DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON

PROGRAM IN PERFORMANCE SENIOR RECITALS 2023

Friday, April 7, 2023 | 8 PM
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Selena Hostetler '23
Horn

Radiance and Darkness

In a 1913 review of Paul Dukas's "Villanelle," the music journal Le Ménestrel *described the piece as creating "a radiance into the morning darkness"—a lovely characterization of the tonal duality of the horn. The pieces on this program explore the bright side of the horn—its distinct voicing of joy, beauty, hope, and heroism—as well as its darker expressions of grief, longing, mystery, and reflection.*

Featuring

Vince di Mura, piano
Rachel Hsu '23, violin
Chris Komer, horn
Soncera Ball '25, horn
Spencer Bauman '25, horn
Clara Conatser '25, horn
Benjamin Edelson '23, horn

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PROGRAM

PAUL DUKAS
(1865-1935)

Villanelle (1906)
Vince di Mura, piano
Duration: 6 minutes

NIKOLAI TCHEREPNIN
(1873-1945)

Six Quartets, Op. 35 (1910)
III. La chasse
V. Chant populaire

Soncera Ball '25
Spencer Bauman '25
Clara Conatser '25
Benjamin Edelson '23
horns
Duration: 2 - 3 minutes

FRANZ STRAUSS
(1822-1905)

Introduction, Theme, and Variations, Op. 13 (1875)
Introduction (Adagio)
Theme (Allegretto)
Var. I: Con licenza
II: Con anima
III: Andante cantabile
IV: Allegro vivace—Rondo

Vince di Mura, piano
Duration: 10 minutes

"BUGS" BOWER
(1922-2020)

Bop Duet #4 (c. 1960)
Chris Komer, horn
Duration: 2 minutes

ALEXANDER SCRIABIN
(1872-1915)

Romance for Horn and Piano (c. 1895)
Vince di Mura, piano
Duration: 2 minutes

INTERMISSION

JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

Horn Trio in Eb Major, Op. 40 (1865)
I. Andante
II. Scherzo (Allegro)
III. Adagio mesto
IV. Allegro con brio

Vince di Mura, piano
Rachel Hsu '23, violin
Duration: 8 - 7 - 8 - 6 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

By Selena Hostetler

Villanelle (Dukas, 1906)

In 1906, Paul Dukas received a request from Gabriel Fauré to compose a piece for the Paris Conservatory horn classes' end-of-year examination, held in the form of a public competition. Dukas barely finished the piece in time for the students to learn it, but it proved a success—Fauré put it on the program at the competition award ceremony, the piece had its traditional concert premiere half a year later, and it was selected twice more as the conservatory's horn examination piece. Given its success as a competition/exam piece, it is no wonder that Villanelle is now standard in the horn repertoire.

Students at the Paris Conservatory had trained on natural (valveless) horns until 1903, when professor François Brémond made the valve horn the exclusive instrument of study for his students. Even then, he was still teaching the old techniques of hand stopping—partially or fully closing the bell with the right hand to alter the pitches achievable on a natural horn scale. Villanelle is representative of this mixture of natural, stopped, and valved horn playing. The opening of the piece is marked "très modéré" (without valves) and is meant to be played on the open horn, with hand adjustments used to reach notes outside the open series. (Some modern hornists, however, play the entire piece with valves to achieve better intonation). Use of the valves returns when the melody becomes more chromatic and begins to pick up tempo. The majority of the piece is played on valve horn, but one section is played stopped (with the hand completely covering the bell opening, creating a muted, echolike sound) and another requires a straight mute (for a clearer muted sound).

A "villanelle" is a type of 16th and 17th-century Italian song, one that was often lighthearted and pastoral. Dukas's "Villanelle" is similarly playful, built from essentially two musical ideas: the opening horn call, and the nimble melody that appears after the tempo picks up. These two ideas reappear alternately throughout the piece with variations in key, style, and use of mutes. After the horn call melody reappears for the final time, finished with a lip trill, the piece rockets through a section of triple-tonguing to its competition-worthy conclusion on three Cs.

