

Elisa Moles, flute

featuring

Michael Krikorian, piano

Recital program

Sunday, July 19, 2015

4:00 pm



Artist Biographies

Elisa Moles is currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts degree at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign where she studies with Dr. Jonathan Keeble. Previously, she held a position as Adjunct Faculty at San Joaquin Delta Community College in Stockton, California, where she taught applied flute and class piano. She has also taught music theory and aural skills classes at Ball State University. Elisa has performed in numerous wind, orchestral, and chamber music ensembles, including as second flute/piccolo in the Muncie Symphony Orchestra. She has been asked to perform as the featured soloist on many occasions, most recently as the guest faculty artist for the San Joaquin Delta College Band and Orchestra Festival in March 2014. Always interested in collaborating with composers and performing new music, she has premiered several pieces and performed at conferences, including Electronic Music Midwest and the national Society of Composers, Inc. Region 1 Conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Her performance of *After Dusk* is featured on the PARMA Music Festival Live 2013 album from Navona Records, distributed by Naxos. Her performances have also aired on Indiana Public Radio and WRUV-FM Burlington. Elisa graduated with her MM from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana and with her BA in music performance from California State University, Fresno. Her past teachers include Carole Romans, Teresa Beaman, and Mihoko Watanabe. She has performed in masterclasses with William Bennett, Walfrid Kujala, Bonita Boyd, James Walker, Christina Jennings, Robert Dick, Kazutaka Shimizu, Judy Mendenhall, Marianne Gedigian, and Leone Buyse.



Michael Krikorian is a doctoral student at University of Southern California working toward his DMA in piano performance with Antoinette Perry. He began his studies with Andreas Werz at the age of 12 and during his pre-college years won a number of local piano competitions and prizes including the Music Teachers Association of California Fresno branch solo competition, the youth division competition of the Philip Lorenz Keyboard Concerts Series, and the Luis Costa Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in Music. He was more recently a first prize winner of the Mu Phi Epsilon Scholarship Competition, the first prize winner of the Susan B. Torres award competition, a prizewinner at the Bell T. Ritchie award competition, a two time winner of CSU Fresno's concerto competition, and a featured performer on Valley Public Radio's Young Artists Spotlight series. In addition to his regular studies, Michael has participated in master classes with pianists Giuseppe Andalaro, Gloria Cheng, Markus Groh, Elena Kuschnirova, Vardan Mamikonian, Vahan Mardirossian, Julian Martin, Ksenia Nosikova, Pascal Rogé, and Biljana Urban. Most recently Michael studied with Sharon Mann of the San Francisco Conservatory at the Siena Music Festival in Italy, and graduated from Manhattan School of Music with his Masters in piano performance as a student of Arkady Aronov.



Program

Syrinx for solo flute

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Solo Suite in E minor, Op. 35, No. 1

I. Prélude

II. Allemande

III. Rondeau -- Les Charités

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier
(1689-1755)

Twenty-four Caprices for flute, Op. 1, No. 5

Nicolò Paganini
(1782-1840)
transcribed by Jules Herman

Brief pause

Jim & John for solo flute

Michael D. Fiday

Sonata for flute and piano in F minor, TWV 41: fl

I. Andante cantabile

II. Allegro

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1767)
edited by Jean-Pierre Rampal
realization of figured bass by
Edith Weiss-Mann

Introduzione e Allegro, Op. 40

Luigi Cortese
(1899-1976)

Brief intermission

Sonata in E minor, BWV 1034

III. Andante

IV. Allegro

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Icicle for solo flute

Robert Aitken
(b. 1939)

Fantaisie sur le Freischütz

Paul Taffanel
(1844-1908)

