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Guest Artist Recital: PEN Trio: "American Currents"

PEN Trio

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PEN Trio
"American Currents"
Nora Lewis, oboe
Phillip O. Paglialonga, clarinet
Eric Van der Veer Varner, bassoon

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Saturday, March 30th, 2019
7:00 pm
Program

Three Places in Vienna
   I. Augarten Im Winter
   II. Die Malteserkirche
   III. Die Spittelauer Muellverbrennungsanlage

Jaren Hinckely  
(b. 1968)

5*4*3 (except after C)(2013)
   I. Freely, Quietly
   II. Presto
   III. Majestic
   IV. Suspended, gently
   V. Forceful, dynamic

William Bradbury  
(b. 1956)

Intermission

Three American Canvases (2018)*
   I. Landscape Overmantel
   II. Emigrants Crossing the Plains
   III. Tide Pool

Daniel Perttu  
(b. 1979)

Trio for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon
   I. Bebop catando
   II. Angelico
   III. Dragon

Bill Douglas  
(b. 1944)
Biographies
PEN Trio

The PEN Trio bridges performance and scholarship to explore and expand the repertoire for the traditional *trio d'anches*. The ensemble regularly tours throughout North America and abroad and has become known for the quality and energy of their performances. The PEN Trio has visited dozens of universities and has performed at numerous academic conferences, chamber music series, and private functions. Recent highlights include performances in Costa Rica, China, Cuba, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Panama, Trinidad and the United Kingdom, as well as appearances at the annual conferences of the International Double Reed Society, ClarinetFest, College Music Society, with flutist Francesca Arnone at the 44th Annual National Flute Association Convention, and National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors, as well as radio broadcasts on Michigan and Alabama Public Radio, as well as national radio stations in Cuba (CBMF) and Guatemala (TGW).

The PEN Trio recently recorded their debut album, *Found Objects* in New York City with Boston-based Soundmirror. The album will include new works, written expressly for the ensemble, by William Bradbury, Jenni Brandon, M. Shawn Hundley and Aleks Sternfeld-Dunn.

The members of the PEN Trio are passionate about performance, education and scholarship, and the group is dedicated to expanding the scope of the traditional *trio d'anches* as well as to bring the intimate yet intense sound of this unique instrumentation to a wider audience. The term *trio d'anches* was coined by bassoonist Fernand Oubradous in 1927 to describe the now legendary Trio d'Anches de Paris. This celebrated group featured the three reed instruments commonly found in the orchestra: oboe, clarinet and bassoon. Popular mythology asserts that the group came together to explore a more perfect blend of timbres known as "une parfaite homogénéité," that is not available to the standard woodwind quintet instrumentation, which includes the distinct and varied timbres of flute and horn.

Louise Dyer-Hanson, founder of the publishing company Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, heard the group in its early days and quickly became enamored with the sound of the ensemble. Consequently, she helped the group commission several new works from leading composers that were eventually published by Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre. Ultimately, this group of pieces was published together as a collection that remained in print for over fifty years. The Trio d'Anches de Paris had nearly a dozen works written for and dedicated to the ensemble, including compositions by Bozza, Franck, Ibert, Milhaud, and Tomasi, which now forms the core of the standard repertoire.
The **PEN Trio** was formed, in many ways, to continue the work that the Trio d'Anches de Paris began nearly one hundred years ago. Since 2010 the **PEN Trio** has premiered works by William Bradbury, Jenni Brandon, Allen Cohen, Jon Grier, M. Shawn Hundley, Peter James Learn, Daniel Perttu, Wendy Wan-Ki Lee, and Aleks Sternfeld-Dunn, and has promoted these works in concert around the world. In 2013, the **PEN Trio** partnered with Trevor Cramer and TrevCo-Publishing to create the **PEN Trio Collection**. This collection includes new works as well as new editions of existing works to make the *trio d'anches* more accessible to musicians around the globe.

### Members

**Nora Lewis** was recently appointed Associate Professor of Oboe at Lawrence University - Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin. Previously she served on the faculties of Western Michigan University and Kansas State University where she taught undergraduate and graduate oboe students, coached woodwind chamber music, taught courses in music theory and music history, performed with the Western Wind Quintet and Konza Winds faculty quintet, and coordinated the Bullock Performance Institute. Lewis also served as Associate Director of the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance at Kansas State University.

Lewis has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Classical Orchestra, Wichita Symphony Orchestra, New Hampshire Symphony, Camerata Chicago, and International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). She was a founding member of Chicago-based Ensemble Dal Niente and held orchestral positions with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra and the Plymouth Philharmonic. She has performed in recital at St. Paul’s Church in Covent Garden, London, on the Cranbrook Music Guild artist series, Hale Library concert series, and in live recital broadcasts on Blue Lake Public Radio, WMUK Kalamazoo’s “In Concert,” and “Live from Studio B” at WFMT in Chicago.

