

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

ORGAN RECITAL HALL / UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

MUSIC PERFORMANCES

Wind Symphony Concert	February 22, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
Singer of the Year Competition / FREE	February 23, 7:30 p.m.	ORH
Virtuoso Series Concert / John Carlo Pierce, Tenor	February 25, 7:30 p.m.	ORH
Jazz Ensembles Concert	February 26, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
University Sinfonia Concert	February 27, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
Classical Convergence Concert / International Contemporary Ensemble	February 28, 7:30 p.m.	ORH
Concert Band Concert / FREE	March 3, 7:30 p.m.	GCH

RALPH OPERA PROGRAM PERFORMANCES

<i>Two British One-Acts</i> / Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams	April 4, 5, 6, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
<i>Two British One-Acts</i> / Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams	April 7, 2 p.m.	GCH

DANCE PERFORMANCES

Spring Dance Concert	April 26, 27, 7:30 p.m.	UDT
Spring Dance Concert	April 27, 2 p.m.	UDT
Spring Capstone Concert	May 10, 11, 7:30 p.m.	UDT
Spring Capstone Concert	May 11, 2 p.m.	UDT
Dance Special Event / <i>Embodiment</i>	June 1, 2 p.m.	UDT

THEATRE PERFORMANCES

<i>One Man, Two Guvvners</i> by Richard Bean	February 21, 22, 23, 7:30 p.m.	UT
<i>One Man, Two Guvvners</i> by Richard Bean	February 24, 2 p.m.	UT
<i>A Man of No Importance</i> , a musical by Terrence McNally	April 26, 27, May 2, 3, 4, 7:30 p.m.	UT
<i>A Man of No Importance</i> , a musical by Terrence McNally	April 28, May 5, 2 p.m.	UT
<i>Rockband Project Concert</i> / FREE	May 16, 6:30 p.m.	UT

FEBRUARY 20, 2019 / 7:30 P.M.

Virtuoso Series

JOHN MCGUIRE
HORN

TIM BURNS
PIANO



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TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

John McGuire & Friends

Horn Trio in E-flat Major, op. 40 / **JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)**

- I. Andante
- II. Scherzo
- III. Adagio mesto
- IV. Allegro con brio

Erik Peterson, violin
Lei Weng, piano

~ **INTERMISSION** ~

Batuque (2017) / **JAMES M. DAVID (b. 1978)**

- I. Kantaderas
- II. Batukaderas

Wesley Ferreira, clarinet
Tim Burns, piano

Till Eulenspiegel's Lustige Streiche, op. 28 / **RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)**
(arr. David Carp)

Michelle Stanley, flute
Andrew Jacobson, oboe
Copper Ferreira, clarinet
Brian Jack, bassoon
Tim Burns, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano, Op. 40

In 1865, Johannes Brahms remained something of an unknown. The 32-year-old would-be-composer from Hamburg had yet to write his first symphony, the genre upon which careers for would-be composers in German-speaking lands were built (Brahms' concern of being capable of producing a symphonic work comparable to Beethoven's weighed heavily), and though he had made inroads as a pianist, he had also been faced with a string of professional setbacks. Two years earlier he had moved to Vienna, where he had been appointed conductor of the city's singing society, but Brahms certainly saw this as a step towards bigger things, and indeed would leave this post a year later, despite a lack of prospects. It was also at the start of 1865 that Brahms' mother died.

Johanna Henrike Christiane Nissen had been a forty-one-year-old spinster when Johann Jakob, Brahms' father, had become smitten with her in Hamburg, years earlier. Small, sickly, "plain of face," in the words of Ian Swafford, and a gimpy leg too boot, it would seem Christiane had little going for her. Yet, her sparkling blue eyes (Brahms would inherit these eyes) must have spoken to Johann Jakob, and though seventeen years her junior, he took her as his wife. The marriage unfortunately didn't last—Jakob would leave her much later—but Brahms always maintained a close affinity to his mother, who in turn often expressed her confidence in her son's abilities. Now, in the summer of 1865, her death inspired his music making.

That May Brahms took lodging in his beloved Lichtental, near Baden-Baden, a picturesque village that had become his summer home away from home. He rented two rooms in a hillside house, from which he could see the nearby mountains, and quickly established his routine: waking at dawn, he made strong coffee and took a long walk, returned to his rooms for four hours of composing, and then spent the rest of the day leisurely, eating and spending time with friends. Among Brahms' musical projects that summer was a trio that he envisioned from the start would include the Waldhorn. Brahms' father had taught him to play the natural horn as a boy and it had been a favorite of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The Waldhorn, or forest or hunting horn, had its limitations, of course, since it couldn't really stray from its home key, but it possessed inherent noble qualities (it was the horn of the Gods, after all) that resonated deeply with Brahms as well.