Program Notes

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) *Syrinx for solo flute*

An extraordinarily influential French composer of the early twentieth century, Debussy is often labeled as an impressionist for the distinct harmonies, melodic lines, and colors that permeate his music. Perhaps more accurately, he should be tied to the poets and other artists of the French Symbolist movement. He entered the Paris Conservatoire at age ten to study piano and eventually composition, leading to a prolific output of operas, ballets, theater music, chamber music, orchestral works, vocal works, and piano solos. Debussy composed *Syrinx* in 1913 as part of the incidental music for Gabriel Mourey's three-act drama on the myth of Psyche, and it was premiered by flutist Louis Fleury on December 1, 1913 in Paris. Debussy dedicated the work to Fleury, who loved it so much that he bogarted the manuscript until his death, performing it widely and largely contributing to its success and current position as a standard in the flute repertoire. The piece was originally titled *La Flûte de Pan*, but was changed when it was published in 1927 (after Fleury's death) so as to not be mistaken for the opening song of Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis*.

The music relates the story of the nymph Syrinx who flees from the lascivious god Pan's pursuit, comes to a riverbank, and turns herself into water reeds to escape him. This was to no avail, as Pan turned these reeds into panpipes (or "syrinx" in Greek) which he then played. Though the tale may seem disturbing, the dialogue Mourey wrote to precede the offstage solo (played behind a curtain) reads: "I envy Syrinx and Echo and Syrinx most of all. Does she not give up her life at the edge of the waters and hollow reeds so that Pan's breath may let these winged tones rise and give forth golden rhythms that cause joy to burgeon the hearts of men?" Whether one finds the extra-musical story appealing or not, the work has often been called the most powerful and expressive flute solo, and Mourey himself told Debussy that the piece was a "real jewel of restrained emotion, of sadness, of plastic beauty, of discreet tenderness and poetry."

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755) *Solo Suite in E minor, Op. 35, No. 1*

Boismortier was a French composer so famous in his time that he was able to make a living purely off his compositions (with no official musical post), which is a rarity. He wrote stage works, vocal works, and numerous instrumental pieces, especially for the transverse flute, which was his favorite instrument. He composed over eighty sonatas for flute and keyboard and in combination with other instruments, including harp, violin, and multiple flutes. Of particular interest and popularity are his six concertos for five flutes, op. 15. On the program today are three movements (of a six movement work) from his first solo suite, which hails from a collection of six solo suites. The Baroque style necessitates embellishments, such as trills and grace notes, to the melodic line. As Corrette said, "A song without any ornament is like an unpolished diamond." As opposed to the German and Italian Baroque styles, however, the French is a bit more particular in its ornamentation and execution; some even venture to call it "fussy." Though Boismortier was often criticized during his lifetime for writing more simplistic music that even amateurs could play, today there is great skill required to master performing the music of the French Baroque style.

Nicolò Paganini (1782-1840) *Twenty-four Caprices for flute, Op. 1, No. 5*

An eccentric and virtuoso, Italian violinist Paganini toured extensively throughout Europe playing his own exceptional compositions. He created quite a following with his stage antics -- acting as if he was possessed by demons, moving wildly, and even imitating animal noises during performances. Due to his unparalleled dexterity and speed, as well as his innovative techniques (such as double harmonics), he has often been deemed the most famous violinist of all time. Most of his music was not published before his death, though his *Twenty-four Caprices, Op. 1* were. Published in 1805, these short and brilliant caprices became a model for violin technique and inspired the compositions of Liszt and Chopin. The theme from the Caprice No. 24 in A minor has been the subject of many sets of variations, including in the works of Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and even Andrew Lloyd Webber. These caprices have been arranged for many instruments, and they were transcribed for flute for the first time in the 1980s. Caprice No. 5 has very few dynamic markings, and the only direction for the player is to play the middle section "agitato;" flashy cadenza-like flourishes bookend it. Since it was originally for violin, the biggest challenge for the flutist is breathing, as there are no rests marked for two pages of rapid sixteenth notes.

