

ALEX TOENNIGES
Bassoon

Dr. Andrew Campbell, piano
Wilson Harmon, oboe

Junior Bassoon Recital
Organ Hall
Saturday, 22 March, 2014 • 7:30 pm

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Music

Sonata (1981)

John Steinmetz

Composer John Steinmetz is a freelance bassoonist in Los Angeles. He also writes essays and articles about music and society, is on the faculty at UCLA, and is known for his sense of humor. His *Sonata*, however, is drawn from emotions rather than humor. Dr. Albie Micklich says that it “epitomizes emotional writing for bassoon.” The *Sonata* is in three movements, but not in “sonata form”. The first movement is full of pitch bends and “portrays the bassoon as a strong-voiced instrument exploring powerful feelings.” The second movement is a theme and variations, based on an English folk tune by William Byrd called “Browning (The Leaves Be Green)”, which originated in the Renaissance era. Unlike most sonatas, which end with a fast movement, Steinmetz concludes his *Sonata* with a Lament. It is based on a few piano chords and coincidentally begins with the same notes as the Prelude and “Browning”. My professor, Dr. Micklich, reminds me often that to perform this piece, “you must bear a piece of your soul to the audience”, to which I add a quote from the choreographer Pina Bausch: “Your fragility is also your strength.”

This performance is dedicated to Brandon.

-Program-

Sonata (1981)

John Steinmetz
(b. 1951)

- I. Prelude
- II. Browning
- III. Lament

-Intermission-

Toccata per Fagotto e Pianoforte (1974)

Nino Rota

Nino Rota was a 20th century Italian composer, best known for his film scores. He won the Academy Award for *The Godfather Part II*, and is well known for *War and Peace*, *La Dolce Vita*, *White Nights*, and *8½*. This *Toccata* is adapted from the first movement of the *Bassoon Concerto* that he wrote near the end of his life. A toccata (from *toccare*: ‘to touch’) is usually written in free form for a solo instrument, to show off dexterity, and this piece is no exception. The *Toccata* is cute and playful, utilizing the bassoon’s ability to sound both lyrical and humorous, and changes character swiftly.

Toccata per Fagotto e Pianoforte (1974)

Nino Rota
(1911-1979)

Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, FP 43 (1926)

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

- I. Presto
- II. Andante
- III. Rondo

Trio for Piano, Oboe, and Bassoon, FP 43 (1926)

Francis Poulenc

Francis Poulenc was a 20th century French composer and pianist. His *Trio*, his first true chamber work, shares many characteristics of the 18th century *divertissement* (French Baroque style), but with zesty dissonances. It sounds clear and well balanced and has a good dose of humor. The work is elegantly symmetrical throughout, and the three movements are in a fast-slow-fast form. The first movement, a witty Presto, emulates a Haydn Allegro, and the Rondo draws on the Scherzo of Saint-Saëns’ *Piano Concerto No. 2*. The second movement, Andante, is much like Mozart in character—“very sweet and melancholic”. Humor can be found early in the first movement when the oboe and bassoon play a mocking version of the bugle call “Taps”, while the piano’s jazzy chords are reminiscent of Duke Ellington. Overall, the piece is joyful, brilliant, and whimsical.

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Out of respect for the performers and audience members, please turn all cell phones and watches to their silent mode and refrain from using cell phones during the performance. Thank you.

Alexandra Toenniges studies bassoon at Arizona State University with Dr. Albie Micklich. She is in her junior year as a National Merit Scholar, working on a Bachelor of Music in Bassoon Performance and a minor in German.

In addition to playing with the ASU Symphony Orchestra and Opera Orchestra, Alex has played with the North Valley Symphony Orchestra, San Tan Orchestra, and Scottsdale Arts Orchestra. She worked as the Conference Intern for the 2011 International Double Reed Conference. Alex's master class experience includes performances for Adam Trussel, Chris Brubeck's Triple Play, Aaron Brant, Sara Fraker, Jeremy Reynolds, Donna Shin, Alban Wesly, Christin Schillinger, Michael Kroth, and Benjamin Kamins.

Alex's past summer was spent in northern Michigan at Bay View Music Festival, where she studied with Jill Marderness of the Arizona Opera. At Bay View, Alex was part of two different woodwind quintets, in addition to the orchestra for Verdi's opera *Falstaff* and the Bay View Festival Orchestra.

Alex grew up in Bloomfield, Michigan, where she studied bassoon with Robert Williams of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), and participated actively in the DSO's Civic Youth Ensembles.

In addition to her passions for music and German, Alex loves hiking and backpacking, classic trucks, Ford Model T's, and nature. After graduating from ASU, she will pursue a career playing bassoon in an orchestra or chamber music setting and maintain a private studio.