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Upcoming Concerts

Keyboard Debut Series; November 8, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Musical-Poetical Club: Classical and Romantic Lieder and Sonatas on Period Instruments; November 16, 8:00 PM; November 18, 3:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Contemporary Group; November 26, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Collegium Musicum and Madrigal Singers; December 1, 8:00 PM; December 2, 3:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

University Singers; December 3, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Jazz Combos I & II; December 3, 8:00 PM; December 4, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

American Anniversaries: Works by prominent American composers celebrating various occasions; December 4, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

The School of Music
presents the 6th program of the 1990-91 season.

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The Soni Ventorum

Felix Skowronek, flute
William McColl, clarinet

Laila Storch, oboe
David Kappy, horn

Arthur Grossman, bassoon

A. Barthe
Passacaille

Vincent Persichetti
Pastoral

Charles Lefebvre
Suite

Jacques Ibert
Trois pièces brèves

Ludwig van Beethoven
Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 71

Friday, November 2, 1990
8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

DAT # 11,693

CLASS # 11,644

CD 14,695

Program

102 **Passacaille** (1:54) A. BARTHE (1830 - 1875?)
for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon

COMMENTS, Laila Storch (the major recording) 8116

103 **Pastoral, Op. 21** (1943) (5:28) VINCENT PERSICHETTI (1915 - 1988)
for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon

104 **Suite, Op. 57** (1884) (11:20) CHARLES LEFEBVRE (1843 - 1917)
for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon

Canon: Moderato
Allegretto scherzando
Allegro leggiero

Class side A
side B

Intermission

105 **Trois pièces brèves** (1930) (7:00) JACQUES IBERT (1890 - 1962)
for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon

106 **Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 71** (1796) (19:10) LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(after the Sextet for 2 clarinets, 2 horns, and 2 bassoons) (1770 - 1827)

Adagio - Allegro
Adagio
Menuetto: Quasi Allegretto
Rondo: Allegro

Program Notes

Tonight's program might well be subtitled "Laila's Choice" in that she requested at least one Soni Ventorum program this season (her last with the quintet, as she retires next June from the UW) be given over to works first studied and performed during her student days at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The coach of the wind ensemble class there was the legendary French oboist Marcel Tabuteau, for 40 years until his retirement in 1954 the Principal Oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra and oboe instructor at Curtis. His roster of students included most of orchestral principals and oboe sections in the U.S. for years, and his "school" of oboe playing was and is regarded as the American standard for the instrument. Many are the stories of his grueling sessions with the young chamber musicians, including the all-too-true account of entire semesters spent on the first eight measures of the **Beethoven Quintet, Op. 71**. None who have lived through these will forget his terrifying familiar preparation for the downbeat — a withering stare over the assembled students, and the fateful selection of each instrumentalist for the rehearsal — ("you play . . . you play . . . read . . . you are sharp! . . . you haven't even played a note and you are already sharp! . . .") — all this delivered in a thick stentorian French accent. With the students thus rendered into little more than gelatinous protoplasm, one wonders how they could play at all, but they did. (One wonders also how M. Tabuteau might have fared today with such academic inventions as student evaluations, peer review committees, campus ombudsmen, etc.)

Establishing just who "A. Barthe" was has not been an easy task given the resources at hand. One "Adrien Barthe" (1830 - 1875) may or may not be the same as "Grat-Norbert Barthe" (1828 - 1898) who was listed as a Prix de Rome winner for 1854, as was Adrien. An "A. Barthe" is cited as a professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatoire, with dates that coincide with those of "G.N." Confusion aside, the light piece for wind quintet known simply as the "Barthe Passacaille" was a familiar warm-up in the Tabuteau class repertoire.

The distinguished Philadelphia-born Vincent Persichetti enjoyed a fruitful career as a composer and later as an administrator at the Juilliard School in New York City. Among his better-known instrumental works are two series for diverse combinations under the headings *Serenades* and *Parables*. His early *Pastoral* for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon received its first and somewhat historic performance in April 1945, in a concert sponsored by the Philadelphia Art Alliance. Mr. Persichetti was asked to assemble a program of works that would

demonstrate the advantages of the new medium of FM radio broadcasting for live musical performances. Particular attention was to be given to the high fidelity reproduction of the sounds of the woodwind instruments. The concert took place at the Franklin Institute, broadcast by radio station WCAU. The performers on this occasion were all students from the Curtis Institute, the oboist being Laila Storch.

