

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SELECTED FRENCH AND AMERICAN
 CLARINET REPERTOIRE COMPOSED
 AFTER 1920

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In the 20th century, France and the United States made particularly noteworthy and interesting musical developments among other countries. Both of the two countries tried to forge a national cultural identity amidst political upheavals of the times and the two World Wars. I specified the time period as after 1920, because the interactions between French and American music dated from that time. French composers were influenced by American popular music, especially by jazz, and many American composers came to France to study from the 1920s. French composers, also, came to the United States as immigrants or visitors for political and professional reasons, which resulted in spreading their influences.

The purposes of this project were to explore significant and representative clarinet repertoire written by French and American composers and to comprehend their distinctive compositional styles. I thus tried to incorporate diverse musical styles that appeared in France and the United States in presenting three recitals as satisfaction of the requirements for a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree at the University of Maryland,

College Park. These recitals comprised works by such French composers as Camille Saint-Saëns, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Olivier Messiaen, Eugène Bozza, Henri Tomasi, and Jean Françaix and by such American composers as George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Vincent Persichetti, Donald Martino, and Elliott Carter. Program notes were presented at each recital to describe the characteristic musical styles of the selected composers and their brief biographies. These recitals took places on December 9, 2006, April 23, 2007, both in Ulrich Recital Hall, and on December 7, 2007, in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall of the Clarice Performing Arts Center in College Park.

SELECTED FRENCH AND AMERICAN CLARINET REPERTOIRE
COMPOSED AFTER 1920

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
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Historical Background

Between the two World Wars (1918-39), there was increasing international tension in many Western countries. They experienced changes in political ideology and became more and more isolated. Reflecting these shifts of times, music also changed enormously. Composers began looking more to folk music traditions of their own countries for inspiration. Political upheavals also forced some composers to alter their style, or to conform with particular expectations. Others escaped their native countries, which resulted in spreading their influences abroad.

The development of recording and broadcasting technology in the 20th century revolutionized the way music could be diffused and perceived, because such technologies as, radio, television, LPs, tapes, and compact discs disseminated all styles of music to a large audience that included composers. This technology also “furthered the growth of a huge body of popular music, much of it originating in the United States: blues, jazz, rock, soul, country, and various strains of newer urban music.”¹

Music in the 20th century cannot be characterized by one specific trait, but rather such diverse styles and techniques as ethnic, impressionistic, neoclassic, expressionistic, atonal, and serial music were appeared. These various musical styles and techniques did not form in a chronological sequence, and their developments and use overlapped each other. Furthermore, they are neither distinctly nor consistently separated from each other. More than one style is often synthesized in the characteristic of an individual composer.

¹ Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 5th ed. (New York: Norton, 1996), 694.

France

Near the end of the 19th century, French composers began to seek their own sound as a result of the Franco-Prussian War. The National Society for French Music was founded in 1871 to “revive the great French music of the past through editions and performances of Rameau, Gluck, and the sixteenth-century composers”² and to “give performances of the works of French composers.”³ This “French revival began with nationalistic aims as a reaction to the dominance of German music and allowed France to regain a leading position in music in the first half of the 20th century.”

The United States

The United States became the prominent musical nation in the 20th century because of remarkable achievements in music education, performance, technology, scholarship, and composition. 20th century American art music developed in similar ways to French music. Like France, late 19th century America was consciously trying to forge a national cultural identity as it recovered from the Civil War. This search for its own national identity influenced American art music in the 20th century.

During the years between the two world wars, significant changes occurred in the United States relative to music. The American art music culture became largely indebted to Europe for the training of its musicians and composers. A number of leading European composers came to the United States as immigrants or visitors for political, professional and personal reasons. The most prominent were Bartók, Prokofiev, Hindemith, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Varèse, Martinů, and Milhaud. They taught and influenced American composers. Starting in the 1920s, many American composers went to Europe to study, especially with Nadia Boulanger, who was continuing her class in Paris and then in Fontainebleau until her death in 1979 at the age of 92. “From this predominantly European heritage, though, American composers emerged as individualists with strongly eclectic tastes.”⁴

² Ibid., 677.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hugh M. Miller and Dale Cockrell, *History of Western Music*, 5th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 215.

