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Marshall University Music Department Presents a Senior Recital, Alyssa Hughes, clarinet

Alyssa Hughes
Marshall University

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DEPARTMENT of MUSIC

presents a

Senior Recital

Alyssa Hughes, clarinet

accompanied by

Alanna Cushing, piano

Friday, April 8, 2011

Smith Music Hall

5:00 p.m.

This program is presented by the College of Fine Arts through the Department of Music, with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304) 696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

Program

Concerto for Clarinet in A, K.622

W.A. Mozart
(1756 – 1791)

Allegro
Adagio
Rondo - Allegro

Intermission

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo

Igor Stravinsky
(1882 – 1971)

Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano

Bohuslav Martinů
(1890 – 1959)

Moderato
Andante
Poco Allegro

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education. Ms. Hughes is a student in the clarinet studio of Dr. Ann Marie Bingham.

Notes.....

Igor Stravinsky – Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo

Igor Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo* (1919) was a pivotal work in the advancement of the clarinet as an unaccompanied instrument. At the time it was written, jazz exerted a considerable influence on Stravinsky's music. The three pieces are jazz-inspired, reflecting the sounds and impressions of improvisation. While living in Switzerland, he wrote the pieces for the Swiss clarinetist Werner Rheinart in appreciation for his family financing the first production of Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat*.

All three pieces are written in unconventional meter notations. The first piece explores the clarinet's chalumeau register, which is an apt match for the meandering, introspective melody. The second piece is Stravinsky's imitation of improvisation and is written without bar lines. Stravinsky employs the full range of the clarinet in this movement, using high, cascading arpeggios and virtuosic passage work. The third piece was conceived for the clarinet's upper register and recalls the "Ragtime" movement from his *L'histoire du soldat*. It uses constantly shifting meters and pulses to create a sense of driving momentum. This final piece has metrical changes in nearly every measure with an abundance of displaced beats and accents, ultimately reducing the bar line to little more than a visual aid.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – *Concerto for Clarinet in A Major K. 622*

After the invention of the clarinet in the early eighteenth century, the first significant piece of literature composed for the instrument was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Concerto for Clarinet in A Major K. 622*. Mozart wrote it in 1791 during the last months of his life in celebration of the virtuoso clarinetist, Anton Stadler. Mozart crafted the concerto to suit Stadler's preferred instrument, the basset clarinet, which extended in range a major third lower than the modern orchestral clarinet. By the time the clarinet concerto was published, a decade after Mozart's death, Stadler's basset clarinet had gone out of favor, and the concerto was printed in a version rewritten for the narrower range of the standard clarinet.

The first movement begins with lyrical melodies that exploit the clarinet's rich tone. Mozart takes full advantage of the clarinet's technical prowess and range with exciting, gymnastic leaps from low to high registers. The Adagio is one of Mozart's most sublime slow movements. In this profoundly expressive movement, Mozart seems to embody the sadness that may be found within beauty. This movement displays the exquisite singing quality of the clarinet. The finale is a rondo with a jaunty 6/8 theme. The technical virtuosity of the clarinet is exploited throughout the movement.

The clarinet concerto is one of Mozart's most personal creations. The mellow, expressive tone quality of the clarinet proved to be a fitting medium to express his feelings near the time of his death. Historians and playwrights alike have suggested that Mozart knew his time was running out, and the music of this concerto implies as much. The concerto has

undertones of serenity that, along with the superb craftsmanship, create a brilliant, moving composition.

Bohuslav Martinů – *Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano*

As a young composer, Bohuslav Martinů moved to Prague at age 16 to study at the Conservatory. There he was first exposed to the music of Debussy, whose music had an immediate impact on his developing compositional style. When he moved to Paris in 1923, he became familiar with the music of Stravinsky and other various modernistic musical trends, all of which were soon incorporated into his emerging style.

Martinů composed *Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano* in 1956. The *Sonatina* uses a variety of dance-like rhythms and pointed articulations. A combination of hemiolas and syncopated rhythms often obscures the beat. Even some of the most important cadences are syncopated, which may give an auditory illusion of the clarinet arriving early in certain scar figures.

The first movement is a test of rhythmic coordination, with complex interplay between the piano and clarinet. The second movement explores the entire range of the clarinet in a flowing, lyrical melody. The third movement features dazzling trills, soaring runs, and flashy techniques. In this final movement, Martinů keeps the clarinet an eighth note ahead of the piano in the counterpoint that governs the music. Overall, the *Sonatina* utilizes rhythmic vitality and well placed changes of tempo and mood to construct a cohesive, charming, and extroverted piece.

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