

David Kaiser Master's Recital

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Dalton Center Recital Hall

Marcel Bitsch (1921-2011)

Quatre Variations sur un Thème de Domenico Scarlatti

Marcel Bitsch was a French composer and educator that studied and later taught at the Paris Conservatoire. Bitsch won the Conservatoire's Prix de Rome in 1945, a prestigious competition for young artists prior to becoming a professor in 1956 at the Paris Conservatoire where he taught for thirty-two years. While well known by trumpet players for his notorious *Vingt Etudes*, Bitsch composed for a variety of settings such as piano concerti, chamber music, solos for other wind instruments, and works for symphony orchestra. Bitsch was considered a master of fugal techniques and counterpoint on which he authored three books.

Quatre Variations sur un thème de Domenico Scarlatti is a piece in a theme and variations form. The theme used is taken from Italian Baroque composer Domenico Scarlatti's Sonata in D Major, K. 21 for keyboard. Bitsch does change the key from D major to B-flat major since it was intended to be performed on B-flat cornet or B-flat trumpet.

Alfred Desenclos (1912 – 1971)

Incantation, Thrène et Danse

Alfred Desenclos was a lesser-known French composer who's relatively small compositional output was typically reflective of the romantic period but incorporated the use of twentieth-century harmony. His textural and orchestration choices often harken back to the music of French composer Maurice Ravel. Desenclos won the Paris Conservatoire's Prix de Rome in 1942. He served as a professor then director of the Roubaix Conservatoire. He composed a total of fourteen works throughout his life primarily for solo instruments.

Incantation, Thrène et Danse is a trumpet concerto in the traditional fast-slow-fast format. The first movement *Incantation* introduces all the themes to be developed in following movements and evokes images of dark spirits being summoned with agitated rhythms and moments of stark dynamic and textural contrast. *Thrène* originates from the Greek word *Threnody* which meant a dirge or lament for the dead. The lament, stated by muted trumpet, is reminiscent of a jazz ballad style that Desenclos was surely familiar with due to living in France during the mid-twentieth century. The final movement, *Danse*, begins with a jarring statement of the main theme followed by a cadenza based on previous thematic material and melodic devices. The asymmetrical dance then begins repackaging themes introduced in the first movement.

Libby Larsen (b. 1951)

Ridge-Runner: an interrupted suite

Libby Larsen was born in 1950 in Wilmington, DE but currently resides in Minneapolis, MN. She is one of the most performed living composers in America. Her catalogue features over 400 works spanning a variety of genres. She earned her bachelors, master's, and doctoral degrees in composition from the University of Minnesota. She is an active guest conductor, speaker, and educator making appearances at many conferences each year often premiering new compositions.

Ridge-Runner is an uninterrupted suite originally composed in five movements for trumpet and two percussionists. The piece was commissioned to be premiered at the International Women's Brass Conference in 2012 which coincidentally took place at Western Michigan University (WMU). The piece was premiered by current principal trumpet of the St. Louis Symphony Karin Bliznik, recently retired WMU percussion professor Judy Moonert, and current Grand Valley State and Hope College percussion professor Greg Secor. The term "ridge-runner" refers to a few different kinds of people: southern farmers, mountaineers, and moonshiners amongst others. Larsen believes all these people to share wit, perseverance, and self-reliance. She believes solo trumpet players are like ridge-runners in their energy, daring, and spirit. The piece blends various American music styles with unusual melodies.

Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695)

Sonata in D Major, Z. 850

Henry Purcell was an English composer during the Baroque period and was one of the first to write serious concert music featuring solo trumpet. He is often regarded as England's finest native composer. Purcell's Sonata in D major was originally composed for natural trumpet, an instrument with no valves capable of playing in only certain keys and a small string orchestra. It is also often performed with trumpet and piano or organ as well. The piece is being performed today with a *continuo* group. In the Baroque period (approx. 1600 – 1750), a *basso continuo* or just simply *continuo* was an accompanying part that provided basslines and added harmonic support. One or multiple players could perform a *continuo* part and a variety of instruments would typically play it, but harpsichord was certainly the most common. *Basso continuo* parts were not traditionally all written out and required players to improvise parts in the moment. Similarly, the soloist was also expected to add their own ornamentation to the written part adding additional improvised elements.

Ben Wendel (b. 1976)

December from “The Seasons”

Ben Wendel is a Canadian American jazz saxophonist and bassoonist that has developed a singular voice in jazz and contemporary music. Wendel was born in Vancouver, Canada and raised in Los Angeles, CA. He leads a multi-faceted career as a performer, composer, and educator. Wendel formerly served on faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music and is currently on faculty at The New School in NYC. He is also a founding member of the jazz fusion band Kneebody.

The Seasons was a project Wendel created in 2015 in which he composed an original composition as a duet each month of the year dedicated to a specific musician that he holds deep admiration for. Musicians featured in the project include Joshua Redman, Gilad Hekselman, Julian Lage, Eric Harland, and Aaron Parks amongst others. The last piece, December, was written for and performed with innovative jazz trumpet player Ambrose Akinmusire. The piece was inspired by music from Akinmusire’s third album “Marie Christie”. While December is often a cheerful and joyous time for many, Wendel thought it can also be a time for reflection and introspection. The piece begins with a solemn chorale intended to capture the loneliness and longing winter. The second half of the piece was written to blur the line between composed and improvised melodic lines while also capturing Akinmusire’s virtuosic ability to leap across wide intervals.

Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

Colchester Fantasy

Eric Ewazen is an American composer and professor at the Juilliard School in New York City. He grew up in Cleveland, OH and earned a bachelor's degree at the Eastman School of Music, and M.M. and D.M.A. degrees at the Juilliard School. He has made guest artist appearances at over 100 universities and had his music recorded by an extensive list of artists including the American Brass Quintet, Summit Brass Ensemble, Doug Yeo of the Boston Symphony, Charles Vernon of the Chicago Symphony, Joseph Alessi and Phil Smith of the New York Philharmonic, and the NY Philharmonic horn section amongst many others.

Colchester Fantasy was written for the American Brass Quintet while Ewazen was teaching in Colchester, England, the oldest recorded town in England. The town is charming in all the ways you would expect from an old town in the English countryside with beautiful churches, quaint homes, and lots of eccentric pubs. Each movement is named for a specific pub in the town and the feelings the name of each pub evoked for the composer. The first movement "The Rose and the Crown" is energetic and boisterous incorporating undulating rhythmic patterns with themes that are constantly developing. The second movement "The Marquis of Granby" is solemn and stately with themes that sound regal and chant-like. "The Dragoon" brings sound of battle to brass quintet featuring dissonant harmonies and fragmented melodies passed around the ensemble in constantly shifting meter. The final movement "The Red Lion" is a jaunty and uplifting tune that is reminiscent of drinking songs.