One of the most important genres in the 20th century American music is popular music since many types such as blues, jazz, rock, soul, and country, originated in the United States. In the 1920s, popular music was disseminated quickly throughout the nation by new technologies, recordings and media. Due to this wide diffusion, popular music was permeated art music through composers who intentionally used popular tunes, rhythms, and harmonies in their works.

Within other popular music as a whole, jazz was the most influential style in 20th century art music. It became internationally recognized and its rhythms and tunes were used by many composers. Swing is one of the most popular jazz styles that emerged during the early 1930s. It is characterized by a syncopated rhythm that falls between beats with equal stress given to the four beats of a measure. It also emphasized big bands comprising about 15 members. The bands of Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie were the primary innovators of big-band swing, while those of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, and Harry James were also outstanding. Jazz gained a wide audience when white orchestras adapted or imitated it, and it became accepted entertainment in the late 1930s when Benny Goodman led racially mixed groups in concerts at Carnegie Hall.

Dissertation Recital I

“Selected French and American Clarinet Repertoire Composed after 1920”
Saturday, December 9, 2006 at 5:30pm, Ulrich Recital Hall
Eunae Ko, Piano

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

Aria

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 167

Allegretto

Allegro animato

Lento

Molto Allegro

Intermission

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Three Preludes

Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

Andante con moto e poco rubato

Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Andante semplice

Lento

Allegretto giusto

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Grazioso

Andantino, vivace e leggiero

Program Notes

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991): *Aria*

Eugène Bozza was born in Nice, France. His father was a professional Italian violinist, and his mother was a French woman. He started playing the violin at the age of five. He went to the Paris Conservatoire three times as a violinist, conductor and composer, and he was awarded the Premier Prix three times in violin (1924), conducting (1930), and composition (1934).

Eugène Bozza composed different genres of music for various instruments including strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. He especially made significant contributions to expand woodwinds' repertoires. "Bozza's Italian heritage is reflected in his frequent use of cadenzas and recitatives, and in his lyrical melodies and harmonies. There are also influences of Impressionism in his use of melody and harmony. He used extended tertian chords, parallelism of perfect intervals, and use of chords with added chromatic tones. Whole tone scales, transposed modes, and pentatonic scales are also utilized."⁵

Bozza originally composed *Aria* for the famous saxophonist Marcel Mule in 1936, and the *Aria* for clarinet and piano is an arrangement transcribed from its original saxophone score. "The title refers to the Baroque concept of Air, implying for the great part, a catchy tune above a simple chordal accompaniment. The movement formed of one block with individual chord connections reveals earlier form shaping characteristics, the sequencing repetition of mosaic-like short rhythm formulae and typical turns."⁶

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921): *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 167*

Camille Saint-Saëns was a French composer, pianist, organist and writer who wrote every genre of 19th century music, including opera, symphonies, concertos, songs, sacred and secular choral music, solo piano and chamber music. While his inclusion in this dissertation recital may initially seem odd, in fact he composed his clarinet sonata in 1921, the year of his death. Saint-Saëns lived from the Romantic era to the 20th century, but he was considered as a contemporary of Brahms according to his musical style. His works are fundamentally conservative and structured in Classic forms. Saint-Saëns's music did not pursue new and innovative ways, but rather it kept the Classic essence, "regarding music as sonorous form rather than expression."⁷

Saint-Saëns's *Clarinet Sonata* was composed shortly before Saint-Saëns died at the age of eighty-six and was dedicated to Auguste Périer, professor of clarinet at the Paris Conservatoire. "The main features of the Clarinet Sonata are the lyrical melodic lines of the clarinet and its

⁵ Hannah Ink, "The French Three: A Comparison of Recital Music for Clarinet Written by Milhaud, Tomasi, and Bozza" (DMA diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 2005), 30.

⁶ Katalin Fittler, "Eugène Bozza" in accompanying booklet, *Rhapsodie niçoise* performed by Csaba Klenyán and Maki Yamamoto, Hungaroton Records HCD 32114, 2003, Compact disc.

