

SONI VENTORUM PROGRAM NOTES

Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach, the second of the surviving sons of Johann Sebastian Bach, was born on March 8, 1714 at Weimar and died on December 14, 1788 at Hamburg. He is remembered today as one of the last and greatest masters of virtuoso playing and improvisation on the clavichord. As a composer, he occupies a key position in the development of the early classical forms of keyboard and instrumental music, exactly midway between the Baroque, which culminated in J.S. Bach, and the Viennese classical school, represented by Ludwig van Beethoven. C.P.E. Bach wrote the VI sonate a II corni, II flauti, II clarinetti e fagotto about 1755 while musical director of the five main churches of the Hanseatic town of Hamburg. The musical character of these works, generally in one movement and with considerable doubling of the instrumental parts, makes it quite clear that they were intended for performance in the open air. -- Kurt Janetzky

Beethoven enjoyed his first successes as a performer and won his first recognition as a composer before he left his native Bonn for Vienna, late in 1792. As part of his musical establishment, the music-loving Max Franz, Elector of Bonn, maintained a dinner orchestra, consisting of two each of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons, and it was for this ensemble of his patron's that Beethoven wrote his Wind Octet, probably in 1791-2. The work was not published as such until over forty years later, posthumously (the late opus number was assigned at the time the composer sold the work for publication), but Beethoven arranged a version of it for string quintet and published this in Vienna as Op. 4, in 1797.

The Netherlands has had a long history of excellent wind music, both in the sense of national composers who wrote widely for winds and in the sense of performers. (It is odd that the justly famed Netherlands Wind Ensemble has recorded no Dutch music.) Willem Pijper was the dean of Dutch composers in this century and wrote much wind music; his disciples, in following his path, have continued to do so. The Fantasie for Bassoon and Wind Ensemble by Henri van Praag is one of a pair of such works published in 1962 (The Concertino by Juriaan Andriessen was performed as a part of the series of Soni Ventorum concerts played with students in 1979). They were dedicated to the noted Dutch bassoonist, Thom de Klerk. The Fantasie is, as its name implies, a one movement work, although it is divided into several sections of varying tempo. Unity is achieved between the sections by using rhythmic and motivic devices in the accompaniment which remain essentially the same, regardless of the differing character of the solo line. The work is easily accessible, and shows off the solo instrument to good advantage.

Emile Bernard, French organist and composer, studied at the Paris Conservatoire, initially as a pianist, and was organist of the Paris church of Notre-dame des Champs from 1887 to 1895. In 1877, his Fantasy and Fugue for Organ won a prize offered by the Société des Compositeurs de Paris. His violin concerto was performed by its dedicatee, Sarasate, at the Conservatoire concert of February 24, 1895. Other works include an overture and a suite for orchestra, a Concertstück for piano and orchestra, and a number of chamber works as well as solo music for organ and piano. His Divertissement for wind instruments was written at the behest of Paul Taffanel, the famed flutist and conductor, as part of a series of works written for the "Société des instruments a vent", an organization dedicated to the redevelopment and resurgence of chamber music for large wind ensembles.

Parts for the Bernard Divertissement were made available through the Edwin A. Fleisher Music Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia.