

SALIDA ASPEN CONCERTS 2006

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2006, 7:30 PM

JOHN HELD AUDITORIUM

ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Deborah Barnekow, Salida Program Director

DAVID HALEN, *VIOLIN*
JENNIFER MONTONE, *HORN*
RITA SLOAN, *PIANO*

PROGRAM

Villanelle for horn and piano (1906)

Paul Dukas (1865-1935)

Sonata in A for violin and piano (1887)

Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

- I. Allegretto ben moderato
- II. Allegro
- III. Recitativo-Fantasia (Ben moderato)
- IV. Allegretto poco mosso

INTERMISSION

Variations on “Salve tu, Domine” from Paisiello’s *I filosofi immaginari*, K. 416e (K398) (1783)

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Trio in E-flat, op. 40 for violin, horn, and piano (1865)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

- I. Andante—Poco piu animato
- II. Scherzo: Allegro—Molto meno Allegro
- III. Adagio mesto
- IV. Finale: Allegro con brio

The audience is requested not to applaud between movements. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management. Those with electronic devices of any kind are asked to silence them before the concert. Cameras, recording equipment, food, and beverages are not permitted. In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, anyone who wishes to leave before the end of the performance is asked to do so between numbers. Adults are responsible for the conduct of their children.

David Halen, concertmaster of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, is living a dream that began when he first saw the St. Louis Symphony perform in his home town of Warrensburg, Missouri. His musical influences began at home: his father, Walter J. Halen, was also his violin professor at Central Missouri State University, his mother is a former member of the Kansas City Symphony, and his older brother is currently acting concertmaster of the Houston Symphony. Mr. Halen began playing the violin at age six. He graduated from high school at sixteen and two years later, aged eighteen, he won the Music Teachers National Association Competition and was granted a Fullbright scholarship for study in Germany with Wolfgang Marschner at the Freidburg Hochschule fur Musik. He is the youngest-ever recipient of this award. Mr. Halen's career has included title positions with the Houston Symphony under Christoph Eschenbach, and he has served as concertmaster in St. Louis under Leonard Slatkin, the late Hans Vonk, and currently David Robertson. He has appeared extensively as soloist with the St. Louis Symphony and the Houston, San Francisco, and West German Radio symphonies. Mr. Halen plays a 1753 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin, made in Milan.

Jennifer Montone has just been named principal horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Currently principal horn of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, which she joined in 2003, she was also formerly associate principal horn of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and an adjunct professor at Southern Methodist University. Ms. Montone became the third horn of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra while still attending the Juilliard School, where she was a student of Julie Landsman. She has also performed with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient, Ms. Montone has appeared as soloist with the St. Louis Symphony, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and National Symphony Orchestra and at brass conventions and workshops throughout the country. A native of northern Virginia, she has performed at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Marlboro Music Festival, Spoleto (Italy) Chamber Music Festival, and the La Jolla Chamber Music Festival. This is her third summer as an artist-faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival and School.

Rita Sloan is recognized internationally as soloist, accompanist, chamber musician, and leading teacher of piano and collaborative piano. In 1999 she became a piano faculty member and director of the collaborative piano program of the University of Maryland. At the Aspen Music Festival and School she founded and heads the collaborative artists program and is an artist-faculty participant of Aspen's prestigious New Horizons Fellowship Program. Recent residencies and master class presentations include the Royal College of Music, Northwestern University, the New England Conservatory, and the Juilliard School. She regularly performs with orchestra, in recital, and in chamber music throughout the U.S., Europe, and Japan. She has been a guest at chamber music venues such as New York's Bargemusic and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chamber Music Series. She is a founding member of

the Aspen Ensemble, featured on NPR's Performance Today. As a participant in the European teaching archival HARMOS project, Ms. Sloan was filmed presenting a master class at the Academy of Music in Vilnius (Lithuania). Last season she returned to Japan for concerts and master classes. A graduate of the Juilliard School, she studied under Martin Canin and Rosina Lhevinne, also with Leon Fleisher, Aube Tzerko, and Vladimir Ashkenazy.

