

Kiefer Strickland, MM Recital Program Notes

Gabriel Grovlez (1879-1944)

French conductor and composer Gabriel Grovlez studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Albert Lavignac, André Gédalge, and Gabriel Fauré, and taught piano for ten years at the rival establishment, the Schola Cantorum. Grovlez was a frequent guest conductor with orchestras around Paris and regularly worked as a music critic. From 1939 until his death in 1944, he led a chamber music class at the Paris Conservatoire. He composed operas, ballets, symphonic poems, songs, and piano music in an idiom that owes much to both Fauré and Debussy.

His short *Sicillienne et Allegro giocoso*, written for the *Morceaux de concours*, is somewhat reminiscent of Debussy's *Danse sacrée et Danse profane* for harp and strings (in fact, Grovlez's piece also exists in a version for bassoon and harp). A serene and poised siciliano gives way to a brief, joyously capering *Allegro giocoso* that is over almost as soon as it has begun.

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)

When we think of Carl Maria von Weber we tend to think of him first and foremost as an operatic composer, the figure who virtually single-handedly created a distinctly German school of opera at a time when national identity was critical. In 1811, Weber composed his Bassoon Concerto, Op. 75. That it is less well known than the concertos and concertante pieces for clarinet has nothing to do with quality, and the élan with which Weber wrote for the instrument in his two symphonies finds its full flowering in the concerto. Once again, much of the work's appeal comes from Weber's unerring ear for sonority, and in particular the dark-hued palette natural to the bassoon.

The *Allegro ma non troppo* opens boldly, with a confident orchestral *tutti* before the bassoon's dramatic entrance, Weber glorying in the range of the instrument, its agility and its ability to sing a wide-spanned line. Though the soloist dominates the remainder of the movement, it proves a most congenial companion as it cheerfully duets with orchestral players. A brush with minor keys proves fleeting as the opening idea returns, leading to an effervescent close.

Roger Boutry (b. 1932)

The most recent work in this recital is by composer, conductor, teacher, and pianist Roger Boutry, a native Parisian who started studying music at the early age of eleven with teachers Marguerite Long, Nadia Boulanger, and Tony Aubin. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire and garnered many prizes there, climaxing with the Prix de Rome in 1954; in 1958, as a pianist, he was awarded a special prize at the immensely prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. From 1962 he was Professor of Harmony at the Paris Conservatoire.

Kiefer Strickland, bassoon

Nathan Uhl, piano

Rachel Messing, oboe

Graduate Recital Series

Katzin Concert Hall | October 25, 2015 | 2:30 PM

Program

Sicilienne et Allegro Giocoso

I. Largamente – Tempo di Siciliana

II. Allegro Giocoso

Gabriel Grovlez

(1879 – 1944)

Bassoon Concerto in F Major, Op. 75

I. Allegro ma non troppo

Carl Maria von Weber

(1786 – 1826)

Interférences I

Roger Boutry

(b. 1932)

— *Intermission* —

Suite pour Basson et Piano

I. Intro et Allegro

II. Sarabande

III. Scherzo

Alexandre Tansman

(1897 – 1986)

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano

I. Presto

II. Andante

III. Rondo

Francis Poulenc

(1899 – 1963)

Kiefer Strickland is in the studio of Albie Micklich.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Master of Music in Performance degree and a Master of Music in Pedagogy degree.



School of Music

The idea of his zany named *Interférences I*, composed in 1972, is a bizarre dialogue between bassoon and piano, in which unexpected rhythmic and metrical irregularities and pitfalls set up musical ‘interferences’ as the players juxtapose widely contrasted gestures and styles. This piece contains hints of composition styles evoked from the music of Debussy, Poulenc, and Messiaen (not to mention a disguised reminiscence of the famous bassoon solo at the opening of Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du printemps*). The bassoon is nevertheless allowed some frankly lyrical unaccompanied solos in the course of this diverting and imaginative work.

Alexandre Tansman (1897-1986)

Alexandre Tansman was born in Lodz, Poland. He moved to Paris in 1919 where he studied the scores of Ravel, Milhaud, and Stravinsky, becoming very inspired by their compositional styles and techniques. Although today he is most noted as a composer, he was also an internationally prominent pianist and conductor. He produced compositions in a variety of styles, predominantly with a neo-classical bias. He wrote two beautiful works for bassoon, the *Suite* presented here and a *Sonatine*.

Composed in 1960 for the *Morceaux de concours*, the *Suite* opens with a somberly eerie *Introduction* followed by a strongly rhythmic *Allegro*. Having a penchant for lyrically beautiful second movements, Tansman wrote the *Sarabande* to feature the bassoon’s singing qualities. The piece comes to a close with a quick scherzo containing hints of polyrhythm.

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

In 1920 Francis Poulenc was counted amongst the “Les Six” which included the composers Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, Louis Durey, Jean Cocteau, Germaine Tailleferre and Georges Auric. Technically speaking this was not a Society but rather the creation of a music journalist who simply used these representatives of Modernism as an analogy to “The Mighty Handful”, the group of five Russian Composers including Mussorgsky and Balakirev in the second part of the 19th Century.

The *Trio* was composed in 1926 and is dedicated to the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. He was particularly proud to always mention the influences of both Haydn and Saint-Saëns on the *Trio*. This piece is the first instance of Poulenc giving a more dominant role to the piano within his chamber music writing. Poulenc held a special place in his heart for the wind instruments. They well served his fondness for a broad palette of colors and cutting timbres. Although he valued the strings as an orchestral body, he was not particularly fond of them as solo instruments. One only has to recall his words: “I love violins, but not the violin.” While the bassoon doesn’t have a Poulenc sonata like our orchestral woodwind friends, we are grateful for the *Trio*, *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon*, and the *Sextet*, which have all become staples in our repertoire.

