12-2-2006

Elective Recital: Matthew Barry, bass trombone

Matthew Barry

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Elective Senior Recital

Matthew Barry, bass trombone
Mary Ann Miller, piano

Program

Solveig's Song from Peer Gynt, Op. 23 (1876)  
Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

Concerto for Bass Trombone and Piano (1997)  
Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

I. Andante con moto – Allegro vivace
II. Andante expressivo
III. Allegro ritmico

~ Intermission ~

Concertino (1850?)  
Ernst Sachse (1808?-1868?)

Cameos (1978)  
Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

I. V.I.P.
II. Nostalgic Singer
III. Nimble Dancer
IV. Phantom Procession
V. Derby Winner

December 2nd, 8:15pm
Nabenhauer Recital Room

Matthew Barry is from the studio of Jeffrey Gray.

A reception will follow the recital in the third-floor “Diva-Lounge.”
Program Notes

“Solveig’s Song” by Edvard Grieg is a movement of the incidental music Peer Gynt. Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) wrote the play Peer Gynt in 1867. Ibsen asked Edvard Grieg in 1874 to write incidental music for a performance of Peer Gynt. The play is about the life of Peer. Peer is an imaginative character. In the beginning of the play, Peer goes to and crashes a nearby pre-wedding party. At the wedding party Peer meets a beautiful young woman called Solveig. After being outlawed for ruining the wedding, meeting up with farm girls in the mountains, a woman dressed in green, the Troll King, and a voice in the darkness, Peer meets with Solveig again. They fall in love, but Peer must “Fetch something heavy.” Solveig promised Peer that she would wait for him to return. However, Peer sets off traveling the world in an attempt to be himself. Peer spends most of his life doing various things around the world thinking that he is being himself. In the end of the play, Peer returns to Norway, eventually finding that Solveig waited her whole left right where he left her many years before. In the middle of the play (also the middle of her life), Solveig, still waiting at the cabin where Peer left her years before, sings a song:

The winter may pass, and the spring turn to air,
And next summer too, and the whole of the year;—
But one day you’ll come, I know that you will;
Then, true to my promise, I’ll wait for you still.

God give you strength if you wander alone!
God give you joy if you stand at His throne!
I’ll wait for you here till you’re home again safe;
And if heaven has you, we’ll meet they, my love!

Eric Ewazen’s “Concerto for Bass Trombone and Piano” actually started its life as a sonata for tuba (or bass trombone) and piano. The piece was later reworked into a three movement concerto with piano accompaniment. The concerto was later orchestrated for orchestral accompaniment. The work is Ewazen at his finest with lively rhythms, singing melodies, and many modulations.

The first movement opens with a liltiing song that leads into a joyous, energetic allegro. The allegro section eventually gets interrupted by a recap of the opening song before the movement’s dramatic ending. The second movement is a soulful aria. The third movement is agitated and driving with changing meters and accents. The movement explores various moods with unrelenting drive. The movement climaxes with a dramatic and expansive cadenza. There is a tremendous build-up of energy throughout the cadenza that pushes the piece towards its exciting conclusion.

Ernst Sachse’s “Concertino for Bass Trombone” was presumably written by Sachse in or around 1850. Not much is known about the life of Ernst Sachse but we do know he was a trumpeter with the Weimarer-Hofkapelle and a town musician around 1850.

At the beginning of the 19th century there was a change in the audiences who came to the concert halls. It was no longer only the upper-class who attended concerts, but now the middle-class audience started to frequent the concert halls. Orchestras became bigger, the quality was improving. Tonal range and technical dexterity among all the groups of instruments were achieving a higher standard. It was at that time that the trombone got its present shape and found its first important players and composers. At the time Sachse worked in Weimar, there was a famous trombonist, Moritz Nabich, for whom he wrote his “Concertino for Trombone”.

The [through-composed] Concertino for Trombone and Orchestra in Bb major, here transposed to F major, is not an attempt to disguise its original intent which was to both please the audience and show the technical ability of the soloist. The first movement imitates the style of an overture to a lyrical heroic Italian opera. Fanfare-like themes are alternated with cantabile phrases. Important in this first movement is the interplay between the triplet and [dotted-eighth] sixteenth notes. A short cadenza leads into the contrasting second movement which has stately folk song motifs. This movement sounds as if it was taken from an Italian bel canto opera aria for baritone or bass. The soloist has the opportunity to show the beautiful singing qualities of the bass trombone. In the third movement, and in keeping with the tradition at that time, Sachse writes variations of a well-known theme from V. Bellini’s opera “Norma”.

Gordon Jacob’s “Cameos” is a five-movement piece that explores different characters in each movement. As the title suggests, each character gets a cameo (movement). Unlike Elgar’s “Enigma Variations,” the characters alluded to in the title of each movement are more suggestions of moods as opposed to actual people Jacob knew. Each movement is generally light-hearted and uses a simple form. The melodies are tuneful. The piece is fun and descriptive throughout.