Michael D. Fiday *Jim & John for solo flute*

Every year the National Flute Association commissions a composer to write a piece specifically for the Young Artist Competition, which the competitors then learn and premiere at the convention. This year the honor was bestowed upon Michael Fiday, the current Composition Department Chair and Associate Professor of Composition at University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. A student of George Crumb, Fiday particularly enjoys cross-disciplinary projects (including with dance, theater, and literature) and exploring the synthesis of popular music (especially jazz and rock) in his classical compositions. *Jim & John* is no exception. Fiday writes that the piece "was inspired by a very distinctive style of blues fife and drum music I heard some years ago, recorded by Alan Lomax in Mississippi in the late 1950s, in particular the song 'Jim and John' as performed by the brothers Ed, Lonnie and G.D. Young. I was fascinated by the registral extremes in the music -- a high cane flute playing blues licks accompanied by low field and bass drums, and decided to compose a work for solo flute which collapsed both melodic and percussive entities into the same instrument. Thus the title *Jim & John* can be taken not only as a tip of the hat to the original source, but also as a study in violently contrasting music dualities: high and low, melodic and percussive, soft and loud, etc." The wild and aggressive piece that resulted is full of extended techniques, including playing and singing at the same time, tongue pizzicato, keyclicks, tongue rams (presumably acting as the bass drum), and percussive air notes (produced by saying "chu" into the flute). About eight to ten minutes in length, Fiday instructs the flutist to play "with a sense of abandon and raw energy."

Georg P. Telemann (1681-1767) *Sonata for flute and piano in F minor, TWV 41: f1*

Telemann began mastering music at an early age by composing and playing flute, recorder, zither, keyboard, and violin. He went to the University of Leipzig to study law but was enticed away to write music for two churches in the area. This spiraled into many other positions, including director of the Leipzig Opera Theater, and the completion of over 3,000 compositions in his lifetime. Telemann has often been compared unfavorably to J.S. Bach, but the importance of his work should not be diminished. The Sonata in F minor was originally written for bassoon and continuo or a

recorder playing the solo part two octaves higher. This work alternates four slow and fast movements. The outer two movements (*Andante Cantabile* and *Vivace*) are in binary form. The third movement *Andante* is short and sweet. The second movement *Allegro* is in compound ternary form. The A section changes from F minor, to C minor, back to F minor. The B section is in Ab major, and then returns to the A section. As customary, the performer adds her own ornaments to the music upon the repeat. Today only the first two movements will be performed.

Luigi Cortese (1899-1976) *Introduzione e Allegro, Op. 40*

Cortese is a relatively unknown Italian composer, pianist, lecturer, private teacher, and music critic. He began his piano and composition studies in Genoa as a young man, though he graduated in mathematics. Subsequently, he studied music in Paris with Gédalge, and then in Rome with Casella. His most prestigious positions were as the director of the Liceo Musicale and as one of the founders of the Paganini violin competition, running the event for twenty-two years. Though he does not have a terribly copious output, it includes a few operas and orchestral works, vocal pieces, chamber music, and four film scores. His major compositional influences include Ravel, Roussel, Milhaud, and Casella. Though obscure, Cortese's talent should not be overlooked. The two movements that comprise the *Introduzione e Allegro* are well written, with interesting chromatic harmonies, biting dissonances, surprising character and tempo changes, and intriguing melodies. The first movement is a lazy, sultry one full of quasi-cadenza passages for the flute. The second movement, in a modified rondo form, takes off briskly from the outset, the flute and piano parts crunching together in a dissonant but pleasing way. The piece is full of tricky passages and charm, making it a veritable gem that deserves a larger place in the flute repertoire.

J.S. Bach (1685-1750) *Sonata in E minor, BWV 1034*

In a dramatic contrast to Cortese, Johann Sebastian Bach is one of the most famous composers of all time. Born in Eisenach, Germany to a large family of musicians, he learned to play violin from an early age and was also a virtuoso organist and keyboard player. Bach held many positions throughout his musical career and was a staggeringly prolific composer. Though musicologists are uncertain exactly when the E minor flute sonata was written, it is considered likely to have been composed either when Bach was working in Köthen (1717-1723) or Leipzig (1723-1750). This sonata is written in the Italian structure: *sonata da chiesa*, beginning with a slow movement, followed by a fast movement, alternating them for the four standard movements. The first movement *Adagio ma non tanto* is in simple binary form, and the second movement, *Allegro*, is a varied concerto ritornello form. *Andante*, the third movement, starts with a sweet melody in the relative major key (G) that blossoms as it plays over the opening bass line which is varied and modulated throughout, similar to a passacaglia. The last movement *Allegro* continues the intricate interplay between flute and keyboard, the two parts frequently in canon. Today, only the penultimate and final movements will be performed.

