

Fridays in the Valley 

Presents: KaTrio

Kaia Sand, oboe
Karen Hansen Gurstelle, clarinet
Kate Saumur, bassoon



Friday, May 10, 2024 | 7:00 pm



Valley Community Presbyterian Church

Fridays in the Valley Chamber Music Series

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Concert Champêtre (1938)

- I. Overture*
- II. Minuetto*
- III. Bourrée*
- IV. Nocturne*
- V. Tambourin*

Henri Tomasi (1901–1971)

Gabriel's Oboe from *The Mission* (1986)

Ennio Morricone (1928–2020)

Spider Suite (2010)

Jenni Brandon (b. 1977)

- I. Along Came A Spider*
- III. Spinning Song*
- IV. A Wicked Waltz: The Spider and the Happy Bug (unsuspecting)*
- V. The end of the day...begin again*

Spanish Dance No. 1
from *La Vida Breve* (1904)

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)
arr. Roe Goodman

———— Intermission ————

Musette, op. 47 (1873)

Georges Jean Pfeiffer (1835–1908)

Trio in C Major, op. 87 (1795)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

- II. Andante cantabile*
- IV. Finale -- Presto*

Adoration (1951)

Florence Price (1887–1953)
arr. Elaine Fine/Karen Hansen

Cinq Pièces en Trio (1935)

Jacques Ibert (1890–1962)

- I. Allegro vivo*
- II. Andantino*
- III. Allegro assai*
- IV. Andante*
- V. Allegro quasi marziale*

Listening Guide by Karen Hansen Gurstelle

This listening guide offers suggestions and ideas for experiencing and appreciating this music on first hearing, and unless you play in a wind trio, most of this music will be new to you!

Three general suggestions:

- For any piece, listen closely to the first musical line played. That's usually a theme that will return throughout the work. Subsequent themes are introduced, sometimes alternating with the first one. Composers develop and vary their themes and intertwine them in counterpoint. Counterpoint involves distinct lines of music moving at the same time while still fitting in with the other lines to create harmony. It's a high-order skill!
- Chamber music players are baton-less conductors, trading off the leadership role based on the music. Much of the bobbing of instruments and eye contact is how we cue each other to start sections, alter and resume tempo, and signal endings.
- This listening guide features my interpretations. If the music makes you think or feel something different, that's your interpretation, and it's as valid as anyone else's—no musical training required!

Concert Champêtre (1938) by Henri Tomasi (1901–1971)

While Concert Champêtre (Pastoral or Country Concerto) is modern music, in many ways it sounds the oldest on this program because Tomasi uses musical elements (especially open intervals of fourths, fifths and octaves and spare harmony) that sound like Medieval music. Concert overtures are a French invention by Italian-born composer Jean Baptiste Lully. Tomasi's Overture sets the tone for the rest of the piece with high-energy, virtuosic passages and galloping rhythms that suggest frolicking, running and skipping in the countryside. The graceful Minuetto makes me think of troubadours performing at a European court banquet.

A bourrée is a 17th-century French and Spanish dance, usually with two beats per measure and lots of fast notes stuffed in (from the original meaning of bourrée). Tomasi makes his bourrée trippingly modern by inter-mixing beats based on triplets with those based on duples. During the Nocturne—marked triste (sad)—try envisioning a night-time scene of dark shadows, gleaming moonlight, shifting clouds, and moody memories. Tomasi creates atmosphere and eeriness with the ways he pairs the instruments, often unexpectedly low or high or close together. In Tambourin, accented notes mimic strong downbeats and upbeats played on a tambourin drum. Tomasi based his tambourin piece on a folkdance from Provence, his birthplace. Tambourin pieces were popular in 18th-century France.

Music critic Gabriel Vialle wrote in 1986, "First and foremost a native of the Mediterranean, Tomasi grasped every style imaginable, from Gregorian to jazz, from Oriental recitative to dodecaphonic, while always remaining profoundly personal. His philosophy is stated in the following citations: 'Although I haven't shirked from using the most modern forms of expression, I've always been a melodist at heart.' 'Music that doesn't come from the heart isn't music!'"

Gabriel's Oboe from *The Mission* by Ennio Morricone (1928-2020)

As you listen to Gabriel's Oboe, you can choose to conjure up the movie scene in which a lone oboist plays in a rainforest, or you can just revel in Kaia's exquisite playing!

