



presents

TRIO DI CLARONE

Sabine Meyer
Reiner Wehle
Wolfgang Meyer

Wednesday, February 1, 2012, 8pm

Herbst Theatre

MOZART

Three Arias from *The Marriage of Figaro*, K.492
(arranged for three basset horns during Mozart's time)

Rondo: Al desio di chi t'adora

Arietta: Voi, che sapete

Aria: Non più andrai

POULENC

Sonata for Two Clarinets

Presto

Andante

Vif

STRAVINSKY

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo

Sempre piano e molto tranquillo (Quarter=52)

(Eighth=168)

(Quarter=160)

J.S. BACH

French Suite No. 5 in G Major, BWV 816

(arranged for two clarinets and basset horn by Rainer Schottstädt)

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Gavotte

Bourrée

Loure

Gigue

INTERMISSION

program continues on next page

MOZART

Divertimento No. 1 for Three Bass Horns, K.439b

Allegro
Menuetto: Allegretto
Adagio
Menuetto
Rondo: Allegro



C.P.E. BACH

Duo in C Major for Two Clarinets, Wq. 142

MOZART

Four Arias from *Così fan tutte*, K.588 (arranged for three basset horns by Rainer Schottstädt)

Aria: Come scoglio immota resta
Aria: In nomini, in soldati
Aria: Un aura amorosa
Terzetto: Una bella serenata

Artist Profiles

Trio di Clarone makes their San Francisco Performances and Bay Area debut with this performance.

Trio di Clarone

The enthusiastic music lover may certainly know the basset horn, a rare instrument in the clarinet family. It was used in Mozart's Requiem KV626, which owes its melancholy sound to this dark-toned instrument.

The clarinet player, however, also knows this instrument as a rather difficult one: it is often challenging to master both technically and in terms of intonation. A trio of basset horns would probably have been unthinkable had it not been for Mozart and his five Divertimenti written for just this instrumentation.

Mozart seemed to have had a particular affinity for the basset horn during his final years. Some even believe that the basset horn was his favorite instrument. Although many of his compositions with basset horns have fallen into near oblivion today. The five above-mentioned divertimenti (KV 439 b) survived, but only as an arrangement for two clarinets and bassoon.

Sabine Meyer, her brother Wolfgang and Reiner Wehle formed the Trio di Clarone in 1983. Their interest in how the original divertimenti must have sounded played an important part. Obviously five divertimenti of Mozart could not form a complete concert program. Rather than including compositions of lesser quality by Mozart's contemporaries, they decided to contrast Mozart's ingenious works with important compositions of the present day.

This juxtaposition of Mozart and contemporary works soon became a success. Regular concert appearances in Germany and other European countries as well as numerous

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broadcast recordings and appearances on television have made Trio di Clarone quickly popular. Tours brought them to the U.S., Africa, Japan and China.

In their effort to perform important but seldom heard original pieces, Trio di Clarone occasionally collaborates with other musicians, thus being able to present a truly rare and interesting program such as performing a program with three singers and three clarinet players or works for three clarinets and piano. On the occasion of Trio di Clarone's tenth anniversary, they collaborated with well-known American jazz clarinetist Eddie Daniels in a cross-over program, which was released on CD as "Blues for Sabine" by EMI Classics.

In 2000 Trio di Clarone toured with German jazz clarinetist Michael Riessler with Bach 2000, also released on CD by EMI Classics under the title *Bach in 1 Hour*. They have now performed their second program with Michael Riessler since 2003. The collaboration with French hurdy-gurdy player Pierre Charial, was called *Paris Mécanique*, which was also recorded. The most recent project is the recording of *Invitation al Danzon* with Paquito D'Rivera released in the summer 2009.

Program Notes

Three Arias from *The Marriage of Figaro*, K.492

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg

Died December 5, 1791, Vienna

The success of *The Marriage of Figaro* caught even its creator by surprise. Following its premiere on May 1, 1786, the opera was given eight more times in Vienna that year, and when Mozart was invited to visit Prague in January 1787 for the first performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* outside Vienna, he discovered that he was famous there. Astonished by this success, he wrote to a friend: "here nothing is talked of but Figaro, nothing played but Figaro, nothing whistled or sung but Figaro, no opera so crowded as Figaro, nothing but Figaro."

Given that popularity, it is no surprise that music from the opera was quickly arranged for instrumental performance, and this concert opens with three vocal selections from the opera, heard in contemporary (though anonymous) arrangements for three basset horns. The basset horn, now considered almost obsolete, was a clarinet-like instrument pitched in F; it could span four octaves and also play four pitches below the standard

clarinet. Mozart was particularly fond of this instrument and specified its use in his *Requiem* and *Così fan tutte* (the basset-hound was reportedly named after the sound the instrument makes).

