

NEC Wind Ensemble

Charles Peltz, conductor

20th c. Giants

Thursday, October 6, 2022

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Richard Strauss
(1864–1949)

Serenade in E-flat Major, op. 7

Henry Brant
(1913–2008)

from *Ghosts and Gargoyles* (2001)
for flutes and percussion

- I.
- III.
- V.
- VI.
- VII.
- IX.
- X.

Stephanie Nozomi Krichena, percussion

Edgard Varèse
(1862-1918)
rev. Wen-Chung Chou

Intégrales (1923)
for small orchestra and percussion

Brief intermission

Paul Hindemith
(1895–1963)

Konzertmusik für Bläserorchester, op. 41
Konzertante Ouvertüre
Sechs Variatione über das Lied "Prinz
Eugen, der edle Ritter"
Marsch

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
arr. Kevin Volans

L'isle joyeuse

Minchao Cai '23 MM, conductor

Strauss *Serenade in E-flat Major, op. 7*

Richard Strauss, born during the American civil war and dying in the rocket age, is one of those people blessed (or cursed) with a lifespan long enough to experience not only the lapsing of time but also astounding changes in the world. As a musician, he participated in the end of the “*ancien regime*” and the difficult birth of the modern. Strauss kept the 19th century’s romantic flame alive long after others had declared it burned out. His love for chromatic lyricism and brilliant, but ultimately traditional orchestration and harmony, gave the world a long lifetime of highly expressive music.

This *Serenade*, written in 1882 (the year of Stravinsky’s birth!), is a piece of juvenilia that fully portends the composer to come. So impressed was the great conductor von Bülow that, upon hearing this work, he commissioned from Strauss a longer suite for the same instrumentation. However, after performing these two works, Strauss laid aside this combination, lamenting: “four horns against paired winds is too much”. He returned to wind works such as this very late in life, supplementing the clarinet ranks to better balance the ensemble. This one-movement *Serenade* juxtaposes Strauss’ signature ideas: a lyrical wind melody perfectly like the human voice, with a horn call, heroic and distant. Both ideas are cleverly teased out, arriving at two Straussian peaks marked by leaping horns and the passionate release of winds, spurred on by rising chromaticism and pulsing syncopations. In the wind friendly key of E-flat, but exploring more distant realms of tonality, Strauss employs a mutated sonata form to give shape to the expressive elements. It is quite the stuff of a precocious and greatly talented adolescent stirring impatiently on the cusp of a deeply expressive adult style.

Brant *Ghosts and Gargoyles*

In 1939 Henry Brant composed a flute ensemble piece titled *Angels and Devils* – before there *were* flute ensemble pieces. It is a large work for thirteen flutes and is a classic of the genre and in the canon of modernism.

Brant was one of the 20th century musicians who was as much an innovator in music as a composer. His passion was for exploring how sound came to the listener. As with Giovanni Gabrieli, whose *cori spezzati* (spaced choirs) exploited the cavernous spaces of St Mark’s in Venice, Brant wanted to exploit the spaces in which music was heard. To do so he would space apart players within venues, creating varied perspectives for the listener.

Brant’s 2001 mini-masterwork, *Ghosts and Gargoyles* for 9 flutes, is the bookend to *Angels and Devils*. In ten short movements, Brant asks his players to be placed about the hall in groups of two. He then has them play as antiphonal ghosts in various styles: jazz and bebop, collages of motives, unison gestures of bells or the blowing of wind.

The piece was intended to have one soloist plus octet. The soloist would play piccolo and the standard C and bass flutes. We have chosen to award those to different soloists in the ensemble.

Varèse *Intégrales*

Without Edgard Varèse, the 20th century's musical course would have been very different indeed. He was a true sound pioneer, exploring unimagined territories of pitch, rhythm and structure. He was the first composer to fully reject a language of music based on patterns of tonality, melody, and rhythm and instead embraced a modernist, scientifically influenced musical philosophy wherein sounds act with the randomness and energy of atomic energy.

Varèse moved from France to New York City in 1915. A conductor of choral music- especially that of the renaissance and baroque – Varèse would complement his love for the old by creating the new through a modernists view of a scientifically understood world. In his view, sound masses, be they pianissimo diads or fortissimo clusters, act as forces hurtling through space around the listener, as do particles speed in sub-atomic space. Sounds are drawn together in explosions and consequently repelled into new sound masses as notes fall from one aggregate to another - just as atoms grab electrons or discard them as they seek energy equilibrium.

It is music in which the beauty is in the constant unexpectedness: the capricious turns, the driving but non-directional rhythms and the manic changes in hyperextended dynamics. His genuine love for and curiosity about percussion instruments is of prime importance to understanding Varèse. He collected them from around the world, experimented with their sounds himself, and then wrote parts for them, really as surrogates for the electronic sounds which were unavailable to him in the 1920s.

