

Student Recital

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GRADUATE CLARINET RECITAL

Sarah Reed, clarinet

with

Mickel Gordon, piano

Christian Leon, marimba

and the C4 Clarinet Quartet

3:30pm, Sunday, October 2, 2022

Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Grand Duo Concertant, Op. 48

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

- I. Allegro con fuoco
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Ronda - Allegro

Impromptu: Duo for Clarinet and Marimba

William A.R. May (b. 1988)

Christian Leon, marimba

INTERMISSION

Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 120, No. 2

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

- I. Allegro amabile
- II. Allegro appassionato
- III. Andante con moto - Allegro

Adoration

Florence B. Price (1887–1953)

arr. Larkin Sanders

Blue Skies

Irving Berlin (1888–1989)

arr. R. Percival

C4 Clarinet Quartet

Samantha Ellis, Deborah Shaw, clarinet

Janice Bengtson, bass clarinet

Sarah Reed is a student of Dr. Nophachai Cholthitchanta

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music in Performance

PROGRAM NOTES

CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826) was a prolific composer writing over 300 compositions for various genres in the 19th century, including opera where he was the leading figure. His solo clarinet works are considered some of the finest of the century. It was at the home of Weber's friend Heinrich Baermann (considered one of the greatest clarinetists of the time) where he began work on the Grand Duo Concertante. This piece was likely written for Weber on piano and Baermann on clarinet. It is marked by highly virtuosic passages in both the clarinet and piano with scales, arpeggios, extreme registers, and fast tempos requiring high levels of technique for both performers.¹

One assessment of the piece is as follows:

“A very brilliant piece in sonata form, the best show piece in the literature for both clarinet and piano. It uses all the resources of the clarinet and is fun to play. This Opus is Weber's best music for the clarinet...”²

Note from William A.R. May about Impromptu: “I was first approached by Andy Hudson (Clarinet) and Patrick Hardin (Marimba) with the idea of writing a duo for clarinet and marimba in the spring of 2008. My mind immediately began reeling with ideas of how I could both challenge the players technical skills, as well as capture the essence and personalities of both of these, most-interesting characters. Indeed, if you know anything about Andy and Patrick, then you should easily recognize the duo being represented here. Set in a tricky 7/16 time, this piece is loosely based in ABA ternary form, yet blends together elements of jazz, blues, and rock music to create sort of a hybrid of musical styles. Think of it as a modern twist on old classical themes, blended with a mixture of 20th century jazz and rock elements, and based on the style of the blues...OR you could just call it Impromptu, for short!”³

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897) is considered one of the most important composers in the last half of the nineteenth century, composing and arranging a variety of works for orchestra, chamber music, piano, and voice. In 1890, Brahms declared his retirement from composing until meeting clarinetist Richard Muhlfield in Meiningen. Brahms was inspired by his playing and came out of retirement to compose his only four woodwind pieces: Trio, Quintet, and the two Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, op. 120 nos. 1 and 2. Brahms spoke very highly of Muhlfield's playing, known for a powerful delivery, beautiful tone quality, and generous use of vibrato. It is clear that Brahms was thinking about these traits in composing the three movements of the Sonata in Eb.⁴

FLORENCE BEATRICE SMITH PRICE was born April 9, 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas. More than any other instrument or ensemble, the piano was the primary outlet for Price's inexhaustible musical imagination. It was the instrument on which she received her earliest musical education and it, together with the organ, was the focal point of her education at the New England Conservatory (Boston), where she completed two diplomas at the age of nineteen in 1906. Price became the first African American female composer to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra played the world premiere of her Symphony No. 1 in E minor on June 15, 1933.⁵

Adoration was originally composed for organ in 1951. Originally in D major, the melodic line in the upper voice moves gracefully over a pedal tone in the bass voice and pulsing quarter note chords in the middle voices. This arrangement by Larkin Sanders for clarinet quartet is written for Clarinets in A, creating a dark, rich sound resembling an organ.

IRVING BERLIN composed "Blue Skies" in 1926. After making its debut in the Rodgers and Hart musical *Betsy*, the song became a success individually. It has appeared in many films as well as been re-interpreted by numerous artists, including Artie Shaw, and Frank Sinatra. It has also crossed genres: Willie Nelson scored a country hit with it in 1978, and British electronic duo Groove Armada recorded it in 1999 under the title "Inside My Mind (Blue Skies)."⁶ Richard Percival's arrangement of Berlin's *Blue Skies* for clarinet quartet is yet another way it has been transformed to expand the range of performances and audiences.

¹Albert R. Rice, *Notes for Clarinetists: A Guide to the Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 249-257

²Burnett C. Tuthill, "The Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1966): 212. Quoted in

³Albert R. Rice, *Notes for Clarinetists: A Guide to the Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴William May, "William A.R. May," 2016, <https://www.williammaymusic.com/product-page/improptu-duo-for-clarinet-and-marimba-1>.

⁵*Ibid.*, 33-36.

⁶"Biography of Florence Beatrice Price," Florence Price, 2020, <https://florenceprice.com/biography/>.

⁷Matt Micucci, "A short history of...'Blue Skies' (Irving Berlin, 1926)," *Jazzlz*, 2017, <https://www.jazzlz.com/short-history-blue-skies-irving-berlin-1926/>.