Mozart composed *Al desio di chi t'adora* in 1789, three years after the premiere of *Figaro*, as a replacement aria for the soprano Adriana Gabrielli. *Al desio*, about love's longing, is sung by Susanna in Act IV (in the later production, it replaced the famous *Deh vieni non tardar*). The famous *Voi, che sapete* comes from Act II, when the young Cherubino, about to be sent off unwillingly to military service, sings this aria about the suffering of love. The equally famous *Non più andrai* comes from the end of Act I—here Figaro taunts Cherubino just after the Count has ordered the young man off to the army.

Sonata for Two Clarinets

FRANCIS POULENC

Born January 7, 1899, Paris

Died January 30, 1963, Paris

Poulenc felt a special fondness for wind instruments: when writing of his *Sextet for Piano and Woodwind Quintet*, he noted that that music should be understood as "an homage to the wind instruments I have loved from the moment I began composing." Poulenc was certainly correct that his affection for wind instruments was a lifelong affair. His great sonatas for flute, clarinet and oboe date from his final years, but his *Sonata for Two Clarinets* is one of his earliest compositions: he wrote it in 1918, when he was only nineteen, and came back and revised it in 1945.

The *Sonata for Two Clarinets* should be thought of as a miniature (Poulenc himself referred to it as "an entertainment"): its three brief movements span a total of only about seven minutes. Poulenc scored the sonata for a B-flat clarinet and an A clarinet, and its three concise movements may be described just as succinctly. The opening *Presto* feels Stravinskian in its spiky acerbity, while the *Andante* offers one performer a long lyric line while the other accompanies with a two-note ostinato. The sonata concludes with a jaunty fast movement that Poulenc specifies should be performed "with joy."

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born June 17, 1882, Oranienbaum

Died April 6, 1971, New York City

Stravinsky did not like to write for solo in-

struments. With the exception of his pieces for solo piano (and there are not even very many of those), Stravinsky wrote for a solo instrument only twice, and both of these works are quite short: the *Three Pieces for Clarinet* (1919) and the *Elegy for Solo Viola* (1944). The reasons for his reluctance are clear—not only is music for a single instrument restricted in timbre, but it is also severely limited harmonically.

Both Stravinsky's works for a solo instrument were inspired by a specific person. The *Elegy* was written as a memorial to the violinist Alphonse Onnou, but the *Three Pieces* express a more personal debt and celebrate a friendship. In 1918, the first performances of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* were able to proceed because Dr. Werner Reinhart of Winterthur, Switzerland stepped in and paid the production costs and performers' fees. Reinhart was a good amateur clarinetist, and Stravinsky—deeply grateful for his help—tried to repay him musically: he arranged five movements from *L'Histoire* for a trio of violin, clarinet, and piano, and he wrote the *Three Pieces for Clarinet*, which he dedicated to Reinhart.

Stravinsky composed the *Three Pieces* in the fall of 1919 while living in Morges, Switzerland, and the premiere was given in Lausanne on November 8. This music comes from a pivotal moment in Stravinsky's creative life: as he wrote it, he was just setting to work on *Pulcinella*, a new ballet for Serge Diaghilev that would change the entire course of his own music. There is no trace of imminent neo-classicism in the *Three Pieces for Clarinet*, however, and these very brief pieces (they last a total of about four minutes) may be understood as miniature studies in mood and sonority.

The first, marked *Sempre piano e molto tranquillo*, stays primarily in the clarinet's low register. At a relatively slow tempo (Quarter=52), it remains quiet and ruminative. The second, marked only "Eighth=168," is much more playful—it leaps into the instrument's higher registers and is full of swirls and flourishes. The concluding piece (Quarter=160) is a brief dance, somewhat in the jazzy manner of Stravinsky's recently-completed *Ragtime* and the *Tango* from *L'Histoire*. The first two pieces are for clarinet in A; the last for clarinet in B-flat.

French Suite No. 5 in G Major, BWV 816

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Born March 21, 1685, Eisenach

Died July 28, 1750, Leipzig

In May 1720, Bach—then music director at the Cöthen court—accompanied his prince to Carlsbad, where Leopold was taking the

waters, and returned to Cöthen in July to discover that his wife had died while he was gone. Bach, then thirty-five years old, waited nearly eighteen months to marry again, and his choice was a good one. In December 1721 he married the twenty-year-old Anna Magdalena Wilcken, daughter of a court trumpeter and herself an accomplished musician—she would bear Bach thirteen children and survive him by a decade. In the first years of their marriage Bach composed for her a *Clavierbüchlein* (“little keyboard book”), just as he had written a similar volume several years earlier for his son Wilhelm Friedemann. Composed for her instruction or perhaps simply for her pleasure, this was a collection of short keyboard pieces that were certainly first performed within the Bach household. In Anna Magdalena’s *Clavierbüchlein* are early versions of five of the six works that would later be published as Bach’s *French Suites*.

Let it be said right from the start: the name *French Suite* is misleading, and while it has become inseparably a part of this music, Bach never heard that name. For him, these were simply a set of short keyboard suites that he wrote for his young wife. There is nothing consciously—or even unconsciously—French about them, just as there is nothing recognizably English about Bach’s *English Suites*: in both cases, these nicknames were attached to the music after the composer’s death. The *French Suites* (inevitably, we have to use that name) are in the standard four-movement suite sequence—allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue—into which Bach introduces a variety of dance movements, always between the sarabande and gigue. All movements are in binary form. In contrast to the *English Suites*, which are large-scale works stretching out to nearly half an hour, the *French Suites* seem tiny. This is small-scaled, intimate music, and these suites—even with their six to eight movements—last only about a dozen minutes each.

