

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

Bohemians - Old & New

the faculty recital of

Ian Zook, *horn*

Eric Ruple, *piano*

with

Šarūnas Jankauskas, *clarinet*

Sam Suggs, *bass*

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

7 pm

Recital Hall



There will be one 10-minute intermission.

Program

Sonatina for Horn and Piano Jaroslav Kofroň
(1921-1966)

I. Allegro Moderato

II. Andante

III. Allegretto

Sonata in E-flat major for Horn and Piano, op 28 Franz Danzi
(1763-1826)

I. Adagio. Allegro

II. Larghetto

III. Allegretto

10-Minute Intermission

Trio pro klarinet, lesní roh a kontrabass František Chaun
(1921-1981)

I. Vivo energico

II. Moderato

III. Allegro Vivace

Šarūnas Jankauskas, *clarinet*

Sam Suggs, *bass*

Three Episodes for Horn and Piano Shawn W. Davern
(b. 1994)

I. High Seas

II. Vantablack

III. Nindo

Program Notes

This evening's program, titled *Bohemians – Old & New*, ties together selections that play off of the dual meanings of the noun, Bohemian.

Historically, this word denotes the Slavic lands and populace that were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire - later becoming a sovereign nation after World War I - that we now know as the Czech Republic. So, any Czech person across history can be referred to as being Bohemian.

From a sociological perspective, being Bohemian can also mean a person (such as a writer or artist) living an unconventional lifestyle in the company of like-minded people, and with few permanent ties. In our current age, living the “boho chic” is embracing freedom over possessions, eclectic aesthetics, and a sense of wanderlust.

Sonatina for Horn and Piano

Culturally bohemian, composer Jaroslav Kofroň was born in 1921 in Vletice, a small town south of Prague in the Czech Republic. His early musical studies were at the Prague Conservatory and included composition and conducting, as well as horn lessons with the influential teacher Emanuel Kaucký. He later taught at the Prague Conservatory and composed several works for horn, as well as art songs, choral music, and vaudeville and dance music. He also compiled a volume of over 300 folk songs from Central Slovakia and published several music theory text books.

The *Sonatina for Horn and Piano*, composed in 1952, is standard repertoire for any hornist in the Czech Republic. This charming piece is a very compact and effective composition, with thoughtful interplay and balance between the horn and piano.

The first movement opens with a noble, stately horn call, and then balances a jaunty first theme with a more languidly searching contrasting theme. The following Andante is quite brief and reminds one of a plaintive folk song. The piece ends with a spirited rondo, full of chromatic shifts and catchy melodies. This music is the essence of carefree!

Program Notes *continued*

Sonata in E-flat Major for Horn and Piano, op 28

Franz Danzi was an early 19th century composer and conductor, and in his early career a cellist in the famed Mannheim Orchestra. He was subsequently appointed principal cellist of the court orchestra in Munich, and later held posts as the Kapellmeister in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. He composed a wide catalog of operatic, symphonic, and chamber works, though his most popular works remain his woodwind quintets Op. 56, 67, and 68. His compositional style is “characterized by a high degree of craftsmanship, pleasant, idiomatic melodies, and a conservative, formulaic approach to form.”

Danzi's *Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 28* dates from 1804. The use of the horn as a sonata partner with the piano was at that time entirely new. The first such piece, Beethoven's Sonata op. 17, had just premiered in Vienna in 1800. At the time, one of the most famous musicians was Jan Václav Stich, a Bohemian horn virtuoso who toured across Europe as a concert soloist. The young Beethoven was so eager to perform with Stich, he hastily wrote his sonata and they premiered it the same week.

It is almost certain that Danzi would have either heard this premier or known of it, and as such would have wanted to emulate Beethoven by composing for the horn as a solo instrument. Much like Beethoven's Sonata, and many of the contemporary sonatas in the genre, the piano is very much the primary and featured melodic instrument. The horn part lends thematic elements, frequent harmonic reinforcement, and tonal colorization.

This piece would have also been performed on the contemporary instrument in use at that time - the natural horn. This horn, without any valves, is restricted to the notes of the overtone series of the key of the piece (in this case, E-flat). A system of subtly opening and closing the right hand in the bell was developed in the late 18th century, and this allowed performers to negotiate chromatic notes, which you will hear featured in the Danzi Sonata. This evening's performance will be played on an antique natural horn from 1825 to lend a sense of how this piece would have sounded in when written back in 1804.

Trio pro klarinet, lesní roh a kontrabass

František Chaun was a very original and unique personality among Czech artists. Born in Kaplice in South Bohemia, he studied pharmacy and worked as a pharmacist throughout his life. However, he was also diversely creative across many artistic fields. He was a painter of both landscapes and expressionistic works, a portraitist, a writer of grotesque visions and bizarre stories, and a composer. He studied music with Jindřich Feld and Klement Slavický; however, he approached music as well as his other artistic activities as essentially a self-taught creator. His music oeuvre is not very large; it consists of roughly thirty compositions. Among orchestral compositions, the most remarkable is the Kafkaesque trilogy: *The Metamorphosis*, *The Castle*, and *The Trial* from 1964 -1969. It is difficult to classify Chaun's compositional style for both for its latitude and unconventionality. It is close to neoclassicism; after all, Igor Stravinsky was Chaun's favorite composer.

