

MARTIN FRÖST CLARINET

HENRIK MÅWE PIANO

**FRANCIS
POULENC**
(1899–1963)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Allegro tristamente
Romanza
Allegro con fuoco

**ANTONIO
VIVALDI**
(1678–1741)

Selections for Clarinet and Piano,
arr. Andreas N. Tarkmann (b. 1956)
"Delle Passioni"

Allegro ("Lo seguitai felice" from *L'Olimpiade*, RV 725)
Adagio ("Mentre dormi" from *L'Olimpiade*, RV 725)
Molto Allegro ("Gelosia" from *Ottone in villa*, RV 729)

INTERMISSION

**JOHANNES
BRAHMS**
(1833–1897)

Sonata No. 2 for Clarinet and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 120, No. 2

Allegro amabile
Allegro appassionato
Andante con moto; Allegro

BRAHMS

Selected Hungarian Dances WoO 1, *arr. Martin Fröst*

No. 1, Allegro molto
No. 13, Andantino grazioso – Vivace
No. 21, Vivace – Più presto

About the Program

By Lucy Caplan, © 2018

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)
Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962)

“Poulenc looked like a trumpet and spoke with the nasal moan of an English horn,” the composer Ned Rorem has written.

Perhaps it makes sense, then, that Poulenc loved to write for wind and brass instruments, embracing their crisp timbre and virtuosic potential. The Sonata for Clarinet and Piano is one of three woodwind sonatas—the others are for oboe and flute—that he wrote toward the end of his life. Compact and energetic, the piece compresses a multiplicity of musical ideas into three short movements. The first movement is marked *allegro* “tristamente,” a juxtaposition that neatly captures its emotional variety. An elegiac second movement in triple meter follows, all languid, minor-key melody.

The sonata concludes with a flurry of bravura outbursts, the piano matching the clarinet’s exuberance.

Poulenc once noted that his music was not especially original. “I know perfectly well that I’m not one of those composers

who have made harmonic innovations like Igor [Stravinsky], Ravel, or Debussy,” he sheepishly admitted. “But I think there’s room for new music which doesn’t mind using other people’s chords.” He was a musical omnivore, eagerly grazing at the



FITTINGLY...

The Poulenc sonata received its premiere from two similarly broad-minded musicians, Benny Goodman and Leonard Bernstein

artistic landscape around him. And it was a verdant landscape. Poulenc was a member of “Les Six,” a group of French composers who eschewed the influence of German Romanticism, instead crafting a self-consciously modern and French style. They soaked up the cosmopolitan culture of Jazz Age Paris, whose icons included everyone from visual artists like Pablo Picasso to dancers like Josephine Baker. Sometimes, this cultural openness crossed the line from appreciation into appropriation. Poulenc’s first success as a composer was a 1917 piece, *Rapsodie nègre*, that sets faux-Liberian poetry as lyrics and relies on musical tropes of African primitivism. “Other people’s

chords,” in other words, were taken up with varying levels of care and respect.

Like many of Poulenc’s works, the sonata carries a dedication: it is inscribed to the composer Arthur Honegger, a fellow member of Les Six. This penchant for

dedication speaks to Poulenc's immersion in a broader artistic culture and the multitude of influences that his music reflects. Fittingly, the sonata received its premiere from two similarly broad-minded



SPEAKING OF THE CLARINET...

PUC has a long history of presenting non-traditional instruments in recital, including banjos, mandolins, bagpipes, accordions, harpsichords, crumhorns, and even an Anglo-Saxon harp!

musicians, Benny Goodman and Leonard Bernstein. They first performed it at Carnegie Hall in April 1963, just months after Poulenc's death, as part of a concert titled "A Tribute to Francis Poulenc." With that performance, Poulenc moved from being a dedicator to a dedicatee, a musical influence to whom tribute was deservedly paid.

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)

Selections for Clarinet and Piano,
arr. Andreas N. Tarkmann (b. 1956)

Based on the programming choices of most concert presenters, classical radio stations, and ringtone creators, it would be easy to conclude that Vivaldi wrote *The Four Seasons* and not much else. In fact, he was a remarkably prolific composer whose output included a vast number of operas. Until relatively recently, these operas received little attention; the first staged production of a Vivaldi opera in the United States occurred in 1980, more than three centuries after the composer's birth. It is also unclear how many Vivaldi operas exist: he claimed to have written 94, but only about 40 have been identified. Further, Vivaldi was an inveterate borrower who freely reused music across various works—a quality that can make it difficult to tell what is its own distinct opera and what is simply a reworking of existing material.