⁷ Grout, 678.

unusually simple piano part. As a gifted pianist, Saint-Saëns generally wrote piano parts of considerable technical difficulty. The work consists of four movements. The first movement has a main section featuring an expansive theme which appears on either side of a florid central section. The second movement presents lively music in A-flat major. The third is notable for its restrained beauty, and the fourth is a lively final which ends with a return to the theme appearing at the beginning of the first movement.”⁸

George Gershwin (1898-1937): Three Preludes

George Gershwin was one of the first and most successful American composers “to incorporate the popular jazz rhythms of the 1920s in classical forms.”⁹ He combined such jazz idioms as blue notes, syncopated rhythms, and onomatopoeic instrumental effects into a symphonic context in his *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924). He was the first to score a Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, *Of Thee I Sing* (1931), which was one of the Gershwin brothers’ serious musicals employing social satire and to write a well known American opera, *Porgy and Bess* (1935), more notable for its all-black cast, its roots in African culture, and hits such as *Summertime*.

Gershwin was influenced by such French composers of the early 20th century as Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud, and Poulenc. The orchestrations in Gershwin's symphonic works are similar to those of Ravel and likewise, Ravel's two piano concertos show the influence of Gershwin. Gershwin's own *Concerto in F* was criticized because it was rooted more in the work of Claude Debussy than in the jazz style which was expected of him. Gershwin, however, did not stop continuing to explore French styles. “The title of *An American in Paris* reflects the journey that he had taken as a composer. Aside from the French influence, Gershwin was intrigued by the works of Alban Berg, Dmitri Shostakovich, Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg.”¹⁰

Gershwin’s *Three Preludes* (1927) are the only published reminder of a series of piano pieces he composed for a 1926 recital featuring himself and a celebrated soprano of the time. The preludes contain the regular phrase lengths, “blue” thirds and sevenths, and the brittle syncopation in the outer pieces recalling his Broadway success. The central prelude is in the AABA popular song form, each section itself a twelve-bar blues.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990): Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Aaron Copland is considered the most widely known American Composer of the 20th century. Copland integrated national American idioms into his music with technical polish.”¹¹ In 1921, Copland traveled to Paris to attend the newly founded music school for Americans at

⁸ Satsuki Inoue, “Saint-Saëns: SONATA in E-flat major for clarinet and piano” essay in accompanying booklet, *French Clarinet Art* performed by Paul Meyer and Eric Le Sage, DENON CO-79282, 1992, Compact disc.

⁹ Wold, 202.

¹⁰ “George Gershwin,” *Wikipedia*, Wikipedia Foundation: 2007, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Gershwin (accessed February 28, 2007).

¹¹ Grout, 777.

Fontainebleau. He was the first American student of Nadia Boulanger.

Copland's compositional styles paralleled the important trends of his time. After his return from Paris, he worked with jazz rhythms in his *Piano Concerto* (1926) and his *Piano Variations* (1930) was strongly influenced by Neoclassicism. In 1936, he changed his direction toward a simpler style to make his music more pleasant to the large audience being created by media. His significant works during this period were based on American folklore including *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Rodeo* (1942), and a Pulitzer Prize-winning ballet, *Appalachian Spring* (1944). Other works during this period were a series of movie scores including *Of Mice and Men* (1938) and *The Heiress* (1948). In his later years, Copland's works reflected the serial techniques of the 12-tone school of Arnold Schoenberg. *Connotations* (1962), notable among this serial music, was commissioned for the opening of Lincoln Center.

Aaron Copland's *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* was originally written for violin and piano in 1943, and Copland himself transcribed it for clarinet and piano in 1986. The Sonata was written in the period when Copland sought for more accessible and simpler music. "It anticipates *Appalachian Spring* (1944), with its lyricism, dance rhythms, and uncomplicated harmony. The first movement begins with a slow theme that gradually accelerates. An angular second theme follows with a lyrical middle section, then flowing thematically backwards to the slow opening. The second movement is a simple, slow waltz preceded and followed by a lyrical dialogue between clarinet and piano. The last movement is a fast dance of bouncy rhythmic themes and textures, punctuated occasionally by pensive lyricism and bold declamation. The Sonata ends with the first movement opening theme, but this time it is accompanied by piano motives from the dance."¹²

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990): Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Leonard Bernstein was an American composer, conductor, music lecturer and pianist. He was the first American-born conductor to attain world-wide fame, and he is best known for both his conducting of the New York Philharmonic and his compositions, including *West Side Story*, *Candide*, and *On the Town*.