Lewis has presented clinics, performances, and papers at national and international conferences including the Midwest Clinic, International Double Reed Society, College Music Society, CBDNA (southwest region), ClarinetFest, National Flute Association, in locations such as the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, Finland, and throughout the United States. Honors include a Big-12 Faculty Fellowship, honorary membership in Sigma Alpha Iota as a National Arts Associate, and a Yale AlumniVentures Grant to support her work with music programs in Haiti.

For ten summers Lewis taught at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan. She has served on the CMS National Advisory Board for performance, editor for the Midwest Double Reed Society, and is
consulting editor for The Instrumentalist magazine. She received a doctor of music degree from Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music, a master of music degree from Yale University, and a bachelor of music degree in performance and a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from Lawrence University. Her principal oboe teachers include Michael Henoch, Richard Killmer, Ronald Roseman, Howard Niblock, and Grover Schiltz (English horn).

Clarinetist Phillip O. Paglialonga has quickly emerged as one of the leading performers and pedagogues of his generation. His book, *Squeak Big: Practical Fundamentals for the Successful Clarinetist* was released in August 2015 by Imagine Music Publishing and has garnered significant praise from leading clarinetist including prominent members of the orchestras in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle, as well as stellar reviews in several major publications.

As a performer he has appeared on four continents and regularly appears throughout North America and abroad. His performances have been heard on National Public Radio, the CBC in Canada, TGW in Guatemala, CBMF in Cuba, as well as several other regional radio and television stations. He has visited dozens of universities to present recitals and classes, and is regularly invited to perform at venues around the world. Recent highlights include performances at Bellas Artes Guatapé, ClarinetFest, College Music Society, ClariBogotá, ClariMania, Cranbrook Concert Series, Fiesta de los Clarinetes, International Double Reed Society, Society for Electro-Acoustic Music, Tutti New Music Festival as well as concerts in China, Colombia, Hong Kong, Spain, Thailand, and Trinidad.

As an orchestral musician he has been a member of the Haddonfield Symphony, Sarasota Opera Orchestra and the Walt Disney World Orchestra. He has also appeared with numerous other orchestras including the: Charleston Symphony (SC), Chicago Civic Orchestra, Concertante di Chicago, Florida Orchestra, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Kalamazoo Symphony, New World Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, Richmond Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra, and Windsor Symphony (Ontario). He has also participated in numerous summer festivals including the National Repertory Orchestra, the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, and Lake George Opera in Saratoga, New York.

In the fall of 2018 he joined the faculty at the University of North Texas as Associate Professor of Clarinet. Dr. Paglialonga is an artist for both Buffet Crampon and Gonzalez Reeds. More information about Dr. Paglialonga is available at www.SqueakBig.com.
Bassoonist Eric Van der Veer Varner has enjoyed a particularly rich and varied musical career. He was the principal bassoonist with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra from 2004 through 2015. He appeared as a soloist with the orchestra on numerous occasions, where his playing was critically hailed as that “of ineffable liquid beauty”. Previously, he held positions with the Ann Arbor Symphony, Michigan Opera Theater, and Sarasota Opera Orchestra. He performs in numerous summer festivals, including the Bellingham Festival of Music, the Michigan City Chamber Music Festival, and the Glickman-Popkin Bassoon Camp.

Currently professor of bassoon and woodwind department chair at the Lynn Conservatory, Dr. Varner has previously held faculty appointments at Miami University (Ohio), Heidelberg University, and the University of Windsor. He also spent fourteen summers working at the Interlochen Arts Camp, where he was the Assistant Director of the High Schools Boys Division.

Dr. Varner is the owner of TrevCo-Varner Music, “the world’s foremost purveyor of fine sheet music for double reeds”. TrevCo-Varner Music is the largest company in the world dedicated solely to double reed music, with over 12,000 titles in stock from publishers all over the world.

Dr. Varner holds the Doctor of Musical Arts (2004) from the University of Michigan, where he also earned a Master of Music (2002) and a Bachelor of Music (1996) degree. He also holds a degree in Artistic Education (1998) from the Mannheim-Heidelberg Conservatory in Mannheim, Germany. His primary teachers were Richard Beene, Alfred Rinderspacher, Hugh Cooper and Michael Dicker.
Program Notes

Three Places in Vienna
Program Notes by composer Jaren Hinckley

For three and a half months in 2012, my family and I lived in Vienna, Austria. Each day we would explore a new neighborhood, church, museum, historical site, etc. Each movement of this piece is based on a particular place in Vienna that was meaningful in some way to me.

Movement One: The Augarten in Vienna is a massive part in which there are expansive gardens, delightful playgrounds, a porcelain museum, the housing for the Vienna Boys Choir, and two large looming flak towers. Hitler built the towers between 160 and 180 feet tall during World War II, equipped with anti-aircraft guns, and they are virtually indestructible. After the war, the cost of dismantling them was too great; it was decided to leave them where they were. The two in the Augarten remain empty and unused, concrete monoliths overlooking all. This movement tries to capture the beauty of the park, the fun of the playgrounds, and the reminders of a darker time in history.

