

FACULTY RECITAL

MICHAEL WEBSTER, Clarinet

WILLIAM VERMEULEN, Horn

ELIZABETH SCHELLHASE, Horn (student)

KATHLEEN WINKLER, Violin

JAMES DUNHAM, Viola

IVO-JAN VAN DER WERFF, Viola

NORMAN FISCHER, Cello

TIMOTHY PITTS, Double Bass

Friday, November 21, 2008

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Quintet for Horn and Strings *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*
in E-flat Major, K. 407 (1756-1791)

Allegro

Andante

Rondo. Allegro

William VerMeulen, horn
Kathleen Winkler, violin
Ivo-Jan van der Werff, viola
James Dunham, viola
Norman Fischer, cello

Concerto a Tre (1947) *Ingolf Dahl*
 (1912-1970)

Allegretto comodo; Moderato; Cadenza;

Allegretto comodo; Presto (played without pause)

Michael Webster, clarinet
Kathleen Winkler, violin
Norman Fischer, cello

INTERMISSION

Octet in E Major, Op. 32 *Ludwig Spohr*
 (1784-1859)

Adagio; Allegro

Menuetto (Allegro)

Andante con Variazione (Thema di Handel)

Finale. Allegretto

Michael Webster, clarinet
William VerMeulen, horn
Elizabeth Schellhase, horn
Kathleen Winkler, violin
James Dunham, viola
Ivo-Jan van der Werff, viola
Norman Fischer, cello
Timothy Pitts, double bass

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

Quintet for Horn and Strings in E-flat Major, K. 407 W.A. Mozart

Octet in E Major, Op. 32 Ludwig Spohr

In 1813, Ludwig Spohr received a commission from an ardent and wealthy amateur violinist, Johann Tost, the dedicatee of Haydn's string quartets – Op. 54, 55, and 64. The unique agreement called for several chamber works to be available only to Tost (not even to Spohr!) for a period of three years. Included among a large group of works were companion pieces: the *Nonet, Op. 31*, for violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon, and the *Octet, Op. 32*, for violin, two violas, cello, bass, clarinet, and two horns. Both were influenced by Beethoven's *Septet* of 1800 with modifications of Beethoven's instrumentation: violin, viola, cello, bass, clarinet, horn, and bassoon.

Other composers followed Beethoven's example. The Swedish composer Franz Berwald wrote for the same instrumentation an excellent septet which was published in 1828, the same year that Schubert added a second violin to create his magnificent *Octet*, the acknowledged masterpiece of this genre. Of the many octets written since, one of the best and most interesting is by Paul Hindemith, who combined Spohr's string section, including two violas, with the standard wind section of clarinet, horn, and bassoon.

Spohr's *Nonet* has been performed far more often than the *Octet* because of the *Octet*'s unusual instrumentation, most particularly two virtuosic and treacherous horn parts, written for the newly-invented horn ventils of Blühmel and Stolz (1813), the first horn capable of playing notes not in the natural harmonic series without stopping the bell. The two violas had precedent in Mozart's *Horn Quintet, K. 407*, lending a deep coloration to the texture of the *Octet*, and setting off the violin as a virtuoso counterpart to the two horns. Like Spohr's *Octet*, Mozart's *Horn Quintet* was written in Vienna, dedicated to his friend and the butt of his jokes, the horn virtuoso Joseph Ignaz Leutgeb. Unlike the *Octet*, the *Quintet* was written for natural valveless horn, which required stopping the bell to achieve chromatics.

The *Octet* has some elegant compositional twists. The first movement begins with a slow introduction (like the Beethoven *Septet* and the Schubert *Octet*), which unexpectedly reappears at the recapitulation after a very short development section. The original Allegro theme is saved for the coda. The first section of the Menuetto (which is really a scherzo like the Menuetto of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*) does not repeat itself exactly, but has a short modulatory section which might go unnoticed because it is so organic.

Herr Tost, ever the businessman, requested variations on a theme of Handel in preparation for traveling to London. Spohr obliged, using *The Harmonious Blacksmith*, one of Handel's most popular tunes, changing the original slightly to suit the needs of his variations, which are alternately simple and elaborate. A striking moment comes between Variation 3, which is in C major, and Variation 4, in the home key of E major, where the first note of the theme evolves out of C major before declaring itself in E major. The finale is an outdoorsy rondo (A, B, A, B, A) with a theme reminiscent of yodeling, but the second theme is so similar to the first theme that the movement might be called monothematic. As expected, the horns take over the coda and bring the work to a rousing conclusion.

Concerto a Tre Ingolf Dahl

Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1912 of Swedish parents, Ingolf Dahl moved to Switzerland in 1932 in response to the Nazi threat. From there, he emigrated to the United States in 1938 and settled in Los Angeles along with many other expatriate composers, of whom Schoenberg and Stravinsky were the most famous. Dahl set his foot firmly with the Boulanger-Stravinsky camp, studying with Boulanger, lecturing on Stravinsky's music, and even translating his *The Poetics of Music* (1947) into English from the original French.

