

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®**

School of Music

*presents the graduate recital of*

**Meredith Stratton, oboe**

**Ziwei Zhou, *piano***

Saturday, March 20, 2021

4 pm

Recital Hall



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## Program

Concerto for Oboe, K. 314

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

- I. Allegro Aperto
- II. Adagio ma non troppo
- III. Rondo—Allegro

### 5-minute break

*Please do not leave your seat*

Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1962)

Francis Poulenc  
(1899-1963)

- I. Elégie
- II. Scherzo
- III. Déploration

Four Personalities for Oboe and Piano (2007)

Alyssa Morris  
(b. 1984)

- Yellow
- White
- Blue
- Red

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree Master of Music.*

*Meredith Stratton is from the studio of Dr. Jeanette Zyko.*

# Program Notes

## Four Personalities

Alyssa Morris is an oboist as well as composer and teacher. She has written many compositions for oboe. Morris draws inspiration from various sources. *Brushstrokes* for flute, oboe, and clarinet is inspired by Monet, Seurat, Van Gogh, and Pollock. In a similar fashion, *Four Personalities* draws on the Hartman personality profile for inspiration. The Hartman personality profile consists of four ways a person can be motivated, and each one is represented by a color. Morris based each movement on a personality:

Yellow – Yellow is fun-loving. The joy that comes from doing something just for the sake of doing it is what motivates and drives yellow.

White – White is a peacekeeper. White is kind, adaptable, and a good listener. Though motivated by peace, white struggles with indecisiveness.

Blue – Blue brings great gifts of service, loyalty, sincerity, and thoughtfulness. Intimacy, creating relationships, and having purpose is what motivates and drives blue.

Red – Motivated by power, red is aggressive and assertive. Red is visionary confident, and proactive.

Morris began writing *Four Personalities* with the movement “Blue.” In an interview, she recalls that while writing “Blue” her favorite piece was Poulenc’s Sonata for Oboe, and she was inspired by the deep sadness Poulenc brings forth in the third movement. At the time she remembered thinking, “Someday I want to musically figure out how to make somebody feel that way.”

Alyssa Morris loved music from an early age. She fondly remembered that her parents would remind her to practice her assigned piano pieces as she began to experiment more with improvisation. In fourth grade Morris entered the Reflections Competition at her school. At the time Morris struggled to put her composition on paper, so her family took her piece to a sound engineer who transcribed the piece for

her. The composition did well, and she advanced in the competition all the way up to state level, the attention igniting a thirst in Morris to make a career in music.

Morris attended Brigham Young University for both her bachelor's and master's degrees in oboe performance. At BYU she studied with GERALYN GIOVENETTI, who had a large impact on Morris. GERALYN first encouraged Morris to use her own composition for her senior recital, then also encouraged her to try to get the piece published as well as performed on a bigger platform. GIOVENETTI most importantly passed on the sentiment "I find that if I ask, I usually get it" to Morris. While this a bold line of thinking, Morris admitted that the worst outcome has simply been an answer of no. Morris continues to have a successful career as a teacher at Kent State University, composer, performer, wife, and mother.

## Sonata for Oboe and Piano

Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Oboe and Piano was written at the end of his life, and premiered in 1963 posthumously. He dedicated it to Sergei Prokofiev, who died ten years earlier. Poulenc and Prokofiev became friends in the 1920s when they were both heavily involved in the Parisian artistic world.

Poulenc's mother, Jenny, began his musical interest by sitting him down at the piano at the age of five, teaching him to play both the popular songs of the day as well as pieces by great composers. Despite Francis' love for music, his father insisted that Poulenc learn more than just music, so he never attended conservatory. After being introduced at the age of fifteen to *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*, Poulenc became fascinated with Stravinsky, an influence that would remain for the rest of his life.

Both his father and mother died during his youth, in 1917 and 1915 respectively. Poulenc's sister took in Francis, and while under her care Poulenc met fellow artists at Adrienne Monnier's bookshop (*La Maison des Amis des Livres*), inspiring him to set music to words. In 1922 after experiencing success with his compositions, Poulenc accompanied the composer Darius Milhaud and soprano Marya Freund in Central Europe for a few weeks; he met Berg, Schoenberg, and Webern in Vienna. He would find his life affected by a number of other musical

figures, as well as non-musical friends throughout his life. In 1934 while they were staying in the same hotel, the baritone Pierre Bernac left a note inviting Poulenc to play piano for him on a piece by Debussy. This began a joint career that lasted a lifetime and led to Pierre being closely associated with Poulenc's music for baritone.

The fellow composer Samuel Barber commented that Poulenc was an intensely religious individual. This developed after his friend Pierre-Octave Ferroud died in a road accident in 1936. When Francis learned of his death, it triggered a huge religious shock that changed his person, his music, for the rest of his life. He traveled to Rocamadour, to the sanctuary of the Virgin Mary. In one week, he finished the composition of *Litanies à la Vierge Noire* for women's chorus and organ. Nadia Boulanger first performed the work during a BBC concert in London. It is perhaps of Poulenc's familiarity with grief that led him to write such profound music.

## Concerto for Oboe in C major

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote the Concerto for Oboe in 1777 at the age of 21. Mozart lived in Salzburg when he wrote the concerto, which was dedicated to the oboist Giuseppe Ferlendis (1755-1802). Ferlendis was hired by Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo to the Salzburg Hofkapelle Orchestra. Though Mozart wrote the concerto for Ferlendis, it made a great sensation when played by the oboist Friedrich Ramm, and Mozart felt that the piece was fated for Ramm, despite being written for Ferlendis. Four years later Mozart would write the Oboe Quartet, K. 370, for Ramm, a piece that has also become part of the standard repertoire for oboe.

Around the same time that Mozart wrote the concerto, he started to experience success at Mannheim where he was seeking a job. He wrote to his father about the positive reception of the concerto, even though people knew he was the composer. From Mozart's tone this was not a common occurrence. In the letter to his father, he remarks, "Nobody said that it was not *well composed*, because the people here do not understand such matters— they had better consult the Archbishop, who will at once put them right."

Four years after he wrote the oboe concerto, the playful theme of the rondo finale reappears in the opera *Abduction from the Seraglio*. This is not the only time that Mozart was conservative with his energies by reusing material from the concerto. In fact, his Concerto for Flute in D major is actually a transcription of the oboe concerto. For many years there was dispute about whether the oboe concerto or the flute concerto came first. After a few letters and an autograph sketch by the composer surfaced, it is now acknowledged the oboe concerto came first. The flute concerto was modified to fulfill a commission for the Dutchman de Jean since Mozart was pressed for time and struggled to compose in a consistent manner.

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