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Upcoming Concerts

UW Concerto Audition Finals; November 18, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Littlefield Organ - Advent & Christmas Concert; November 23, 8:00 PM;
November 24, 3:00 PM; Walker-Ames Room, Kane Hall

Jazz Combos; November 25 & 26, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Contemporary Group: 25th Anniversary Concert; November 25, 8:00 PM,
Meany Theater

University Singers; December 2, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

The School of Music
presents the 18th program of the 1991-92 season.

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The Soni Ventorum

Felix Skowronek, flute
William McColl, clarinet

Alex Klein, oboe
David Kappy, horn

Arthur Grossman, bassoon

Works By

Paul Taffanel

Jean Francaix

Johannes Brahms

School

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Sunday, November 17, 1991
3:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Program

CD 14,626

AT
ED2 Quintet in G minor (1882) 26118 PAUL TAFFANEL
(1844 - 1908)

Allegro con moto
Andante
Vivace

ID3 Divertissement 11:01 JEAN FRANÇAIX
for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon (1947) (b. 1912)

Prelude
Allegretto assai
Elegie
Scherzo

CASS SIDE A
CASS SIDE B

Intermission

ID4 Variations and Fugue 25:20 JOHANNES BRAHMS
on a Theme of Handel, Op. 24 (1861) (1822 - 1897)
arr. Mark Popkin

Program notes

Claude Paul Taffanel, born in Bordeaux, enjoyed a distinguished career as flutist, teacher, conductor, and composer for flute. He graduated from the Paris Conservatoire in 1865 with first prizes in flute, harmony, counterpoint, and fugue. The following year saw his appointment as flute professor at the same institution, and over the next century his artist-pupils were to spread and establish the virtues of the 'French School' of flute playing to the world of Western music. His rich and

darkly sonorous Wind Quintet was first performed by the 'Société des instruments à vent' on May 13, 1882, in a two-movement version entitled *Romance et Saltarelle*, with the first movement *Allegro con brio* apparently added later. The work is an excellent representation of French Romanticism and displays throughout an impressive understanding of the range and depth of tonal coloration of which the winds are capable.

The contemporary French composer Jean Françaix has contributed a generous and gratifying output of works for the wind quintet and combinations from its instrumentation: the two **Wind Quintets** themselves (1948 and 1987); the **Wind Quartet** (1933); the **Divertimento** for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon (1947); and the **Sept Impromptus** for flute and bassoon (1977). Of the various "acts within an act" so to speak, the so-called "reed-trio" ("trio d'anches") of oboe, clarinet, and bassoon has found special favor among Gallic and Francophile composers, with the example of Françaix being one of the most charming. His **Divertimento** is somewhat atypical compared with his other wind works, relying here more on the subtle shifting and melding of melodies and textures rather than upon the outwardly boisterous character or sheer digital virtuosity found elsewhere.

Brahms' **Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel**, Op. 24, is considered by pianists to be one of the great sets of variations in the solo keyboard literature. (A recent Schwann catalogue lists ten recordings of the Brahms in comparison with eighteen for the Bach "Goldberg" variations, and eight of the Beethoven "Diabelli" variations). There is evidence that Brahms himself regarded the work with special favor: during a festive "Brahms Week" celebration in Leipzig in 1874, the composer selected these Op. 24 variations for his own solo performance. Much has been written about the work with regard to structure and analysis, but suffice it to say here that Brahms chose the theme from the first keyboard suite of Handel. While each of the 25 variations displays its own working-out, each has its own character, with distinctions noted such as the canon of No. 6, the "Hungarian Rhapsody" of No. 13, the "Pastorale" of No. 19, the "chromatic fantasy" of No. 20, and the "Musette" of No. 22. The culminating fugue, based on the ascending 5-note diatonic outline of the theme (and the only fugue Brahms published for the piano) builds to a towering conclusion for the entire structure. Despite the orchestral implications of much of the writing, it is not known if Brahms considered such treatment. The idiomatic and effective arrangement for wind quintet presented this evening is the work of Mark Popkin, bassoonist with the Clarion Wind Quintet of the faculty of the North Carolina School of the Arts.