Six Quartets, Op. 35 (Tcherepnin, 1910)

After earning a law degree to please his father, Nikolai Tcherepnin studied piano and composition at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he was a student of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Tcherepnin went on to work at the Mariinsky Theater as a conductor and became well-known for his ballet scores. He also taught at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, mentoring pupils such as Sergei Prokofiev. World War I led Tcherepnin to move to Paris, where he spent the rest of his life making concert tours in Europe and the States, conducting ballets, and founding the Russian Conservatory.

The Quartets for horn are part of Tcherepnin's small chamber music output. The full piece has six movements: *nocturne, anciene chanson allemande, la chasse, choeur danse, chant populaire,* and *un choral.* The third movement, *la chasse*, evokes a hunt with its energetic horn calls and fanfares. A more elegant and sustained variation of the melody appears in the middle of the

movement before the original tune reappears. The movement concludes playfully as the sound of the hunting horns fades into the distance. Movement V, *chant populaire*, is based on a Russian folk song. The first horn introduces the melody alone, then the third horn takes it up with support from the second horn. The solo melody is passed around the ensemble, with harmony parts gradually layered beneath it until the whole ensemble is playing. The movement concludes with a duet between the first and third horns and ends on a solemn minor chord.

Introduction, Theme, and Variations, Op. 13 (F. Strauss, 1875)
Franz Strauss (the father of composer Richard Strauss) studied many instruments as a child, but the horn was the one to which he devoted his life's study. He achieved such mastery of the instrument that he was considered one of the greatest horn players of his time—he was the principal horn for several of Wagner's opera premieres. Strauss was also a member of the Bavarian court orchestra and a professor at the Academy of Music in Munich.

The piece begins, as its title suggests, with an elegant introduction. The opening phrase is strongly reminiscent of the beginning of Mozart's third horn concerto—the first measures in both pieces are nearly identical. This introduction draws out the horn's lyricism, while also providing opportunities to demonstrate its agility and range with grace notes, leaps, and arpeggios. Following the introduction is the simple, songlike theme, which lays out the A A' B A' structure that most of the variations follow (Strauss wrote the piece with the B A' section repeated; I omit the repeats). Variation I, *con licenza*, features a highly adorned version of the theme, its mordents, scales, and arpeggios played in a more *recitative* manner. Variation II, *con anima*, transforms the theme into an etude-like barrage of sixteenth notes, some slurred and some lightly staccato. The *andante cantabile* breaks from the A A' B A' structure and reworks the theme into an expressive minor melody in 3/4, ending with a brief cadenza. The final variation, *allegro vivace—rondo*, is the longest by far. The theme, returned to its major key, is now in a jaunty 6/8 meter. The B section of this variation deviates significantly from the theme, but is heroic and triumphant. After a final repetition of the 6/8 version of the A theme, Strauss adds a virtuosic coda full of motion that careens almost breathlessly to the finale, a dramatic leap up to a Bb that then conclusively plummets two octaves.

Bop Duet #4 (Bower, c. 1960)
Maurice "Bugs" Bower wrote and arranged hundreds of tunes in the bebop style and was a successful music producer. His duet collection Bop Duets was among the first books of music he published in the 1960s. Though the French horn is not typically considered a jazz instrument, these duets are playable on any pair of treble clef instruments (and a handful of horn players, including Chris Komer, are exploring and advocating for the horn's role in jazz music). Duet #4 features a melody in the first horn part that is echoed or supported by the second horn. In the second half of the tune, the second horn soloistically takes over the melody before returning to its supporting role for the final phrases.

Romance for Horn and Piano (Scriabin, c. 1895)
Alexander Scriabin composed almost exclusively for piano and orchestra. Other than a handful of unfinished works and a movement for a jointly-composed string quartet, this Romance for Horn and Piano is the only piece of chamber music Scriabin wrote. Almost nothing is known about its composition, including the date, though the (posthumous) first published edition of the Romance suggested that it was likely written between 1894 and 1897. This same edition also states that the

piece was written “for the famous horn player Louis Savart from France.” This detail is unverified, but it is documented that the two at least crossed paths—Savart performed a Mozart horn concerto at the 1897 concert where Scriabin premiered his piano concerto.

