

No. 66
Betty

THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND THE OFFICE OF LECTURES AND CONCERTS

Present

THE SONI VENTORUM

Felix Skowronek, *flute* Laila Storch, *oboe*
William McColl, *clarinet* Christopher Leuba, *horn*
Sidney Rosenberg, *bassoon*

assisted by

Ove Hanson, *oboe*; Julie Oster, *clarinet*; David Cottrell, *horn*

and *bassoonists*

Terry Ewell (Mozart), Robert Olson (Gounod), and Gary Claunch (Reinecke)

with *Guest Soloist*

Alexander Illitch Eppler, *kaval*

Friday, May 19, 1978

Meany Theater, 8:00 PM

Tape No. 1 - 8996

MOZART 28:19
(1756-1791)

PROGRAM

Serenade in E^b Major for two oboes, two
clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons,
K. 375 (1781)
Allegro maestoso
Menuetto
Adagio
Menuetto
Allegro

Tape No. 2 - 9006

GOUNOD 20:37
(1818-1893)

Petite Symphonie for flute, two oboes, two
clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons (1885)
Adagio, Allegro
Andante cantabile
Scherzo: Allegro moderato
Finale: Allegretto

Tape No. 3 - 8997

CARL REINECKE 24:53
(1824-1910)

INTERMISSION

Octet in B^b Major for flute, oboe, two
clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons, Op. 216
Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Vivace
Adagio ma non troppo
Finale: Allegro molto e grazioso

A. I. EPPLER 10:18
(b. 1955)

Composition on Thracian Themes for Kaval and
Woodwind Quartet (1978)

Alexander Illitch Eppler, *kaval soloist*

Encore: 2:56
2nd Mov. of Eppler.

--World premiere

PROGRAM NOTES

The wind band of the late 18th century served both nobility and citizenry alike as a genteel and popular entertainment medium, most notably in Austria and Germany. Groups of wind instruments had long been used in military and ceremonial functions, and as the woodwinds developed, they began to be incorporated into various combinations for outdoor and indoor use. It was the rare noble who did not have at least a few wind players in his service (frequently doubling as butlers, footmen, or in some other servant capacity), and for the prince who could not afford a larger retinue, a wind octet of paired oboes, clarinet, horns and bassoons was considered a reasonable alternative. These ensembles performed dinner and background music as well as evening "concerts" for visiting guests and dignitaries, and should the master wish to go to the hunt, his wind players more often than not accompanied him. Castle archives to this day literally bulge with the accumulation of serenades, partitas, divertimenti, notturni, cassations and other works written for these wind ensembles. Most are occasional compositions practically all in manuscript, whose primary purpose was entertainment and little else, yet a few survive as examples of more serious intent.

Mozart wrote his share of these wind divertimenti, but the three largest of these, the Serenades (Octets) K. 375 and K. 388 as well as the Gran Partita, K. 361 for thirteen winds are substantial works regarded as the Classic masterpieces of this genre.

The E flat Serenade was written in 1782 for the newly-organized wind octet of Prince Aloys Liechtenstein. This was, however, a re-scoring of a work written the previous year for only six instruments which Mozart himself enjoyed on his name-day as reported in a letter to his father: --"At eleven o'clock at night I was treated to a serenade performed by two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons and that too of my own composition...the six gentlemen who executed it are poor beggars, who, however, play quite well together, particularly the first clarinet and the two horns...these musicians asked that the street door be opened and, placing themselves in the center of the courtyard, surprised me, just as I was about to undress, in the most pleasant fashion imaginable with the first chord in E flat."

With the passage of time and the changing of custom, the wind octet faded from the scene, and few examples of its earlier form are found after the Napoleonic years. Toward the end of the 18th century however, a resurgence of interest in larger wind-ensemble works was brought about in Paris by the "Societe des instruments a vent". Founded in 1879 by the famous French flutist Paul Taffanel, this organization presented a regular series of concerts for many years, with its programs devoted to the performance of wind repertoire from the past as well as contemporary works written for it. One of the latter was the "Petite Symphonie" of Charles Gounod, as the celebrated composer of "Faust" responded readily to the request of his friend Taffanel for a work of its kind. Written in the composer's 70th year, the nonet received its first performance at the Salle Pleyel in Paris on April 30, 1885 and was an instantaneous success.