Intégrales, which in this case translates best to “essential”, was composed in 1923 and is a quintessential Varèse work. Cast for instruments capable of both great stridency and whispering - the most soprano and declamatory of woodwinds (2 piccolos, oboe, E-flat and B-flat clarinets) and brasses (the high trumpets). To oppose these are the powerful trombones, the lowest “end” played by *two* bass trombones, one a contrabass. To navigate both ends of tessituras is the horn, both a soprano and a bass instrument for Varèse. Intertwined throughout these sound masses are the unique and dramatic utterances of the many percussion instruments played by four players.

Intégrales is cast in three parts : a slow moving first section made up of sustained sound masses in woodwinds and brass through which solos electrically interject. Next is a faster middle section in which rhythmic motives are sounded in unison by brass or woodwind sound masses. The ending combines both the rapid and slow moving, the aggregates and lonesome solos.

Hindemith *Konzertmusik für Bläserorchester, op. 41*

“All notes lean to the right” “I am the last great romantic composer” - Thus spake Paul Hindemith to his Yale students in the 1950s. The first of these quotes is picturesque, one imagines the flags of the notes tilting forward, calling for direction in performance. The second seems contrary to the conclusion of those for whom Hindemith is a composer of dry, academic music. But then, the self-awareness of one

is often contested by others - the world sees few as they see themselves.

Much as was Richard Strauss, Hindemith was an *enfant terrible*, adventurous in his youth who, as he aged, seemed to look back longingly even as the musical world hurtled headlong into serialism and the electronically inspired avantgarde. Hindemith always had a foot in the past, his compositional style (codified in his treatises on theory and composition) was rooted in Pythagorean ideas of the overtone series and the circling fifths and the tonic/dominant hierarchy that emanate from it. Just as his contemporary Stravinsky was a neo-classicist, shamelessly borrowing from the late 18th century, Hindemith was a neo-baroque composer, borrowing from the polyphony and diatonic chromatic adventures of the of the mid-18th.

This *Konzertmusik*, from 1926, is cast with one eye gazing towards youthful adventure and the other focused on the Baroque. Cast in three movements, those at the premiere at the Donaueschingen Festival might have listened quizzically – was this a homage to German military bands whose mellow brass dominant instrumentation it follows, and who played its premiere? or a parody of them? It is both. Just as are the *waltz* and *march* movements of Schoenberg's *Serenade*, here is some teasing of the clichés and conventions and yet rich in serious musical ideas – all coming from affection.

The first movement begins with a declamation in compound meter – is Hindemith thinking of the opening of the *St. Matthew Passion* with its slow contemplative 12/8 dance? After he sets this stage of driving seriousness, Hindemith turns a corner with a *lebhafter viertel* (lively quarter note), giving us a cheeky tune – is it a march? A folk tune? What follows is a volleying of virtuosity between trumpet and trombone, all skittering 16ths. A codetta of insistent ostinato escorts the players off the court.

The second movement is a theme and six variations. *Prince Eugen*, a story-song from the 18th century (again!) depicts the battle exploits of the Prinz Eugen – the Noble Knight. The theme is boldly announced in the same rhythm and melody as the original song but quickly we are treated to a busy working out in variation I, set in chatty woodwinds. This polyphony is answered by a contrasting section in which solo sections of instruments engage in a dialogue of sustained melodies accompanied by still more active woodwind writing. Next is a sinewy variation in meandering eighth notes, followed by a *majestaetisch* fanfare. An abrupt turn send us back into a slow compound meter in a "*schreitender marsch*" (funeral march). The finale is a tribute to the gigue finales of so many Baroque dance suites – exuberant polyphony in dancing 3/8. It all ends as trumpets stand athwart the dancers yelling "Stop!".

One ends this masterful homage with, what else? - a *marsch*, complete with sentimental trio and traditional da capo.

Debussy *L'isle joyeuse*

The island in question is the British island of Jersey (note Debussy's British spelling of the French "l'île). How that title came to be associated with this piece is the result of great love and great scandal. In 1904 Debussy was in the tenth year of his relationship with his lover "Gabby with the green eyes". It was also the year in

which he met and fell madly for Emma Bardac, the wife of a banker and paramour of many Parisian artists. Debussy and Emma made their way to Jersey that summer where they reveled in each other's company and made it their own joyous island. *L'isle Joyeuse* first was intended as one of the three parts making up a triptych for solo piano, a collection which was never made by his publisher. (The same publisher, it could prudently be noted, that was instructed by Debussy to let no-one – especially Debussy's family – know that he was trysting on Jersey.) It should be noted, though, that in spite of this spicy story which has grown up around the composition, Debussy had in fact begun the piece before that summer trip; his original ideas had been inspired by Watteau's painting of Cythera, the mythical island of love.

Kevin Volans, a South African composer with a great original voice, transcribed this work for the Netherlands Wind Ensemble.