In a sense, this evening's transcriptions continue that tradition of borrowing and arrangement. Uprooted from its original contexts, the music stands on its own merits. The aria "Lo seguitai felice"—from *L'Olimpiade* (1734), an opera about the Olympic Games that makes use of a popular libretto by Pietro Metastasio—is an opportunity for the singer (or clarinetist) to dazzle the audience with elegant coloratura and elaborate ornamentation. In "Mentre dormi," from the same opera, an achingly delicate melody unspools over a lush, still accompaniment. "Gelosia"—from Vivaldi's first opera, *Ottone in villa* (1713)—rages and laments, alternating fiery passages with moments of woeful introspection.

If the music is open to reinvention, however, other elements of these operas are solidly of their time. All three arias portray women as objects of men's affection rather than fully human people. In "Gelosia," for instance, an incensed man castigates his lover for being an unfaithful, typically untrustworthy woman, and in "Lo seguitai felice" a naïve woman pledges unconditional devotion to the man she loves. These one-dimensional representations of women may be standard for eighteenth-century opera, but that doesn't mean they can't be scrutinized. Instead, we might ask: does this context matter, even when these melodies are divorced from their original context? Can operatic music be separated fully from text and plot? Should it be? Even if these are not fully answerable questions, they're worth considering as contemporary listeners delve into the still little-known world of Vivaldi opera, delighting in its abundant musical beauty.

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)
Sonata No. 2 for Clarinet and Piano
in E-flat Major, Op. 120, No. 2 (1894)

Music by Brahms is often described as "autumnal," and this sonata is no exception. One of Brahms' last works, it was written for clarinet and later transcribed by the composer for viola—both instruments whose warm-hued timbres might evoke red leaves and golden sunlight. The opening movement, aptly called *Allegro amabile*, opens with a gentle, meandering melody. A gust of fervor blows through the second movement, a densely textured scherzo that broadens into a gleaming B-major trio section. The final movement has a

nostalgic sensibility, looking backward in both content and structure as a theme of Mozartean elegance wends its way through a series of lyrical variations.

What does it mean, exactly, to call a piece of music autumnal? The term is paradoxical, conveying both specificity (a certain time of year) and timelessness (it could be any autumn of any year, after all). That paradox speaks to Brahms' historical reputation more generally. He is thought to be both a product of his time—namely a symbol of an elite musical culture that flourished in the late nineteenth century—and a quintessentially German composer whose music holds universal appeal. Yet the very idea of German music as timeless and universal is itself a historically specific one. Nineteenth-century German scholars argued that the best music was universal music—and that such universality just happened to be found in German music, rendering it the apex of musical hierarchy. Because this idea links a composer's nationality with cultural supremacy, it veers all too easily into dangerous political nationalism.

Also paradoxical is the fact that by the time Brahms composed this sonata, he was distinctly out of step with contemporary musical trends. The composer had effectively retired in 1890, but after hearing the superstar clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld play, he was inspired to write a few more pieces, including this sonata. By the early 1890s, other European composers were already pushing at the limits of tonality and musical structure, ushering in a newly modern soundscape. Ironically enough, the sonata's "timeless"

sound was what made it unlike other music of its time. Perhaps this is another of its autumnal qualities: this is music that aligned itself with the year's—or century's—preceding seasons, even as the rest of the world spun on.

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Selected Hungarian Dances *WoO 1*, arr. *Martin Fröst*

Among the treasure trove of historical recordings available on YouTube is an Edison wax cylinder, dating from 1889, on which Brahms himself plays the piano. Through crackle and hiss, a man's voice introduces Brahms, followed by about 60 measures of the composer's performance of the Hungarian Dance No. 1. While the recording gives little sense of Brahms' legendary talents as a pianist, it does illuminate something

of his personality: listening, we can imagine him among friends, at ease, having fun. This is not the usual image of Brahms. Consider the well-known portrait that shows him in serious, bearded middle age. How often have you seen a picture of the composer with a smile on his face?