The Romance is simple and straightforward; it consists almost entirely of a single musical idea. The primary motif features a descending minor scale in alternating eighth and quarter notes, followed by a triplet figure; it is repeated consistently throughout the piece. The opening statement of the melody is wistful and plaintive, rich with emotion but never overstated. Scriabin’s pairing of eighth notes and triplets in the horn mirrors the juxtaposition of the two rhythms in the piano accompaniment, and thus the horn melody sometimes floats neatly on top of the piano, while at other times it seems to be fighting the current of the river-like wash of sound. In fact, the piece is more of a duet for the two instruments; their melodies are constantly weaving around and yielding to one another. Though the piece begins rather innocently and reflectively, it gains intensity and builds to two climactic statements of the motif, each louder than the one before. By this point, the melody that was once gently melancholic is now insistent, lamenting, and anguished. Though the piece reaches calm once more, Scriabin ends the final phrase with the horn on the dominant—an imperfect cadence that ends this brief journey with something more like a question than an answer.

Horn Trio in Eb Major, Op. 40 (Brahms, 1865)
Brahms’s trio for horn, piano, and violin is one of the great chamber works in the horn repertoire, and there is no other piece quite like it. Brahms composed this work in May 1865, just months after the death of his mother. He wrote it while staying in Baden-Baden in Germany’s Black Forest, a location Clara Schumann had introduced to him a few years earlier. Perhaps it was this forest and thoughts of old hunting horns which inspired Brahms’s decision to write for the horn—or perhaps it was childhood memories of his father, a hornist, giving him lessons on the instrument. Whatever the reason, the composer’s decision was unprecedented—no one had ever written for piano, violin, and horn, and not a few critics objected to this unusual orchestration. But Brahms did not merely write for horn—he repeatedly emphasized that the piece was for Waldhorn, the natural, valveless horn (even though it had become standard for composers to write for the valve horn starting in the 1830s). He was convinced that the sound of the open horn and the unique color of its hand-stopped notes were what gave the piece its “gentle[ness]” and “poetry.” Most modern performances of the trio use the valved horn, and though this sacrifices the original variety in the horn’s timbre, the piece nevertheless remains elegant, evocative, and poignant.

The first movement, *andante,* eschews traditional sonata form in favor of an ABABA format. The A theme of this movement “first occurred” to Brahms during a walk in the forest, “near Baden-Baden on the wooded heights between the fir trees.” It is a gentle, lulling melody with tinges of yearning and nostalgia. The B section is somewhat livelier, though it retains the intensity and longing of the first theme. The second movement is a lively scherzo, simultaneously playful and emphatic. Its trio in Ab minor, however, provides an unexpected shift in tone as the melody becomes a passionate lament. Though the scherzo returns, this wistful interlude is foreshadowing for the somber third movement.

The *adagio mesto* is considered one of Brahms’s greatest slow movements, and many of his friends and biographers suggest it was written as an elegy for his mother. The unusual marking *mesto* is Italian for “sad” or “mournful.” The movement begins with a funereal piano introduction.

The haunting horn melody is affecting, but restrained. It is a movement of profound despair, yet its grief is expressed through a controlled lyricism that avoids mere emotionalism There is a brief and passionate moment of hope at the end—the horn triumphantly proclaims a phrase from a German folk song Brahms's mother taught him as a child, "In der Weiden steht ein Haus" (In the Meadow Stands a House). This folksong reappears in the primary theme of the final movement. This *allegro con brio* finale is gleeful, driving, and adventurous, evoking the hunting horn with several horn call passages. The piece romps to a triumphant and insistent conclusion, restoring light and joy after the bitterness of mourning.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Selena Hostetler '23 is a senior from Coldwater, MI, concentrating in English and pursuing a certificate in Music Performance on the horn. She began playing the horn in sixth grade and studied with Deb Sarno through high school. During this time, she played horn for her high school concert band, joined the Sturgis Wind Symphony, and performed in the pit orchestra for a professional production of *West Side Story.* In her freshman year at Princeton, Selena joined the Princeton University Orchestra and began studying horn with Chris Komer. She has also enjoyed performing with Sinfonia, the Princeton Triangle Club pit orchestra, and various ensembles for dance and theater productions at the Lewis Center for the Arts. Outside of music, Selena is a member of Christian Union Nova and an editor for Moon Press, and she is busy writing her thesis on metaphor in Ray Bradbury's short fiction. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in academic publishing.

