

Max Ignas
trumpet

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree, 2024
Student of Steve Emery

with
Ga-Young Park, piano

Sunday, April 16, 2023
4:00 p.m.
Burnes Hall

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685–1750)

arr. Allen Chen

Concerto in D Major, BWV 972

after Vivaldi's *Concerto for Violin in D Major*

RV 230

Allegro

Andante

Allegro assai

Richard Peaslee

(1930–2016)

Nightsongs (1973)

Franz Strauss

(1822–1905)

arr. Max Ignas

Nocturno, op. 7 (1864)

Richard Rodgers

(1902–1979)

arr. Max Ignas

My Funny Valentine (1937)

Georges Enesco
(1881–1955)

Legend (1906)

Alan Hovhaness
(1911–2000)

Prayer of Saint Gregory (1946)

Thorvald Hansen
(1847–1915)

Sonata in E-flat for Cornet and Piano (1903)

Allegro con brio

Andante con espressione

Allegro con anima

*Thank you to
Naomi Ignas, Daniel Ignas, Zhelah Kayce, Larry Ignas,
and Steve Emery*

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Bach Concerto in D Major, BWV 972 (after Vivaldi's RV 230)

Johann Sebastian Bach's concerto transcriptions for keyboard arose during his employment as organist working in Weimar. Prince Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar brought back a wealth of new music publications to Weimar in 1713 after returning from the Netherlands, sparking enthusiasm in Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach, who was working as a court organist and chamber musician in Weimar, arranged numerous concertos from Italy for organ or harpsichord. In making his transcriptions, Bach often changed keys to suit the keyboard's strengths, transposed lines to facilitate performance, changed ornamentation to better suit the keyboard, and added contrapuntal enrichment. Bach's adaptations are regarded as respectful of the originals.

Bach's reworked Concerto in D Major (BWV 972), includes many of his unique techniques. The Concerto in D Major is a harpsichord adaptation of Vivaldi's Concerto in D Major for violin and orchestra, RV 230 (also known as Concerto No. 9 from Vivaldi's collection *L'estro armonico*). Bach added an intriguing left-hand section to the third movement and managed to fit an entire string orchestra onto one harpsichord in the first movement. In this version, keeping in line with Bach's editorial spirit, the piano part has exchanged some of the harpsichord-centric gestures for figures which better suit the piano's added dynamic-expressive abilities.

Peaslee *Nightsongs*

Born in New York City in 1930, Richard Peaslee received his composition education at Yale University, where he focused on big band music. Due to his diverse background and extensive knowledge, Peaslee's style has been described as eclectic, incorporating elements of jazz, folk, electronic music, and instrumental extended techniques. His involvement with various genres, including film and television, dance, and jazz, reflects his rich cultural heritage in New York City.

Peaslee is most well-known for his work in theater and for composing scores for chamber groups on Broadway. As such, much of his other musical works are not as widely recognized. New York City studio trumpeter Harold Lieberman commissioned *Nightsongs* in 1973. The piece was originally written for solo trumpet and flugelhorn with accompanying strings and harp. It was written during Peaslee's theater career and showcases his passion for jazz techniques and extended trumpet techniques.

Nightsongs could be described as a pairing of two sets of songs about the night. In the sections for flugelhorn, these songs are contemplative in nature. In today's performance, the flugelhorn will be replaced by placing a velvet bag over the trumpet bell which achieves an effect similar to trumpet solos heard in *film noir* music. The songs in the sections for trumpet are much more haunting and frantic, achieved by a timbral shift in instrumentation as well as compositional technique, most notably with the divergent textures, harmonies, and use of a twelve-tone row. These sets oscillate until the flugelhorn section returns to end the final song.

Strauss *Nocturno, op. 7*

Franz Strauss holds a secure place in music history, not only for being Richard Strauss' father and primary musical influence, but also for being the leading horn player of his generation and Richard Wagner's solo hornist. The elder Strauss was a musical traditionalist who believed he belonged more to the era of Haydn and Mozart than the expansiveness of Wagner or the heightened emotions of Mahler. Nonetheless, he was renowned for playing magnificently, regardless of his feelings about the composer or composition.

Strauss composed the *Nocturno* in 1864. It features both beautiful lyric writing for the horn as well as the instrument's penchant for operatic heroism and bravura. The *Nocturno* encompasses Strauss' ideal musical contexts — a beautiful melodic line, a refined piano accompaniment, a clear three-part ternary form, and satisfying cadences. The *Nocturno* has become one of the most frequently played works of the standard repertoire for horn. In today's performance, the key has been shifted to more closely align with the trumpet's best registers.

