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27 Da Originalz

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UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC
PRESENTS

“Something Old. And New.
And Maybe Borrowed Too.”

UMD Wind Orchestra
Michael Votta Jr., conductor

Sunday, October 7, 2012 . 3PM
Elsie & Marvin Dekelboum Concert Hall
“Something Old. And New. And Maybe Borrowed Too.”

DONAL MICHALSKY (1928 – 1975)
Fanfare After 17th Century Dances (1965)

JOACHIM RAFF (1822 – 1882)
Sinfonietta in F, op. 188 (1873)
Allegro
Allegro molto
Larghetto
Vivace

INTERMISSION

HENRI TOMASI (1901 – 1971)
Fanfares liturgiques (1947)
Annunciation
Evangel
Apocalypse
Procession du Vendredi-Saint

JOSEPH SCHWANTNER (1943)
Recoil (2004)

DONAL MICHALSKY
Fanfare After 17th Century Dances

Donal Michalsky was born in Pasadena, California in 1928. He received his BM, MM and DMA degrees from the University of Southern California where he studied composition with Ingolf Dahl, and became acquainted with Igor Stravinsky. He won prizes from BMI and ASCAP and received a Fulbright scholarship. His promising career was cut short when he and his family perished in a fire that swept through their home on December 31, 1975. The fire started after a New Year’s Eve party. Michalsky wrote: “The Fanfare After 17th Century Dances was commissioned by the 1965 Ojai Music Festival, Ingolf Dahl, Director. It was the opening piece for the first concert, an evening outdoor program for winds. A comparison with the original dances will reveal the extent of recomposition: alternating dance sections, transpositions, shortened and extended meters, displaced octaves, overlapping harmonies, added counterpoint — all to create a self-contained, closed form. In other words, I continued the long tradition of parody composition.”

The dances quoted are:
First movement – Paul Pears: “Nove Padouan, Intrada, Dansz und Galiarda” (1611)
Second movement – Johann Hermann Schein: “Banchetto Musicale” (1617)
Third movement – Isak Posch: “Ballet from Musicalische Ehnmfreudt” (1618)

JOACHIM RAFF
Sinfonietta

Available evidence indicates that Joachim Raff coined the word “sinfonietta” to describe his op. 188. The term has since entered the musical vocabulary to describe works such as this “little” or “light” symphony — but Raff’s piece pre-dates the next work with that title (by Rimsky-Korsakov) by seven years. Raff’s Sinfonietta was popular in its day and that no doubt helped the use of the term amongst composers. Raff wrote the piece in Wiesbaden in Spring 1873 during the period which was, as his daughter Helene wrote, “the cultural high point of his life.” The Lenore symphony had recently topped the success of his Forest symphony and everywhere he was feted and honored.

The work’s connections to the Classical-era serenades of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven are obvious. It was, though, somewhat unique in its time and was popular from the first — it may have also prompted the young Richard Strauss to write his Serenade about a decade later.

Isolated works are rare in Raff’s canon. In contrast with his 11 symphonies, six operas, eight string quartets, four piano trios and five violin sonatas there is only one sinfonietta and one other (earlier) piece for piano band. Raff understood the financial imperative of getting his works performed. From a commercial point of view there may have been little point in writing another whilst the original one was doing so well in an uncontested field, and from an artistic standpoint, it is difficult to see how he could have bettered his first attempt.

Written for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, it was clearly intended by Raff to be regarded as something greater than earlier wind serenades that had been popular since Mozart’s time. Neither his motivation for writing the work, nor the occasion of its premiere is recorded, but it was published in November 1874 by Siegel of Leipzig and Raff himself also arranged all four movements for piano four hands — which was typical for symphonic works of the day.

The Sinfonietta’s popularity has endured and it is one of the works that has continued to keep its composer’s name before audiences long after most of his music has been forgotten. This is no doubt partly due to the relative scarcity of 19th-century wind music, but it is also because of the unfailing charm, wit, vivacity and good humor of the music itself. It retains the traditional symphonic movement structure and is truly a “small symphony.”
The first movement is a relatively long (nine minutes) sonata form movement that reveals Raff’s command over orchestration for winds. There is an endless variety of texture and dynamic as Raff develops the two principal themes. The first, puckish and sprightly, is predominant and is rarely absent — its dotted rhythm pervades even the accompaniment. The second melody is much stayer. A fugal passage, very characteristic of Raff’s style, leads to a lovely moment where the bassoons and horns carry the melody against the twittering of the upper winds. The movement ends with a reprise of the two major themes.