Charles Edouard Lefebvre, a son of the French painter Jules Lefebvre, studied law before entering the Paris Conservatoire. In 1870 he won the Prix de Rome, returning three years later to Paris where he spent most of his life teaching and composing. In 1895, he succeeded Benjamin Godard as professor of ensembles at the Conservatoire. Although he was not an innovator, Lefebvre was highly regarded by French critics of his time. He himself was a great admirer of Mendelssohn, to whose works the style and texture of his instrumental pieces might be compared. In his own words, he worked in pastels rather than oils. The *Suite*, Op. 57 appeared first in 1882 in a two-movement version; with the addition of the *Finale* the *Suite* was first performed in its entirety two years later, one of the few French quintets from that time to have endured.

Francis Eugene Timlin, in his Doctoral Thesis "An Analytic Study of the Flute Works of Jacques Ibert" (UW, 1980) writes what must surely be the definitive description of the *Trios pièces brèves*:

"The *Three Short Pieces* is Ibert's only work for the standard woodwind quintet — flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn — and was composed at the height of one of Ibert's busiest and most prolific compositional periods. The work is a staple of the woodwind quintet repertoire and for ample reason: it is the perfect concert opener, the perfect 'finale' piece, and an excellent 'encore' piece. The three movements are often performed singly or in reverse order with little apparent damage to the integrity of the work, so adaptable and flexible is the style. . . The quintet opens with a brilliant introduction for the full ensemble which quickly dissolves into a sprightly, jazz-like theme given to the oboe and reiterated by the flute and clarinet. . . The second movement offers a complete contrast with a flowingly lyric melody in the flute supported only by a closely-interwoven countermelody in the clarinet. . . The third movement opens with a brief slow introduction and leaps into a jaunty tune for clarinet solo. . . The middle section is a sort of 'carousel waltz', again dominated by the clarinet. . ."

The Beethoven *Quintet in E-Flat Major*, Op. 71 is a reworking of his *Sextet in E-Flat* for 2 clarinets, 2 horns, and 2 bassoons written in 1796; such "reworking" at hands other than Beethoven's it must be added. Several versions exist, this evening's most likely that of the early 20th century German clarinetist, Robert Stark. Beethoven wrote of the original to his publisher: "*By the next postcoach, you will receive a sextet for wind instruments. . . It is one of my earlier things, and moreover was written in a single night. There is really no more to add, except that it was written by an author who has produced at least a few better works. . .*" On the other hand, a review of the first performance in 1805 states that of all the works on the concert, "*the most especially pleasing was the beautiful Sextet in E-Flat of Beethoven, a composition distinguished by fine melodies, a natural harmonic flow and a wealth of new and surprising ideas.*"

The Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet

Through its many recordings and international tours, Soni Ventorum has established a brilliant reputation for outstanding wind playing. The ensemble was formed in 1961 when Pablo Casals invited its members to become the woodwind faculty of his newly founded Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico. Drawing upon rich and varied backgrounds in symphonic and chamber music both in the United States and Europe, the group soon became recognized for its sensitive performances and high standards. While living in Puerto Rico, the Soni Ventorum Quintet participated in the Casals Festival, toured often in the United States and the Caribbean and began their impressive recording career.

In 1968, the University of Washington brought the group to Seattle through a Rockefeller Grant arranged by William Bergsma, then director of the School of Music. After winning the silver medal in the 1972 Villa-Lobos Competition and Festival in Rio de Janeiro, Soni Ventorum was sent on three tours of South and Central America by the United States Department of State. Subsequently, the group toured in eleven countries of Europe, again under the auspices of the State Department. Highlights included concerts in such important cultural centers as the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, La Scala in Milan, Teatro la Fenice in Venice and the first broadcast performance on Hungarian National Radio by American musicians since 1940.

The Quintet continues to maintain a busy concert schedule in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.