Movement Two: The Maltese Church is a small unassuming church located in a row of businesses on one of the busiest shipping precincts in Vienna- Kartnerstrasse. I stumbled upon it almost by accident. I entered the church in the midst of a mid-day church service. The only people present were the priest singing Mass, the organist up in the loft, and two congregants. I stood quietly in the back as the lone priest sang a peaceful recitation with organ accompaniment; instead of the usual incense, it smelled as though there were wood chips burning. The tranquility of the sanctuary, combined with the hypnotic quality of the singing, made a deep and lasting impression on me. I have tried to capture that in this movement.

Movement Three: Rising above Vienna is a large fantastical smokestack. Instead of the usual boring smokestacks seen most everywhere, this one (designed by Friedensreich Hundertwasser, a visionary artist and architect) features a vibrant blue color with a large gold misshapen sphere near the top. This smokestack catches the eye immediately. When I first saw it, near our apartment, I thought it must be Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. It is part of a larger building complex in which there is an environmentally friendly waster incinerator, and apartments. The apartment- all uniquely Hundertwasser, with purposely-crooked bricks and windows, checkerboard paint and decorative ceramic tiles- are powered and heated by the incinerator. Hundertwasser was very conscious of the environment; much of his architecture blends into the surrounding landscape or incorporates trees and foliage in some way. This
movement tries to capture the off-kilter, yet somehow sensible, aesthetic of Hundertwasser's architecture.

5•4•3 (except after C)
Program Notes by composer William Bradbury

I was lucky enough to study gamelan for several years with Indonesian master musician Sumarsam while I was in graduate school. As a composer I was intrigued with the exciting pentatonic (five note) compositions in that tradition. A number of years ago I wrote a piece for flute, piano and bass entitled 5•4•3 (five notes for three players) that used only five pitches; I found it to be an interesting compositional challenge. In writing this new piece for the PEN Trio, I revisited the idea and began composing with a different set of five notes (the pentatonic scale is presented at the beginning and end of the piece and in used extensively throughout). As the composition unfolded, however, I felt somewhat limited by this constraint so I added a new "rule"; I would compose strictly pentatonic music with the caveat that I could insert the note C (which is not in the original scale) when it felt right. After any C the piece could go wherever it needed and use the full chromatic scale for a time. Then it returns to the pentatonic music... Hence the name 5•4•3 (except after C). The work is in several sections, with a middle section in C minor. Nearly all the rest is pentatonic music (with a few brief forays into chromatic territory). Many thanks to the wonderful musicians in the PEN Trio for commissioning and premiering this piece.

This work was premiered by the PEN Trio in Oxford, Ohio at Miami University on October 5, 2013.

Three American Landscapes
Program notes by composer Daniel Perttu

Written for the PEN Trio. This music is inspired by three works of American art that capture the essence of three different eras in American history. Images of the pieces may be seen at the composer’s website. The first piece, created by Winthrop Chandler who is regarded by many as the first American landscape painter, is entitled Landscape Overmantel (1767-1769). It represents landscape art during the era leading up to the Revolutionary War. To represent this work and era, I based the first movement of this composition on
the folk song, "Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier", which was sung at the time.

The second movement of the composition is based on an artwork from the Romantic Era. Albert Bierstadt is regarded as one of the finest American landscape artists from this era, and his art appeals to me personally on a very deep level, so I chose his *Emigrants Crossing the Plains* (1867). This work is also reflective of this era in American history which was characterized in significant part by westward expansion.

The final era of American history whose spirit I attempted to capture in music is the recent past, which we might characterize as the post-modern era in art or the post-industrial era in history. The last piece of art was created by my aunt, Diana Cutrone, and is entitled *Tide Pool* (2011). At first, the title suggest that this work is simply conveying a natural phenomena at a beach. However, the piece itself is composed of metal washers, nuts, and gears suspended in clear acrylic with blue paint in it. The use of these materials and methods of artistic creation are characteristic of the modern and post-modern eras. The metal washers, nuts, and gears cannot be perceived without at least some connotation of industrialization, but the way in which they are creatively arranged in two-dimensional space, along with their obvious third-dimensional depth, as if to represent sea froth and bubbles, as well as the rich, azure color palette, all contribute to the natural and organic quality of the piece. This juxtaposition of the materials of industry against the natural and organic, and even their synthesis, is a fundamental aspect of our recent history in American, and it will continue to be an issue, whether the contrast of these features will result in tension or destruction, or whether they can be amalgamated more harmoniously.

*This work was premiered by the PEN Trio in New Delhi, India on May 18th, 2018.*

**Trio (2007)**
Program Notes by composer Bill Douglas

This piece was written in the summer of 2007. The first movement follows the basic jazz form: a theme in octaves and thirds followed by an improvisation on the chord progression of that theme, then a return to the theme with variations. In this case, the improvisation sections are completely written out. The second movement is a simple modal song, and the last movement alternates rock groove sections with lyrical, singing interludes.