Italian composer Ennio Morricone was best known for decades as the composer of scores for spaghetti Westerns, including *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Morricone composed nearly 400 film scores across all genres, including *The Untouchables* and *Cinema Paradiso*. Morricone received the Honorary Academy Award in 2007 "for his magnificent and multifaceted contributions to the art of film music." Morricone was less well known for but equally committed to his concert music.

Spider Suite (2010) by Jenni Brandon (b. 1977)

In *Along Came a Spider*, the first theme—detached but steady—portrays the spider arriving and setting to work. Listen for music that makes you think of a spider lurking or its legs moving quickly. In *Spinning Song*, a theme with continuous flowing notes (slurred eighth notes) depicts the spinning of an unbroken web. The final chord with bright instrumental color depicts the spider's satisfaction with its web and suggests sunlight glinting on the strands. In *A Wicked Waltz*, the first theme is a lyrical, legato waltz tune that represents a happy bug going about its day.

The second theme is a short pecky motif (staccato eighth notes) that sounds like the spider laughing as the unsuspecting bug approaches the web. These two short themes alternate in rapid succession. Near the end of the movement, trills in the oboe and clarinet suggest the flapping of the entrapped bug's wings. In the final movement, the music is contemplative as the spider thinks about its success. The return of the first theme from the first movement signals that spider's start of another day and a new web.

Jenni Brandon's music has been commissioned by many ensembles and performed in venues across the world, including Carnegie Hall. She is the music director of The Concert Singers, the oldest independent choir in Los Angeles. As a mezzo-soprano, she has performed with the Boston Pops, Pacific Chorale, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and at the Hollywood Bowl.

Spanish Dance No. 1 from *La Vida Breve* (1904) by Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)

In this Spanish Dance we hear elements of flamenco, a Spanish song, dance and instrumental folk art that de Falla championed and used in his concert, opera and ballet music. Listen for triplet flourishes that mimic the swirl of a dancer's skirt and accented beats like the dancer's heels striking the floor.

De Falla's first success was his zarzuela (Spanish opera) *La vida breve* that was finally produced and warmly received in France and Madrid in 1913 ... nearly 10 years after he wrote it. Before the opera's eventual success, de Falla lived in straitened circumstances in Paris beginning in 1907. In Paris he was befriended (and fed) by French composers Debussy, Ravel and Dukas. Spanish music was in vogue in France, and de Falla contributed to that trend. At the same time, he picked up Impressionist elements and used them in his music. At the outbreak of WWI de Falla returned to Spain and wrote two ballets: *El amor brujo* (Love, the Magician) and *El sombrero de tres picos* (the Three-Cornered Hat). In 1939, ill and unhappy with the political state of Spain under Franco's rule, he emigrated to Argentina.

Musette, Op. 47 (1873) by Georges Jean Pfeiffer (1835–1908)

A musette piece imitates the sound of the small French bagpipe called a musette. Listen for the drone tones (long sustained pitches) that are a hallmark of bagpipe music.

Georges Pfeiffer was a French pianist, composer and music critic. He was a much sought-after chamber music pianist in Paris, working with the star musicians of his time. Pfeiffer's music is renowned for its refined melodic creativity and elegant classical forms.

Trio in C Major, op. 87 (1795) by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

The charm of this piece is in Beethoven's operatic lyricism and melodic beauty in the Adagio and the energetic romp of the Presto in which the perky opening theme recurs between varied episodes of other musical material.

Beethoven composed this trio while he was still taking composition lessons. Arriving in Vienna in 1792, he found the Viennese people in love with wind music. The emperor had his own wind ensemble! Over the next several years Beethoven composed a dozen chamber works for wind players, then lost interest in 1802. The original Trio in C Major was for two oboes and English horn. When it was published in 1806, it was also issued in arrangements for two violins and viola and as a sonata for piano and violin. It goes to show that great music works its magic in a variety of forms.

Adoration (1951) by Florence Beatrice Price (1887-1953)

While I could waffle on about ABA form and hymnody, I really just want you to listen to the utterly beautiful melodies and harmony that Price created. Adoration is a piece that sings and soars with joyful humility and wonder. It's a musical gem with an Amen.

Price composed Adoration for organ, harkening back to her early career as a church musician and organist accompanying silent films. That work kept her very busy; it wasn't until she broke her leg that she had enforced time off, during which she composed her first symphony.

The performance of her Symphony No. 1 in E Minor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933 was the first time a major American orchestra performed music by an African American woman. Price's works include symphonies, concertos, chamber music, symphonic works, choral works, and piano and organ music, some of it found in 2009 and since published.

