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Senior clarinet recital

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Senior clarinet recital

Abstract

The written portion of this thesis combines program notes for the recital with reasoning behind programming choices and a reflection to give the reader context for the actual performance.

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SENIOR CLARINET RECITAL

By

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with Honors in Music Education

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As a senior music education student, it is necessary to prove my instrumental competency in the form of a performance. This senior recital is the culminating experience of any student pursuing a music degree, be it in education or performance. It requires the use of every skill obtained in the four years of study, whether it is programming, researching, and most importantly presenting the music in a unique way through playing the clarinet.

Step one for any recital preparation is choosing the repertoire that will be performed. For me, it was about performing pieces that I had no previous experience with. Throughout my collegiate career, I had plenty of Classical training with only small amounts of music from other eras. Thus, I knew I needed to expose myself to great works from other eras. My program reflects selections mostly from the romantic era and modern era, with one short selection from the classical era for balance. I used several different repertoire lists to aid me in my search for these pieces, as well as advice from Professor Sandra Jackson. Professor Jackson helped me talk through several different program options, and helped me settle on the one that would best showcase my talents.

Performing a recital at this level is not only about the music, much to my dismay. I needed to take care of administrative tasks as well, including finding an accompanist, advertising the recital, writing program notes, and printing program materials. In the matter of an accompanist, I decided that I wanted to have the same accompanist for all of my pieces to ensure consistency and simplicity. My accompanist, Andrew Song, was terrific. He added his own style to the music without overshadowing my own. Advertising my recital was much easier than I anticipated. Seeing as my talents lie in clarinet playing, I asked a friend to draft my posters for me. The posters she made were

gorgeous, and her work made my life so much easier as I prepared to perform. I did need to write my program and research program notes for my audience to read. I used a format that is used by the New York Philharmonic, which is informative yet easy for the audience to read. I printed all of these materials at FedEx, which was extremely helpful and yielded a great product for my audience.

I decided to start off my recital with *Sonata No. 1 in F minor* by Johannes Brahms. This piece is a little over twenty minutes long, making it the longest piece on my program. By putting this piece first, I knew that I would have enough physical and mental stamina to perform it. Also, it would be better received by my audience, who would still be attentive and interested. This Brahms sonata is one of the cornerstone pieces of the clarinet repertoire and has been performed time and time again. I knew that I would need to work extremely hard in order to have it stand out, instead of being classified as just another performance.

Johannes Brahms is considered to be a romantic composer. Most of his professional life was spent in Vienna, Austria where he composed for piano, chamber ensembles, orchestra, voice and chorus. While he was considered an innovator, Brahms focused on preserving German structures from the Classical era but also updating them into the Romantic era. Brahms was a piano virtuoso, and also played the cello. While he began his music education with his father, he later studied with Eduard Marxsen.

Brahms was heavily influenced by the Schumann family with whom he stayed from 1853 to 1856. He was also influenced by Classical artists, Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn as well as Baroque artist Johann Sebastian Bach. Though Brahms was not especially religious, he considered the Bible to be a source of inspiration. Composers

such as Béla Bartók, and Alexander von Zemlinsky were influenced by Brahms. Arnold Schoenberg, who was a student of Zemlinsky, studied Brahms's work and orchestrated one of his piano quartets. Anton Webern, who was a student of Schoenberg, was important in shaping Brahms's popularity in the 20th century and also wrote music in homage to Brahms.

Brahms was a perfectionist, so much so that he destroyed many of his original works. This aspect of his personality bled into his social life also. He was a sarcastic man and alienated other adults. However, he would carry around penny candy on his walks to give out to children he met along the way.

Both of Brahms's Clarinet Sonatas were written after he supposedly retired. Once he heard Richard Mühlfeld perform at an arts festival in 1891, he was compelled to write for clarinet. The sonatas were meant to be played with piano, because Brahms preferred the sound of the piano over a string section. *Sonata No. 1* is in four movements. The first movement, *Allegro appassionato* is in F minor and in sonata form. *Andante un poco Adagio* and *Allegretto grazioso*, movements two and three, are both in Ab major and in ternary form. Movement four, *Vivace*, is in F major and in rondo form.

This piece is extremely difficult, not necessarily in a technical manner, but in a musical manner. As I said before, many clarinetists have played this piece, so it proved especially challenging to make my performance unique. Much of the credit for making this performance special goes to Professor Shannon Orme. She was instrumental in aiding me to form my vision for this piece into something that became a work of art rather than a simple reading of notes off of a page of music.

Seeing as the Brahms *Sonata* is such a lengthy piece, I decided to follow it up with something quick, humorous, and fun for the audience. I found exactly what I needed in Adolf Schreiner's *Immer Kleiner*. This piece is most definitely a crowd pleaser, and can almost be considered performance art. Even though this piece is much more lighthearted than the Brahms, it still poses a significant challenge. What it lacks in traditional methods for clarinet performance, it makes up for with extended technique demands and quick changes in mood.

Translated to English, *Immer Kleiner* means "always smaller". Subtitled, A humorous fantasy for clarinet, *Immer Kleiner* instructs the performer to gradually disassemble their clarinet as the piece continues on, ending on only the mouthpiece. Adolf Schreiner is also known for his piece, *Der Pauker Im Aengsten*, or *The Worried Drummer*. This piece is classified as a multiple percussion solo, and has the soloist rushing to and from instruments while attempting to keep up with the fast paced music. I knew that I had met my goal with *Immer Kleiner* when I heard giggles from my audience at my ridiculous gestures and phrases.