Brahms' latest chamber offering reflected his deep feelings about his mother's recent passing, and though no out and out requiem—that was another project begun earlier that year and which would occupy him for much of what remained of it—the E-flat Trio is certainly imbued with melancholy and sadness, particularly evident in the solemn adagio, which carries the unusual Brahmsian marking "mesto", or sad. Whether or not these feelings had anything to do with the fact that Brahms wouldn't compose another chamber work for eight years afterwards, they were certainly a testament to his grief and, in a way, opened the door for some novel compositional concepts, testing grounds that appear here for the first, and sometimes, last time.

Among the many striking features of the trio is the fact that many of its themes are drawn from the violin's opening phrase. Of course, beginning with a slow movement is another unusual feature of this work, not to mention that the trio as a whole is comprised of four movements, not the more traditional three, perhaps hearkening back to the four-movement church sonata of the Baroque era. The A-B-A-B-A rondo form of the opening Andante is also more simply organized than the rather sophisticated sonata forms common to his other opening movements—in fact, this is the only opening movement of a major work by Brahms not constructed in sonata form! The violin will then also introduce the more agitated second idea, and these two ideas will be swapped out over the course of the movement.

A playful Scherzo offers momentary relief from the somber qualities of the movements that surround it. Like the others, its constructed in the key of E-flat, that in which the horn is built, and its thematic ideas are mined from the same ore that make their way through all of the trio's movements. And, as if not to forget itself entirely, the "trio" at the center of this movement is imbued with feelings of nostalgia that are so much a part of the larger work. The centerpiece of Brahms' score is the Adagio mesto, a mournful dirge established by the piano alone and which leaves no doubt about the composer's frame of mind while at work on the trio. When played on the open horn, the performer has to "stop" the instrument in order to negotiate pitches beyond those naturally available, creating a haunting quality that certainly spoke to Brahms, particularly in this time of grief. In fact, Brahms ends the movement on just such a note, the horn's closing G-flat.

Rather than allow grief to color the work's conclusion, Brahms closes his trio in a playful mood, as if determined that the lasting memories are joyous ones. The muscular Allegro con brio has everything we might expect in a finale from this master, including sophisticated musical dialogue—listen how the opening figure is later submerged becoming the development's accompaniment—and forward drive. And as for the hunting calls, thoughts of Christiane may have dominated the deeper moments of the work, but there is no mistaking the hunting horn, noble echoes from the nearby mountains Brahms could nearly have made out from the room in which this music was composed.

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James M. David (b. 1978): Batuque for horn, clarinet, and piano

"Batuque" refers to a genre of music and dance associated with coastal West Africa and Brazil. It is considered one of the primary influences on Latin American dance music including samba and the ubiquitous son clave. This two-movement composition will explore the heterophonic and "call-and-response" techniques found in batuque as well as its typical binary structure. A secondary influence is found in the 20th century works of such luminary composers as Villa-Lobos, Ginastera, Messiaen, and Revueltas. The first movement focuses on the tuneful melodies associated performed by the kantaderas (singers), while the second movement features the complex polyrhythms of the batukaderas (drummers).

—James M. David

Richard Strauss (1864-1949): Till Eulenspiegel's Lustige Streiche, op. 28

Till Eulenspiegel is the consummate prankster, always in trouble and never quite able to learn from the mistakes of his past, never conforming to convention and never heeding any kind of criticism. This well-known German folk tale hero/clown originated in the fourteenth century and has long represented the ultimate challenge to established order. When Richard Strauss chose to write a tone poem about this colorful character between 1894 and 1895, he was also thumbing his nose at the musical establishment critics who had treated his first opera, *Guntram*, with great disdain at its premiere.

The overall form of the tone poem is a rondo. Since a rondo is a work with a recurring theme, Strauss united the various "pranks" of the work by associating the character of Till with the recurring theme, which is a magnificent, almost maniacally difficult horn solo. In the course of his mischief, Till encounters peasants and preachers, goes courting and is rejected, and makes fun of intelligentsia. In each of these adventures Strauss ingeniously weaves the rondo theme into the texture of the music in various guises; one can always tell that Till is in the forefront of the action. In the end, Till is brought before judges and his life is briefly reviewed before he is sentenced to death. A final mocking gesture ends the work in an amazing transformation of the original theme.

The orchestral version of Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks includes some of Strauss's most brilliant orchestration, giving the work an appealing color and also making it a virtuoso piece for orchestra. In this chamber version one hears that same virtuosity taken up another notch, resulting in a work of crystalline clarity with a certain Tillish elegance.

—Beth Fleming