The College of Saint Benedict’s/Saint John’s University Department of Music

Presents in

Senior Recital

Zhiyuan Gao, horn

assisted by

Prof. Lisa Drontle, piano

Linnea Metelmann/Dallas St. Hilaire, horn

Sunday, April 18, 5 pm

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Music Degree in Horn Performance

Zhiyuan Gao is the student of Dr. Jenna McBride-Harris

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Program

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Horn Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major, Op. 11 Richard Strauss

Richard Strauss(l864-1949) wrote his first mature work, the Horn Concerto No. 1 in E Flat Major, in 1883. Being the son of one of the greatest horn players in the world at the time granted him the privilege of having incredible experience and knowledge with the horn. Although Richard Strauss is considered one of the “Wagnerian Composers”, at nineteen, he hadn’t yet been much influenced by Wagner. He studied works of the great classical and early Romantic composers, and his own personality as a composer was just beginning to emerge.

Strauss wrote two versions of this concerto, one is for horn and orchestra, another for horn and piano. The horn part stays the same in each version. The concerto is cast in the three movements traditional to European concertos. He wastes no time introducing the soloist: one chord from the orchestra(piano) and the horn jumps in with an energetic fanfare. The first movement is a regular Allegro movement, with the elements of bravery and elegance. In the slow movement in the middle, a somber, soft-grained place of sweetly haunting tunes communicates back and forth with the accompaniment. The third fast movement features the fanfare of the first movement as its theme, and ends this concerto with a brave display. The first two movements are linked together, and the third follows very closely to the second, leaving almost no gap between each movement “through the use of a system of thematic and motivic transformation.”[[1]](#footnote-0) -- notes adapted from Internet sources by Zhiyuan Gao

Nocturno Op. 7 Franz Strauss

Franz Strauss (1822-1905), the father of the notable composer Richard Strauss, was one of the greatest french horn virtuosos in Europe at the time. His career as a horn player had a huge influence on how Richard Strauss used horns in his orchestral works. The Nocturno, Op. 7, for horn and piano was published in 1904.  This lyrical work, in ABA form, “features both beautiful lyric writing for the horn as well as the instrument’s penchant for operatic heroism and bravura.” It starts with a gentle, beautiful tune. In the middle, the piano suddenly introduces the music into a grand session, contracts with the previous. In the end, Franz Strauss finishes the piece with a low A flat, establishing the great sound horn can produce in its low register. The Nocturno of Franz Strauss has become one of the most frequently played works of the standard repertoire for horn -- notes by Zhiyuan Gao

Blues and Variations for Monk David Amram

Horn is not usually a jazzy instrument, but it can be sometimes!

David Amram (b. 1930), started his professional life in music as a hornist in the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, D.C.). After serving in the U.S. Army, he moved to New York City and played French horn in the legendary jazz bands of Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie and Lionel Hampton.[[2]](#footnote-1) In David Amram’s own words, the first three notes of his 1982 Blues and Variations for Monk for Solo Horn are,

a motif based on the way Thelonious Monk played the piano in his unique style. When we visited each other, beginning in 1955, he encouraged me (as he also did with my fellow jazz hornist Julius Watkins) to use the French horn as an improvising instrument in jazz ensembles, as well as pursuing my dreams of being a composer of contemporary symphonic music. And all of the times spent with Monk over the years during our memorable musical get-togethers included playing the 12-bar blues. That’s why decades later I wrote this piece to honor our friendship. Except for the reference to Wagner’s Siegfried horn call, every note of the piece is my own creation of what I thought would be the perfect series of jazz choruses I would love to play myself today (if Thelonious Monk were still here to hear it), as a way of thanking him for the blessing of knowing him. Because as a composer I had the chance to suspend time, I was able to notate the best series of 12-bar choruses I never played but wished I had, with the hope that whoever is playing this piece can share with today’s listeners the warmth and spirit of what it was like to spend time and play in a room with Thelonious Monk, one of America’s true musical heroes. And to give listeners the chance to hear a tiny bit of the infinite variety of melodic variations and harmonic sophistication with which the art of jazz continues to enrich the world of music every day. And to know that today, the French horn is part of the family of this music that we call jazz, which has proven itself to be classical music of enduring value.

Thelonious Sphere Monk(1917– 1982) was an American [jazz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz) pianist and composer. He had a unique [improvisational](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Improvisation) style and made numerous contributions to the standard jazz repertoire. Monk is the second-most-recorded jazz composer after [Duke Ellington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_Ellington)--Wikipedia

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Intermission

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Villanelle Paul Dukas

Paul Abraham Dukas(1865 - 1935) was a French composer, critic, scholar and teacher. He was intensely self-critical, having abandoned and destroyed many of his compositions. His best-known work is the orchestral piece *[The Sorcerer's Apprentice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sorcerer's_Apprentice_(Dukas))* (*L'apprenti sorcier*), which become so famous that it overshadowed his other works. At a time when French musicians were divided into conservative and progressive factions, Dukas didn’t join either side but absorbed elements from both. His compositions were influenced by composers including [Beethoven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_van_Beethoven), [Berlioz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hector_Berlioz), and [Debussy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Debussy).