After a short intermission, I began again with a piece by Eugene Bozza entitled simply *Aria*. I happened upon this piece while searching for new clarinet music, and I never thought that it would fit my program so well. It served as a perfect opening to the second half of my recital, and is one of the pieces that I will use again and again through my career as a music educator, either by performing it myself or teaching it to my future students. I wanted this piece to sound more like a vocalist singing a heart wrenching melody than a clarinet solo, and I believe I achieved just that.

Eugene Bozza was a French composer who lived during the Modern Era. He studied music at the Paris Conservatory and was conductor of the Paris' Opéra-Comique and Ecole Nationale de Musique. Bozza doesn't fit nicely into any specific category of modern music, but overall his sound is very French. His works include mostly chamber piece type music written specifically for each instrument and catering to the uniqueness of each instrument.

Aria, a piece originally written for saxophone, was written for famous French saxophonist Marcel Mule. The piece is written after Johann Sebastian Bach's piece for organ, *Pastoral in F*. There is even an exact four bar quote from Bach's original piece. Overall, *Aria* is described as relaxed, mournful and introspective. At first, I underestimated this one page solo's difficulty, but the physical endurance needed to perform this piece turned out to be quite a challenge. I had to make sure that I breathed in the prescribed places, otherwise my phrases would suffer and the piece would not be as beautiful as I imagined.

Seeing as my recital at this point had only been about me, I saw fit to add a duet to the program to change things up a bit. The piece I chose was *Concerto for Two Chalumeaux and Orchestra* by Georg Phillip Telemann. Yes this piece is Classical, but it is sandwiched between a French-Modern-Romantic and a Modern-American piece. This was another piece that I came across on my search for recital music, and since my duet partner and I both enjoyed it, I figured I had discovered the ideal duet. The whole work is four movements long, but I only performed half at my recital. The other half was performed at my duet partner's recital the day before.

Georg Phillip Telemann was one of the most influential composers in German history. His works include pieces for nearly every type of ensemble both vocal and instrumental. Along with composing, Telemann was the musical director of five main churches in Hamburg, where he spent most of his professional career. Telemann included German, French, Italian, and Polish styles in his music and is considered an important link between the late Baroque and early Classical eras. Telemann was mostly self-taught when it came to music due to the fact that his family was against his musical interests. His compositions were studied by Bach and Handel and he was a huge influence on both of Bach's sons.

For modern performances of this piece, the clarinet is substituted for the Chalumeaux. The Chalumeaux was an important instrument before the invention of the clarinet, but was soon surpassed in range and technical ability after improvements were made to the clarinet. The whole concerto is in four separate movements; *Largo*, *Allegro*, *Adagio*, and *Vivace*.

To end my recital, I wanted to go out with a bang and I could think of no better piece than Aaron Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet*. Since hearing this piece as a high school clarinet student, I knew I wanted to perform it. This is by far one of my favorite pieces written for clarinet. It begins slowly, builds to an exciting jazz section, and ends with an explosive glissando that is sure to bring any audience to their feet.

Aaron Copland is one of America's most beloved and well-known composers, and was born and raised in Brooklyn. His original musical training came from his mother, but he also studied with Rubin Goldmark, and at the Fontainebleau School of Music in Paris.

Young Copland was influenced by Chopin, Debussy and Verdi, but he names his teacher Nadia Boulanger from Paris as his most important influence. Later in life however,

Copland was inspired by the jazz scene in America. His compositions include not only symphonies, but also film scores and ballets. He is most well known for works such as *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Rodeo*. Copland's most prolific era was the decade beginning in the 1940s. Both of the previously mentioned pieces were written during this time as well as *Appalachian Spring*, and *Symphony No. 3*. Also written at this time was his *Concerto for Clarinet*.

Concerto for Clarinet is a jazzy clarinet piece that was written specifically to show off the talents of Benny Goodman. The whole piece is considered to be two movements connected by a cadenza. Many of the themes in the second movement of the piece are introduced in the cadenza including a Latin American jazz theme that Copland picked up on a visit to Rio de Janeiro. The piece is meant to be performed with piano, strings and harp, though a piano reduction is quite common. Copland had his first version of the concerto finished in 1948, though there were some revisions as the part was too difficult for Benny Goodman. The clarinet sections that were too difficult ultimately went to the piano.

Overall, I was pleased with my performance in my recital. There were mistakes for sure, and I had performed those pieces better prior to the recital, but I still felt a great sense of accomplishment when I was finished. My degree of Bachelor of Music Education does not decrease my love or ability for performing. I hope to instill this love for performance in my students, but I also hope to keep my love alive as well. I know that as a music educator, my life will be very busy, but I hope I can find the time to continue to play my instrument outside of the educational realm.

Eastern Michigan University



EMU Music and Dance

Kat Jakrzewski

A Senior Recital

Alexander Music Building
Saturday, April 14, 2012
2:00pm

Kat Jakrzewski - Clarinet
Andrew Song - Piano
Jonathan Polan - Clarinet

Sonata No. 2 Op. 120

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Immer Kleiner
1864)
"Always Smaller"
(ret.)

Adolph Schreiner (1791-

Transcribed by: George S. Howard, Col. USAF

~Intermission~

Aria
1991)

Eugène Bozza (1905-

Concerto for Two Chalumeaux and Orchestra
III. Adagio
IV. Vivace

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

*Kat Jakrzewski - Clarinet
Jonathan Polan - Clarinet
Andrew Song - Piano*

Concerto for Clarinet

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)