

Olivia Fletcher, bassoon David Gatchel, piano

Graduate Recital Series

Katzin Concert Hall | February 23, 2021 | 7:30 p.m.

Program

Bassoon Concerto in A Minor, RV 498

- I. Allegro
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

Double Helix for Bassoon and Piano

- I. Prelude
- II. Entrechat
- III. Divertissement
- IV. Soar
- V. Postlude (Epilogue)

Jenni Brandon
(b. 1977)

Intermission

Bassoon Concerto B flat Major, K. 191

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante ma adagio
- III. Rondo: Tempo di menuetto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Sonata for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 9

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Largo
- III. Allegro

Gustav Schreck
(1849-1914)

Olivia Fletcher is in the studio of Dr. Albie Micklich. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Master in Music Performance degree.

Olivia Fletcher, MM Recital Program Notes

Antonio Vivaldi, Bassoon Concerto in A Minor, RV 498

Italian priest, violinist, and composer Antonio Vivaldi was a master of the Baroque concerto and also an important “puzzle piece” in the timeline of female bassoonists. Vivaldi served as the music director at an orphanage and conservatory for girls, *Pio Ospedale della Pietà (Devout Hospital of Mercy)* in Venice. The most talented students in the program became assistant teachers and members of his prestigious orchestra. Vivaldi composed expressive, invigorating, and virtuosic works for mostly strings but also numerous works for woodwinds and voice. Among these works are hundreds of concertos, including 37 completed concertos for the bassoon, which were performed by the young women at the conservatory. Other than this purpose, it is unclear why Vivaldi composed so many high-quality works for an instrument that was seen as bass support in Baroque orchestras of his time.

These standard concertos provide bassoonists with opportunities to learn about Baroque style and explore ornamentation. The Italian solo concerto is a fast-slow-fast three movement form. The first movement of the Bassoon Concerto in A minor, RV 498 features flashy arpeggios, scales, leaps, and sequences which are evidence of Vivaldi’s violin background. The second movement is a sensitive bassoon aria in F major with antiphonal interaction between the high and low registers. The third movement barrels through sequential patterns with an air of light excitement.

In recognition of his contribution to female bassoonists, the Meg Quigley Vivaldi Competition and Symposium (MQVC) was formed in 2010. The MQVC is an organization that provides professional, financial, and social support to young female bassoonists in the Americas. Each competition year, one of Vivaldi’s compositions are selected for the competition. Today, his works are just as educational and striking to listeners and performers around the world as they were to his female students at the *Pietà*.

Jenni Brandon, Double Helix for Bassoon and Piano

Jenni Brandon is currently a force of nature in the realm of wind and double reed composition, composing a high volume of colorful works double reed solo and ensemble. Her works capture nature and a wide range of emotions in an idiomatic, well-informed and accessible light. *Double Helix* was commissioned in 2014 by my former teacher and mentor, Dr. Christin Schillinger to perform with pianist and her good friend, the late Jed Moss. The duo premiered the work at UCLA in 2015. Dr. Schillinger is currently the assistant professor of bassoon at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. This work is inspired by the sculpture “Double Helix” by sculptor Susan Hawkins of Long Beach, California. The sculpture depicts two dancers circling each other but never touching. In this warm and vibrant piece, the bassoon and the piano become the dancers and their separate stories intertwine. It is inevitable that this piece will become a standard work for bassoon due to its captivating story that the bassoon captures so well. Other notable works for double reeds by Brandon include Cane: Bassoon Concerto with Reed Quintet and Colored Stones for solo bassoon.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Bassoon Concerto in B flat Major, K. 191

Composed in 1774, Mozart's Bassoon Concerto is the most well-known work in the solo repertoire. Almost every graduate school and professional orchestra requires this piece as a part of the audition. It is a great example of Classical concerto as well as galant style. It is also one of the last works composed during Mozart's Salzburg period. Its light melodies and simple form are due to the fact that this was Mozart's first wind concerto written when he was just 17 years of age.

The first movement is written in sonata form with an orchestral accompaniment and showcases the improved articulation, flexibility, and newly expanded range of the bassoon, singing from a low B-flat below the bass staff to an A above the staff. Proper execution of ornamentation such as trills and the *Eingänge* (short improvisatory passage before the entrance of a theme) are critical to a successful performance of the piece. The second movement is a sensitive, operatic sonata without a development that features a theme from the aria "Porgi, Amor" from Mozart's opera the Marriage of Figaro.

Mozart's more interactive accompaniment showcases the improved dynamic capabilities of the pianoforte during the Classical period. Cadenzas in the first and second movement provide opportunities for the performer to showcase their expressive and technical skills, their knowledge of the Classical bassoon's limitations and standards, as well variations on themes from the rest of the concerto. It is the responsibility of the performer to re-invent Mozart's melodies in a different key, registers, or rhythm. The more accessible third movement, a standard rondo in compound time, ends the piece in a dignified and extraverted light.

Gustav Schreck, Sonata for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 9

Gustav Schreck was a German composer, teacher, and musician that is most well-known for his choral works and piano reductions of Bach's cantatas. He taught at Leipzig University between 1887 and 1892 where he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree. In 1892, he was appointed to choirmaster of the St. Thomas School, a position held in Leipzig until 1918. The Sonata for Bassoon and Piano is a standard piece because it is one of the only true Romantic sonatas in the bassoon repertoire. It is unknown if Schreck wrote this sonata for a specific bassoonist in particular, but it should be noted that famous pedagogue and performer Julius Weissenborn also resided in Leipzig until 1888.

The work showcases Schreck's vocal writing style, especially the aria-like second movement. The accompaniment is interactive and virtuosic, though it can be difficult to balance because the writing is so heavy. The work showcases the traditional form and expression of the Romantic period as well as the bassoon's advancements in range and agility. With much room for *rubato*, both performers have ample opportunity to showcase their personalities through Schreck's beautiful and charming work.