Bernstein was appointed music director of the New York Philharmonic in 1958 and became truly famous in the same year "with the first of his series of Young People's Concerts, fondly remembered by many as their introduction to the world of classical music."¹³ During his tenure as music director of the New York Philharmonic, he "introduced thematic programming, and the televised 'Young People's Concerts,' and at one concert every week he addressed the audience before playing each work; he launched a survey of Mahler's symphonies, and

¹² Sean Osborn, "Aaron Copland" in accompanying booklet, *American Spirit* performed by Sean Osborn and Blair McMillen, Albany Records TROY619, 2003, Compact disc.

¹³ Chris Woodstra and Gerald Brenna, "Leonard Bernstein," *All Music Guide to Classical Music* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 152.

inaugurated the new Philharmonic Hall (now Avery Fisher Hall) at the Lincoln Center.”¹⁴ Bernstein’s performances and recordings of all of Mahler symphonies particularly made the noteworthy achievement in reviving interest in Mahler.

Bernstein’s compositional style is influenced by such composers as Aaron Copland, Paul Hindemith, and George Gershwin. Bernstein’s symphonic writing with jazz elements is reminiscent of styles of Copland and Gershwin, and his use of tonality that contains dissonance reminds of Hindemith’s harmonic treatment. His *Clarinet Sonata* is a good example of these influences. The harmonic structure of the first movement is reminiscent of Hindemith, and the second movement “alternates between slow, motivic writing and a faster, lighter, more rhythmic 5/8 section”¹⁵ that illustrates styles of Gershwin and Copland. The Sonata was written in Key West during the winter of 1941-42.

¹⁴ David Schiff, “Bernstein, Leonard,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press: 2006, <http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.02883> (accessed October 31, 2006).

¹⁵ Sean Osborn, “Leonard Bernstein” in accompanying booklet, *American Spirit* performed by Sean Osborn and Blair McMillen, Albany Records TROY619, 2003, Compact disc.

Dissertation Recital II

“Selected French and American Clarinet Repertoire Composed after 1920”

Monday, April 23, 2007 at 8pm, Ulrich Recital Hall

Eunae Ko and Grace Cho, Piano

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

Parable XIII for Solo Clarinet, Op. 126

Elliott Carter (b. 1908)

GRA for Bb Clarinet alone

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

Scaramouche

I. Vif

II. Modéré

III. Brazileira

Eunae Grace Cho, piano

Intermission

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955)

Sonatine for Clarinet and Piano

I. Modéré

II. Lent et soutenu

III. Vif et rythmique

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Abîme des oiseaux from “Quatour pour la fin du Temps”

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

I. Allegro tristamente

II. Romanza

III. Allegro con fuoco

Program Notes

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987): **Parable XIII for Solo Clarinet, Op. 126**

Vincent Persichetti was an American composer who was a virtuoso pianist and conductor as well as composer. He received his masters and doctorate degrees in piano performance and composition from the Philadelphia Conservatory and a Diploma in Conducting from the Curtis Institute. In 1947, he joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music, assuming chairmanship of the Composition Department in 1963. He was noted for his "concise polyphonic style based on interconnected melodic lines, forceful rhythms, and generally diatonic melodies in chromatic movements."¹⁶

Persichetti composed numerous instrumental works, including two unique series: one comprised of 15 different works each entitled *Serenade*, and the other of 25 pieces, each entitled *Parable*. There are 19 Parables written for solo instruments. The other six are ensemble pieces for brass quintet, band, string quartet, piano trio, opera, and two trumpets. "Parable XIII is a single movement for Solo Clarinet in three sections. First comes a slow rhapsodic section followed by a fast and lively part. Then the slow section returns and ends the piece with the clarinet dissolving into nothing. This piece shows an intimate understanding of capability of the clarinet."¹⁷

Elliott Carter (b. 1908): **GRA for Bb Clarinet alone**

Elliott Carter is the one of the most significant post-World War II American composers. Carter was consistently innovative in his use of dynamics, his explorations in tempo relationships, and texture in his works.

