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Concert: Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA COLLEGE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Jeffery Meyer, conductor
Richard Faria, clarinet

Ford Hall
Friday, May 1, 2009
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Dances concertantes

Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

- I. *Marche – Introduction*
- II. *Pas d'Action*
- III. *Thème varié*
- IV. *Pas de Deux*
- V. *Marche – Conclusion*

Sonata in F minor for Clarinet and Orchestra, Op. 120, No. 1

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
Arr. Luciano Berio
(1925-2003)

- I. *Allegro appassionato*
- II. *Andante un poco adagio*
- III. *Allegretto grazioso*
- IV. *Vivace*

Richard Faria, clarinet

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 99 in E-flat major, Hob. 1/99

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

- I. *Adagio – Vivace assai*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Menuetto: Allegretto*
- IV. *Finale: Vivace*

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Program Notes

Firmly deciding to give up composition in 1890 on the occasion of his 57th birthday, **Johannes Brahms** (1833–1897) never imagined he would meet anyone who could coax him out of retirement. Nearly two years later, while watching a performance of the Meiningen Orchestra, Brahms was so moved by the performance of Carl Maria von Weber's *Concerto in F minor* by principal clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld that he would write four new works for clarinet before his death in 1897. The *Clarinet Trio* (1891), the *Clarinet Quintet* (1891), and the *Sonatas* (1894) were all written for and dedicated to Mühlfeld who toured extensively with the works. The *Sonatas Op. 120 nos. 1 and 2* were among the last works Brahms ever composed and published. Mühlfeld gave their premiere on January 11, 1895 with Brahms at the keyboard.

Twentieth-century Italian composer **Luciano Berio** (1925–2003) received a commission to orchestrate Brahms's *Op. 120 no. 1* from the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1986. Berio, well-versed in and respected for orchestrating many Baroque compositions including J. S. Bach's *Art of a Fugue*, found the Romantic, melodic elegance of the sonata to pose different kind of challenge to him. In this instance, Brahms's thick piano writing proved to be a blessing as Berio exercises his skills in orchestration through instrumentation combinations, extreme dynamic shifts, and many interpretive subtleties. To honor what Brahms might have orchestrated himself, Berio even includes the contrabassoon, an instrument regularly found throughout Brahms's symphonies and other orchestral compositions.

The *Allegro appassionato* opening movement begins with a brief introduction in the orchestra before the clarinet appears with a haunting melody of descending contour. Brahms makes excellent use of the clarinet's subtle dynamic capabilities and wide tessitura in this movement, sometimes employing virtuosic arpeggios that span two octaves and more at once. The *Andante un poco adagio* contains a quiet and reflective accompaniment over which the clarinet sings a smooth and gliding melodic line. The quiet repose in A flat major that ends the movement is retained in the *Allegretto grazioso*, an effective scherzo and trio. The final F major *Vivace* incorporates tremendous interplay between the orchestra and clarinet throughout its five-part rondo form. The work ends vivaciously with clarinet arpeggios that fly upward until they finally reach the penultimate cadence.

Shortly after his emigration to the United States in 1940, Russian-born composer **Igor Stravinsky** (1882–1971) was commissioned by Werner Janssen, the conductor of the Janssen Symphony Orchestra of Los Angeles, to write a work for chamber orchestra. The *Danses Concertantes* – premiered with the subtitle "Concerto for Small Orchestra" – was the result, and the work received its first performance on 8 February 1942.

The *Danses Concertantes* is one of Stravinsky's very finest neo-classical compositions, and effectively captures his humor, style, and mastery in a series of short movements.

Hints of the dance rhythms that Stravinsky employs in his two *Suites for Small Orchestra*, the clever modulations of the *Symphony in C*, and the complex concertante writing within the *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto* are all found within this infrequently performed gem. Although the *Danses Concertantes* was commissioned for a chamber orchestra performance and follows no specific plot, Stravinsky cast the work as a sort of abstract ballet. Two years after its 1942 premiere performance, George Balanchine and the *Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo* gave a staged performance of the work in New York City.

In a similar fashion to *L'histoire du Soldat* (1918), the orchestration in *Danses Concertantes* is based on opposing one instrumental group against another. The lively, Lydian-based *Marche-Introduction* establishes the core ensemble's sound and yields to the animated *Pas d'Action*, whose lighter orchestration favors the high strings, flute, and clarinet. This movement is followed by a theme (presented in the woodwinds) and a set of four variations. The theme begins in G, and the tonality of each variation climbs upward by one semi-tone until the movement finally cadences in B-flat. In a symmetrical fashion, the work concludes with a reprise and an extended version of the opening two movements: a more lyrical *Pas de deux* and tongue-and-cheek *Marche-Conclusion*.

Written one year prior to his second arrival in London in 1794, the *Symphony No. 99 in E-flat major* (Hob I:99) of **Franz Joseph Haydn** (1732–1809) is the first of the set of six symphonies known as the "London Symphonies". *Symphony No. 99* was presented only four days after Haydn's arrival on British soil in February of 1794 and was premiered under Johann Peter Salomon's baton. At this first performance, the symphony was the centerpiece of a concert that combined both instrumental and vocal works; not surprisingly, the work was an immediate success with audience members and critics alike.

