



CLEVELAND
CHAMBER
MUSIC
SOCIETY

PROGRAM NOTES

William Caballero, horn and Rodrigo Ojeda, piano
April 30, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.
Forest Hill Church Presbyterian

***En forêt* (“In the Forest”), Op. 40**
String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2

Eugène Bozza

Born: France, 1905

Died: France, 1991

Composed: 1941

Since the 1830s, the Paris Conservatoire has been commissioning pieces for all woodwind and brass instruments as well as for harp, which students had to prepare for the annual competitions. (There is also a separate series for sight-reading exercises for all instruments; A-R Editions has been publishing anthologies of this invaluable material.) Over the years, the Conservatoire commissions have given the music world such important repertoire staples as Debussy's *Première rhapsodie* for clarinet and piano and Dutilleux's *Sonatine* for flute and piano.

Eugène Bozza's *En forêt*, written as part of this distinguished tradition of examination pieces, has become an integral part of the horn literature. It was written in 1941, at a time when Paris — and half of France — was occupied by the Nazis. Bozza, a graduate of the Conservatoire who had won

no fewer than three *Premiers Prix* there (in violin performance, conducting,

and composition), wrote prolifically for all wind instruments. During the years of occupation, he conducted at the *Opéra-Comique*; later he became the director of the conservatory in Valenciennes in Northern France.

En forêt is a short but ambitious work which begins and ends with a lively and energetic motif, full of syncopations and other rhythmic irregularities. In between these bookends, we encounter a series of episodes such as a mysterious signal with an alternation of regular and stopped sounds; a solemn rendition of the Easter chant *Victimae paschali laudes*; a hunting melody in traditional 6/8 time; and an expressive short section in which the horn player uses a mute. Part of the challenge lies in the quick changes of mood that require a wide range

of technical skills as well as a high level of musical sensitivity.

Three Miniatures

Anthony Plog

Born: Glendale, California, 1947

Composed: 1997

Anthony Plog, an eminent trumpet player, composer, conductor, and educator now based in Germany, has written prolifically for brass instruments. The present “three miniatures” constitute, for all intents and purposes, a sonatina with the traditional fast-slow-fast movement sequence. The work challenges the player with the many fast

chromatic runs that can be rather tricky for the French horn. The outer movements have a great deal of rhythmic energy, while the central *Adagio* (“atmospheric and dream-like”) introduces a *dolce* melody, highlighting the lyrical aspect of the instrument's character.

Horn Concerto, Op. 28

Oliver Knussen

Born: Glasgow, Scotland, 1952

Died: Snape, Suffolk, England, 2018

Composed: 1994-1995

For nearly half a century, Oliver Knussen was one of the most prominent and influential personalities on the international new music scene. As a composer, conductor, and educator, he inspired and influenced generations of musicians worldwide (in the United States, he directed the contemporary music programs at Tanglewood for many years). His works include, along with numerous outstanding orchestral and chamber works, the two humorous Maurice Sendak operas *Where the Wild Thing Are* and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* His untimely death last July is mourned by his many friends, students, and admirers around the globe.

In November 1995, Knussen shared the following comments on his Horn Concerto, which he conducted at Severance Hall, with dedicatee Barry Tuckwell as soloist:

“The wish to compose something for Barry Tuckwell had been somewhere at the back of my mind for almost as long as I can remember. Hence, when I received an invitation from the Suntory Foundation to write a piece for performance in the magnificent acoustic of Suntory Hall, Tokyo, a work for horn and orchestra seemed appropriate, as I imagined that the subtle colour-gradations, wide dynamic range and what might be termed ‘spatial’ characteristics of the horn sound world would be heard to ideal effect in that room (which I knew from having conducted a concert there in 1992). The relationship between the sound of the instrument itself and the space around it is, it seems to me, especially critical in the case of the horn, and this aspect is particularly difficult to reflect accurately in a recording. Thoughts of this nature eventually led to the conception of a predominantly lyrical work which employs a large orchestra (including

two sets of timpani) in a very economical manner. The music began as a grateful response to more than thirty years of hearing Barry Tuckwell play and, as I composed it, assumed more and more character of a *Nachtmusik* (in a Mahlerian sense). My working plan was for two parts, *Fantastico* (a sonata-allegro) and *Adagio* (variations on a ground bass), framed and connected by cadenza-like passages. But in the process of composition these designs telescoped unexpectedly, and the result is a single

movement, playing for about thirteen minutes in all, in which the interlocked old forms are only vestigial frames for a very allusive piece about aspects of the character of my favourite instrument of all. My Horn Concerto, composed in August and September of 1994, was played for the first time in Suntory Hall, Tokyo on 7th October 1994 by Barry Tuckwell with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra under my direction. The score was revised in October 1995.

Intermezzo in A major, Op. 118, No. 2

Johannes Brahms

Born: Hamburg, 1833

Died: Vienna, 1897

Composed: 1893

One of the twenty short piano pieces Brahms wrote late in life, the A-major intermezzo is among the most intimate musical compositions ever written. Hearing its gentle melody played on the French horn, one will be put in mind of those magical forests beloved by the German Romantics.

Brahms, who created an iconic work in the horn literature with his Trio, Op. 40 (for the natural *Waldhorn* or “forest horn”), used the more modern valved instrument to evoke nature in the famous “mountain greeting” in his First Symphony.

Trio in A minor for Oboe, Horn, and Piano, Op. 188

Carl Reinecke

Born: Altonad, 1824

Died: Leipzig, 1910

Composed: 1886

A highly esteemed composer in his own time, Carl Reinecke was one of those German masters from the circle of Schumann and Mendelssohn who carried the ideals of early Romanticism into the 20th century. He was the longtime music director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (which Mendelssohn had founded), and conducted the first performance of the full seven-movement version of Brahms' *German Requiem*. He was also a

distinguished professor at the Leipzig Conservatory, where his students included Isaac Albéniz, Max Bruch, Edvard Grieg, Leoš Janáček, and Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Reinecke was extremely prolific (his opus numbers reach an astounding 288!) and is best remembered for his music for young players, and for his many works featuring wind instruments. In the four movements of the present trio, the three instruments carry

on a convivial conversation with one another. While scrupulously respecting the conventional musical forms, well-established by the late 19th century, Reinecke handled melody and harmony with an assurance very few composers could muster, and got the most out of his unusual combination of instruments. Occasionally, the convivial conversation becomes more

heated in the first movement, and some dramatic tension builds up, even though it never comes to a full-blown argument. The second-movement Scherzo is a delightful romp with a more song-like middle section; the *Adagio* is a heartfelt hymn; and the final *Allegro ma non troppo* (in A major) combines light-heartedness with considerable harmonic sophistication.

-Peter Laki

Mr. Laki is a musicologist and Visiting Associate Professor of Music at Bard College. He has been the annotator for the Society's program booklet since 2012, having previously served as annotator for the Cleveland Orchestra from 1990 to 2007. He is a native of Budapest and holds a Ph.D. in music from the University of Pennsylvania.