– Charles Peltz

NEC Wind Ensemble

Charles Peltz, *conductor*

Flute

Javier Castro
Chia-Fen Chang
Anne Chao
Jeong Won Cho
Anna Kevelson *
Jay Kim *
Elizabeth Kleiber *
Amelia Libbey *
Yang Liu
Elizabeth McCormack
YeChan Min *
Subin Oh *
Mara Riley *
Erika Rohrberg *
Dianne Seo *

Oboe

Dane Bennett
Donovan Bown
Gwen Goble
Kian Hirayama
Sojeong Kim
Alexander Lenser
Kelley Osterberg
Samuel Rockwood
Nathalie Graciela Vela

Clarinet

Thomas Acey
Tyler J. Bourque
Tristen Broadfoot
Hyunwoo Chun
Chenrui Lin
Aleksis Martin
Soyeon Park
Erica Smith

Bassoon

Andy Brooks
Andrew Flurer
John Fulton
Matthew Heidt
Miranda Macias
Julien Rollins
Richard Vculek

* Brant

Saxophone

Guangcong Chen
Vladyslav Dovhan
Guanlong Shen
Zeyi Tian
Cheng Wang
Juchen Wang
Jade Wu

French horn

Logan Fischer
Sam Hay
Karlee Kamminga
Xiang Li
Huimin Mandy Liu
Hannah Messenger
Yeonjo Oh
Willow Otten
Tess Reagan
Paolo Rosselli
Tasha Schapiro
Sophie Steger
Jenna Stokes

<i>Trumpet</i>	<i>Euphonium</i>	<i>Harp</i>
Jake Baldwin	Jack Earnhart	Yoonsu Cha
Daniel Barak		Yvonne Cox
Michael Harms	<i>Tuba</i>	Shaylen Joos
Sarah Heimberg	Jimmy Curto	Morgan Mackenzie Short
Eddy Lanois	Masaru Lin	Jingtong Zhang
Reynolds Martin	David Stein	
Nelson Martinez		<i>Double Bass</i>
David O'Neill	<i>Percussion</i>	Yu-Cih Chang
Alex Prokop	Eli Geruschat	Brian Choy
Dimitri Raimonde	Ross Jarrell	Colby Heimburger
Jon-Michael Taylor	Stephanie Nozomi Krichena	
	Daniel Kukuk	<i>Wind Ensemble Graduate</i>
<i>Trombone</i>	Ariel Pei Hsien Lu	<i>Assistants</i>
Puyuan Chen	Parker Olson	Weizhe Bai
Zachary Johnson	Michael Rogers	Rachel Brake
Alex Knutrud	Jeff Sagurton	Minchao Cai
Quinn McGillis	Hayoung Song	Iverson Eliopoulos
Jianlin Sha	Leigh Wilson	Michael Lewis
	Yiming Yao	
<i>Bass Trombone</i>		
Chance Gompert		
Luke Sieve		

Charles Peltz

Director of Wind Ensemble Activities

Besides his work with the NEC Wind Ensemble, Charles Peltz is music director of the Glens Falls Symphony, and his guest conducting has included the Syracuse Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Merrick Symphony on Long Island, Pacific Symphony in Los Angeles, Hamilton (Canada) Philharmonic, and the New Jersey Ballet.

Peltz has recently had regular engagements with the Orquesta Nacional in Bogota, Colombia, and the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland. He served for eleven seasons as Music Director and conductor of the orchestra at the Luzerne Summer Music Center. An award winning educator, he received NEC's Krasner Teaching Excellence Award and the 1992 Milton Plesure Excellence in Teaching Award from SUNY at Buffalo. His sixth CD on the Mode label features music from his 2000 appearance at the Lincoln Center Festival, where he conducted the New York-based Ensemble Sospeso as part of the festival's exploration of electronic music in the twentieth century.

Upcoming Wind Ensemble Concerts at NEC

NEC SYMPHONIC WINDS, William Drury, conductor
Huling Into the Forest of Strange Beasts; Blake *Sinfonietta for 10 Brass Instruments*;
 Holst *Suite in E-flat*; Rimsky-Korsakov *Capriccio Espagnol*; Bassett *Quartet for Trombones*; Van Heusen *Like Someone in Love*, *Beija Flor* - Jason Palmer, trumpet
Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Upcoming Wind Ensemble Concerts

–continued

NEC WIND ENSEMBLE, Charles Peltz, conductor: “**NEC Favorites**”

Tomasi *Fanfares liturgiques*; Adams *Strange Birds Passing*; Tippett *Mosaic*;
Ives *Charlie Rutlage* and *Decoration Day*; Lully/Philidor *Musique pour les douze oboi*
Thursday, November 10, 2022 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC SYMPHONIC WINDS & SYMPHONIC CHOIR, William Drury
and Erica J. Washburn, conductors

Smith *The Consolation of Apollo*; more
Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

GUNTHER SCHULLER LEGACY CONCERT

Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

“**INTO THE HOLIDAYS**”

NEC Chamber Singers, Symphonic Winds, & Navy Band, NE perform works
of the season

Monday, December 12, 2022 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC WIND ENSEMBLE GRADUATE CONDUCTORS’ CONCERT

Thursday, December 15, 2022 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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