REPERTOIRE

Tyler Armenta, clarinet

Doctoral Student Recital Series
Katzin Concert Hall | 24 February, 2016 | 2:30 p.m.

Program

3 Preludes — **George Gershwin (1898 – 1937)**
arr. Gareth Brady

No. 1 – Allegro ben ritmato
No. 2 – Andante con moto
No. 3 – Allegro ben ritmato

Vientos Dulces
Tyler Armenta, Eb
Julie Park, Bb/A
Paco de Alba, Bb/A
Julia Lougheed, Bass

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano — **Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990)**

I – Grazioso
II – Andantino; Vivace e leggiero

Benniana — **Steven Harlos (b. 1953)**

Benny's Dream
Blues Nocturne
Jazz Rondo

Gail Novak, piano

Intermission

Moonflowers, Baby! — **Meyer Kupferman (1926 – 2003)**

Clarinet a la King — **Eddie Sauter (1914 – 1981)**
trans. by
arr. by Tyler Armenta

Kate Vincent, alto
Patrick Feher, tenor
Kristen Zelenak, bari
Liam Connor, trumpet
Alex Price, trumpet
Nathan Bitter, trombone
Gail Novak, piano

Three Preludes

Upon the major success of *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924, George Gershwin (1898-1937) followed up with a set of short piano pieces influenced by jazz. Originally planned to be 24 preludes, the number was reduced to five upon the first public performance, and reduced once again to three when published in 1926. The preludes are dedicated to Gershwin's friend and mentor William "Bill" Daly Jr.

The first prelude is based almost entirely on a five-note blues motif, stated twice in the beginning. The underlaying rhythm that follows is based on the Brazilian baião: an incredibly popular dance style from the Nordeste (Northeastern) region of Brazil that permeated throughout Latin America and into the U.S. The syncopated rhythmic pattern of the baião has become very common, especially in jazz and fusion idioms.

The second prelude has been referred to as "a sort of blues lullaby" by the composer. With the steady bass line starting this movement and the loving melody on top, it's easy to hear the lullaby effect. This relaxed prelude emphasizes the use of thirds, the interval of a seventh, and the duality of major and minor found within the blues scales. In the middle, contrasting section, the left hand of the piano (here, the bass clarinet) is featured with a slow, lush, and bluesy melody before returning the first section, almost unchanged.

Gershwin described the final prelude as "Spanish," and while indeed snappy, rhythmic, and somewhat "exotic," the more likely influence for this movement comes from the mixing of Caribbean-like rhythms with jazz/blues harmonies rather than any Spanish influences. Regardless of its heritage, this prelude explores the relationship between major and minor modes, in which two themes – one in minor and the other in major – argue in a question-and-answer setting. Eventually, major wins the fight and ends the piece on a flourish in the Eb major key.

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

In the summer of 1941, recent graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) headed to Key West, FL for a vacation and to work on what would become his first published work: his *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* (1941-2). During his vacation, Bernstein listened frequently to Radio Havana and would become influenced by the popular music played on the station (primarily, at the time, the rumba, el son cubano, and the merengue). This infatuation with Latin music would go on to inspire this and many of his other works – especially *West Side Story*. Since its publication, the clarinet sonata has been revamped into several different arrangements, including a clarinet and orchestra setting, a cello sonata, and a violin sonata.

The first movement begins in the gentle *Grazioso* with what many describe as having "a hint of Hindemithian harmony" underneath the slow, wandering, and lyrical melody of the clarinet. The piano soon shifts into a restless ostinato pattern above which the clarinet develops the previous "Hindemithian" theme into a more uniquely "Bernsteinian" style. This new style is decidedly more American, in that it is reminiscent of jazz music through the use of harmony and rhythmic qualities. Written in a large ternary form, the opening section is recalled later on before switching suddenly into an extended coda section. The ending winds down to give the movement a sense of lingering off in thought or in meditation.