The second movement is a short scherzo in 6/8 that has an ABCACA structure. The dancing opening melody is cut short by a rather spiky theme that Raff does not re-use. He quickly introduces a lovely lyrical idea that is continually developed by unique combinations of instruments and a brief interruption from the dance melody. The dance reasserts itself at the end in a passage reminiscent of the scherzos of Felix Mendelssohn.

This C-major third movement carries Raff’s favorite designation for a slow movement — Larghetto. Almost as long as the opening Allegro, it is a rapt, gentle study built around two complementary but contrasting themes on an ABABA scheme. The first melody is, for Raff, uncharacteristically understated, but it leads into the second theme, a much more typical lyrical outpouring of great beauty. An episode of clustering clarinets returns to the first theme in an ultimately intense recapitulation before the two melodies are heard again in sequence leading to a slow, winifull close.

After the quiet intensity of the Larghetto the Sinfonietta’s finale is all festive jollity. It is the shortest movement in the work, built from two contrasting themes. Raff captures the spirit of the “peasant band” and the frenetic tempi, swirling winds and contrasting material all make for a dazzling end to his masterful “little symphony.”

HENRI TOMASI

Fanfares liturgiques

Henri Tomasi was a well-known and well-regarded French composer, conductor and pianist with a significant catalogue of works, the best known of which are concertos and other pieces for winds. He was born in Marseilles to Corsican parents and quickly demonstrated musical precociousness. His father encouraged his talent, sending him to the Marseilles Conservatoire, and when the child gained enough skill began presenting him for fees in the homes of the rich. Henri Tomasi was a natural, brilliant and imaginative pianist, and as a teenager was able to earn a living playing in a variety of settings, including cafés and movie theaters. Eventually he won a scholarship from the city of Marseilles itself to travel to Paris for further study. He continued his performing activity in Paris, but was a successful scholar, winning a prize for his first composition, a wind quintet, as well as a first prize for conducting and, in 1927, the prestigious Prix de Rome.

By the late 1920s Tomasi was active as a conductor, and he was soon embarked on a thriving career. He was also associated with many of Paris’s leading musical lights, forming with Prokofiev and Milhaud the “Triton” group for new music. His compositions increasingly received recognition. His work was noticed by Charles Munch, who premiered the Symphony in C and later introduced his music to the repertoire of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducting Tomasi’s Ballade for alto saxophone and orchestra in February 1958 with soloist Marcel Mule. Tomasi tended generally toward picturesque inspiration in his concert pieces. His parents’ birthplace of Corsica was the source for many of his early works, but he also drew on more exotic locales including Cambodia, Laos and Brazil.

In 1935, Tomasi had written music for a radio adaptation of O.V. de Milez’s 1912 play Miguel Matana, a retelling of the Don Juan legend in which the great seducer mends his ways. Tomasi turned his piece into an opera in the early 1940s, during a time when a failing marriage and doomed love affair helped push him into a life of seclusion in religious retreat, paralleling the theme of the opera. He considered taking religious orders, but reconciled with his wife and, apparently, after becoming aware of some of the inhuman atrocities of World War II, became disenchanted with religion. In 1945 he re-entered the world, as it were, taking up a position as conductor of the Opéra de Monte-Carlo. It was while in Monte Carlo that he excerpted as a concert work the four Fanfares concertantes, later to be called Fanfares liturgiques, from the score to his opera Miguel Matana (also called Don Juan de Matana). The opera, although not produced until 1956, is considered Tomasi’s most significant and characteristic score.

Scored for four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and percussion (two snare drums, tam-tam, suspended cymbal) the Fanfares have been described as an “instrumental oratorio,” meaning a brass choir version of a liturgical work. Of course there is no text sung, but the trombone recitative of the second movement provides an instrumental analog to the vocal genre, as in Mozart’s Requiem and Berlioz’s Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale.

