and classical fields. When Schnyder's *Concerto for Bass Trombone* was premiered at Columbia University by David Taylor in 1999, J.J. Johnson (considered to be the Charlie Parker of Trombone) heard the live broadcast on his radio while driving. Johnson liked the piece so much that he felt he had to pull over and turn the engine off so he could listen more carefully. Johnson called Schnyder and Taylor to tell them how much he enjoyed the piece. Schnyder was "blown away" by the compliment of the trombone legend. After J.J. Johnson passed away tragically in 2001, Schnyder decided to dedicate a piece to him. *Rhythm in Blue* (dedicated to Johnson) was the result of the AEOLUS Wind Competition in Düsseldorf, Germany commissioning Schnyder to write a piece for a competition. Schnyder describes this piece as a "NASA project" because it is hard for the pianist and trombonist to adapt stylistically. Schnyder says, "there is nobody, except Jim Pugh, on the planet that has all the style and technique it takes to get around a piece like this." Therefore, according to Daniel Schnyder, as of tonight's recital nobody has performed this "NASA project" correctly.

### Scherzo – V. Smirnov

For over 20 years, Douglas Yeo (Bass Trombonist – Boston Symphony) and Victor Venglovsky (Principal Trombonist – Leningrad Symphony) engaged in a pen-pal friendship. Although they never met face to face they exchanged music, LP recordings and trombone accessories by mail. Mr. Yeo loaned me a small stack of low brass solo repertoire books published in Russia sent to him by Venglovsky some years ago. While some of the compositions contained in the books were well known to us in the U.S. (such as Bozza, Bitsch, Bach and Corelli) there was one book specifically titled "Compositions by Soviet Composers" full of music by composers not well known and most likely never heard of in the U.S. The *Scherzo*, along with Chudova's *Sonata* (last on the program), comes from this Soviet Composers book. All the repertoire is for Tenor Trombone so the *Scherzo* and *Sonata* have been lowered a fourth in order to be playable on the Bass Trombone. It is possible these solos are or were standard solo repertoire in the Russian trombone pedagogy but we are assuming this recital is the Western Hemisphere debut of these solos and quite possibly the first time ever played on Bass Trombone. Initial searches for information about Smirnov have thus far been in vain. After hearing this light, fun and beautiful piece, one can only hope that Smirnov was not one of the many artists who were purged for composing music outside the Party's demands. Many were arrested on contrived charges, tortured until they plead guilty then forced to suffer starvation and cold in Siberian labor camps. Until we find out more we can only wonder. For all we know at this point, Smirnov could be enjoying a relaxing retirement in Hawaii.

### Vocalise – Sergei Rachmaninoff

Published in 1912 as the last of his *Fourteen Songs*, *Vocalise* was originally composed for voice with piano accompaniment dedicated for soprano Antonina Nezhdanova. The song contains no words but is rather sung using any vowel of the singer's choice. Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise* can be performed without alteration except by means of transposition, allowing performers to choose a range more suitable to their natural voice. The nature of the melody makes it easily adaptable to instrumental writing. Although lacking text, *Vocalise* quickly became the most popular item in the *Fourteen Songs* and one of Rachmaninoff's most performed compositions due to the loveliness of the melody.

### Small Suite No.2 – Vladislav Blazhevich

Blazhevich was a Russian trombonist mostly remembered for his pedagogical compositions. Blazhevich was the principal/solo trombonist of the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow starting in 1916 just one year before the great 1917 Russian Revolution. Blazhevich became the trombone teacher at the Moscow Conservatory soon after his appointment at the Bolshoi Theater. In the early 1920's, Blazhevich gave up his seat at the Bolshoi to give his full attention to his students at the conservatory. With his extra time Blazhevich composed educational pieces for his students to practice and develop important trombone skills. By the time of Blazhevich's death, he had composed books of etudes, solos, and small chamber works still used today in both educational and professional performance settings.

The Small Suite No. 2 is one of these pedagogical pieces for trombone trio. The first movement requires control in extreme dynamics with accented fast notes. Blazhevich's use of the glissando seems to allow the student player to experiment with the harmonic series of the trombone. The second movement incorporates repetitive notes to develop a consistent articulation while the melody is marked cantabile to learn the lyrical capabilities of the trombone. The third movement calls for mutes, which gives the student performer a chance to play and rehearse with a mute in an ensemble setting. The fourth movement requires a lot of flexibility in dynamic control with light articulation. Blazhevich's compositional contributions are, and will continue to be, a great resource for generations of trombonists to come.

### Sonata for Trombone – Tatyana Chudova

Tatyana Chudova was born in Moscow in 1944 during Joseph Stalin's terrible dictatorship. The affects of the great purge, just six years before Chudova's birth, where millions of Soviets were captured then killed or placed in labor camps was undoubtedly still visible to the young Chudova. Many sources say that the purges continued all the way up to Stalin's death in 1953. Many of the people who perished during this time were artists. Chudova, having been born into a family of musicians, surely had a heightened awareness as a young girl of the dangers surrounding her family's profession.

The Sonata for Trombone was written in 1967 when Chudova was a 23-year-old student of composition at the Moscow Conservatory. The piece set in Sonata form seems to express many of the emotions of the Stalin era. Dissonance is heard throughout the entire exposition in the piano part giving a sense of evilness. The non-tonal melody adds to the fear of the unknown. The heavy march-like feel might depict the NKVD's (public and secret police of the Soviet Union) midnight marches up stairwells to rip the party's "traitors" from their communistic apartment-style homes. The development is a dreamy, maybe nightmarish, depiction of the family members left behind to stand in long lines outside prisons just to try to find out anything about their recently accused and arrested family member. The Sonata ends with haunting calls and screams of the tortured "traitors" and mournful wailings of the families left behind to wonder who is next on Stalin's list.