1947 is also the date of *Concerto a Tre*, which is unified by a leaping six-note theme that takes shape after a short, hesitant introduction. Stravinsky's influence is clearly evident in the choice of thematic, harmonic, and rhythmic materials, but there is also a strong feeling for Coplandesque Americana, especially in the slower second section, in which the theme is augmented and harmonized like the "open prairie" and in a particularly striking section where the two string instruments play lush double stops in the manner of a string quartet. After a brilliant clarinet cadenza, the theme returns in its original form, receiving even more elaborate contrapuntal development than it had the first time. A brilliant Presto evolves almost imperceptibly, and the *Concerto a Tre* ends with a tip of the hat to Joseph Haydn, as if to reaffirm its neoclassical roots.

As a clarinetist, I am particularly touched by the story of Dahl's last work, *Five Duets for Two Clarinets*, which are quite a bit more "modern" than *Concerto a Tre*. Dahl died in Switzerland in 1970. Among the mourners was his close friend and colleague from the University of Southern California, clarinetist Mitchell Lurie, who received a package in the mail a couple of weeks later. It contained the duets, which Dahl had posted just before he died.

— Notes by Michael Webster

BIOGRAPHIES

A multi-faceted musician, MICHAEL WEBSTER is Professor of Clarinet at The Shepherd School of Music and Artistic Director of the Houston Youth Symphony. Former principal clarinetist of the Rochester Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony, he has appeared as soloist with many orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Boston Pops. Described by the Boston Globe as "a virtuoso of burgeoning prominence," Dr. Webster has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y, Da Camera of Houston, CONTEXT, the Tokyo, Cleveland, Muir, Ying, Leontóvych, Ensō, and Chester String Quartets, and the festivals of Marlboro, Santa Fe, Chamber Music West and Northwest, Norfolk, Victoria, and Domaine Forget, among others. Dr. Webster has served on the faculties of the New England Conservatory, Boston University, the University of Michigan, and the Eastman School, from which he holds three degrees. With his wife, flutist Leone Buyse, and pianist Robert Moeling, he plays in the Webster Trio. His recordings appear on the Arabesque, Bridge, Centaur, C.R.I., Crystal, and Nami (Japan) labels. As composer and arranger he has been published by G. Schirmer, International and Schott. He is a member of the editorial staff of The Clarinet magazine, contributing a regular column entitled "Teaching Clarinet."

Horn virtuoso WILLIAM VERMEULEN enjoys equal success as soloist, master teacher, chamber musician, and orchestral principal horn. He is Professor of Horn at The Shepherd School of Music and Principal Horn of the Houston Symphony. In addition, he is a popular horn soloist and clinician. He performs with the most prestigious chamber festivals, such as Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Joshua Bell and Friends and has numerous students employed in major orchestras worldwide, including the Cleveland, New York Philharmonic, Boston, Los Angeles, Israel, Houston, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Dallas symphonies. He has performed to critical acclaim on four continents. In Tune magazine says, "the horn playing of William VerMeulen is miraculous! ... clearly one of today's superstars of the international brass scene." A champion of new music, Mr. VerMeulen has had numerous pieces written for him including concertos by esteemed American composer Samuel Adler and Prix de Rome and Stoeger winner Pierre Jalbert. In 1985, he was invited to the White House to receive a Distinguished Teacher of America Certificate of Excellence from President Reagan and the White House commission on Presidential Scholars. Mr. VerMeulen received his training from Dale Clevenger at Northwestern University and at the Interlochen Arts Academy and per-

forms on horns handcrafted and custom made by Keith Berg of Canada and Engelbert Schmid of Germany.

ELIZABETH SCHELLHASE is currently the Acting Fourth Horn of the Houston Symphony. She is also a senior at The Shepherd School of Music, where she studies with William VerMeulen, who is Principal Horn of the Houston Symphony. Ms. Schellhase's festival appearances include the Tanglewood Music Center, the National Repertory Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, the International Festival-Institute at Round Top, and the Aspen Music Festival.

The artistry of KATHLEEN WINKLER has earned her the plaudits of critics and audiences alike worldwide. She has been heard with such orchestras as the Detroit Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Danish Radio Orchestra, the Odense Byorkester, and the Polish Slaska Philharmonic, to name a few. She has toured throughout the United States and Canada as well as having performed in Sweden, Poland, Germany, Spain, and the Canary Islands. Ms. Winkler has been the recipient of numerous awards including first prize in the First International Carl Nielsen Violin Competition. Through a national search, Kathleen Winkler was selected by the United States Information Agency to represent the U.S. as an Artistic Ambassador on concert tours throughout the world, including Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America. The Philadelphia-born artist attended Indiana University where she received her Bachelor of Music degree, magna cum laude, as well as the coveted Performer's Certificate. She also attended the University of Michigan, where she received her Master of Music degree, summa cum laude. She is currently Professor of Violin at The Shepherd School of Music and a recipient of Rice University's Julia Miles Chance Prize for Excellence in Teaching. Additionally, she is a visiting professor at the Middle School of the Beijing Central Conservatory in China. During the summer she is on the artist faculty of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, and the Beijing International Music Festival and Academy in Beijing and Shanghai.

Violist JAMES DUNHAM is active as a recitalist and guest artist. He has collaborated with such renowned artists as Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Cho-Liang Lin and members of the American, Cassatt, Guarneri, Juilliard, Takács, Tokyo, and Ying Quartets. An advocate of new music, he recently premiered and recorded two works by Libby Larsen — her *Viola Sonata* (2001) and *Sifting Through the Ruins* (2005) for viola, mezzo-soprano (Susanne Mentzer) and piano, due for release by Naxos. Summers are spent at festivals including Sarasota, Amelia Island (Florida), Aspen, La Jolla Chamber Music Festival, and le Domaine Forget (Quebec), with past participation in Festival der Zukunft (Ernen, Switzerland), the San Diego Mainly Mozart Festival, and the Marlboro Music Festival. Other recording projects have included *Glyph* by Judith Shatin for solo viola with string quartet and piano, and the recently released Telarc recording of Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* with the Ying Quartet and cellist Paul Katz. Violist of the 1996 Grammy Award-winning Cleveland Quartet for eight years, James Dunham performed throughout North America, Europe, the Far East, and the Soviet Union. Founding violist of the Naumburg Award winning Sequoia String Quartet, he formerly taught at California Institute of the Arts, the Eastman School of Music, and the New England Conservatory, where he also chaired the String Department and received the Louis & Adrienne Krasner Teaching Excellence Award. Mr. Dunham is Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at The Shepherd School of Music.

IVO-JAN VAN DER WERFF has attained accolades as a chamber player, recitalist, guest artist, and teacher throughout Europe and North America. As a member of the Medici String Quartet for twenty-four years, Mr. van der Werff performed in over 1,700 concerts in major festivals and venues worldwide, broadcasting regularly on radio and television. The Medici Quartet made

more than forty recordings and had collaborations with many artists including the Royal Shakespeare Company, George Martin, Alan Bennett, John Williams, John Thaw, and Jack Brymer. Mr. van der Werff has performed as recitalist in New York, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Sri Lanka, as well as numerous venues throughout the United Kingdom. He has been invited to appear as guest principal viola and soloist with many of the United Kingdom's leading orchestras. Mr. van der Werff is Professor of Viola at The Shepherd School of Music. He was previously Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at the Royal College of Music in London. He has also been a frequent adjudicator for competition juries. His most recent project, inspired by his viola mentors Margaret Major, Peter Shidlof, and Bruno Giuranna, is a book entitled "Notebook for Viola Players" which is a series of exercises and explanations on and about viola technique.

NORMAN FISCHER is one of America's most versatile cellists. He first graced the international concert stage as cellist with the Concord String Quartet, a group that won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, an Emmy and several Grammy nominations, and recorded over forty works on RCA Red Seal, Vox, Nonesuch, Turnabout, and CRI. In addition to performing the major concertos, Mr. Fischer has premiered and recorded many new scores for cello and orchestra. His chamber music expertise has led to guest appearances with the Juilliard, Cleveland, Emerson, American, Chiara, Chester, Ensö, Blair, Schoenberg, Ciampi, Mendelssohn, and Audubon string quartets, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Ann Arbor, Chamber Music International, CONTEXT, and Da Camera of Houston. Norman Fischer and pianist Jeanne Kierman have performed together as the Fischer Duo for over thirty-five years. Thoroughly versed in the classical repertoire, the Fischer Duo has acquired an equally impressive reputation for rediscovering neglected works of the past. They have commissioned many new scores by contemporary composers such as Augusta Read Thomas, George Rochberg, David Stock, Robert Sirota, Shih-Hui Chen, Anthony Brandt, Richard Lavenda, Pierre Jalbert, and Richard Wilson. In 2002, they launched a new chamber music festival in Vermont with violinist Curtis Macomber. Mr. Fischer is currently Professor of Violoncello and Coordinator of Chamber Music at The Shepherd School of Music.

TIMOTHY PITTS, Principal Bass of the Houston Symphony, graduated with distinction from the New England Conservatory of Music. In 1979 he was awarded a Leonard Bernstein Fellowship to attend Tanglewood, and while there, was the recipient of the Gustav Golden Award. Mr. Pitts was a member of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1985 to 1992, at which time he joined the Houston Symphony as Principal Bass. He has also held the position of Principal Bass with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra as well as with the Handel and Haydn Society. An active chamber musician, Mr. Pitts has appeared as a guest artist with the Boston Musica Viva, the M.I.T. Chamber Players, the Amabile and Los Angeles Piano Quartets, and the Cleveland Octet. He has collaborated with such artists as Arnold Steinhardt, Christoph Eschenbach, Lawrence Lesser, Heinz Holliger, and the Vermeer Quartet. Additional performances include appearances as soloist with the Houston and Savannah Symphonies, the Mid-West Bass Symposium, the Bay Chamber Concerts, Mainly Mozart, and the Skaneateles and Pacific Music Festivals. Mr. Pitts has given master classes at the National Orchestral Institute at College Park, Maryland, and at the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan. Formerly on the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory, he is currently Associate Professor of Double Bass at The Shepherd School of Music.



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