MAKING HISTORY...

Both the Poulenc Sonata and the Brahms Sonata No. 2 were first played on the PUC series in 1996 by clarinetist Todd Palmer.

It is no coincidence that this less serious image of Brahms goes hand in hand with his less rarefied music. The Hungarian Dances, first published in 1869, were a runaway success. Short bursts of kinetic rhythm and hummable melody, each lasting just a few minutes, they are instantly appealing. They also draw upon a longstanding trend among European composers of writing music with “local” or “ethnic” color, which in practice meant using exoticizing sounds to represent various ethnic groups. In this case, “Hungarian” dances were actually the music of Roma people (pejoratively known as “gypsies”), a persecuted minority who faced racism and discrimination across Europe.

Curiously, although Brahms composed several of the dances himself, sheet music identified him only as the arranger of already-existing tunes. This was a sort of sleight-of-hand that kept a certain distance between Brahms and this musical material, shoring

up the idea of “Hungarian” music as a less prestigious counterpart to his usual fare of symphonies and sonatas.

As the Hungarian Dances grew in popularity, they continued to acquire new cultural meanings. Some even speculate that Brahms’ music influenced the development of ragtime in the United States by way of German immigrants – notably, a man named Julius Weiss who taught them to his African American piano students, including a young Scott Joplin. Making their way from Hungary to Hamburg to Harlem, the Hungarian Dances secured an enduring impact,

heard not just through the noisiness of a nineteenth-century recording, but also in their varied influence across the boundaries of genre, time, and place.

Lucy Caplan is a Ph. candidate at Yale University, where she is writing a dissertation on African American opera in the early twentieth century. She is the recipient of the Rubin Prize for Music Criticism.

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About the Artists



This concert marks Martin Fröst's Princeton University Concerts debut.

Clarinetist, conductor, and Sony Classical recording artist, Martin Fröst is known for pushing musical boundaries and has been described by *The New York Times* as having “a virtuosity and a musicianship unsurpassed by any clarinetist — perhaps any instrumentalist — in my memory.” Fröst has performed with orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, and Orchestre National de France, and regularly collaborates with leading international artists including cellist Sol Gabetta, pianists Yuja Wang and Leif Ove Andsnes, and violist Antoine Tamestit.

At the end of last season he presented his third collaboration with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, *Retrotopia*. The project is a musical journey that explores new repertoire and challenges traditional performance settings, demonstrating Fröst's boundless creativity and curiosity. *Retrotopia* follows in the footsteps of his second critically acclaimed project, *Genesis*, which he performed last season with the Gothenburg Symphony. Future performances are with the Bamberger Symphoniker, where he will be Artist-in-Residence this season, and in Frankfurt in May 2019 with the hr-Sinfonieorchester where he will be Principal Guest Artist.

In July 2018 he notably opened the 25th anniversary gala concert at Verbier Festival alongside some of the world's most renowned classical soloists, including violinist Lisa Batiashvili and pianist Evgeny Kissin. He started the 2018/19 season at the Baltic Sea Festival with a new composition by Jesper Nordin, *Emerging from Currents and Waves*. It is a visionary piece that experiments with motion sensors attached to the clarinet, transforming Fröst's conducting movements into sounds produced by a virtual orchestra.

In May 2017, it was announced that Fröst will be Chief Conductor of the Swedish Chamber Orchestra from the 2019/20 season, and he will return to the Orchestra in spring 2019. Known for artistic collaborations worldwide, this season he continues as Artistic Partner with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra,

where he will perform both as soloist and conductor. In 2018/19 Fröst will appear in some of the world's most important concert venues, including the Barbican Hall in London, Konzerthaus Berlin, and the Concertgebouw Amsterdam. Tour partners for the upcoming season include the BBC Symphony Orchestra with concerts in Spain and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in Switzerland.

In 2019 Fröst will record a new album with transcriptions of Vivaldi arias, inventing a place for the clarinet in the baroque operatic repertoire. This will be his third recording for Sony Classical, following his critically acclaimed album of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. Other chamber music dates this season include performances at Konzerthalle Bamberg with the Ébène String Quartet and hr-Sinfonieorchester's Sendesaal with the Hába Quartet.

