Ruchy Gambhir – hautbois, cor anglais
Masaru Sakuma - piano/clavecín
Jacob Barker - violoncelle

Undergraduate recital Series
Recital Hall | April 22, 2017 | 5 p.m.

Program

Sonata pour hautbois et piano

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

Sonata for Oboe and Continuo in C minor, RV 53
Adagio
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

INTERMISSION

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Morceau de Salon, Op. 228

Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda
(1801-1866)

Thank you all for coming!

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Music
Sonata for Oboe and Piano

Francis Poulenc (7 Jan 1899 – 30 Jan 1963) was a prolific composer of secular and religious music, including operas, ballets, orchestral and chamber music, and music for choirs and solo or chamber voices. The Oboe Sonata was Poulenc’s last composition, premiered in 1963 after his death. Written in memory of Sergei Prokofiev, the piece follows in the footsteps of Sept Repons, angry, urgent, and “very interior.” Despite his religiousness, in his later pieces Poulenc creates “a religious atmosphere [that is] no consolation, faced by the proximity of death,” and this is evident in the Oboe Sonata.

The movements move from Elégie to Scherzo to Déploration, from the melancholic to the frantic to pensive grieving, creating the feeling of a memento mori. Following a short, unaccompanied fragment, Elégie, written in a modified ABA form, opens with a lyrical, nostalgic oboe melody, which recalls the frequent use of the oboe in pastoral writing. The second movement, Scherzo, though also in ABA form provides an abrupt change of mood, introducing a “perpetual motion” feeling that is perhaps a nod to Prokofiev. The perpetual motion machine here is a bit off, interspersing 9/8 measures into the 6/8 theme, and clipping or adding to the ends of phrases; the effect is one of slight mania. In another dramatic change, Déploration takes the airy B theme of the second movement and condenses it. The music in this movement varies widely in dynamics, moving rapidly from pp to ff, as well as from major to minor, but the effect is neither show nor mania. Instead, the movement is a lament, and the effect is of intense, intensely personal grief.

Sonata for Oboe and Continuo in C minor, RV 53

The sonata for oboe and continuo in C minor, identified as RV 53 in the catalogue of Vivaldi’s works by Peter Ryom, is the only work from the composer’s pen to have been composed indisputably for this instrumental combination. A showpiece for the instrument, it requires great virtuosity, especially in the performance of chromatic notes, which were more difficult on the baroque oboe than on a modern instrument. One suspects that the sonata was tailored to a particular, expert player known to Vivaldi. RV 53 follows the four-movement plan. A stately Adagio, which has an independent introduction by the continuo in the manner of a cantata aria, is followed by a sprightly Allegro, a melodious Andante (in which the continuo engages in non-stop imitation with the oboe) and a whirlwind of an Allegro. Noteworthy is the fact that all four movements are cast in the home key of C minor.

Pavane for a Dead Princess

Pavane pour une infante défunte is a well-known piece written for solo piano by the French composer Maurice Ravel in 1899 when he was studying composition at the Conservatoire de Paris under Gabriel Fauré. Ravel also published an orchestrated version of the Pavane in 1910.

Ravel described the piece as "an evocation of a pavane that a little princess [infanta] might, in former times, have danced at the Spanish court. The pavane was a slow proccessional dance that enjoyed great popularity in the courts of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

This antique miniature is not meant to pay tribute to any particular princess from history, but rather expresses a nostalgic enthusiasm for Spanish customs and sensibilities, which Ravel shared with many of his contemporaries (most notably Debussy and Albéniz) and which is evident in some of his other works such as the Rapsodie espagnole and the Boléro. Ravel dedicated the Pavane to his patron, the Princesse de Polignac, and he probably performed the work at the princess's home on at least several occasions.

Morceau de Salon

Today, Kalliwoda's compositions are nearly forgotten. But works like "Morceau de Salon" exude humor and charm. The name Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda is familiar among oboists because his favorite instrument seems to have been the oboe. Born in 1801 in Prague, the composer served for more than 40 years as orchestral director in the southwestern German city of Donaueschingen. In a music periodical ("Neue Zeitschrift für Musik") co-founded by Robert Schumann, the composer praised Kalliwoda for the tenderness and sweep of his works.

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