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Faculty Recital: The Cycle-Concert of Nikos Skalkottas

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The Cycle-Concert of Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949)

Paige Morgan, oboe
Kim Dunnick, trumpet
Lee Goodhew Romm, bassoon
Charis Dimaras, piano

Wednesday, September 6, 2006
Lecture: Iger Lecture Hall, 7:00 p.m.
Concert: Hockett Family Recital Hall, 8:15 p.m.
Program

Quartet No. 1 for Oboe, Trumpet, Bassoon and Piano (1943-44)

I. Moderato assai
II. Vivace (Rondo)

Concertino for Oboe and Piano (1939)

I. Allegro giocoso
II. Pastorale: Andante tranquillo
III. Rondo: Allegro vivo

Sonata Concertante for Bassoon and Piano (1943)

I. Allegro molto vivace
II. Andantino
III. Presto

Concertino for Trumpet and Piano (1943)

I. Allegro giusto

Quartet No. 2 for Oboe, Trumpet, Bassoon and Piano (1943-44)

I. Tango
II. Fox-Trot
Program Notes

In 1939 Skalkottas composed a Concertino for Oboe and Piano (for a Colleague in the State Orchestra of Athens) and in 1943 a much longer Sonata Concertante for Bassoon and Piano, also for a Greek bassoonist. A trumpet player had also asked for a solo piece (probably some time between 1941 and 1943, most probably in 1943) and thus Skalkottas was led to conceive not only a “cycle”, but a “concert”, economically involving these three wind instruments and the piano. This concert was to start with a very short, witty quartet, to be followed by the much longer, expressive-lyrical oboe concertino; then the monumental bassoon sonata as the central part of the concert; next the rather short, brilliant trumpet concertino and, finally, another extremely short, humorous second quartet (Tango and Fox Trot). This original idea of “composing a concert” in its entirety (substantiated through a note preserved in the composer’s hand) was presumably realized in 1943 (or early 1944). The five works it comprises are all written in the “non-serial” method developed by Skalkottas in the late 1930s and stylistically (although very personal) much closer to Stravinsky – for whom Skalkottas had a very high esteem – than to Schoenberg. The solos are quite difficult and have even been “officially” and repeatedly considered “unplayable” by eminent soloists versed in new music. However, their world premieres in recent years have rendered those earlier declarations questionable and indeed obsolete.

This text was contributed by musicologist, John G. Papaioannou (Secretary, Society of Skalkottas’ Friends) as the Prologue to the 1986 editions of the above works by Margun Music.