Winner of the 2014 Léonie Sonning Music Prize, one of the world's highest musical honors, Fröst was the first clarinetist to be given the award and joined a prestigious list of previous recipients including composer Igor Stravinsky, conductor/pianist Daniel Barenboim, and conductor Sir Simon Rattle.



**This concert marks Henrik Måwe's
Princeton University Concerts debut.**

Swedish pianist Henrik Måwe studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and Royal College of Music in Stockholm where his most important mentor was Staffan Scheja. During his studies, he worked with some of the best pianists and educators in the world, including Dominique Merlet, Dmitri Bashkirov, John O'Connor, and Olli Mustonen.

Måwe regularly collaborates with the international elite among singers and instrumentalists, including clarinetist Martin Fröst, mezzo-soprano Anna Larsson, violinist Christian Svarfvar, and cellist Torleif Thedéen.

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS



Glimpses of a Remarkable History: Princeton University Concerts over the Past 125 Years

By Professor Emeritus Scott Burnham, ©2018

Imagine Princeton in 1894, the year Princeton Borough began governing itself as an entity fully independent from Princeton Township. And now imagine the Old Princeton Inn, a building that stood where Borough Hall stands today. At half past three on a Monday afternoon in late October, a group of music enthusiasts gathered there to enjoy a concert performance by the renowned Kneisel Quartet. They concluded with a piece of new music, namely Antonin Dvorak's most recent string quartet, the so-called "American" quartet, which the Kneisel players had premiered in Boston some months earlier and which was one of the fruits of Dvorak's extended stay in America.

That inaugural concert was organized by the "Ladies Musical Committee," founded in 1894 by Philena Fobes Fine. Mrs. Fine was a remarkable spirit who persuaded the community to rally round and underwrite this new venture, which in its early years presented about six concerts annually. She was the first in a long line of such spirits: to an extraordinary degree, the history of Princeton University Concerts is a history of determined women making wonderful things happen. The initial committee was all women, and the driving forces for supporting and managing the concert series throughout the entire history of Princeton University Concerts have been mostly women, exclusively so for the first fifty years. Mrs. William F. Magie became chair of the committee after Mrs. Fine's death in 1928 (in an interesting parallel, her husband, William F. Magie, had succeeded Mrs.

Fine's husband, Henry B. Fine, in the role of Princeton University's Dean of Faculty back in 1912). And for a fifteen-year span during the 20s and 30s, Mrs. Williamson U. Vreeland did much of the heavy lifting, organizing the concerts, choosing the artists, and managing the finances.

Had you been around in the 1920s, you would have caught the Princeton debut of violinist Fritz Kreisler in March of 1920; or heard Pablo Casals, then lauded as the world's greatest cellist, play Bach in 1922; or heard 23-year-old Jascha Heifetz play five encores after his concert on April 7, 1924; or attended the historic concert in 1925 that featured Polish pianist, composer and statesman Ignaz Paderewski in a program including Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody. Not to mention a steady array of orchestral performances by the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

A turning point for the Ladies Musical Committee came in 1929, marking a new and crucial stage in its relationship with Princeton University. The first move was to stabilize and augment the committee's finances. Mrs. Fine had led the concert series for over thirty years at the time of her death. During those years, she had managed to raise about \$35,000 to support the concerts. In 1929, Mrs. Jenny Hibben and others helped increase that number to about \$52,000, and the committee established a fund in Mrs. Fine's memory, stating that the monies had "been raised for the purpose of securing for Princeton audiences better

music than they could otherwise afford." The name of the committee changed to Princeton University Concerts Committee at this time as well, but its constitution insisted that "at least a majority of the members shall be women" (this wording was not altered until 1977!). In accordance with the name change, the University became increasingly involved throughout the 1930s and 40s. Nominations to the committee had forthwith to be approved by the President of Princeton University (the President at the time was John Grier Hibben, husband of Mrs. Jenny Hibben); the university Controller's Office soon began keeping the books; and in 1946 President Harold Dodds authorized payment for the building of a stage set that would enable the chamber concerts to move to McCarter Theater, where the orchestral concerts and showcase recitals were already happening.