The *Adagio* introduction of the first movement establishes the harmonic outline for the entire work, and is followed immediately by the pompous *Vivace assai*. Here, the first theme is introduced by the violins and is immediately imitated in the winds. As this is the first time he ever included the clarinet in one of his symphonies, Haydn appropriately brings the instrument to the foreground in the second theme of this movement. Haydn's humor is abundant in the development as he employs grippin chromaticism and dramatic pauses throughout. The charming G major *Adagio* movement is based on an echo motif, and grants an enormous amount of independence to the principal wind players. The flute, oboe, and bassoon solos found

throughout this movement spin out of gentle string writing and are presented in free counterpoint. The arpeggiated theme of the minuet is directly contrasted not only by tempo, but also in the smooth contour and scalar passagework of the trio whose appearance is announced by a pair of oboes. It is only in the sonata-rondo finale where Haydn fully explores the breadth of his musical humor, particularly striking in his use of the French horns – and at a breakneck speed.

Notes by Aimée Shorten

Clarinetist **Richard Faria** pursues an active career as soloist, chamber musician, and educator. He has been a participant in such festivals as the Bard Music Festival of the Hamptons, Skaneateles Festival, and the Garth Newel Music Festival, and has collaborated with the Zephyros and Sylvan Wind Quintets, Atlantic and Arianna String Quartets. He has performed in Weill Hall, Carnegie Hall, Spivey Hall, the Smithsonian Institution, as well as at the American Academies in Rome and Berlin, the Temple of Apollo in Turkey, and Glinka Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia.

He co-founded the new music group Ensemble X along with Pulitzer prize-winning composer Steven Stucky and colleagues from IC and Cornell University. Together they made recordings of chamber music by Steven Stucky and Scottish composer Judith Weir. The inaugural season featured Richard as soloist in John Adams clarinet concerto *Gnarly Buttons*.

A fervent advocate of new music, Richard premiered the *Clarinet Sonata* by Roberto Sierra at the International Clarinet Fest 2007 in Vancouver, BC. His first solo CD, *Roberto Sierra: Clarinet Works*, was described as “a superb recording that belongs on every clarinetist’s shelf” by the American Record Guide. His newest recording of Stephen Hartke’s *The Horse with the Lavender Eye* was released by Chandos.

Richard is a contributing author to *The Clarinet* magazine, and studied at Ithaca College, Michigan State University, and SUNY Stony Brook, as well as the Aspen Music Festival, National Repertory Orchestra and the Stockhausen Courses Kürten. His teachers have included Joaquin Valdepeñas, Dr. Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr and Charles Neidich.

Born in Chicago, Jeffery Meyer (DMA, MM, SUNY Stony Brook; BM, Lawrence Conservatory) began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. He is presently the director of orchestras at the Ithaca College School of Music, as well as the founder and artistic director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the 2008-09 season, he assumed the position of artistic director of the Water City Chamber Orchestra, northeast Wisconsin's only professional chamber orchestra.

Called "one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg" by Sergei Slonimsky, in recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Russia, and throughout Europe and Asia. He has appeared with ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony, Syracuse Symphony, Philippine Philharmonic, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra Sinfonico "Haydn" di Bolzano e Trento. As a pianist, he performs frequently as part of the piano-percussion duo *Strike*. He has been broadcast on CBC Newfoundland, has recorded and performed with the Philadelphia Virtuosi (Naxos), and has been heard as a soloist at the Aspen Festival. During the 2001-2002 academic year he lived and studied in Berlin and Leipzig as the recipient of a DAAD grant in music. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition) and was recently awarded third prize in the Tenth International "Antonio Pedrotti" Conducting Competition.

ITHACA COLLEGE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Violin I

Andrew Bergevin,
concertmaster
Kate Goldstein
Laura Sciavolino
Will Downey
Tim Ball
Sharon Mohar
Alyssa Jutting

Violin II

Ellen Kogut*
Ian Salmon
Colin Oettle
Natalie Brandt
Gabriella Colkett
Kristin Bakkegard

Viola

Rosie Newton*
Nicole Wright
Derek Hensler
Jennifer Meckler
Zackary Slack

Cello

Tyler Borden*
Allison Rehn
Kristin Mills
Daniel Frankhuizen
David MacLeese

Bass

Joseph Arcuri*
Kyle Kresge
Kevin Gobetz

Flute

Jacque Christen*
Aimee Shorten

Oboe

Alicia Rockenhauser*
Jamie Davis

Clarinet

Adam Butalewicz*
Marcus Christian

Bassoon

Josh Malison*
Margaret Fay

Horn

Rose Valby*
Lori Roy
Michael Drennen

Trumpet

Cyril Bodnar*
Ethan Urtz

Trombone

Andrew Bennett*

Timpani/Percussion

Andrew Boynton*

Graduate Assistants

Kevin Ryan
Jesse Livingston

* principal

Concert Calendar

May

2	8:15	Wind Ensemble; Stephen Peterson, conductor
3	4:00	Symphony Orchestra; Jeffery Meyer, conductor
15	8:30	Open Dress Rehearsal of Commencement Eve Concert
16	8:30	42 nd Gala Commencement Eve Concert

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