Vince di Mura is a concert jazz pianist, composer, arranger, and musical director appearing on concert stages and theaters throughout North America, Canada, Europe, and Latin America. He is currently the Resident Musical Director and Composer for the Lewis Center of the Arts at Princeton University, where he has served since 1987. He has conducted seasons at The Bethesda Nederlander Theatre, Laguna Playhouse, Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, Tennessee Repertory, Act II Playhouse, The Arden Theatre Company, The Muhlenberg Summer Theatre Festival, The American Theatre Group, and many more. Best known for his arrangements for Summerwind Productions, his shows have had over 1,000 productions nationally and internationally, including "My Way: A Tribute to Frank Sinatra," "Christmas My Way," "Simply Simone" and "I Left My Heart: A Tribute to Tony Bennett." Mr. di Mura has fulfilled numerous compositional commissions from Princeton University's Department of Theatre and Dance, Rutgers University, Rider University, the Pingry Foundation, the University of Colorado, American Stage, People's Light and Theatre Company, among others. Mr. di Mura is also the author and curator of "A Conversation With The Blues," a 14-part web instructional series on improvisation through the Blues, produced by Soundfly Inc. He holds composition and jazz fellowships from the William Goldman Foundation, Temple University, Meet the Composer, CEPAC, the Union County Foundation, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Puffin Cultural Forum, and the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. Mr. di Mura's film credits include "Grace" and the award-winning indie film "Breathe."

Rachel Hsu '23 currently studies violin with Sunghae Anna Lim. She began playing violin at the age of three and since then has won numerous awards, making her solo debut at age 7 in 2009 with the Oistrakh Symphony Orchestra as the winner of the DePaul Concerto Festival. She has won top prizes in the Society of American Musicians' violin competition, CYSO Concerto Competition, and more. In previous years, Rachel has performed with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra and at Carnegie Hall as a member of the New York String Orchestra Seminar.

At Princeton University, Rachel is pursuing a degree in Molecular Biology, as well as certificates in Global Health Policy, Engineering Biology, and Music Performance. She is also an enthusiastic member of the music community. She is a volunteer violin teacher for Trenton Arts at Princeton, concertmaster of the Princeton University Orchestra, a member of Opus Chamber Music Princeton, and previously a member of Princeton Camerata. In her free time, Rachel enjoys reading, baking, biking, making videos, traveling, and eating good Asian food.

Chris Komer is proudly performing in his 7th season as Principal Horn of the New Jersey Symphony, and his 13th year teaching Horn at Princeton University. Outside of NJS and PU, his active and diverse musical life includes performances with the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, The New York City Ballet, the American Ballet Theater, and the New York City Opera. He has also been a frequent guest Principal Horn with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Milwaukee Symphony. His studio recording credits include Barbra Streisand, Natalie Cole, Sting, Harry Connick Jr., J.J. Johnson, Elvis Costello, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, and many movie soundtracks. He has been the contracted Principal horn on 11 major Broadway Productions, including *West Side Story* (2007), *Miss Saigon, Les Miserables, La Boheme, Music Man* (2001), and *Candide*.

Considered one of the top "jazz" hornists in the country, Chris is also a member of the Jamie Baum Septet Plus and the All Ears Orchestra. Recent jazz performances include the Monterrey Jazz Festival, the London Jazz Festival, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra (led by Wynton Marsalis), Panamericana (a 20-piece Latin/Brazilian Big Band), the Michael Brecker Dodectet, and the Charles Mingus Orchestra, to name just a few. Chris spends his summers in Montana directing (and building) the Artists' Refuge at Thunderhead—a diverse artists' retreat he founded in 2007 deep in the mountains of the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Soncera Ball '25 is a prospective philosophy major from Point Pleasant, New Jersey. She has been playing horn for about ten years and currently performs with the Princeton University Orchestra and Princeton Camerata. She is also the assistant conductor of Camerata. When she isn't playing music, Sunny can be found rock climbing, writing poetry, hiking, and spending time with friends.