Rodgers *My Funny Valentine*

My Funny Valentine is from the musical *Babes in Arms* and was written by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. It premiered on Broadway in 1937. The story follows a group of young people who are left to their own devices when their parents leave town to pursue their careers in show business. The teenagers decide to put on their own show and prove their talent to the world. They organize a show with their friends, which includes song and dance numbers. However, they face obstacles when the theater owner tries to shut down their production due to lack of funds. The teenagers then have to find a way to finance the show and keep it going. There are several memorable songs throughout the show, including *My Funny Valentine*, *Where or When*, *The Lady is a Tramp*, and the title song, *Babes in Arms*.

In the original musical, Billie Smith sings the song to Valentine "Val" LaMar. She reflects on her relation with him. Billie describes Valentine's characteristics in unflattering and derogatory terms (at one point Billie describes Valentine's looks as "laughable", in keeping with the title), but ultimately affirms that he makes her smile and that she doesn't want him to change. The description of Valentine was consistent with Lorenz Hart's own insecurities and belief that his appearance was too inadequate for him to be loved.

Enesco *Legend*

Legend is a solo piece for trumpet and piano composed in 1906 by the Romanian composer, Georges Enesco, and dedicated to Merri Franquin, the trumpet professor of the Paris Conservatoire. The piece is one of Enesco's most popular and frequently performed works. It requires masterful command of the trumpet and displays Enesco's keen sense of musical expression.

Legend is structured around a simple, lyrical melody that is initially presented in the trumpet's lower register. The trumpet then gradually ascends to higher registers, expanding the melody and exploring the instrument's full range. The piano

accompaniment provides a rich harmonic foundation and complements the trumpet's emotive phrasing.

Legend is heavily influenced by Romanian folk music. It reflects traditional Romanian melodies and rhythms that Enesco had heard as a child, but it is also imbued with the composer's own unique style and modern musical sensibility. Its complex harmonies and shifting time signatures require precise ensemble playing, while its lyrical melody requires a delicate touch and nuanced phrasing.

Hovhaness *Prayer of Saint Gregory*

The *Prayer of St. Gregory* was composed by Armenian-American composer Alan Hovhaness in 1946 for trumpet and strings. Hovhaness later provided piano or organ accompaniment. Hovhaness was born on March 8, 1911 in Somerville, Massachusetts, originally having the name of Alan Vaness Chakmakjian. After his mother's death, he changed his last name to his surname "Hovhaness" in 1944, stating that "nobody ever pronounced it right."

Depicting St. Gregory the Illuminator, the patron saint of the Armenian Apostolic Church who was imprisoned for twelve years, this prayer embodies a powerful and stirring prayer, a cry for help and forgiveness.

The piece opens with a simple, plaintive trumpet melody that gradually builds in intensity and complexity. The trumpet is accompanied by lush harmonies that create a sense of tension and anticipation. As the piece progresses, the trumpet melody becomes more ornate and virtuosic, culminating in a breathtaking climax that is both triumphant and reflective.

Hovhaness' *Prayer of Saint Gregory* is characterized by its use of rich, modal harmonies and soaring melodies that are reminiscent of Armenian folk music. The piece also displays Hovhaness' interest in ancient and mystical traditions, with its use of modal scales and repetitive motifs that create a sense of ritual and contemplation.

Hansen *Sonata in E-flat for Cornet*

Thorvald Hansen, a renowned Danish trumpeter, achieved widespread acclaim for his remarkable trumpet skills, although he also excelled in playing the piano, organ, and violin. At the age of 37, Hansen was appointed as a solo trumpeter in the Royal Danish Orchestra, and within a decade he became a trumpet instructor at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Hansen's *Sonata*, composed in a Romantic style, stands out among other sonatas or solo concertos for the cornet due to its unique approach. Composed in 1903, it showcases the expressive and virtuosic capabilities of the cornet, a brass instrument often associated with military and band music.

The *Sonata in E-flat* consists of three contrasting movements that explore different moods and tempos. Its lasting appeal is a testament to Hansen's exceptional musicianship and his enduring contribution to the world of music. The first movement is a lively and rhythmic piece that features intricate melodic lines and energetic flourishes for the cornet. The piano provides a lively accompaniment with its sparkling arpeggios and syncopated rhythms. In the second movement, the pace

slows down. The music becomes lyrical, allowing the cornet to sing vocal phrases. The piano provides a simple accompaniment that complements the cornet's melody. The final movement is joyful, buoyant, and exuberant and brings the sonata to a rousing conclusion. The cornet and piano engage in a playful dialogue, trading musical ideas back and forth. The movement features a mix of musical sentiments found in quicksteps of the brass band music of the 19th century.

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