When Mrs. Magie resigned in 1944, Professor Roy Dickinson Welch took over as head of the committee. Welch was also the father of the Music Department, which began in 1934 as a subsection of the Art and Archaeology department. A dozen years later, in 1946, Music became an official university department, housed in Clio Hall. In that same year, Welch hired Mrs. Katharine (Kit) Bryan as concert manager. They had collaborated before: in 1935, Mrs. Bryan co-founded the Princeton Society of Musical Amateurs with Welch; the group still exists today.

Among the many highlights during Mrs. Magie's tenure was the historic 1937 appearance of American singer Marian Anderson, who sang four sets of arias

and Lieder and then concluded with a stirring set of spirituals. Also notable were several concerts by the Trapp Family Singers in the early 1940s. Highlights of Mrs. Bryan's early years as concert manager include performances by the recently formed Bach Aria Group, founded and directed by Princeton legend William H. Scheide.

When Mrs. Bryan retired in 1964, she was replaced by Mrs. Maida Pollock, who greatly professionalized the entire operation, bringing it up to speed in ways that are still in effect today. A force of nature, Mrs. Pollock ran the Princeton University Orchestra as well, and was also very involved with the Princeton Friends of Music. Due to the greatly increased expense of hiring symphony orchestras, the concert series stopped programming orchestras in 1975 and began focusing exclusively on chamber music. In a recent interview, Pollock asserted that her most cherished goal was to get a worthy concert hall for chamber music up and running at the university, and in the 20th year of her 22-year tenure, her efforts were finally rewarded. Richardson Auditorium became the concert hall it is today in 1984, thanks to a donation from David A. Richardson '66, in memory of his father David B. Richardson '33, a lifelong enthusiast of classical music.

One of the most memorable nights of Mrs. Pollock's reign was almost a disaster, because Spanish singer Victoria de los Ángeles had to cancel at nearly the last minute. Pollock quickly obtained the services of Russian soprano Galina

Vishnevskaya, who happened to be the wife of Mstislav Rostropovich; he played the piano for her in an electrifying performance.

After Mrs. Pollock retired, Nate Randall took over in 1988. Randall broadened the purview of Princeton University Concerts, introducing programs of jazz music and world music. He also oversaw the 100th anniversary season of the series, and assisted with the inauguration of the Richardson Chamber Players, along with their Founding Director, Michael Pratt.

Our current Concert Director, Marna Seltzer, came to Princeton in 2010. Recognized by Musical America in 2017 as one of their "30 Movers and Shapers," Seltzer's many audience-friendly innovations have clearly established Princeton University Concerts at the forefront of the future of classical music. These include new ways to interact with the musical artists, such as live music meditation sessions, late-night chamber jams, and "Performances Up Close" that feature onstage seating. In introducing these additional ways to get involved in music, Marna Seltzer continues to honor the original and sustaining intention of Philena Fobes Fine: that Princeton University Concerts should reflect the values of our community as a whole. As such, it enjoys pride of place as perhaps the finest ongoing town/gown affiliation in Princeton.

The history of Princeton University Concerts has been remarkably consistent for these past 125 years. Passionate,

committed women (and a few men) have presented the premier musical artists of their age, from fiery 20-somethings taking the concert world by storm to larger-than-life stars who can captivate us merely by taking the stage. An exalted lineup of the world's finest string quartets has always maintained pride of place in the series, from the Kneisel Quartet in the first decades through the Budapest Quartet in the 1930s to the Takács, Brentano, and Jerusalem Quartets today. A special relationship has always endured between all these musical artists and their Princeton presenters. Back in the day, Mrs. Fine, Mrs. Magie and Mrs. Vreeland often entertained artists after the concert; as an early history of the Concerts Committee put it: "the

artists came to think of Princeton people as their friends." That holds true now more than ever, for our visiting artists regularly declare that they love playing in Richardson Auditorium, they love the way they are treated by Marna and her staff, and they love all of you, who so demonstrably value the experience of music, who take in and give back the brilliant energy of their cherished performances.

"Music offers infinite capacity for infinite self-renewal." This is what Music Department founder Roy Dickinson Welch fervently believed, and this is what Princeton University Concerts will continue to offer us, one unforgettable concert after another.

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