Robert Aitken (b. 1939) *Icicle for solo flute*

In his roles as flutist, conductor, composer, and educator, Canadian Robert Aitken is a champion of new music. The Paris publisher Editions Musicales Transatlantiques commissioned *Icicle*, which was written in 1977. Aitken dedicated the piece to his daughter Dianne, who used to tease her

younger sister by playing variations of the “Pink Panther” theme on the flute. That dotted rhythm is used throughout this short three minute long piece, though it is somewhat disguised by extended techniques. Included in this work are multiphonics, flutter tongue, and special fingerings that result in “colored” trills and microtones (pitches between the traditional twelve notes of the Western chromatic scale). The music notation is a bit unusual, as it is written with two staves: one to show how the flutist should finger the notes and the other to show what the result should sound like. While the techniques and sounds that emerge from using these techniques are not traditional, the form is. The piece is a simple ABAB form with a codetta. Section A features the “Pink Panther” rhythm and microtonal sounds. Section B embarks with the first “normal” flute notes and is heavily laden with trills. When A returns, the “Pink Panther” rhythm is varied in diminution and accelerates to the last section, which also features trills. Interestingly, the piece can also be analyzed using twelve-tone technique. Almost the entire first minute of the piece uses only four notes (with the addition of microtonal effects), and the twelve-tone row is completed with the two entrances of the “normal” sixteenth notes. Overall, the extended techniques, free rhythm, and stringent use of pitch, are intended to evoke the stark, glistening, and perhaps violent aspects of winter.


Paul Taffanel (1844-1908) *Fantaisie sur le Freischütz*

French flutist and conductor Paul Taffanel was a student at the Paris Conservatoire in 1860, becoming the flute professor there thirty-three years later. An incredible musician, he played with new levels of expressivity and lyricism, developing the modern French school of flute playing that is still a global model for flute playing today. More of a performer than composer, Taffanel wrote several virtuosic flute pieces to dazzle concert audiences, including five *grandes fantaisies* on popular operas of the late 1800s. Some consider his Freischütz fantasy the best of this collection.

Der Freischütz (“The Freeshooter”) was written in 1821 with music by Carl Maria von Weber and a libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind. The opera takes place in the 17th century Bohemian forest, and the story revolves around an assistant forester Max and his love Agathe. In order to marry Agathe, Max must pass a marksmanship contest. He fails the first competition and so makes a deal with the demonic Black Huntsman, Samiel, in exchange for seven magic bullets in hopes of winning the next test. A milestone work, as it was the first true dramatic German opera (previously German operas were predominantly lighter *singspiels*), Taffanel melds its tender melodies, soaring lines, and animated passages into one grand escapade.

A Note About the National Flute Association

The National Flute Association is the largest flute organization in the world. Every year they call for applicants for the Young Artist Competition, which is the premier national competition that attracts top flutists under the age of 30 from around the globe. Applicants submit recordings of three pieces in the fall, and fifteen quarter-finalists are selected in the spring to compete at the annual convention in the summer. This year, the convention will be held in Washington D.C. in August. The competition is held in three elimination rounds with three compositions in each round. Six semi-finalists are selected from the first round to continue on, and then three finalists are selected to compete for first place in the final round. The first two rounds of music are preselected by the Young Artist Competition committee. The performer chooses the last round of music to showcase his or her own personality and abilities.



University Presbyterian Church - Fresno, CA

Program notes by Elisa Moles