"His early music, including the ballet *Pocahontas* (1939) and his *Symphony no. 1* (1942), reflects the neo-classical influences of studies with Walter Piston and Gustav Holst at Harvard (1926-32) and with Nadia Boulanger in Paris."¹⁸ Carter established his notion of "metric modulation" in which one tempo leads gradually to another through equivalent sounding but differently written rhythmic values acting as links from one meter to another. This technique was first employed in the *String Quartet No.1* (1951) and developed this method further in the *Quartet No. 2* (1960) which gained him his first Pulitzer Prize.

GRA for Bb clarinet alone was written in 1991 for the 80th birthday of Witold Lutoslawski. "Gra means 'play' in Polish, and the piece is a light and humorous work. Carter gives the

¹⁶ "Vincent Persichetti," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, Encyclopedia Britannica: 2007, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9059344> (accessed February 28, 2007).

¹⁷ Jonathan Cohler, "Vincent Persichetti" in accompanying booklet, *The Clarinet Alone* performed by Jonathan Cohler, Ongaku Records 024-105, 1995, Compact disc.

¹⁸ Elliott Carter, *Classical Net*, Classical Net: 2007, <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/carter.html>; Internet (accessed March 1, 2007).

unusual character indication 'Ghiribizzoso' which mean 'whimsical' in Italian at the head of the score, and the writing brings out the comic potential of the clarinet in different ways. This piece particularly draws attention to the wide range of colors that the clarinet can produce throughout its registers and even on one note. In the center of the piece, the clarinet sustains one note for six bars, but it is instructed to increase and decrease a change in tone-color or vibrato or both."¹⁹ This piece contains multiphonics, one of the avant-garde techniques, but it is sometimes hard to hear because of its soft dynamics and short lengths.

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974): Scaramouche

Darius Milhaud was one of the co-founder of *Les Six* (The French Six), a group of six students at the Paris Conservatoire which was comprised of Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, George Auric, Germaine Tailleferre, and Louis Durey. Milhaud published more than 400 compositions in many genres, including 12 symphonies and 18 string quartets, as well as music for theater, operas, ballets, and film. He was always open to such global inspirations as jazz and Latin-American music and showed great interest in exotic scales and rhythms, polytonality and polyrhythms in his compositions.

Scaramouche, also known as Scaramuccia, is a naughty character in commedia dell'arte ("play of professional artists" also interpreted as "comedy of humors" in Italian) who wears black trousers and shirt with a black velvet mask and hat. This character was invented by a 17th century Italian actor, Tiberio Fiorelli. Scaramouche is usually portrayed as a buffoon or boastful coward. Milhaud's *Scaramouche* was originally written for two pianos in 1937, but it was transcribed by the composer for alto saxophone (or clarinet) and piano. This piece is formed in three movements. The first movement illustrates Milhaud's counterpoint with unusual tonal shifts and vigorous rhythmic action. It has a perpetual-motion quality to it. The second movement is structured in ABA form. It demonstrates a simple elegance and is marked *with feeling* in the score. The finale is the most dynamic movement of the piece. It is written in samba rhythm (3+3+2) in which shows Milhaud's Brazilian inspirations and is marked *Braziliera* in the score.

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955): Sonatine for Clarinet and Piano

Arthur Honegger was born of Swiss parentage in France and lived in Paris after 1913. "He used short-breathed melodies, strong ostinato rhythms, dissonant harmonies, and well-controlled dynamic actions in his compositions."²⁰ His oratorios, *King David* and *Joan of Arc at the Stake* are two of the great choral works of the 20th century and gave him an international recognition.

Honegger's *Sonatine* was composed for his benefactor and amateur clarinetist Werner Reinhart

¹⁹ David Schiff, "GRA" in accompanying booklet, *Elliott Carter* performed by Charles Neidich, Bridge Records BCD 9044, 1994, compact disc.