The opening theme of the first movement, a motif for the Christ figure, returns in the final movement. The movements all depict Christian mysteries and rituals:

I. Annunciation (Annunciation)
A brilliant fanfare depicts the angel Gabriel declaring Mary to be the mother of God.

II. Evangile (Gospel, or the word of God)
The priest (trombone) reads the sacred text, and the congregation responds.

III. Apocalypse (Apocalypse, or revelation)
In this virtuosic scherzo, the Four Horsemen (Pestilence, War, Famine, Death) gallop forth to spread misery throughout the lands. In addition to a religious piece, this movement may also be a reflection on the devastation of World War II.

IV. Procession du Vendredi-Saint (Good Friday Procession)
This is the longest and most developed movement of the work, taking about half of the total performance time. It is taken from the second act, third tableau of Miguel Matana (where the music accompanies what is, in context, a Holy Thursday procession); the story takes place in the environs of Seville, where such Holy Week processions are common. As the procession passes by, the Spirit of Heaven sings guidance to Miguel Matana, who is despondent following the death of his beloved wife. This scene is sometimes played as a concert work in which the “Procession du Vendredi-Saint” music is joined by female voice. In the present version, without voice, the piece begins as a somber march based on a Catholic chant and grows in intensity and volume. Following the climax of the march (about two-thirds of the way through the nine-minute piece), the concluding minutes represent Miguel’s spiritual epiphany and redemption.

—Adapted and expanded from notes by Robert Kirzinger
PROGRAM NOTES

JOSEPH SCHWANTNER
Recoil

Joseph Schwantner was born in 1943, and will celebrate his 70th birthday in 2013. This afternoon’s performance of Recoil marks the beginning of UMWO’s celebration of his works, culminating in the premiere performance of his “Trilogy” for wind ensemble on March 10, 2013. Recoil is his fourth work for wind ensemble and is the latest in a series of pieces that span 29 years. The other works (and the mountains rising nowhere (1977), From a Dark Millennium (1980) and In evening’s stillness. (1996)), although written independently, are three sections of the larger “Trilogy” that will receive its first performance next March.

Recoil was commissioned through the Raymond and Beverly Sackler New Music Foundation by the University of Connecticut. It was given its premiere on November 3, 2004, at the Isaac Stern Auditorium of Carnegie Hall, in New York, by the University of Connecticut Wind Ensemble, Jeffrey Renshaw, conductor. It is the only one of Schwantner’s four works for winds to include both saxophone and euphonium parts, and is also the only one of the four not inspired by poetry. Schwantner was a guitarist and much of his orchestration is reminiscent of the sounds and articulation of the guitar, especially the idea of “plucked” notes that are allowed to ring.

Schwantner writes:

“While Recoil employs a larger instrumentation than the earlier works, they all share similar characteristics in that each is framed in a single continuous movement and each exploit the rich timbral resources of an expanded percussion section that includes amplified piano.”

UMD WIND ORCHESTRA
Michael Votta Jr., conductor

Flute
Angelina Ho
Christi Rajnes
Kendall Rybolt

Oboe
David Dickey
Sarah Minneman
Emily Tsai

English Horn
David Dickey
Emily Tsai

Clarinet
Michael Castro
Kristi Licare
Alaina Pritz
Katherine Sylvester

Bass Clarinet:
Kristi Licare

Bassoon
Tilden Marbit
Jacqui Symon
Erica Yeager

Contra Bassoon
Erica Yeager

Horn
John Bailey
Matt Gray
Gabby Lambiase
David Meichle
Chandler Nadig
Rachel Sebastian

Saxophone
Drew Blaise
Ernesto Elizondo
Brendan Kelly

Trumpet
Neil Brown
Ian Dahlstrom
Patrick Durbin
Edward Jakuboski

Euphonium
Jermaine Fryer

Trombone
Susan Goodwin
Casey Jones
Corey Sansolo

Tuba
Matthew Craig

Timpani
Paul Keesling

Percussion
Laurin Friedland
Jan Nguyen
Logan Seith
Dan Vaughan

Piano
Christopher Koelzer

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