COMPOSER NOTES:

Villanelle—Paul Dukas is one of those composers destined to be remembered mostly for one work. In his case it was *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* which got a great boost from Disney in the film *Fantasia*. The small output was not the result of inability, but an exaggerated level of self-criticism. He actually destroyed a great number of his own compositions including the orchestral accompaniment of the work we will hear today. Dukas was a fine professor of composition and orchestration, teaching at the Paris Conservatory for many years. He wrote scholarly books on some of his favorite composers, including Richard Strauss, whose father was a notable horn player. Perhaps he hoped the senior Strauss would promote his Villanelle.

Most recordings describe his Villanelle as “for horn and piano,” because the original version was lost. The version we hear today was orchestrated by Dr. Donald Miller of the University of Missouri. According to one source, a Villanelle is a “simple-minded” Neapolitan street song with a repeating pattern which was popular in the sixteenth century. According to another, it is a “sophisticated” parody of a madrigal. The term later was used to suggest a bucolic scene, perhaps a village dance. Berlioz, Dukas, and others have used it in this sense.

The horn was introduced to the orchestra in the seventeenth century and was appreciated by Mozart who wrote four horn concertos. In spite of this endorsement and the many works written for solo horn in those days, the horn repertoire fell into obscurity for many years. Horns are notoriously hard to play, so perhaps there just weren't many good players. This changed with the English family Brain, and especially with Dennis Brain. There were generations of horn players in that family, but Dennis Brain was outstanding. In the 1950s, if you asked music-lovers to name a great horn-player, they would name Dennis Brain, and could think of no others. Brain resurrected the four horn concertos of Mozart and began to popularize other horn pieces that had been forgotten—including the Dukas Villanelle. Dennis Brain could make even a garden hose sound pretty good!

This piece is easy to listen to, as a Villanelle should be; but is not easy to play. It was written in 1906 as a competition piece and is designed to show off the particular charms of the instrument. Wait for the coda which is very fast and displays speedy triple-tonguing. There is not a great deal of complicated structure here, and the work is very lyrical. One or two themes are repeated and the speed increased (the original Villanelle was quite repetitive, but this one is more varied) until we reach a dramatic finish.

Mozart Variations—Mozart was already composing keyboard variations on themes by other composers when he was only ten years old and he continued the practice sporadically throughout his life. He borrowed themes for this purpose from Salieri, Gretry, Gluck, and, in the present work, from Giovanni Paisiello. “Salve tu, Domine” was a popular chorus from Paisiello's 1781 opera *I filosofi immaginari*.

Mozart wrote to his father from Vienna on March 29, 1783, describing a concert on which he had played his “variations on an air from an opera called *Die Philosophen*, which were encored.” So he then played another set of variations, on Gluck's “Unser dummer Pobel meint.” Both works formed part of a typical lengthy concert in which various vocal pieces, two concertos, and several other instrumental pieces were played after the first three movements of his *Haffner* Symphony but before the final movement, which closed the program.

It is entirely possible to imagine Mozart improvising these showy variations on the spot in view of their free treatment of the theme. Paisiello's somewhat long theme can be divided into two main sections, with a fermata in the third bar before the end. Mozart pauses on the fermata in the first, second, and third variations, but in the fourth he embarks on a new path in the second part, coming instead to a cadenza-like embellishment of the dominant. In the final two variations he never even gets to the second section, having been carried away each time by a flashy cadenza. These cadenzas, however, arrive in an elaborate way on the dominant, which had been the primary function of the original second section in any case. A closing section based on the end of the theme's first section rounds out the piece. *Jane Vial Jaffe*

Franck Violin Sonata (Dedicated to violinist Eugene Ysaye)—Franck was looked down upon by Brahms who neglected even to glance at a score that Franck sent to him from Paris. Born in Belgium, Franck moved to France.