Spencer Bauman '25 is a sophomore in the Chemical and Biological Engineering department from Boca Raton, Florida. He has been playing horn for ten years and currently plays in the Princeton University Orchestra, Sinfonia, and Camerata. Besides playing horn, he also enjoys writing articles for the Daily Princetonian as Head Editor of the humor section.

Clara Conatser '25 is a geoscience major from New Orleans, Louisiana. She is pursuing certificates in French Language and Culture, Music Performance, and Environmental Studies. She is a member of Princeton Christian Fellowship, the Princeton University Orchestra, and is the co-president of the Princeton Association of Women in STEM.

Benjamin Edelson '23 is a senior from New York majoring in Philosophy with a certificate in Music Composition. On campus, Benjamin is a member of the Princeton University Orchestra and the Society of Philosophy, and a writer for the Legal Journal. In his spare time, he plays the organ at the University Chapel, composes music, and plays guitar, keys, and bass in a band with friends.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HORN

The origins of the modern horn can be traced back to the circular hunting horns used in France and Germany in the 16th century. Hunting horns made their way into performance settings later in the century primarily through opera and ballet, where they were first used for horn calls in hunting scenes, and later became part of the orchestral ensemble. By the 17th century, the Germans had developed what became known as a hand horn. This horn had no valves—players could only achieve different pitches by adjusting their lips, or later by moving their hand in the bell to make chromatic intonation adjustments. In the 1750s, the horn was modified to fit moveable slides known as crooks. Each crook was a different size, allowing the length (and therefore pitch) of the instrument to be adjusted. This enabled hornists to play in new keys and access notes previously unavailable on the old horn. In 1814, Heinrich Stölzel solved the problem of having to change crooks by inventing a two-valved horn. French-made horns had piston valves, and German models had rotary valves. Over the next few decades, the valved horn became standard and replaced the natural horn. By the late 19th century, a third valve had been added to the horn, and Fritz Kruspe invented the double horn—the valved horn in F with a second set of tubing in Bb. The double horn solved the problem of the F horn's high register, which was unreliable due to how close the partials were. The second set of tubing allowed for more comfortable, accurate high playing. Some modern players have triple horns with a third set of tubing for even easier access to the high range.

Today, most horn players use a double horn descended from the German model, with three standard rotary valves and a fourth to access the Bb "double" side of the horn. If it were "uncurled," the tubing of this horn would be approximately 12-13 feet long. The instrument remains commonly known as the "French horn" despite no longer being French in design. The International Horn Society suggests that the instrument should simply be known as the Horn.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my family for the many years they have supported me—in my time at Princeton as a whole, but especially in my musical career. They encouraged me to play a brass instrument, funded my lessons, drove me to countless rehearsals, bought the horn I'm playing tonight, supported my decision to pursue a music certificate, and so much more. I wouldn't be here tonight without them. Special thanks also go to my two horn teachers, Deb Sarno and Chris Komer, for their guidance, patience, mentorship, and skillful teaching, all of which made me the horn player I am today. I would especially like to acknowledge my pianist, Vince Di Mura, who spent more hours than I could have asked learning and rehearsing this music with me. I've played for Vince's projects several times during my Princeton career, and it has been an honor to collaborate with him once again and be blessed by his dedication to musical excellence. Thank you to my violinist, Rachel, for devoting her time, skill, and musicality to the Brahms. My warmest affection goes to the members of my orchestra horn section, especially those playing alongside me tonight. Thanks are due to Maestro Pratt and Dr. Ruth Ochs for their instruction, guidance, and support in both the rehearsal room and the classroom. I am also grateful to the music department, especially Collin Costa, Katie Baltrush, and the Taplin production team for making the recital planning process smooth and transparent. Finally, of course, thank you to all of my orchestra friends who constantly reinvigorate my love for music.