²⁰ Grout, 717.

during a stay in the Swiss town of Wintherthur in 1921 and 1922. It has three short movements. “The first two movements have a restrained character and are in strong contrast to the last movement. The finale features lively music incorporating such jazz elements as syncopated rhythms and sliding between notes.”²¹

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992): *Abîme des oiseaux* from “*Quatour pour la fin du Temps*”

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) was regarded as one of the most influential and innovative 20th century composers. Messiaen developed an original and unique style. He used the modes he designed with capabilities of limited transposition and unusual rhythms from ancient Greek and Hindu sources. Many of Messiaen’s works are ametrical with bar lines placed only to indicate phrasing. Messiaen sometimes used bar lines to indicate measures but did not include meter signatures. He developed rhythmic palindromes, or nonretrogradable rhythms which read the same backward and forward. Messiaen changed the rhythmic pattern through adding a note, inserting a rest, or lengthening the value of one of the notes. He also wrote down birdsongs in musical notation and used the transcriptions in his compositions.

Quatour pour la fin du temps (Quartet for the End of Time) is one of Olivier Messiaen’s principal pieces. It was composed in 1941 when Messiaen was interned in a German prisoner-of-war camp in Silesia. Its unusual instrumentation of clarinet, violin, cello, and piano was brought about by the availability of performers in the camp. Messiaen first wrote a short trio for clarinet, violin, and cello, and then added a piano to the ensemble and seven more movements to this Interlude to create the *Quartet for the End of Time*. The work was first performed by Messiaen on the piano together with three musicians encountered in the camp for their 5000 fellow prisoners on January 15, 1941.

Quartet for the End of Time was written under the inspiration of Chapter X of the Book of Revelation of St. John about the descent of the seventh angel, at the sound of whose trumpet the mystery of God will be consummated, and who announces "that there should be time no longer." There are eight movements because God rested on the seventh day after creation, a day which extended into the eighth day of timeless eternity. Messiaen also put a musical sense to the angel's announcement. He developed such a varied and flexible rhythmic system, based in part on ancient Hindu rhythms, as ostinato (repeated) rhythmic patterns, added note values, and rhythmic palindromes (mirror forms) in the Quartet, where more or less literally Messiaen put an end to the equally measured "time" of western classical music.

In a preface to the score, Messiaen stated on the third movement:

3. Abyss of the birds. Clarinet alone. The abyss is Time with its sadness, its weariness. The birds are the opposite of Time; they are longing for light, stars, rainbows, and

²¹ Satsuki Inoue, “Henegger: SONATINE for clarinet and piano” essay in accompanying booklet, *French Clarinet Art* performed by Paul Meyer and Eric Le Sage, DENON CO-79282, 1992, Compact disc.

jubilant songs.

The third movement was written for solo clarinet and consists of three sections. Both the first and third section portray the “abyss is the Time with its sadness and its weariness.” “The tempo of the abyss section is slow and desolate. Several notes fade in from the edge of audibility and grow to the loudest possible dynamic over what seems an almost infinite time.”²² The middle section between the “abyss” sections represents totally different music, contrasting with the “birds longing for light, stars, rainbows, and jubilant songs.” In this movement, Messiaen uses bird-songs for the first time, which he increasingly explores thereafter. “The birds are represented by playful, light, fast notes rendered in free rhythms using trills and other ornamentation to imitate the sound of birds.”²³ In this movement, Messiaen drives the instrument to its limits and uses from the tones emerging out of nothing to the extreme length of the sustained notes

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963): Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was a self-taught composer and only undertook formal musical training with Charles Koechlin in 1921, by which time he had already become identified with *Les Six*. Poulenc’s compositions are immediately recognizable with their bright colors, strong, clear rhythms, and diatonic harmonies. He used small forms and fluent melodies “with the grace and wit of the Parisian popular chansons.”²⁴ Poulenc showed his particular skill in the handling of woodwind instruments in such woodwind works as sonatas for flute, for clarinet and for oboe and piano, a trio for oboe, bassoon and piano, and a sextet for woodwind quintet and piano.

Poulenc’s *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*, written in 1962, is Poulenc’s last composition. It was dedicated to the memory of Arthur Honegger and first performed by Benny Goodman and Leonard Bernstein at Carnegie Hall, New York in 1963. The movements of the *Clarinet Sonata* follow the usual pattern, fast-slow-fast. The main theme of the first movement is a melody of the *Romanza* which shows the gift that made Poulenc the most notable French composer of songs since Fauré. This Sonata shows full of Poulencian gestures such as simple direct melodies, dotted rhythmic figures, sudden dynamic changes and accents.

²² Jonathan Cohler, “Olivier Messiaen” essay in accompanying booklet, *The Clarinet Alone* performed by Jonathan Cohler, Ongaku Records 024-105, 1995, Compact disc.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Grout, 719.

Dissertation Recital III

“Selected French and American Clarinet Repertoire Composed after 1920”

Friday, December 7, 2007 at 8pm, Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Grace Cho, Piano

Donald Martino (1931-2005)

A Set for Clarinet

I. Allegro

II. Adagio

III. Allegro

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

Concerto pour Clarinette et piano

I. Allegro moderato

II. Andantino

III. Vif

Intermission

Jean Françaix (1912-1997)

Tema con variazioni pour clarinette et piano

Tema (Largo-Moderato)

Var. I. Larghetto misterioso

Var. II. Presto

Var. III. Moderato

Var. IV. Adagio

Var. V. Tempo di Valzer / Cadence

Var. VI. Prestissimo

Henry Tomasi (1901-1971)

Concerto *pour Clarinette Si b et Piano*

I. Allegro giocoso

II. Nocturne (Scherzando)

III. Scherzo Final (Subito allegro)

Program Notes

Donald Martino (1931-2005): *A Set for Clarinet*

Donald Martino was a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, and he was also a clarinetist. He was “one of the most highly regarded American composers to emerge from the post-World War II era’s fascination with mathematically directed musical structures.”²⁵

Donald Martino’s music has been characterized by technical and intellectual rigor with lyric expression and a style of instrumental virtuosity. “It uses dense polyphony to support long melodic lines and is usually articulated by frequent rubato.”²⁶ Martino distinctively used exact notations for fingerings, bowings, and articulations along with serial procedures “to ensure that all sounds are produced in as an integral and precise manner as that in which they were conceived; yet the many *espressivo* and tempo indications allow the performer considerable flexibility within a rigorous frame work.”²⁷ He, also, used register, dynamics and specific modes of tone production “to mark structurally significant pitch sets, as well as to provide opportunities for imposing instrumental virtuosity.

A Set for Clarinet was dedicated to Martino’s old pal, Arthur Bloom. The piece set new standards for the extremes of register, skips, and sudden dynamic contrasts. According to the composer, the term “set” refers to dance band sets of three tunes played together, not to pitch sets. “The performer must often jump three octaves up and then three octaves back down again in the space of three rapid sixteenth notes. The resulting effect is spectacular and jolting. *A Set for Clarinet* demonstrates Martino’s style well which combines astonishing virtuosity with expressive and free *bel canto* playing. The work is in three movements, with the first Allegro and second Adagio in ternary form, while the final Allegro is in binary form.”²⁸

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991): *Concerto pour Clarinette et piano*

Eugène Bozza made noteworthy contributions to the clarinet repertoire. *Concerto for Clarinet* is a challenging piece, and he wrote eleven more pieces for clarinet and piano which are all worthy of performance on recitals. Bozza’s *Concerto for Clarinet* was published in 1952 for Ulysse Delecluse and scored for clarinet and chamber orchestra.

The first movement is marked *Allegro moderato* and is in a loose sonata-allegro form, with three principal themes in the exposition instead of two main themes and a closing theme. In

²⁵ Joseph Stevenson and Robert Cummings, “Donald Martino,” *All Music Guide to Classical Music* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 800.

²⁶ Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 521.

²⁷ Elaine Barkin and Martin Brody, “Martino, Donald,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press: 2006, <http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.17930> (accessed October 31, 2006).

²⁸ Jonathan Cohler, “Donald Martino” in accompanying booklet, *The Clarinet Alone* performed by Jonathan Cohler, Ongaku Records 024-105, 1995, Compact disc.