Paul Dukas wrote his Villanelle as a “demanding exam piece” for the horn class of the Paris Conservatoire in 1906. As this implies, it is not an easy piece to play. There are many technical challenges applied including stopped notes, fast scales, playing without valves using natural horn techniques, etc. The title references a cheerful traditional vocal genre that originated in 16th century Italy. As a Villanelle, its refreshing melodies makes it pleasant to listen to, for which reason it is one of the most popular performance pieces for the horn -- notes adapted from Internet sources by Zhiyuan Gao

I love the Wuzhi Mountain, I love the Wanquan River Liu Chang-an, rearranged by Xiong Rongli

The direct translation would be “I love The Mountain of Five Fingers, I love The River of Ten-Thousand Springs”. Wuzhi Mountain is located in Hainan province of China (an island at the bottom of China). It is also the highest mountain there. Wanquan River is also a famous river at Hainan. Both of them became famous sights after the song was published and beloved by people all around China. The song was written in early 1970, text by Zheng Nan (Wise-President of World Chinese Musicians' Association), and music composed by Liu Chang-an (President of Guangdong Musicians' Association). You Guoping was the first artist to sing the song, but it became wildly successful with the version of singer Li Shuangjiang in 1973 who won the first China Gold Record Award with this song. The emotion this song tries to evoke is our love towards Hainan as part of our country, also the propaganda of the Chinese Red Army, which relates to the local revolution led by Chinese Communist Government. It’s undeniable that this song had its political usage, but what truly made people love it was its beautiful lyrics and the simple but typical structure that was widely used in Chinese vocal music. The song has been transcribed into instrumental music for various instruments which makes it one of the most successful vocal-instrumental transcriptions of Chinese songs. This version is for the horn and piano, and in my opinion, is one of the versions which truly grasp the essence. The horn is the perfect instrument with its broad and full sound to express the heroic voice in the original sound. The horn also has a characteristic cadenza before the end of the piece which adds lustre to the entire song -- notes and translation by Zhiyuan Gao

Translation of the text:

我爱五指山，我爱万泉河 I love Wuzhi Mountain, I love Wanquan River

双手接过红军的钢枪 I will protect my country on the island of Hainan,

海南岛上保卫祖国 with the weapon I got from our Red Army.

啊五指山，啊万泉河 Stories were told, songs were sang

你传颂多少红军的故事 by our Wuzhi Mountain and Wanquan River.

你日夜唱着红军的赞歌 to praise our Red Army.

我爱五指山的红棉树 I love the Hongmian trees on Wuzhi Mountain,

红军曾在树下点篝火 The Red Army had lit fire under them;

我爱五指山的红石岩 I love the red rocks on Wuzhi Mountain,

红军曾在石上把刀磨 The Red Army sharpened their blades on those.

我爱红军走过的路 I love the path that the Red Army stood on,

我沿着山路上哨所 I walk to the sentinel post trough that path.

我爱万泉河的清泉水 I love the fresh water of Wanquan River,

红军曾用河水煮野果 The Red Army used that water to cook meals.

我爱万泉河的千重浪 I love the waves of Wanquan River,

红军在这里把敌人赶下河 It blocked our enemies.

万泉河流水向大海 The Wanquan River marches onto the ocean,

我沿着河边去巡逻 And I patrol the side of it.

啊，五指山，啊，万泉河 We will protect our country,

红色的江山我们保卫 With the lead of the Red Army

红军的钢枪 永在手中握

Reicha Six Trios, Op. 82 for Three Horns Anton Reicha

1. Lento

2. Allegretto

Anton Joseph Reicha (Rejcha) (1770 – 1836) was a Czech-born, Bavarian-educated, later naturalized French composer and music theorist. A contemporary and lifelong friend of Beethoven, he is now best remembered for his substantial early contributions to the wind quintet literature and his role as teacher of pupils including Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz and César Franck -- Wikipedia

24 Horn Trios, Op. 82 is a collection of horn trios composed by Anton Reicha. The trios are scored for 3 horns or 2 horns and a bassoon. The work was published in Paris before 1815, and is divided into four parts, six trios each. Here we are featuring the Lento and Allegretto of the fourth part. Reicha composed a large number of works for wind instruments, the trios of Op. 82 are part of this trend, and also “reflect Reicha's interest in pedagogy as well as his affinity for counterpoint.” The Reicha horn trios are well established works nowadays for horns -- notes adapted from Internet sources by Zhiyuan Gao

Five Bach Trios J.S. Bach (1685-1750) trans. Lowell Shaw

1.Bouree II from English Suite, Suite No.2 in A minor

2. Andantino, Jesu Meine Freude

3. Gigue

It’s not likely that Bach would write a trio for the horns due to the limitations of the instrument at the time. These transcriptions are by Lowell Shaw, hornist and composer, and student of the famous horn educator Philip Farkas. Shaw is the author of Fripperies, Quipperies, Tripperies, etc, the horn chamber works that are widely played by horn students.

Here we have the Bouree II from The English Suites no.2, Andantino from the motet, Jesu Meine Freude, and Gigue. The English Suite, BWV 806–811, is a set of six suites written by Johann Sebastian Bach for harpsichord (or clavichord). Shaw took the lines that the keyboard plays and makes them function as a horn trio. Typical of Baroque music, these horn trios often feature multiple melodies and counterpoint which makes each of the three horns, although different in register, equally important for the music.

Jesu Meine Freude is a motet Bach composed for a five part vocal ensemble (SSATB choir). Named after the [Lutheran hymn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheran_hymn) "[Jesu, meine Freude](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesu,_meine_Freude)", the motet has 11 movements and the text is taken from the [New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament)'s sixth book, the [Epistle to the Romans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Romans) -- notes adapted from Internet sources by Zhiyuan Gao

This recital is dedicated to Dr. Jenna McBride-Harris, Dr. Justin Zanchuck, and all the people I love. Thank you so much for your love and support!

1. Notes by Ronald Comber [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Horn Monologues, Howard Wall [↑](#footnote-ref-1)