There he became the dominant force in music, accruing a large group of ardent devotees. Unlike Brahms or Beethoven (or Wagner for that matter), Franck was a saintly man, always kind in manner and speech. To increase the gulf separating him from Brahms and Beethoven, Franck, disinterested in fame and fortune, managed to get married, but it wasn't a happy marriage. An unsuccessful—though virtuoso—pianist, it wasn't until Franck began to play the organ at age 30, that he found his vocation. Even then, he was a late bloomer. All of his best known music was written after he was 53 years old.

Franck's compositional style favors frequent modulations, and, like Liszt's *B minor Sonata*, he develops the initial melodic material throughout the piece. His pieces are sensuous, yet spiritual and serene. He promised Wagner's wife, Cosima, a violin sonata in 1859, but put it off. Finally, the famed Ysaye, a fellow Belgian (born in Franck's hometown), persuaded Franck to write a violin sonata in honor of Ysaye's wedding. The 1886 premiere took place in an art gallery in Brussels. The room was so dark that Ysaye was forced to play the sonata largely from memory!

The opening movement is in sonata form, but leaves out the development section to avoid conflict. It is harmonious and reflective. The piece develops less by thematic opposition than by a gradual rising and falling of tension. It uses what Franck referred to as "cyclic" development: all the movements share common thematic threads. The second movement is turbulent, but subsides to a foreboding calm. The third movement is somewhat amorphous; Franck called it a "recitative-fantasia." The Finale opens with a sunny theme in perfect canon! There is a recapitulation of sorts, and the ending is fervent; a proclamation of love for the married couple. *Jason Sundram*

Brahms Horn Trio—Early one morning in the summer of 1865, Johannes Brahms went for a walk in the woods of the Black Forest and conceived the opening theme of his Horn Trio in E flat, op. 40. Walking was a central part of Brahms' life and he frequently used his walks to think through his musical ideas. For Brahms, walking became a metaphor for the compositional process itself—working through an idea was "taking it out walking."

In early February of 1865, Brahms experienced for the first time a death in his immediate family with the passing of his mother, Christiane. He was deeply affected by his mother's death. Most of Brahms' grief came out through his music. In the year after his mother's death, the only other piece Brahms worked on besides the Requiem was the Horn Trio. As we shall see, his mother's presence can be found in several places in the trio, from the slow movement marked "mesto" ("sorrowful"), to the possibility that a theme that appears in the last two movements is based on a folk tune that Christiane taught Brahms as a child. It is possible that the loss of his mother, and Brahms' subsequent thoughts about his childhood, even helped determine the unusual instrumentation of the piece: horn, violin and piano are all instruments Brahms studied as a boy.

The first performance of the trio took place on November 28, 1865, in Zurich with Brahms on piano, a violinist named Hegar and a hornist named Glass. Brahms again performed it on December 7 of the same year in the foyer of the "Hoftheater" in Karlsruhe, in a private concert with the Ducal Orchestra members Mr. Strauss on violin and Mr. Segisser on horn. Brahms was very fond of the piece and performed it many more times. Clara Schumann played the piece, and one of the more interesting early performances took place on March 26, 1867, with Hans von Bulow on piano, Leopold Abel on violin, and the conductor Hans Richter on horn.

The trio was published in November of 1866 by Fritz Simrock, a horn player with whom Brahms performed the work in the same year. Simrock insisted that Brahms include a cello part as a substitute for the horn part, and Brahms conceded, although he was unhappy with how it sounded. He later became interested in the idea of using a viola in place of the horn, and a viola part was published in 1884. Brahms published a second edition of the trio in 1891.

The trio occupies a special place in Brahms' output. Not only was it the first piece Brahms wrote after his mother's death, but it was the last piece of chamber music Brahms was to write for eight years. It was also the last piece Brahms wrote before the *German Requiem* was to take him to a new level of fame and recognition.

The trio is undoubtedly one of the best pieces of tonal chamber music for horn. One of the more interesting aspects of the piece is that Brahms did not write it for the modern valve horn on which it is usually performed. Brahms wrote the trio for violin, piano and *Waldhorn*—natural horn.