The flute had been an infrequent part of wind bands of the past, no doubt due to the limited dynamic capability of the pre-Boehm instrument. The "modern" flute as we know it today was already developed by Taffanel's time, and Gounod added it to the classic octet combination, honoring both the instrument and its illustrious protagonist with a gorgeous solo in the second movement. Further, Gounod departed from the classical "divertimento" style with its series of several and often unrelated movements by writing a truly balanced miniature symphony. The bucolic nature of the first movement is complemented smoothly by the operatic ambience of the second, while the vigorous

"hunting" Scherzo sets the stage for the lightly-theatrical "stop-tempo" and "patter song" character of the Finale.

Carl Reinecke was born in Hamburg-Altona, Germany, making his debut as a pianist at the age of 12 and touring the Scandinavian countries at 18. He was a pupil of Mendelssohn in Leipzig, and after occupying a post at the Cologne Conservatory, returned there in 1861 as professor of composition and piano and conductor of the Gewandhaus concerts. Reinecke was a very active composer, and his works include several operas, three symphonies, four concerti for piano, and one each for violin, cello, harp, and flute. The Mozart revival of the late 19th century attracted his attention, and he published cadenzas for all of that composer's piano concerti. The influence of Mendelssohn and Schumann are clear in his music, and it was felt that the eclectic nature of his writing detracted somewhat from his acknowledged mastery of the orchestra and the general breadth of his innate musicality. Such criticism notwithstanding, Reinecke composed energetically right up to his final years, and many of his innovative departures, including his writing for winds, date from his seventies. Currently, Reinecke's music is undergoing something of a revival, and a recent discography includes a Sonata and Ballade, both for flute and piano, two piano concerti, as well as one concerto each for flute and harp.

The Octet in B-flat Major, Op. 216 is rather orchestral in scope and sonority when compared with the Gounod, and again, effective use is made of the "modern" flute when grouped with the "classic" winds. Indeed, the Octet did not escape the notice of the abovementioned "Societe", as it was performed twice in their final season of 1893.

Balkan folk music has long exerted a fascination of its own throughout the world, and of the various types and styles comprising its general nature, that of the Thracian region of Bulgaria is held in particular esteem for its wealth of vibrant, imaginative and sophisticated material. The wind instrument known as the "kaval" takes a particularly active role in the performance of this music, and although found in one form or another in the Balkans, it is again in Thrace that its development both as an instrument and as a performance medium has found its highest expression. Essentially, the kaval is an end-blown vertical flute with a completely hollow cylindrical bore. It is held somewhat obliquely, with the performer's embouchure directing an airstream at the sharpened edge of the tube-end itself. There is no key mechanism, and tonguing of the airstream is never employed; articulation and vibrato are accomplished by subtle refinement of the finger technique. In the hands of an artist, the instrument displays a wide range of tonal colors throughout its two and one-half octave range. The kaval performed upon by Mr. Eppler are of his own manufacture.

The "Composition on Thracian Themes" contains five sections: -- an instrumental introduction on the Bulgarian national dance known as the "Rutchenitsa", with the kaval entering as soloist in a traditional Thracian melody, "Neranza". A lively "Triteh Puti", a dance step found only in Thrace, is followed by a haunting solo for unaccompanied kaval, "Na Bulchavane"; here, a slow unmetered and richly ornamented melody followed by a short 2/4 section in the style of wedding music honoring the bride. Yet another "Rutchenitsa", in its customary 7/16 meter, brings the work to a fiery conclusion.

Alexander Illitch Eppler, a Seattle native, began his association with Balkan and Slavic folk music at an early age and while still in his 'teens served as Musical Director with the Koleda Ensemble. He subsequently spent three years of study at the Bulgarian State Conservatory, taking up the kaval and in short order becoming a recognized virtuoso on this Bulgarian national instrument, as well as an accomplished craftsman-maker of the same. As kaval soloist and recording artist with the Plovdiv Ensemble, he

toured extensively in Eastern European Europe. Returning to Seattle in 1974, he turned his attention to instrument-making and has since acquired an international reputation as a flutemaker. In the meantime, he maintains his reputation as a performer, fulfilling numerous engagements annually as concert soloist and instructor at seminars in both the United States and Canada.