the recapitulation, the second theme group is not included and the third only briefly stated and in its original tonal center. The 2/4 meter is obscured somewhat by Bozza's use of syncopation, ties across the bar lines, and displaced accents. Bozza's use of rhythm is effective and gives momentum to the musical line. After a two-measure eighth note ostinato accompaniment in the piano, the clarinet states the theme that is the centerpiece of the movements. The harmony is tertian with chords based on sevenths, ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths. The first movement finished on a D major chord. The Second movement, *Andantino*, begins in a contrasting D-flat in 6/4 meter. It is in ternary form with slow harmonic motion. There is a lovely repose, and beautiful expansiveness of the melodic line in the clarinet. The third movement, *Vif* is in a quasi-rondo form. The "A" theme has a folk-like scherzando character. The jovial nature in the piano accompaniment is replete with comic grace notes. Grace notes in the clarinet "hiccup" in a humorous syncopated manner. Bozza frequently utilizes 6/8 in the clarinet and 2/4 in the piano, vice versa. The accelerating tempo and dissonance heighten the tension as the clarinet approaches the final cadenza. There are numerous crescendos and decrescendos, abrupt tempo changes, fermatas, statements of integral themes, and use of the extremes of the clarinet range.²⁹

Jean Françaix (1912-1997): Tema con variazioni pour clarinette et piano

Jean Françaix (1912-1997) was born in a professional musical family. His father was the director of the Le Mans Conservatoire, and his mother was a noted professional singer, so his natural gifts were encouraged by his family from an early age. Françaix was a "prolific composer, who seems to have possessed a constant disposition to create. His output was rich and diverse, and amounts to more than 200 pieces."³⁰

Françaix's significant style is marked by lightness and wit as well as a conversational technique of interplay between the musical lines. His music is "resolutely tonal, yet it expresses his harmonic language very freely. He preserved the exposition-development-recapitulation structure, even in short pieces. His themes are melodic, or constructed from very simple motifs, exploiting the principles of repetition and variation to the full."³¹ Françaix often used complex rhythms that demand considerable virtuosity from performers. He was a neoclassicist who rejected atonality and formless setting and his musical style did not change much throughout his career.

Theme and Variation for Clarinet and Piano shows Françaix's compositional styles which are a conversational technique of interplay between clarinet and piano, tonal harmony with dissonances, a simple variation form, and complex rhythms that demand considerable virtuosity from performers. This piece was written in 1974.

²⁹ Ink, 35-37.

³⁰ Muriel Bellier, "Françaix, Jean," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press: 2006, <http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.10083> (accessed October 31, 2006).

³¹ Ibid.

Henry Tomasi (1901-1971): *Concerto pour Clarinette Si b et Piano*

A French composer and conductor, Henry Tomasi (1902-1971) was born in Marseille, France and was the first son of Corsican parentage. During 1930s, Tomasi was one of the founders of a contemporary music group “Triton” in Paris alongside Prokofiev, Poulenc, Milhaud, and Honegger.

Tomasi developed the lyrical expression in his music. Diatonic and chromatic melodic lines are predominant, and they are supported by tertian and polychordal harmonies. Tomasi was influenced by his French contemporaries, because his harmonic design derived from Debussy, and Ravel. He was also inspired by Gregorian Chant and such exotic sounds as Corsican folk tunes. Tomasi utilized many musical methods including Oriental recitative and twelve-tone techniques, but he used them in a special and unique way.

Tomasi’s *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra* was published by Alphonse Leduc in 1953 and dedicated to Ulysse Delecluse. Tomasi composed the *Concerto* in an effective manner, deriving thematic material from motivic cells.

The first movement was chosen to be the Paris Conservatory Examination Solo in 1953. Later, the second and third movements were the Contest Solo at the Paris Conservatory in 1966. The first movement is in sonata form and starts with an E flat/D Major polychord. Usually a conventional concerto has an exposition in the orchestra, but here the clarinet starts unaccompanied with a similar figure to Bach’s *E Major Partita for Solo Violin*. A long cadenza connects back to the original theme and ends with rhythmic material in 7/8. There are traditional key centers in a flexible framework. The nontraditional elements include polychords, chords with added notes, clusters, and dissonance. The clarinet exhibits a freedom of key relationships and tonal centers. The second movement opens with a motive from the first movement. This introduction is followed with ternary form with return above an ostinato of Sicilian rhythm. The virtuoso Scherzo finale is in a sonata rondo construction. A combination of meters is used: 4/4 12/8, 3/4 9/8, 2/4 6/8. The concerto comes to a blazing conclusion after the final statement of theme “A”.³²

³² “Henri Tomasi,” *Wikipedia*, Wikipedia Foundation: 2006, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Tomasi (accessed October 26, 2006).

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