Continuing in a thoughtful mood, the second movement explores the delicacy that can be achieved between the clarinet and piano before suddenly shifting into a burst of cheerful rhythmic pulsing. The writing of this section in 5/8 time harkens back to Bernstein's listenings to Radio Havana, were many of the popular music played on the station would have been heavily syncopated and filled with riffs between performers. The *quintillo* rhythm (rather, a variation of the *tresillo* rhythm), a popular drum technique in many Cuban music, is referenced to throughout the piano line and helps to create a constant shift in rhythmic pulse (3+2 vs. 2+3). Halfway through the movement, the delicate interplay between the clarinet and piano reappears and develops a more playful spirit; it eventually evolves into the previous, cheerful, syncopated, and jazzy section. The coda propels the clarinet to the upper end of its register before ending with a declamatory motif.

Benniana

Steven Harlos (b. 1953) is a pianist and composer who is well known as a collaborative artist and has performed with many diverse artists as Harvey Philips, Dick Hyman, Marvin Gaye, Dionne Warwick, and Chaka Khan. He currently serves as Staff Keyboardist for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and as Chair for the Division of Keyboard Studies at the University of North Texas in Denton. Dr. Harlos, who feels equally at home between the concert stage, jazz clubs, and in the pit of Broadway musicals, has written his sonatina *Benniana* (2004) for clarinet and piano that combines elements of jazz and classical music. Dedicated to James Gillespie and inspired by the jazz/classical crossover clarinetist Benny Goodman, *Benniana* is in three movements. Each movement explores the contrasts and relationships between the classical and jazz worlds of clarinet.

The first movement, "Benny's Dream," begins in a style meant to represent the classical side of Goodman's playing which, through chromatic passages, gently morphs into a swing feel and back again to the original mood. This is reminiscent of Goodman's own ability to move freely between jazz and classical music.

"Blues Nocturne" briefly seems to begin classically, but soon becomes apparent that the style is more smoky and laid back – much like the ballads of the swing era. There is a constant rhythmic unsettling due to the switches between triple and duple times while still exploring the clarinet's wide range.

The final movement, "Jazz Rondo," is essentially just that: a rondo in a jazz style. Beginning with a piano introduction, and following with a 5-part rondo, the theme presented in the clarinet is a fast and lively riff in a quick swing style. The contrasting episodes that appear in between the initial theme are written in styles that were popular during the swing and big band era. The rondo form breaks away with a kind of "shout section" between the clarinetist and pianist before rounding off with an energetic coda building to the end.

Moonflowers, Baby!

Meyer Kupferman (1926-2003) was a largely self-taught composer, but was still highly influenced by the 12-tone technique of serial music. Although not as strict as Arnold Schoenberg, Kupferman created an "Infinities Row" in 1961 and used this tone row as the basis of all his major works. Kupferman also had very strong ties to the jazz music scene and incorporates both jazz and modern techniques in his pieces.

Moonflowers, Baby! was written in 1986 and is dedicated to clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. Roughly divided into three sections, this work utilizes various jazz-style writings ranging from bebop to blues. The "Infinities Row" can be heard in several incarnations during the first section. The second section is a slow, weary blues melody that is later heavily embellished, while the third section returns to a quicker pace and new motif: a quick series of three repeated notes. The blues melody of the second section returns at the end to give a sense of rest to the piece.

"What's a moonflower?" is the question you might be asking yourself. According to the composer, "It's just what you imagine it might be. A flower that blooms in the moonlight. Sensitive, subtle, beautiful, refined."

Clarinet a la King

Eddie Sauter (1914-1981) was a composer and arranger for such swing era royals as Woody Herman, Red Norvo, Artie Shaw, and Benny Goodman. Sauter is known for his big band works such as *Benny Rides Again* and *Clarinet a la King* as well as his work in the musical *1776*. In 2003, Sauter was inducted into the Big Band and Jazz Hall of Fame.

Benny Goodman (1909-1986) was a jazz clarinetist and band leader who also branched out into the classical repertoire. Goodman commissioned works from Bartók, Poulenc, and Copland and regularly performed Mozart, Weber, and Bernstein. Naturally, the "King of Swing" is also known for his renditions of such standards as *Sing, Sing, Sing*, *Stompin' at the Savoy*, and *Clarinet a la King*.

Sauter's *Clarinet a la King* was written for Goodman's band in the early 1940's and is, quite naturally, a clarinet feature. Harmonically innovative for the time and technically challenging, this chart was popular and served as an encore many times for Goodman. Originally written for a full big band, it has been arranged here for a septet combo.