

Grand Canyon Music Festival

The 30th Anniversary Season
Program Notes for Friday, August 23, 2013

JC Bach Quartet in D Major for Flute and Strings

Also known as the “London Bach,” Johann Christian Bach (1735 – 1782) was the youngest son of the more famous Johann Sebastian. It is interesting to note that he was probably more celebrated in his time than was his father, who became the more well-known composer after a nineteenth century revival of his larger choral and orchestral works. Johann Christian lived in Italy prior to settling in London, where he died in the usual swindle-induced poverty that seems to be so favored by classical composers. This quartet is one of a number composed in the *gallant* style of the early classical period. W.A. Mozart held the younger Bach in high esteem as a composer, and arranged three sonatas from the elder composer’s Op. 5 into keyboard concertos.

Radamés Gnattali Canção e Dança

Like so many of the composers on our concert this evening, Brazilian composer Radamés Gnattali (1906 – 1988) was born into a musical family. They appear to have been opera fans; Radamés had a brother named Ernani, and a sister named Aida. At first a violinist and pianist in his hometown of Porto Alegre, Gnattali broadened his musical range to include conducting, composing, and arranging. He was able to compose across styles and genres, incorporating elements of jazz, traditional Brazilian music, and pop music. His influences came largely from his varied experience as both a performer of all of these kinds of music, and as an accompanist and arranger for radio stations in Rio de Janeiro. Written in 1959, the *Canção e Dança* was likely composed for Edu da Gaita, the harmonica player who toured with Gnattali’s sextet in Europe and South America.

Richard Einhorn Audubon Fragments

Before devoting himself full-time to composition, Richard Einhorn (b. 1952) worked as a record producer for artists such as Meredith Monk and the New York Philharmonic. He also produced the famous Yo-Yo Ma recording of the Bach Cello Suites that won a Grammy for Best Instrumental Performance. Einhorn has written opera, chamber music, film music – you name it. His work is exceptional in modern classical music for its unique ability to reach into the lives of so many people, as well as garner critical and popular acclaim. *Audubon Fragments* was written for a film made by the Audubon Society featuring slides of beautiful birds and fauna in a nature preserve in Florida. The music both describes and is inspired by the wildlife in the film.

Cenovia Cummins Small Suite

Cenovia Cummins is the concertmaster of the New York Pops, Riverside Symphony, and School of American Ballet Orchestra. She is a frequent performer with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Cummins does not limit herself to classical music, however. She can be heard on recordings and in concert with musicians who range from Madonna to James Taylor. *Small Suite* was written for the Cummins sisters duo to perform in recital on their respective instruments, violin and cello. Normally limited to duets by Kodaly and Ravel, *Small Suite* provides a welcome addition to the repertoire. The piece incorporates elements of jazz rhythms, Irish fiddling, and the influence of Copland and Bernstein. Blending world and classical musics, *Small Suite* creates a sound world all its own.

Paul Hindemith Passacaglia for Solo Viola

A German-American violist, violinist, composer and conductor, Paul Hindemith (1895 – 1963) was also a renowned teacher of composition at Yale University after the Second World War. Before immigrating to the United States in 1940, Hindemith was alternately in and out of favor with the rising Nazi party, who accused him of creating “degenerate” music. In addition to creating his unique compositional style, sometimes known as “dissonant-tonal counterpoint,” he was the author of a famous rhythmic training manual, which has tortured students at American conservatories for decades. The influence of the compositional style of Johann Sebastian Bach can be heard in this passacaglia for solo viola. A *passacaglia* is a compositional form created in 17th century Spain. Originally written as melodic interludes, the term came to more broadly describe melodic and harmonic variations over a bass line. JS Bach was a prolific composer of this form, most famously in his *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* for organ.

Albert Roussel Trio for Flute and Strings

French composer Albert Roussel (1869 – 1937) is not as well known as many of his contemporaries, such as Ravel and Debussy, and was surpassed in fame by some of his students as well, including Erik Satie and Edard Varèse. Much of his relatively low profile is related to his more conservative, classicist style of composition. He maintained a respect and affinity for functional tonality that his contemporaries did not share, and continued to be influenced by the rhythmic and harmonic fundamentals exemplified by earlier composers like Palestrina and Bach. Roussel served in the French Navy in the late 1890's, and was an ambulance driver in the First World War. His Trio for flute and strings, Op. 40 was composed in 1929 and highlights the strong rhythmic vitality that exemplified Roussel's compositional style. This feature is also one of the major elements in his writing that set him apart from his peers.