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**Faculty Recital Series**

**2021–2022 Season**

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Sara M. Snell Music Theater

Sunday, September 19, 3:00 PM

## **Carol Lowe, bassoon**

Laments and Invocation (2020)

Invocation

Patterns

John Steinmetz

(b. 1951)

Solo de Concert, Op. 35 (1898)

Gabriel Pierné

(1863-1937)

Julie Miller, piano

Laments and Invocation (2020)

Chaconne

John Steinmetz

Zippy! (2020)

Gregory Wanamaker

(b. 1968)

Christine Hoerning, bass clarinet

Laments and Invocation (2020)

Call and Response

John Steinmetz

L'Heure du Berger per flauto, oboe, clarinetto, corno,  
fagotto e pianoforte (1948)

Jean Françaix

(1912-1997)

I. Les Vieux Beaux

II. Pin Up Girls

III. Les Petites Nerveux

Brian Dunbar, flute

Anna Hendrickson, oboe

Julianne Kirk-Doyle, clarinet

Lauren Becker, horn

Young-Ah Tak, piano

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *Laments and Invocation* by John Steinmetz

In the last few months of 2020, I composed several Laments for solo bassoon. Musicians without and concerts to play were bemoaning the difficulty of practicing during the pandemic, so I thought of writing solo pieces, playable while isolating.

I wrote the Laments in response to a year full of frustrations, tragedies, and griefs: hundreds of thousands of people dead without much public mourning; hurricanes, wildfires, and floods intensified by human impacts on the biosphere; intense polarization afflicting governments and undermining civility; police brutality toward demonstrators protesting police brutality; old social wounds and basic unfairness becoming more and more obvious; the economy failing many people; too much selfishness, violence, lying, bigotry, and power-hunger.

Music can't solve these problems, but it can grieve, privately or publicly.

These pieces sometimes draw inspiration from old styles and from folk music, perhaps seeking structure or grounding for strong emotions. The music uses time-tested ways of evoking sadness, like a descending bass line, a certain turn of phrase, or the ancient practice of call and response. Each Lament has a subtitle; it is there to distinguish one piece from another, not to define the music. The purpose here is not to break new ground or to display virtuoso composing or performing, but to provide space for mourning.

I wrote *Invocation* in the spring of 2020, to give myself a project, and to offer a project to fellow bassoonists isolated at home during the pandemic. The piece is a homespun, non-sectarian ceremony—customized by each performer to make it personal.

Notes by John Steinmetz

*Solo de Concert. Op. 35 by Gabriel Pierné*

A prolific composer, Pierné wrote operas, oratorios, ballets, piano pieces, symphonic works, and chamber music. His writings include the article on the “Histoire de l’instrumentation” in Lavignac’s Encyclopédie de la Musique.

*Solo de Concert, Op. 35* is an attractive work of medium difficulty in the style of the late nineteenth-century display piece. It opens with an energetic theme in D minor that serves as the unifying thread throughout the work. A cantabile subsidiary melody is introduced later, and the piece ends with a lively scherzando derived from the opening theme. This piece was commissioned as the concours piece for bassoon at the Paris Conservatoire in 1898. It was selected again for the same purpose in 1906, 1914, 1922, 1932, and 1943, making it one of the most often used test pieces at the Conservatoire

*Zippy!* by Gregory Wanamaker

During the summer of 2020, the beginning of the lengthy period of isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent a great deal of time on my back deck and in my backyard trying to perfect my grilling technique and feeding the birds. Naturally, the later activity tends to attract wildlife of the rodent variety, especially the pesky and arrogant squirrels, who destroyed so many of my bird feeders that I had to take out a second mortgage to purchase another thousand.

And then there were the chipmunks, also pesky (like the squirrels) but more shy and humble than arrogant (unlike the squirrels), who were far too light and nimble to weight down and destroy the birds’ feeders, but helped themselves to the birds’ food anyway. I could continue this description for hours, but the point is that there was this one chipmunk named Zippy who sorta rose to the top of her community and decided that I was a good pathway to the birds’-and-now-chipmunks’ feeders hanging from various poles attached to my deck, so she began to run up my legs and back and shoulders to jump on the railing to the feeders, collect her food, and run to my neighbor’s yard where she lived to store her food.

Eventually, I was able to give the birds a break by collecting food for Zippy so that she could eat from my hand. Some evenings she would perch on my neighbor's fence and yell (as chipmunks do) until I came

out to light the grill with a bunch of seed or corn or nuts in my hat. (They were in my hat because I had to carry charcoal and utensils with my hands.) As soon as she saw me, she would come running over to climb up my leg or the railing to sit in my hat (on my head) and collect her food.

Things went on like that for weeks and Zippy became a bit of a social media star on my various social media pages, which are, for a large part populated by musicians who have performed my music, many of whom expressed "likes" and other such reactions to selfies and videos of Zippy on my head.

This piece *Zippy!* is for Zippy-lovin' musicians everywhere who want to play a four-minute piece requiring the energy and heartbeat of a chipmunk. While the original version is for the all-too-common standard instrumentation of soprano saxophone and English horn, whose repertoire rivals the string quartet, other versions exist for similar pairs of instruments.

I spent a lot of time during the COVID-19 pandemic writing melancholy and angry music in forced isolation, during the reign of an authoritarian racist urging violence against his own constituents. *Zippy!* is the opposite of those musics as it is a recollection of the part of this troubling time when I made a friend who lifted my spirits and never once peed on my head while she ate from my hat.

And now she hibernates.

November 23, 2020

Notes by Gregory Wanamaker

### *L'Heure du Berger* by Jean Françaix

*L'heure de berger* is three brief character sketches of Parisian café life. Françaix wrote the piece in 1947, the story goes, for a Parisian restaurant to use in the background as its customers dined. Françaix wrote what he called *la musique sérieuse sans gravité* (serious music without weight), providing witty, accurate descriptions in sound of three types of people seen while at the café.

The first movement is *Les Vieux Beaux* (The Old Dandies). The piano plays a jaunty accompaniment for the woodwinds' ironic, gliding sighs, as if the dandies are remembering the good old days. A quicker central section breaks into gossipy sixteenth notes between the flute and bassoon, with the occasional butting in of the horn, but the sighs return: those days are gone. In the second movement, the clarinet describes the teasing Pin-Up Girls in delightful arpeggios while the flute, oboe, horn, and bassoon parade around and the piano is silent.

The set ends with *Les petits nerveux* (Nervous Children). All the instruments skitter around, their melody lines moving against each other. The trio section finds them better organized, with the flute and oboe playing offbeat, against the others. The opening section is repeated, followed by a coda wherein the nervous excitement builds to an inevitable collapse.

Notes by Patsy Morita



# **PEACE & LOVE**

The Crane School of Music celebrates the life of Dean Emeritus Dr. Lonel Woods by proclaiming his salutation the 2021-2022 theme. The curator of this program has chosen at least one musical work on this concert that resonates with our community emphasis: "Peace & Love."