Cinq Pièces en Trio (1935) by Jacques Ibert (1890-1962)

In his Cinq Pièces en Trio (Five Pieces for Trio) Ibert gives no titles or indications of what these pieces are about. So we get to make up our own interpretations. I think the first movement is a bourrée, a fast dance with two beats per measure and a lot of notes.

The second movement is a slow canon in which one instrument plays a melody and the next instrument starts the same melody a little later, then off they go in masterful counterpoint. The third movement is a stately jig, but definitely with more complex rhythms and offset entrances than most such Celtic dances!

Listen for the humorous runaway bassoon solo at the end. The fourth movement is a romance. If you let this tender music call to mind someone you love, you'll appreciate Ibert's artistry all the more. The fifth movement, marked *Allegro quasi marziale*, is a cheerful march full of flourishes and energy.

Jacques Ibert was a versatile and prolific French composer of operas, ballets and music for the theatre, cinema, and radio. Defying stylistic categorization, his music is generally described as eclectic. It is sometimes romantic, sometimes impressionistic, occasionally hints at jazz, and has an appealing freshness. Always beautifully crafted, Ibert's music features particularly colorful, idiomatic writing for wind instruments. Listen for how his masterful use of our instruments' characteristics and sound color frequently makes us sound like more than three players.

Musician Biographies

Kaia Sand (oboe) is an active freelance oboist and teacher in the Twin Cities metro area. In addition to holding principal oboe positions with the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra and the Mississippi Valley Orchestra, she has subbed with numerous area orchestras, including the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, and the Wayzata Symphony Orchestra. Kaia knew she wanted to play the oboe from an early age.

Encouraged and supported by wonderful teachers, she followed her passion and earned a B.A. in music from Luther College and an M.M. in oboe performance from the University of Oklahoma. Along the way, she performed with the Norman Philharmonic, the Cimarron Opera, and the Wichita Symphony Orchestra, and in such venues as Harpa Hall in Reykjavik, Iceland, Girona Cathedral in Girona, Spain, and the Konzerthaus in Vienna, Austria. She now teaches oboe lessons at Cadenza Music in St. Paul and at several area schools, and she hopes to instill the same love for the oboe in her students.

Karen Hansen Gurstelle (clarinet) is principal clarinetist of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and Mississippi Valley Orchestra and clarinetist with the Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Incidental Trio and Dolce Winds. Her freelance work also includes performing in the Moody Blues backing orchestra, OCEAN with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and the world premieres of three operas. As a chamber ensemble musician, she has worked for Classical MPR, The Schubert Club, Thursday Musical, and other artist series.

With Dolce Wind Quintet she enjoyed two busy seasons as a Class Notes Artist for Classical MPR, playing dozens of concerts for thousands of schoolchildren. Karen teaches clarinet at Cadenza Music in St. Paul. Having worked in France and Germany, Karen now scratches her travel itch by working as an arts enrichment lecturer on board cruise ships. She earned her B.A. from St. Olaf College and her M.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and studied music and theater in London.

Kate Saumur (bassoon) is a busy Twin Cities freelance bassoonist. She has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and many other local and regional groups. She plays principal bassoon in the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, is a member of the Rochester Symphony, and is a frequent sub with the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra. After earning a degree in computer science, she had enough of being practical and sensible and later earned a master's degree in theology and the arts.

She worked in arts administration for ten years as a writer and producer for American Public Media's Performance Today and as a marketing specialist for Minnesota Opera. Kate's relationship history with woodwinds includes a failed attempt at the flute, which lasted a week, followed by a sullen and loveless pairing with the clarinet, which went hand in hand with acne and teenage angst. It wasn't pretty. She finally broke free and found the love of her life when she met the bassoon. The rest, as they say, is history.

Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery

Minneapolis Crisis Nursery offers free, voluntary services for parents who face barriers such as poverty, domestic violence, and other difficult situations. They strengthen



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families by connecting them to resources, caring for their children during difficult times, and setting goals that promote self-sufficiency and make the relationship between the parent and child stronger.

UPCOMING CONCERT

SUNDAY, June 9, 2024 | 7:00 pm
Marimba Bullies:

Carey Sirianni, Alan Epp,
James Holdman, and David Birrow

The Twin Cities-based Marimba Bullies play upbeat, high-energy music on diatonic marimbas. Our sound is built on the rhythmically complex music of the African mbira, as played by the Shona people of Zimbabwe. The Bullies' repertoire includes traditional African tunes, music composed specifically for the ensemble, and arrangements of popular Western music. All these influences combine to create the lively, danceable, fun style that is unmistakably the Marimba Bullies.

A Benefit Concert For: The FATHER Project

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