The *Allemande of the Suite No. 5 in G Major* makes some very attractive modulations, as moments of shade pass over the sunny G-major surface of this dance. There follow a quick *Courante* (somewhat reminiscent of the *Two-Part Inventions* Bach was composing in these same years), and a graceful, light *Sarabande*. The interpolated movements—three of them in this suite—are a *Gavotte* (which has become so popular that it is sometimes performed separately), an athletic *Bourrée*, and a *Loure* marked by swirls and cascades of sound, almost arpeggiated chords. The concluding *Gigue*, a fugue, is the most difficult movement in the suite; it races impetuously along its unusual 12/16 meter.

Divertimento No. 1 for Three Basset Horns, K.439b

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg
Died December 5, 1791, Vienna

In the years after his arrival in Vienna in 1781, Mozart wrote some of the greatest music ever composed for wind ensemble, including the *Serenade in D Major, K.361* (the *Gran Partita*) and the *Serenade in E-flat Major, K.375*. But in these same years Mozart also wrote a number of short pieces for small wind ensembles. These may have been written as occasional pieces, composed quickly for friends or in response to requests. Mozart did not think enough of these pieces to include them in his official catalog of works, and they remained almost unknown until Simrock collected twenty-five of them and published them in 1800, nearly a decade after the composer’s death. In their original form, Mozart appears to have conceived these pieces for either an ensemble of two clarinets and bassoon or for three basset horns. Over the last two centuries, however, these pieces have been heard in many arrangements, including versions for keyboard.

This is music intended for the pleasure of the performers and the audience, and it requires little description. The *Divertimento No. 1* is in five brief movements, and these include the movements one expects from a Mozart divertimento: brisk outer movements, a pair of minuets, and—longest of the five movements—a singing *Adagio* at the center.

Duo in C Major for Two Clarinets, Wq. 142

CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH
Born March 8, 1714, Weimar
Died December 14, 1788, Hamburg

We remember Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach as one of the most successful sons of Johann Sebastian. Though his father intended that he should study law, Emanuel chose a different path entirely, leaving behind his extensive university training to devote himself to the keyboard and to composition. In 1740 he was named court harpsichordist to Frederick the Great, and he spent the next twenty-seven years in Berlin and Potsdam in service to Frederick, an accomplished amateur flute-player. In 1767 Emanuel succeeded Telemann as music director for the city of Hamburg, and he remained in that city for the final two decades of his life.

The *Duo for Two Clarinets* dates from Emanuel’s first years in Hamburg—this music appears

to have been composed about 1770. Not a great deal is known about the *Duo*, and since the modern clarinet was not invented until about the turn of the nineteenth century, this music must have been conceived for an early version of that instrument, one that lacked the many keys and full range of the modern instrument. Emanuel’s *Duo* begins with a slow introduction in common time marked *Adagio e sostenuto*, then leaps ahead at the *Allegro*. This section, in a dancing and athletic 9/8 meter, is in binary form.

Four Arias from *Così fan tutte*, K.588

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Così fan tutte has always been Mozart’s “other” great opera, the one people remember after they have thought of *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Magic Flute*. Commissioned by Emperor Joseph II, *Così fan tutte* was premiered in Vienna on January 26, 1790 (the day before the composer’s thirty-fourth birthday) and was a great success, being produced ten times in that year alone. But the subject of the opera—the constancy (or, more accurately, the inconstancy) of women—has proven troublesome. The title *Così fan tutte* translates rather lasciviously “They all do it” (the article is feminine), and nineteenth-century audiences thought the whole thing immoral. Soon after its premiere, *Così* fell into a long obscurity from which it was rescued a century later by the young Richard Strauss, who recognized the sparkle and wit behind the at times acid-edged story.

This concert concludes with four vocal selections, all from Act I of the opera, arranged for three basset horns by Rainer Schottstädt.

In the famous *Come scoglio*, we are in the boudoir of the sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi. Their lovers Ferrando and Guglielmo, disguised as Albanians, have just appeared, knelt before the sisters, and declared their love. The outraged women throw them out and now, in the impassioned and self-righteous aria *Come scoglio* (“Like a rock”), Fiordiligi denounces the fickleness of men. The maid Despina sings *In nomini, in soldati* as she urges the sisters to take new lovers while their men are away, while Ferrando sings *Un aura amorosa* as he attempts to seduce Dorabella. The stirring terzetto (or trio) *Una bella serenata* comes from the opening scene of *Così fan tutte*. Ferrando and Guglielmo have declared their love for their fiancées, and now Alfonso sets the plot in motion by challenging the two men to seduce each other’s fiancée.

—Program notes by Eric Bromberger