

# Ruchy Gambhir, Oboe

Student Recital Series  
Katzin Concert Hall | March 29, 2018 | 5 p.m.

## Program Notes

**Marin Marais (1656-1728)** was the central figure in the French school of bass-viol composers and performers that flourished during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. He spent his entire life in Paris and the greater part of it in royal service. His contemporaries recognized him as an outstanding performer and a composer of stature whose works for viols and the operatic stage were known beyond the boundaries of France. The instrument for which Marais wrote the major portion of his works is commonly referred to as the viola da gamba.

*The Variations on La Folia* come from the second book of viol pieces, published in 1701. The folia theme is one of the best-known themes of the entire Baroque period and was the subject of numerous variations, including those by Corelli, Albicastro, and Marais for stringed instruments, Alessandro Scarlatti and CPE Bach for keyboard. In his Avertissements to Books II and III, Marais states that he tried to make sure that the pieces were suitable for various kinds of instruments. He allows for performance on the organ, harpsichord, lute, violin, treble viol, traverse, recorder, guitar, and oboe, and professes some pride in having tried them out successfully on both the flute and viol himself. The work is useful for just about any solo instrument and is one of the finest examples of solo literature to be found anywhere.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)** was an Austrian composer, widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music. Unlike any other composer in musical history, he wrote in all the musical genres of his day and excelled in every one. His taste, command of form, and range of expression have made him seem the most universal of all composers; yet, it may also be said that his music was written to accommodate the specific tastes of particular audiences. Mozart composed the *Oboe Concerto in C major, K. 314*, for Giuseppe Ferlendis, oboist in the orchestra of the Archbishop of Salzburg in 1777. The Oboe Concerto in C major is scored for solo oboe with an orchestra of two oboes, two horns, and strings. The orchestration is light and transparent, highlighting the soloist and giving the numerous recurrent rhythmic figures more presence, especially a falling passage in the orchestra that first introduces the solo oboe. Mozart's central slow movement is elegiac, with the oboe placed throughout in its most liquid range. The ebullient, Haydn-esque finale is a rondo in a quick 2/4 time, with a theme that is bouncy and jagged.

**Robert Schumann (1810-1856)** was a German composer and influential music critic. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Romantic era. Schumann left the study of law, intending to pursue a career as a virtuoso pianist. But a hand injury ended this dream; he then focused his musical energies on composing. His writings about music appeared mostly in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal for Music), a Leipzig-based publication that he jointly founded. Schumann composed his Op. 56 Etudes, entitled *Six Pieces in Canonic Form*, in the spring and summer of 1845. In an attempt to master the polyphonic style, Schumann wrote pieces in imitation of the works of J.S. Bach. He dedicated the canons to his first piano teacher, Johann Gottfried Kuntzsch, who was organist at St. Mary's in Zwickau. Schumann's Op. 56 Etudes bear a strong resemblance to Bach's Inventions in their texture. The first of the six is a strict canon at the octave in C major that touches on D minor in its second half. The canon deviates from its strict path only in the last two measures, all the while with a harmonic underpinning of sustained notes. The second piece, in A minor, features repeated chords in the left hand supporting a canonic texture in the right hand alone. No. 5 sounds the least Baroque of the set because of its detached chords; however, it becomes clear that a canon spins out between in the upper notes of the right and left hands.

**Claude Debussy (1862-1918)** was a French composer whose works were a seminal force in the music of the 20th century. He developed a highly original system of harmony and musical structure that expressed in many respects the ideals to which the Impressionist and Symbolist painters and writers of his time aspired. Claude Debussy's *Rhapsodie for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* was commissioned in 1903 by Elisa Hall, President of the Boston Orchestral Club. Hall had taken up the saxophone in the hope that it would improve a respiratory weakness from which she suffered. With little regard for the cost, she set about commissioning a substantial array of new works for the instrument, which then had a very small repertory, and approached several prominent French composers, including Debussy. Debussy, who cared little for the instrument would not fulfill the commission for several years. When he did submit his score, it was incomplete and not orchestrated. It was completed after the composer's death by Jean Roger-Ducasse. The 'Rhapsody' is in a single movement beginning with a short introduction in the orchestra followed by a cadenza for the soloist.