Especially in his chamber compositions, Chaun looked for unusual sound that, in this way, underlines his typical inclination towards grotesque and irony, sometimes even uncontrolled and playful pranks that were, according to his contemporaries, an inseparable part of almost all his acts. He had a liking for non-standard instrumental groupings and he had a soft spot for double bass. In 1964, he composed his rather bizarre *Serenata Rabbiosa for Violin and Four Double Basses*. Three years later (1967), he composed another composition with another "exotic" instrument grouping, his *Trio for Clarinet, French Horn and Double Bass*.

A close look into the score will reveal other, more subtle peculiarities. The double bass uses scordatura - it is tuned a second higher (Kontrabbasso in Re) - most likely to make some literally virtuoso parts stand out that were composed in an extremely high position on G string. The Trio is playful; however, very demanding for the performers. The first movement is strangely delightful, with a humorous mood conveyed by the insistent, chugging bass lines that constantly push the clarinet and horn to respond. The second movement is a solemn choral, that uses odd chord progressions and voicings to maintain a sense breadth. But, whatever mysticism may be evoked by this chorale is summarily dismissed by the odd cabaret music that follows. The closing movement reprises many previous themes and allows from some *espressivo* moments for all instruments.

The Trio was originally composed for Chaun's friends and excellent instrumentalists: the clarinetist Vačlav Kyzivat, the hornist Arnošt Charvát, and the double bass player Vačlav Fuka, who premiered the work in 1968.

Program Notes *continued*

Three Episodes for Horn and Piano

Composer and JMU alum Shawn Davern writes about the final selection:

Laura and John Parker commissioned *Three Episodes for French Horn and Piano* for their son and hornist, Andrew Parker. I completed the work in Winter 2020, and it was premiered by Andrew during his final degree recital at JMU in May, 2021.

As the title suggests, *Three Episodes for French Horn and Piano* is broken up into three separate movements each encapsulating the theme of “The Hero’s Journey” from different perspectives in literature and film.

Entitled *High Seas*, the first movement opens as a haunting sea song, accompanied by open piano harmonies that ebb and flow like crashing waves on the open ocean. The movement morphs into a jaunty sea chanty that elicits all the excitement of starting a new journey, much like how an eager young sailor feels when they set sail for the first time.

The second movement is an extremely dark, noir-jazz inspired ballad that stretches the ranges of both the instrumentalists. Entitled *Vantablack*, this movement attempts to capture the cold desolation of space and the feelings of loneliness and uncertainty that often accompany space-faring voyagers in their attempts at discovery. As we often find, there can be comfort and calm found in solitude, and the lush harmonies and soaring melodic lines act as a temple of solace within this second movement.

The last movement is a fun, fast paced mixed meter dance that brings the entire piece to an exciting conclusion. Named after the Ninja Art of living by your own personal rule, *Nindo* encapsulates the utter elation of coming to the end of a long journey and enjoying the sweet rewards of finding a place to call “home.”

Biographies

Ian Zook is an active orchestral and solo performer and has appeared in concerts throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. He joined the faculty of James Madison University in 2009 and performs frequently with the Madison Brass and Bluestone Winds, both faculty ensembles in-residence at James Madison University.

As soloist he has performed with numerous ensembles including the JMU Symphony Orchestra, Brass Band, Wind Symphony, Percussion Ensemble, Madison Singers, the Charlottesville Symphony Orchestra, the Virginia Baroque Consort, the Chamber Orchestra of Charlottesville, and the Staunton Music Festival.

He is also a frequent substitute musician with the Philadelphia Orchestra in addition to the National, Richmond, Virginia, Roanoke, and Harrisburg Symphony Orchestras. He holds degrees from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and the University of Michigan, and has performed at the Verbier, Pacific, Sarasota, AIMS in Graz, Staunton, and Aspen Music Festivals, and the National Orchestral Institute.

Steinway Artist **Eric Ruple** is on the piano faculty at James Madison University. He enjoys an active career as a solo and chamber musician, including several performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Steinway Hall in New York, and he is also pianist for the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Michigan, and is currently serving as Interim Director for the JMU School of Music.

Clarinetist **Sarunas Jankauskas** joined JMU faculty in 2016. His performance engagements have taken him through Europe, Canada and across the US, while participating at *International Conservatory Week Festival*, *Musicalis Daunia*, *SoundSpace at Blanton*, *Chamber Music at the Barn*, *ICA ClarinetFests®* and various new music events. His commissioning project *Duos* will culminate as a music album in 2020.

Dr. Jankauskas holds degrees from Grand Valley State University, Rice University and The University of Texas at Austin.

Sam Suggs was named New Artist of the Month by *Musical America*, soon after receiving 1st prize at the 2015 International Society of Bassists Solo Competition, at which he performed many of his own compositions. Sam was named Concert Artists Guild's *New Music/New Places Fellow* at the 2016 CAG International Competition. Most recently, at the 2017 Bradetich Foundation International Double Bass Solo Competition, the jury invented and awarded Sam a prize for "Extraordinary Creativity."

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- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result. We resolve to educate ourselves, keep vigilant watch, and act to bring an end to systemic oppression.
- Cultural equity—which embodies values, practices, and policies that ensure all people have access to, and are represented in, the arts—is critical to the sustained engagement of music in society.
- Acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- The prominent presence of musicians in society can challenge inequities and encourage alternatives.



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