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ERIC RUSKE  
JENNIFER FRAUTSCHI  
GLORIA CHIEN

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Friday, December 11, 2015 ~ 8 pm  
Coolidge Auditorium  
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building

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The Library of Congress  
Coolidge Auditorium  
Friday, December 11, 2015 — 8 pm

THE BORIS AND SONYA KROYT MEMORIAL FUND  
IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

ERIC RUSKE, HORN  
JENNIFER FRAUTSCHI, VIOLIN  
GLORIA CHIEN, PIANO



## Program

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)

Sonata for alto horn and piano (1943)

*Ruhig bewegt*

*Lebhaft*

*Sehr langsam*

*Das Posthorn (Zwiegespräch)—Lebhaft*

GYÖRGY LIGETI (1923-2006)

Trio for violin, horn and piano (1982)

*Andante con tenerezza—Più mosso—a tempo...*

*Vivacissimo molto ritmico*

*Alla Marcia—Più mosso—subito Tempo primo*

*Lamento. Adagio*

INTERMISSION

VINCENT PERSICHETTI (1915-1987)

*Parable for Solo Horn (Parable VIII), op. 120* (1972)

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Trio in E-flat major for violin, horn and piano (1865)

*Andante*

*Scherzo. Allegro*

*Adagio mesto*

*Finale. Allegro con brio*



## About the Program

### PAUL HINDEMITH, Sonata for alto horn and piano

Paul Hindemith composed over two dozen duo sonatas for solo instruments and piano, with the aim of creating sonatas for the major instruments in traditional art music composition. The sonata for alto horn and piano was composed in 1943, during Hindemith's residence in the United States (1940-1953). He composed the alto horn sonata without a commission, but rather as a contribution to his series of duo sonatas. The sonata was completed during a week-long sojourn in the Berkshires (specifically in South Egremont, Massachusetts), after Hindemith completed teaching duties at Yale's 1943 summer session. According to musicologist Luther Noss, AMP (Associated Music Publishers) had no interest in publishing the alto horn sonata, but Schott later released it in 1956.<sup>1</sup> The Schott score lists the sonata as appropriate for performance on alto horn (*Althorn* in German), French horn or alto saxophone. This flexibility was likely intended to maximize the commercial viability of the published sheet music. It is typical for a French horn player to perform alto horn music by transposing into the appropriate key (usually F or B-flat). The alto horn that Hindemith had in mind for this sonata is a valved brass instrument that looks like a small version of a euphonium. They are typically constructed to sound in the key of E-flat and are popular in German and Central/Eastern European brass bands. In Britain they are also popular in brass band repertoire. Additionally, many military marches call for E-flat alto horn.

The first movement of the sonata (*Ruhig bewegt*) is structured in ABA' form. Hindemith opens with a gentle horn melody that is supported by three iterations of a chordal motive in the piano. The first phrase group is comprised of an opening eight-bar phrase and an embellishment over an additional seven bars. The middle section of the movement is simply a series of sequential arpeggiations, with slightly off-center rhythms in the piano. In a few passing moments the piano echoes the horn and Hindemith uses dynamic swells to add a wistful quality to the arpeggios. The closing third of the movement reverts to the opening phrase group, which is modified after an exact repeat (in the horn) of the first three bars of the original theme. Rather than rehash the same figure from the opening bars, the piano repeats a denser chordal pattern that is based on the same pitches as the opening (B-flat and E-flat). To conclude the movement Hindemith writes out an extended descent from the peak of the final arpeggio high point in the horn. The piano repeats the same figure in the right hand during the penultimate two bars, and the horn sounds alone in the final moment with a *pianissimo* long tone.

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<sup>1</sup> Luther Noss, *Paul Hindemith in the United States* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 121.

Hindemith marks the second movement *Lebhaft* ("lively"), and what ensues is an expressive exploration of the color palette offered by the alto horn and piano combination. The horn introduces a majestic theme at the outset, and is followed by a thematic statement in the piano. This first (A) section serves as the anchor of the movement. In addition to initiating the rhythmic impetus of the music, the A material is heard on three separate occasions, alternating with secondary and tertiary thematic sections. The boisterous A section pivots to a quiet, sneaky fragment heard in the horn and echoed in the piano. This music links to a second thematic group (B) that sounds like music accompanying a bustling urban scene. Constant quarter-note chords in the piano perpetuate the forward motion. Hindemith offers another short transition phrase that connects to a restatement of the A material, though it is modified. The horn statement of the theme is identical to the opening, except the final pitch is raised by a half step. The piano does not state the A theme this time. A new section emerges, featuring a series of rhythmically distorted repeating pitches. It sounds like something is spiraling out of control, building tension and exploding into a gloriously rich climax phrase in the horn. This lick is bolstered by dense, expansive chords that add depth to the sound. Hindemith brings the horn back for a third statement of the A theme, this time above a frenetic sequential figure in the piano. The piano takes a moment to develop the sequence, marked with three dynamic swells. Hindemith's closing section is based on several of the key elements heard in the previous sections, including the A theme, the frenetic piano sequence, and then the rhythmically-distorted repeating pitches. The horn calms to a 10+ bar long tone that gives way to a short, relaxed phrase.

*Sehr langsam* is a miniature of a movement. Though it is as long as the first movement temporally (ca. two minutes in duration), the "very slow" tempo means that there is much less musical material over the course of the two minutes. The horn offers a mysterious, expressive theme above little tremors in the piano (comprised of a thirty-second-note triplet and a longer tone). Hindemith segues into a piano interlude that sounds influenced by an American spiritual. It offers a stark contrast to the first thematic phrase, however the composer uses some of the same rhythmic ingredients. A modified version of the original piano tremor is made more prominent and begins the spiritual music. The horn reenters with a second statement of the opening theme, now much louder (*mf* compared to the earlier *p*). It is again paired with the tremor figure in the piano, which subsequently drives the music towards a climax. The horn joins after a brief moment, working in tandem, but not in sync, to open the sound up to the sky. Hindemith marks the climax *fortissimo*, and staggers the arrival at the new dynamic. The horn hits it first, one full beat ahead of the piano (though on an off-beat, so the peak is heard in an unexpected place). The climax quickly relaxes into the return of the tremor in the piano, which transitions to a closing instance of the spiritual music and a gentle, yet resolute final reflection.

Hindemith begins the final movement with a dialogue for the horn player and pianist, titled *Das Posthorn* ("The Posthorn"). The composer uses this text (which he authored) to convey his feelings about the magical sound of the horn. In German culture the horn has a prominent role in traditional music, through instruments like the alphorn, festive brass band music, and horn-centric hunting music. An American equivalent is the banjo, which produces a unique sound that we associate with Americana, even though it is used much more widely nowadays. It is also likely that Hindemith's text references his complicated relationship with his German homeland, for he essentially was subjugated by the Nazi regime because his musical style did not conform to their nationalistic ideals.<sup>2</sup> The dialogue begins with a stanza spoken by the horn

2 Hindemith and his colleague Wilhelm Furtwängler famously got into trouble with the Nazis for their non-conformist (at least at the time for Furtwängler) attitude towards the regime. Hindemith's opera *Mathis der Maler*

player, who speaks of "the sounding of a horn to our busy souls" as a nostalgic sound that is a "cornucopia's gift" calling "forth in us / a pallid yearning, melancholy longing." Hindemith surely missed the way things were in Germany prior to the Third Reich, as he was a supporter of the Weimar Republic. The pianist responds with words that offer perspective, suggesting that no matter what was in the past and what is in the present, it is our duty to "hold and treasure" whatever goodness and peace exists in the current moment of chaos. Hindemith composed this sonata at the height of World War II, when things were not going well for the Allies. His disillusionment is evident in this text.

Hindemith marks the music *Lebhaft* ("lively"), with a time signature of 9/16. He sets the pulse at one bar per second, which is quite rapid for the constantly churning pattern in the right hand of the piano. The movement begins with an extended piano solo that evokes a sense of chaos, angst and darkness, symbolizing the troubled present that Hindemith expresses in the dialogue. The horn enters approximately one-third of the way through the musical part of the movement. You'll notice that the mood shifts completely for the time being (also marked with a new 6/8 time signature), with the horn playing a lush folksy melody that sounds akin to many of the standard horn works from the Romantic era. The piano suddenly returns to the 9/16 meter and the frantic whirlwind music of the opening solo. Hindemith brings the horn back in, but keeps it in the 6/8 meter, juxtaposing the two meters within a common sixteenth-note pulse. The horn develops its thematic material while the piano continues in the background. The two voices converge to bring about a bold climax section that consists of a *fortissimo* horn call and a rhythmic echo in the piano. The climax pushes through to conclude the movement on an open set of unison E-flat octaves.

1943 was a particularly productive year for Hindemith, as was much of the 1940s. Though he was subjected to restrictions as a German alien<sup>3</sup> living in the United States during World War II—such as having to report to police with frequency—Hindemith managed to keep a steady pace of teaching and compositional activities (albeit somewhat limited to the Yale/New Haven area). David Neumeier describes this period as "...the best decade of Hindemith's career... he produced a continuing series of varied, mature compositions."<sup>4</sup> Projects of note from 1943 include *Symphonic Metamorphosis after Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*, *Amor und Psyche*, and the book *A Concentrated Course in Traditional Harmony* (1943-1943). Hindemith's major project in 1944 was a ballet commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress, *Herodiade—An Orchestral Recitation of a Poem by Stéphane Mallarmé*. The short ballet was commissioned for Martha Graham and received its world premiere in the Coolidge Auditorium on November 30, 1944.

Nicholas Alexander Brown  
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(1933-1935) and the ensuing symphony based on the opera, promoted the story of painter Matthias Grünewald, who joined the peasants against authoritarian rule in the Peasants' War (1524-1525). Needless to say, the regime didn't take this very well and they attacked Hindemith's music and character. Hindemith and Furtwängler were essentially forced out of their jobs, and performing Hindemith's music in Germany became a risky undertaking for musicians during the remainder of Nazi rule. Hindemith sought refuge in Switzerland in the years after these kerfuffle. Furtwängler eventually regained his posts under the Nazis.

3 Hindemith and his wife Gertrude proudly obtained American citizenship in 1946, and maintained it even after moving back to Switzerland in 1953.

4 David Neumeier, *The Music of Paul Hindemith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 5.

#### IV. Das Posthorn (Zwiegespräch)

*Text and translation by Paul Hindemith*

***Hornist:***

Tritt uns, den Eiligen, des Hornes Klang  
nicht (gleich dem Dufte längst verwelkter Blüten,  
gleich brüchigen Brokats entfärbten Falten,  
gleich mürben Blättern früh vergilbter Bände)  
als tönender Besuch aus jenen Zeiten nah,  
da Eile war, wo Pferde im Galopp sich mühten,  
nicht wo der unterworfne Blitz in Drähten sprang;  
da man zu leben und zu lernen das Gelände  
durchjagte, nicht allein die engbedruckten Spalten.  
Ein mattes Sehnen, wehgelauten Verlangen  
entspringt für uns dem Cornucopia.

***Pianist:***

Nicht deshalb ist das Alte gut, weil es vergangen,  
das Neue nicht vortrefflich, weil wir mit ihm gehen;  
und mehr hat keiner je an Glück erfahren,  
als er befähigt war zu tragen, zu verstehen.  
An dir ist's, hinter Eile, Lärm und Mannigfalt  
das Ständige, die Stille, Sinn, Gestalt  
zurückzufinden und neu zu bewahren.

#### IV. The Posthorn (Dialogue)

***Horn Player:***

Is not the sounding of a horn to our busy souls  
(even as the scent of blossoms wilted long ago,  
or the discolored folds of musty tapestry,  
or crumbling leaves of ancient yellowed tomes)  
like a sonorous visit from those ages  
which counted speed by straining horses' gallop,  
and not by lightning prisoned up in cables;  
and when to live and learn they ranged the countryside,  
not just the closely printed pages?  
The cornucopia's gift calls forth in us  
a pallid yearning, melancholy longing.

***Pianist:***

The old is good not just because it's past,  
nor is the new supreme because we live with it,  
and never yet a man felt greater joy  
than he could bear or truly comprehend.  
Your task it is, amid confusion, rush, and noise  
to grasp the lasting, calm, and meaningful,  
and finding it anew, to hold and treasure it.

## GYÖRGY LIGETI, Trio for violin, horn and piano

“...musically this Horn Trio does not have much to do with my opinion of Brahms; what is remembered from Brahms is perhaps only a certain smilingly conservative comportment—with distinct ironic distance. I think it has much more to do with late Beethoven...”

— György Ligeti<sup>5</sup>

If it seems from the quote above that György Ligeti may not have boarded the Brahms’ homage train with the greatest enthusiasm in his Trio for violin, horn and piano, that would seem to be a correct assessment. After the composition of his opera *Le Grand Macabre* in the mid-1970’s, Ligeti had multiple parties interested in commissioning a work that involved horn, from Barry Tuckwell to pianist Anthony de Bonaventura. Ultimately the commission for the horn trio came through a colleague at the Hamburg Hochschule, pianist Eckart Besch. Besch then called on the foundation commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of Hamburg’s most famous sons, Brahms, to assist with the commission. “Thus it was that the chairman of the foundation asked Ligeti to incorporate themes and melodies from Brahms’ own music. Dismayed, Ligeti insisted that he could not accept such terms. But, as a compromise, he would inscribe the score ‘Hommage à Brahms;’ although it would have been musically more appropriate—and he would have preferred—to write ‘Hommage à Beethoven.’”<sup>6</sup>

The surface rationale for the commission of a horn trio in celebration of a Brahms anniversary is that Brahms essentially invented the genre (you can read more about this in the note on Brahms’ horn trio, performed on the second half of this concert). Since, evidently, Ligeti did not feel so tied to Brahms in this piece, what can be said about his statement that it has “more to do with late Beethoven?” This depends a bit on what one classifies as “late” Beethoven—are we thinking of organizational principles, sophistication of language, boldness, or some other parameter? If we look at thematic links, there are two at the very opening of the piece—or rather one that references two separate but related Beethoven works, from Beethoven’s mid-life and youth. The first fairly leaps off the page to anyone familiar with Beethoven’s piano sonatas: it is an altered version of the inverted horn call that opens the “Lebewohl” sonata, op. 81a of 1809-10; the alteration in Ligeti’s case being that the second dyad is a tritone instead of a fifth. This relationship has been evident to most commentators over the years, but I believe there is more to this particular reference than the relationship to the classic double horn call. It has also been noted that Ligeti’s mother died during the composition of the horn trio,<sup>7</sup> as had been the case with Brahms (though in that case there is some recent debate as to whether it is a memorial work—this is discussed in the Brahms note), making a reference to the “farewell” sonata resonate in a personal way.

There are at least two other aspects of this reference, however, that deserve consideration. First is Beethoven’s key of E-flat major, a key central to Brahms’ trio, chosen because of Brahms’ use of the E-flat natural horn. Ligeti’s trio, while played on a valved horn, also makes use of natural harmonics on the horn, which are intended to be played “without correcting the intonation of the harmonics in question...”<sup>8</sup> The impact of this type of historical reference is meaningful in Ligeti’s work, as it is meaningful in Brahms; in Ligeti’s case he would develop different ways of including alternate tunings into his future compositions. There is another overlooked link to

5 Lichtenfeld, Monika, “Gespräch mit György Ligeti,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 145 (1984), pp. 8-11; cited in Paul Griffiths, *György Ligeti* (London: Robson Books, second ed., 1997); further cited in Searby, Mike, “Ligeti’s ‘third Way’: ‘non-atonal’ Elements in the Horn Trio” in *Tempo*, no. 216 (Cambridge University Press, 2001): 19.

6 Steinitz, Richard, *György Ligeti: Music of the Imagination* (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 2003), 252.

7 Steinitz, 254.

8 Ligeti, Györgi, “The notation of the horn part,” in the score to his Trio for violin, horn and piano (Mainz: Schott Musik International, 2001).]

this theme, however, and it has to do with the work that is the “b” to *Lebewohl’s* “a.” the sextet for two horns and strings, op. 81b. Opus 81b was published in 1810 (before the publication of the piano sonata), but is thought to date from around 1795, making it an early work. At the opening of the sextet, after the strings play a loud chord, we hear the pair of horns playing the exact same pitches of the inverted horn call that opens the piano sonata, though in an Allegro con brio context. It is worth seeing this aspect of these three works side-by-side:

EXAMPLE 1a: *Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E-flat major, op. 81a, I, mm. 1-2*

EXAMPLE 1b: *Beethoven, Sextet for two horns and strings, op. 81b, I, m. 1, horns*

EXAMPLE 1c: *Ligeti, Trio for violin, horn and piano, I, mm. 1-2, violin*

While Ligeti was not fond of blatant neo-Romanticism in contemporary composition, that did not mean that he did not know and admire the music of his predecessors; so when he does make a specific reference, it is laden with multivalent historical meanings.

There are elements beyond the instrumentation that one might describe as Brahmsian in Ligeti’s trio, from the masking of metrical articulation to the use of ternary form and a passacaglia-like structure (as in Brahms’ finale to his fourth symphony). The Beethovenian nostalgia hinted at in the *Lebewohl* reference was also significant for Brahms—consider the *Rückblick Intermezzo* movement of Brahms’ op. 5 piano sonata. Yet Ligeti’s trio, which encountered some criticism because of these “conservative” features, distinctly bears Ligeti’s aesthetic signature. There is no doubt that the trio is a departure from the micropolyphonic and cluster textures that characterized much of his earlier music, but it has forerunners and significant descendants in Ligeti’s compositional output. Ligeti’s use of triads in a non-tonal context muddies the

referential waters a bit, but Ligeti had a great way to describe this: “My Horn Trio marked a radical break with atonality. Now I have the courage to be ‘old fashioned’... by the end of the 1970s I had evolved a ‘non-atonal’ language which became obvious in the Horn Trio.”<sup>9</sup>

The first movement of Ligeti’s trio is a haunting study in the interaction between the horn call theme and the horn’s melody, which features larger intervals generally constrained within the octave, like fourths, tritones, fifths, sixths and minor sevenths. While distinctive sections, characters and figures emerge, like the rising scales/arpeggios and the *più mosso* rhythmically distinctive sections, the material for the whole movement is built on the ideas established in those first few measures. In some ways the musical argument is about the upward evaporation of what begins as a descending idea, with periodic meetings in the upper reaches. It notably contains exact repetitions of material, with metric displacement that makes any differences difficult to hear because of the general obfuscation of barlines in the piece (although muting is one audible shift). The movement ends quietly with one of the dissipations of energy into the upper register.

The second movement begins innocently enough with quiet plucked dyads in the violin, followed by the establishment of a motoric scalar ostinato that repeats for the remainder of the movement, primarily in the piano:



EXAMPLE 2: Ligeti, *for violin, horn and piano*, II: m.11, *piano left hand*

This very distinctive figuration was used in the harpsichord work *Hungarian Rock*, and to stunning effect in the later fourth piano étude, *Fanfarsa*, composed a few years later. The particular pattern grouping was also used by Bartók, and is an *aksak* (“limping”) rhythm.<sup>10</sup> The movement is a stunning example of a *perpetuo mobile* ostinato that never lacks for imaginative adornments, some drawn from the material of the opening movement. While much of the dramatic path of the movement involves the accretion of layers, there are several spots that stick out in unexpected ways. For instance, about 75 measures in, the violin and piano play the same melodic pitches many octaves apart, exploring the periphery of the registers while the horn and right hand of the pianist continue their busy activity in the center. Another dramatic moment occurs near the movement’s end, when the pianist’s scales have accelerated and left the confines of the octave to launch upwards to the top of the keyboard. A grand pause precedes an *una corda* reminiscence of the *Lebewohl* gesture. The movement ends quietly, again in an upper register.

The third movement is a march, essentially in a scherzo role. The piano and violin start with strictly coordinated attacks that suggest these might not be the steadiest of marchers. The parts start to diverge from one another, sometimes pre-empting or echoing the other. At the loudest moment there is a brief pause before the *più mosso* “trio” that consists of legato, running quarter notes in all voices. As the section progresses, the violin moves to high harmonics and

9 Szitha, Tunde, “A conversation with György Ligeti,” *Hungarian Music Quarterly*, vol. 3/1 (1992), 14-15; as quoted in Searby, 19.

10 Steinitz, 258.

the piano part transitions into more chordal material, still in steady quarter notes. Another brief pause precedes a return to the march proper, this time with the horn offering a blatantly obnoxious commentary—a wonderful, farcical use of the horn that forces a reconsideration of the march material, now that the horn player is in the act of catching up.

The final movement could not contrast more greatly from the third, providing a powerful counterpoint to the march's excesses. Ligeti is back in the world of the first movement harmonically, perhaps with even more tonally suggestive moments, but now time has been dilated, intensely stretched out. The horn provides a seemingly unending mid-register pedal point while the violin and piano slowly trade off descending figures. The horn maintains the role of stationary point (though pitches shift gradually) through the first forty-three measures, and all the while the piano and violin parts are intensifying in volume and frequency of attack. It is something of a surprise when the horn has its full-throated entry in measure 51, now joining in on the collective lament. The violin soars ever higher, while the compacted piano line moves lower and lower. Its gradual descent is ended by the confines of the keyboard, and when the piano suddenly goes silent, we become aware of the return of the horn, now providing a dark pedal tone in its low register. The violin line remains in its upper realm, slowly cycling through its melody. The piano's return again recalls the opening of the trio, and what seems like an E-major version of the *Lebewohl* motive has lost its minor sixth dyad to a second tritone. As the violin and horn fade away into nothing, the piano offers one last chord, an almost whole-tone cluster based on A. The piano line itself fades away with the measured release of its held chord tones until only the solitary A remains. The trio concludes in the manner prepared by the ends of the first and second movements: in silence.

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## VINCENT PERSICHETTI, *Parable for Solo Horn (Parable VIII)*

"Like the unadorned human voice with its beautiful simplicity, or the drum with its pulsing energy, the horn, with its passionate and evocative tone, began as a truly solo instrument." —Eric Ruske<sup>11</sup>

Vincent Persichetti was an American composer, performer and music educator. A native of Philadelphia, he studied at the Combs Conservatory, Philadelphia Conservatory<sup>12</sup> and the Curtis Institute. He subsequently held teaching posts at his first two alma maters, and was appointed to the faculty of Juilliard in 1947. Persichetti's principal composition studies were with Russell King Miller in Philadelphia, and he also studied conducting with Fritz Reiner. His compositions are widely known in band circles, as several of his works for band are staples for advanced secondary, collegiate and professional wind ensembles and concert bands. These popular works include *Pageant*, op. 59 (1953) and *Symphony for Band* (Symphony no. 6), op. 69 (1956). Persichetti's output extends far beyond the band repertoire, however, to include many works for orchestra, chorus, voice, instrumental chamber ensembles, piano, and other solo instruments. Walter G. Simmons' biography of Persichetti for *Grove Music Online* credits Stravinsky, Bartók, Hindemith and Copland with influencing Persichetti's compositional

11 Eric Ruske, Liner Notes to *Eric Ruske Just me and my horn* (Albany TROY903, 2007).

12 The Philadelphia Conservatory is one of the precursors of the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. The Combs Conservatory (also known as the Combs College of Music) closed in the early 1990s.

style, which can be described as an combination of various popular compositional trends in the first half of the twentieth century (including neoclassicism and dodecaphonic music).<sup>13</sup> He received numerous major awards and fellowships, including Guggenheim Fellowships, awards from the American Institute for Italian Culture, the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award, the Star of Solidarity Medal from the government of Italy, and the first Kennedy Center Friedheim Award for Excellence in Symphonic Composition. His students included Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Peter Schickele and Thelonius Monk. Persichetti's papers are held at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

This concert features one of Persichetti's twenty-five parables, which were composed over twenty-one years (1965-1986). He referred to these works as "non-programmatic musical essays about a single germinal idea."<sup>14</sup> Persichetti set the majority of the parables for solo instruments, ranging from piccolo and tuba to guitar and harp. He also composed one parable each for carillon (church bells) and organ. Several parables were set for chamber ensembles, including trumpet duo, brass quintet, string quartet and piano trio. *Parable IX*, op. 121 (1972) was composed for band, and the most extraordinary parable was the twentieth, *The Sibyl (Parable XX): A Parable of Chicken Little: An Opera in One Act*, op. 135 (1976). This was Persichetti's only complete operatic work.

*Parable for Solo Horn (Parable VIII)* was premiered in November 1972 by Priscilla McAfee at Alice Tully Hall in New York City.<sup>15</sup> A hallmark of the parables is Persichetti's regular recycling of material from other compositions. The eighth parable includes an excerpt from the "Nicene Creed" section of the composer's Symphony no. 7, "Liturgical," op. 80 (1958). This excerpt begins after an eight-bar phrase that introduces several key motives. The opening horn call, an ascending perfect fifth interval (see Example 3), will be heard throughout the piece in varying forms. Related to this figure is the contrast between open and stopped horn music.<sup>16</sup>



EXAMPLE 3: *Opening motive*

Persichetti frequently creates an echo effect by repeating a figure (that was first played open) with a stopped iteration. You hear this in the first echo of the horn call motive at the outset of the introduction. A third key ingredient in the introduction is an additional melodic motive comprised of three pitches separated by a rising minor third interval and a descending major second interval. Persichetti marks this motive stopped for its first instance (see Example 4). The motivic and textural contrasts are evident throughout *Parable VIII*, but Persichetti succeeds in masking the nitty-gritty of the composition's layout by conveying the

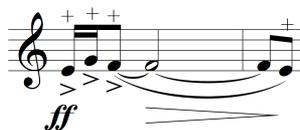
13 Walter G. Simmons, "Persichetti, Vincent" in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21384>>.

14 Ibid.

15 McAfee was then a student at Juilliard and went on to play in the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra for twenty years (serving as principal horn for six years). She was also principal horn of the Cabrillo Music Festival for fifteen years.

16 Stopped horn is a common technique in music for horn. It is an acoustical effect that results from blocking the exit of the bell with your hand. This affects the sounding pitch of the instrument, the timbre and the dynamic level. A resource for learning more about stopped horn techniques is a November 2007 presentation given at the Louisiana Music Educators Conference by James Boldin of the University of Louisiana Monroe: <<http://tinyurl.com/stoppedhorn>>.

music as an improvised meditation. To the listener the music sounds as if it evolves and roams organically.



EXAMPLE 4: *Rising/Descending motive*

The reality of the score is that there are many specific tempo, articulation and expression markings that the horn player is bound by. At points the tempo fluctuates as frequently as every two bars. Persichetti shifts in the middle of the piece to a virtuosic section that is devoid of internal bar lines (following a double bar that delineates the end of the previous section). This new material is first marked *agitato* (quarter note=144+). Short snippets of phrases and motives are cut off by pauses marked with fermatas (holds). This creates a certain sense of angst and uncertainty for the listener. Persichetti makes the tempo very elastic within the short phrase statements. He follows with an expansive section that revisits and further develops the principal motives of the piece. The parable concludes with a *ppp* statement of the opening horn call figure, on the same exact pitches as at the beginning. This time, however, the original pitches are only heard in the stopped horn, and the music fades away.

Persichetti received a commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress for his Quintet for piano and strings, op. 66 (1954)—the manuscript of which is held by the Music Division. This evening's performance of *Parable for Solo Horn* is the first performance of the work in the Coolidge Auditorium. Several of the parables have been performed here previously, including *Parable for Brass Quintet (Parable II)*, op. 108 (1968), and String Quartet no. 4 (*Parable X*), op. 122 (1972).

Nicholas Alexander Brown  
Music Specialist  
Library of Congress, Music Division



## JOHANNES BRAHMS, Trio in E-flat major for violin, horn and piano

The horn trio occupies a unique place in Brahms' compositional output. It includes his only use of a brass instrument in the instrumental chamber music context, and is one of only a few of his non-orchestral pieces to involve the horn.<sup>17</sup> The instrumentation of violin, horn and piano does not seem to have an historical precedent from the pen of a major composer before Brahms' work of 1865. This status has led to several assessments that persist today:

1) Brahms' horn trio is revered by horn players in particular (the winds and brass rejoice whenever a talented composer writes chamber music for them instead of just for the strings), and it stands as the progenitor of the genre and the benchmark against which all other horn trios seem to be measured (this includes the trio by György Ligeti, also on this program);

<sup>17</sup> An important predecessor in Brahms' output is his op. 17 *Vier Gesänge* for women's chorus, two horns & harp.

2) The horn trio, though generally admired, is often seen by scholars as an outlier in the broader context of Brahms' chamber music, and not just due to its unorthodox instrumentation—there are “peculiar” harmonic and structural features that distinguish it from the “tradition” to which the corpus of Brahms' chamber works is seen to belong.

It is worth a closer look at assessment “2” above. A fascinating aspect of the work is the overwhelming importance of the key, E-flat major. Each movement begins and ends with the three-flat key signature of E-flat major, with the exception of the *Adagio mesto*, which features the parallel minor key of E-flat minor. The piece deviates harmonically from E-flat (a great portion of the opening theme of the first movement centers on a dominant sonority, undercutting the initial perceived importance of E-flat), but Brahms carefully chooses those destinations from a constellation of flat keys around E-flat. Part of the accomplishment here is that Brahms was able to achieve such variety without harmonic stagnation, all while keeping E-flat in his sights across four movements.

But why was Brahms so fixated on E-flat and its environs in the horn trio? The answer can be found in his own predilection for an instrument that was in the process of going out of mainstream use in 1865: the *Waldhorn*, or natural horn. Valved horns had become favored by many composers by this time, but Brahms' preference was for the natural horn.<sup>18</sup> That Brahms' wishes were already out-of-sync with what could be expected in the 1860's is clear from a letter written to Brahms by Clara Schumann after a performance in 1866 (shortly after its composition), in which she states that “the horn-player was excellent. I do not think he sputtered once, and that says a great deal, though it is true that he played on a *Ventil-horn* [and] would not be induced to try a *Wald-horn*.”<sup>19</sup>

The key of the natural horn that Brahms wanted to be used was, as you may have guessed, E-flat. The sonic upshot of this choice is that member pitches of the E-flat harmonic series have an open, familiar horn sound (the register plays a role here—notes in the series are closer together the higher the horn plays), while other pitches have a stopped sound due to the player's use of the hand in the bell to yield the pitch. While not as subtle, the overall effect can be thought of in a similar vein to the use of stopped and open strings on a cello. In the cello's case there are four notes that can be played “open” (each of the four strings), and every other “normal” pitch is stopped; for the E-flat natural horn there are more than four “open” possibilities at different points in the harmonic series (including multiple E-flats and B-flats, etc.), while chromatic pitches around those open notes are stopped (except in the highest range). Modern players almost always perform the work with a valved horn, but it is worth listening to some of the recordings that employ a natural horn, because it can provide insight into some considerations that Brahms had. As evidenced by the key choices, Brahms did not just write a piece and then ask for the natural horn.<sup>20</sup> What one finds is that important thematic statements tend to occupy the “open” territory, while other passages have an echo-like quality with a distant stopped sound—it is also clear that these differences in tone color were well considered, and not arrived at haphazardly.

18 Musgrave, Michael, *The Music of Brahms* (New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994), 109.

19 As quoted in Thompson, Christopher K., “Re-forming Brahms: Sonata Form and the Horn Trio, Op. 40,” in *Indiana Theory Review* 18(1), (Indiana University Press, 1997), 84; from Berthold Litzmann, ed., transl. Grace E. Hadow, *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1913), 248.

20 Brahms did have the practical idea to add to his manuscript “or Violoncello” after “Horn”—probably a later decision due to the way he modified his title page; he thought better of writing “Violine Horn und Pianoforte (ad lib Violoncello),” perhaps thinking that some ambitious musician might try to replace the piano part with a cello! The Library of Congress holds the 1865 holograph manuscript of Brahms' op. 40, where one can find this correction and several other compositional second thoughts, some of significance. Though not specified in the manuscript, Simrock's first edition of the trio indeed specifies “Waldhorn” in the title. Brahms revised the work in 1891; the primary change seems to be the utilitarian addition of the viola as an option to replace the horn.

Beyond the key, there is also the issue of form. As Christopher Thompson points out, many commentators seem to think that the horn trio should be compared to the model string quartets of Mozart and Haydn, and therefore any deviation from the expected is a failure to live up to what was expected of Brahms. As Thompson puts it, "...they dismiss the movement as an anomaly among the composer's twenty-four published chamber works, claiming it to be the only such first movement *not* in sonata form."<sup>21</sup> To summarize in brief Thompson's counter-argument, it may not make great sense to compare the new horn trio genre to that of the string quartet, especially when the more permissive body of work for the piano trio, as well as the historical diversity of divertimenti surely also informed Brahms. His very act of requesting the natural horn also signifies a more distant past that he may be referencing. Additionally, while the horn trio's opening movement does seem to exhibit traits of a rondo form, it also possesses elements describable as "sonata-like," and the categorization (and suggested statement of relative value) ultimately comes to an *ex post facto* analytical call.<sup>22</sup>

I would add that a formal label of the opening movement tends not to add or detract from the appreciation that many have for the quality of the music. The violin presents the first theme, followed by the horn's restatement of it. Only a twinge of uncertainty is introduced by a short motive that moves chromatically around B-flat in the piano—this idea is developed as the movement progresses, preparing the idea that figures prominently in the second large section:

EXAMPLE 5a: *Brahms, Horn Trio, I: mm. 16-18*

EXAMPLE 5b: *Brahms, Horn Trio, I: mm. 76-77, violin*

A secondary theme (now in E-flat major) is introduced, with material drawing on the rhythmic profile of the violin's earlier accompaniment. The second significant section (with key signature change) has more active material that explores the darker intimations of

21 Thompson, 81-82.

22 *Ibid.*, 82-86.

Example 5. This is followed by an abbreviated return of the opening material, and then alternations of the material in different keys. The final firm arrival of E-flat major involves a clever re-ordering of the movement's opening idea, creating a definitive sense of arrival:



EXAMPLE 6a: *Brahms, Horn Trio, I: mm. pickup-1*



EXAMPLE 6b: *Brahms, Horn Trio, I: mm. 11-10 from the end*

The exuberant scherzo's main theme is presented in octaves by the piano, with the other instruments largely in an accompanimental role. While keeping tight control of the material, Brahms offers a good variety of figuration as the material is developed. The trio features the violin and horn in an accompanied duet, and the thirds are reminiscent (especially when in the piano) of material from the second section of the first movement, though less angst-ridden. The high spirits of the scherzo are lost with the opening rolled chord of the *Adagio mesto*. The piano writing here hearkens back, in my mind, to the world of the op. 10 *Ballades*, and preempts the austere coloration of the late piano intermezzi (especially op. 117/3)—if Robert Schumann had written it, he might have labeled it *Im Legendenton*. This movement stands out as offering little comfort in its haunting beauties, and its pervasive darkness contrasts greatly with the dramatic arc of the other movements. It is perhaps this movement that leads many commentators to describe the horn trio as Brahms' response to the death of his mother—about which more shortly. While most of the lines in the trio tend to have a developmental context, a different one arises at a very special point that follows a sonorous *tremolando* section. Here the violin offers a ghostly incarnation of an earlier theme, isolated and marked *pianississimo quasi niente* ("barely audible"), atop the piano's opening music:

EXAMPLE 7: *Brahms, Horn Trio, III: mm. 43-44, violin and piano*

Other music that comes up in the context of this melody later in the movement actually prefigures the main theme of the trio's finale:



The bawdy and not-very-nuanced words here suggest a very different affect if we accept that Brahms was referencing this song in a theme that not only dominates the finale but also plays a role in the previous movements. In any case, the kinetic energy of the movement never disperses, especially given the fireworks in the piano writing. The work may not have been what was expected from Brahms by critical purists, despite the many elements that are absolutely in keeping with his other output, but it immediately etched out a place for a compelling new chamber ensemble.

*David Henning Plylar*  
*Music Specialist*  
*Library of Congress, Music Division*



## About the Artists

Horn soloist **Eric Ruske** has established himself as an artist of international acclaim. Named associate principal horn of the Cleveland Orchestra at the age of 20, he also toured and recorded extensively during his six-year tenure as hornist of the Empire Brass Quintet. His impressive solo career began when he won the 1986 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, First Prize in the 1987 American Horn Competition, and in 1988, the highest prize in the Concours International d'Interpretation Musicale in Reims, France. Of his recording of the complete Mozart Concerti with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, *The New York Times* stated, "Mr. Ruske's approach, firmly positioned with the boundaries of balance, coherence and good taste that govern the Classical Style, enchants by virtue of its confidence, imagination and ebullient virtuosity." Performances as soloist include appearances with the Baltimore Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Shanghai Radio Broadcast Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, European Camerata, San Diego Symphony, Boston Pops, Kansas City Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, and a tour with the Israel Chamber Orchestra throughout Israel. His recitals have been presented in venues such as the Louvre in Paris, the 92nd Street Y in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Duke's Hall in London, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and the Mariinsky Concert Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. A student of Dale Clevenger and Eugene Chausow, he grew up in LaGrange, Illinois and is a graduate of Northwestern University.

An active chamber musician, Ruske has appeared with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Festival de Musica de Santa Catarina in Brazil, Moab Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, Spoleto Festival, Festival de Musique in St. Barthélemy, OK Mozart International Festival, Recontres Musicales d'Évian, La Musica in Sarasota, Bargemusic in Brooklyn, Music from Angel Fire, Boston Chamber Music Society, and the Festival Pablo Casals both in Puerto Rico and in France. He is in great demand as a teacher and clinician, and in addition to having given master classes at over one hundred universities and conservatories in the United States, he has taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Banff Centre in Canada, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, Tokyo College of Music, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the College of Music at Seoul National University and most recently at the Ionian Academy in Corfu, Greece.

In 2012, Albany Records released a 7-CD box set of Ruske's recordings entitled *The Horn of Eric Ruske*. The set includes: *Music by Three*, a disc of music for horn, violin and piano; a collection of unaccompanied horn repertoire entitled *Just me and my horn*; two discs of virtuoso transcriptions for horn and piano, *The Classic Horn* and *Virtuoso Music for Horn and Piano*; a disc of the Strauss and Glière horn concerti, *The Romantic Horn Concerti*; the complete Mozart horn concerti; and a disc of horn and piano repertoire entitled *Night Poems*. He also made the world premiere recording of the *Concierto Evocativo* for horn and string orchestra by Roberto Sierra. His numerous arrangements and transcriptions, including a complete edition of the Mozart concerti, are now available from Cimarron Music.

Joining architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, trumpeter Miles Davis and comedian Richard Pryor, Ruske was inducted into the Illinois Hall of Fame in 2007. In 2014, he was inducted into the Sociedade Brasileira de Artes Cultura e Ensino (SBACE), and the Brazilian Minister of Education and Culture bestowed upon him the title of Commander and awarded him the Mérito Cultural Maestro Carlos Gomes prize for distinguished service as both a performer and teacher. He has received grants from the National Philanthropic Institute, the Saunders Foundation, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, the International Institute of Education, the Mattina R. Proctor Foundation and Boston University. Ruske currently directs the horn seminar at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute and is the professor of horn at Boston University.



Two-time GRAMMY-nominee and Avery Fisher career grant recipient **Jennifer Frautschi** has garnered worldwide acclaim as an adventurous musician with a remarkably wide-ranging repertoire. Her 2015-2016 season features performances with the Boston Philharmonic, and the New Jersey, Norwalk and Valdosta Symphonies; re-engagements with the Austin, Boise, Pasadena, Pensacola, and Toledo Symphonies; and chamber music appearances at the Library of Congress and Duke University. Highlights of the past two seasons include performances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Tucson Symphony; return engagements with the Alabama, Arkansas, Belo Horizonte, Chattanooga, and Phoenix Symphonies and the Rhode Island Philharmonic; and appearances at the Ojai, La Jolla, Santa Fe, Moab, Bridgehampton, and Salt Bay Music Festivals.

Her discography includes the Stravinsky Violin Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Robert Craft, and two GRAMMY-nominated recordings with the Fred Sherry Quartet, of Schoenberg's Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra and the Schoenberg Third String Quartet (an Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress commissioned work). Recent releases include a recording of Romantic horn trios with hornist Eric Ruske and pianist Stephen Prutsman, and the Stravinsky *Duo Concertant* with pianist Jeremy Denk. She recently released two discs in collaboration with pianist John Blacklow: the first devoted to the three Schumann violin sonatas; the second an exploration of recent additions to the violin and piano repertoire by American composers.

Born in Pasadena, California, Frautschi was a student of Robert Lipsett at the Colburn School; she also attended Harvard, New England Conservatory, and Juilliard, where she studied with Robert Mann. She performs on a 1722 Antonio Stradivarius violin known as the "ex-Cadiz," on generous loan from a private American foundation.

Pianist **Gloria Chien** has been picked by *The Boston Globe* as one of the superior pianists of the year, "... who appears to excel in everything." Richard Dyer praises her for "a wondrously rich palette of colors, which she mixes with dashing bravado and with an uncanny precision of calibration...Chien's performance had it all, and it was fabulous." Chien made her orchestral debut at the age of 16 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Since then, she has appeared as a soloist under the batons of Sergiu Comissiona, Keith Lockhart, Thomas Dausgaard, Irwin Hoffman, Benjamin Zander, and Robert Bernhardt. She is a prize winner of the World Piano Competition, Harvard Musical Association Award, as well as the San Antonio International Piano Competition, where she also received the prize for the Best Performance of the Commissioned Work. Chien has presented concerts at the Alice Tully Hall, Library of Congress, Gardner Museum, Phillips Collection, Jordan Hall, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Savannah Musical Festival, Dresden Chamber Musical Festival, Kissinger Sommer, Salle Cortot in Paris, and the National Concert Hall in Taiwan.

An avid chamber musician, Chien has been the resident pianist with the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston since 2000, a group known for its versatility and commitment to new music. Boston Herald praises her for "[playing] phenomenally." Her recent CD with violinist Joanna Kurkowicz featuring music of Grazyna Bacewicz was released on Chandos Records. *International Record Review* writes, "[the violinist] could ask for no more sensitive or supportive a pianist than Gloria Chien." *Strad* praises her for "super performances...accompanied with great character." She also received fantastic reviews in *Gramophone*, *American Record Guide*, and *Muzyka 21*. Chien has participated in such festivals as Chamber Music Northwest, Verbier Music Festival, Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival, and Music@Menlo, where she was appointed director of the Chamber Music Institute in 2010 by artistic directors David Finckel and Wu Han.

Chien's recent performances include collaborations with the St. Lawrence, Miró, Pacifica, Brentano, Borromeo, Daedalus and Jupiter String Quartets, David Shifrin, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Joseph Silverstein, Jaime Laredo, Daniel Hope, James Ehnes, Cho-Liang Lin, Ani Kavafian, Ida Kavafian, Wu Han, Paul Neubauer, Jan Vogler, Roberto Diaz, David Finckel, Sharon Robinson, Zuill Bailey, Soovin Kim, Carolin Widmann, Radovan Vlatković and Anthony McGill. In fall of 2009, Chien launched String Theory, a chamber music series at the Hunter Museum of American Art in downtown Chattanooga, as its founder and artistic director.

She began playing the piano at the age of five in her native Taiwan. She holds a DMA, a Master's and an undergraduate degree from the New England Conservatory of Music. Her teachers have included Russell Sherman and Wha-Kyung Byun. Chien is an artist-in-residence at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, and is an artist of the prestigious Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She is a Steinway Artist.

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