ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: ECHOES OF CELESTIAL ARIAS: THE BASSOON'S HARMONIOUS JOURNEY THROUGH ADAPTATION

Qun Ren, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2024

Dissertation directed by: Professor Joseph Grimmer
Associate Professor Sarah Frisof
School of Music

This performance dissertation examines the potential of musical expression and technical skills on bassoon through a series of arrangements for the instrument. Each program features original works in addition to vocal and other instrumental works that were transcribed for bassoon. The works performed and discussed in this document include: Steven Dibner's arrangement of *Fantasia di Bravura on motives of Donizetti's La Figlia del Reggimento*; William Winstead's *First Operatic Anthology* and arrangement of *Carmen Fantasy*; Antonio Torriani's *Divertimento on various themes from Lucie de Lammermoor*; John Steinmetz's *Suite from an Imaginary Opera;* J.S. Bach's *Sonata for Viola de gamba, BWV 1029* and his *Oboe Concerto BWV 1053r*; Maurice Allard's *Variation on a theme by Paganini (Capriccio 24)*; Fritz Kreisler's *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud*; Johannes Brahms' *Sonata for Piano and Violoncello in E minor, op. 38*; C.P.E. Bach's *Cello Sonata in A minor, H. 432*; and G.F. Handel's *Trio Sonata in G minor, HWV 393*.

ECHOES OF CELESTIAL ARIAS:
THE BASSOON'S HARMONIOUS JOURNEY THROUGH ADAPTATION

by

Qun Ren

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2024

Advisory Committee:

Lecturer Joseph Grimmer, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Sarah Frisof, Co-Chair
Professor Robert DiLutis
Lecturer Emily Tsai
Professor Mark Shayman

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To my beloved parents, to whom I am grateful for this precious life

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I would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported me throughout this process. This dissertation could not have been possible without the kind people around me.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to my teacher, Professor Joseph Grimmer, who encouraged, inspired and supported me with his kindness, patience and knowledge throughout my time at Maryland. Professor Grimmer taught and continued to challenge me to become a better human, learner and musician. His support, guidance and inspiration have been priceless to me. It has been a great fortune and honor to be his very first doctoral student. I am forever grateful for his contribution of time and effort to my growth over the past few years, as it will continue to nurture my life and career beyond my academic studies.

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I am most grateful for my former teacher George Sakakeeny and his wife Jian Dong Sakakeeny, who gave me the invitation to study in the United States in 2011, where this journey began.

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Introduction

For my final performance dissertation project, I aim to showcase the lyricism and technical vitality of the bassoon through a selection of repertoire that is borrowed from vocal and instrumental music. I have always wanted to expand beyond the standard repertory and explore the expressive side of the bassoon. In recent recitals, I have performed several string music arrangements including Schumann's *Five Folk Songs* (originally for cello), Schubert's *Arpeggione*, JS Bach's *Cello Suite No. 1*, arrangements of Glinka's *Viola Sonata in D minor*, and Max Bruch's *Romanza* for viola. I was initially drawn to the beautiful melodies and longed to play them on the bassoon. As a wind player, I encountered several challenges when I first approached the music. Questions I asked myself include: "How can I emulate the articulation or vibrato of a string player?" or "How can I manage my breathing effectively while playing through three pages without experiencing excessive fatigue?" In addition to these challenges, achieving a convincing musical performance on the bassoon with adapted repertoire is not easy; however, I found myself truly enjoying the process of learning and performing these pieces.

During the process of researching this repertoire, I spent much time listening to recordings. I made myself a list of repertoire that I would really hope to perform on bassoon; however, realistically not all of them could work well on bassoon. I was very fond of Sibelius' *Violin Concerto* and Richard Strauss' *Oboe Concerto*; but due to various factors such as the basic nature of bassoon, limited time, and other factors, I had to cut the list short and find other music for the recital. In addition, I wanted to make my project

appealing to those who might be interested either in performing these sets of arrangements or teaching students of various levels.

Some of the earliest arrangements in the history can be traced back to the early fourteenth century; a majority of examples include a variety of keyboard arrangements and lute intabulations of choral polyphonic works.[1] Sociocultural circumstances also increased the popularity of musical arrangements, as more music lovers wanted opportunities to perform different music on instruments they had at home. Music arranging and publishing especially became more profitable when printing technology became more advanced in the nineteenth century. However, not all arrangements on the market were easy; many of them required much more advanced techniques and stylistic nuance for performance. Often, professional musicians and aristocratic amateurs wanted more challenging arrangements to study for their entertainment and pleasure. Over the next few centuries, more and more performers sought arrangements of popular tunes from symphonic works, operatic works, and even pop and jazz works. Professional bassoonists, like Paul Hanson, and bassoon ensembles such as the Breaking Winds have often diversified their musical careers by performing a variety of arrangements.

For my dissertation project, I conceived three challenging programs with clear themes. Program A, "Recitative", is a collection of arrangements featuring operas, such as *La traviata, The Barber of Seville, Carmen, La fille du regiment, and Lucia di Lammermoor*. Program B, "Echoes", features original works for strings, including Brahms' *Sonata for Cello in E minor*, and J.S. Bach's *Sonata for Viola de gamba, BWV 1029*. Program C, "Nightfall", features arrangements including J.S. Bach's *BWV 1053r Concerto for Oboe* and C.P.E. Bach's *H.432 Sonata for Cello*, performed with a string

[1] Malcolm Boyd, *Arrangement*. Groves Music Online. 2001.

quartet and a harpsichord. Through these last two programs, I hope to explore the vocal qualities of the bassoon, mimicking the uninterrupted phrases of string instruments achieved with bowing techniques, and integrating these ideas by performing with a string chamber ensemble.

Chapter One: Dissertation Recital A, "Recitative"

February 13, 2024

8:00PM

Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Building

University of Maryland, College Park

Qun Ren, bassoon

Assisted by:

Yuhe Wang, piano

Fantasia di Bravura on motives of Donizetti's La Figlia del Reggimento (2006)	Giuseppe Tamplini (1808-1888) Arr. Steven Dibner (b.1954)
Suite from an Imaginary Opera (2005)	John Steinmetz (b.1951)
First Operatic Anthology (2001) "Sempre libera" from Verdi's *La traviata* "Mon Couers'ouvre a ta voix" from Saint-Saëns' Samson and Delilah "Largo al factotum" from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*	William Winstead (1943-2020)
Divertimento on various themes from Lucie de Lammermoor	Antonio Torriani (1829-1911)
Carmen Fantasy (1882)	Georges Bizet (1838-1875) Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908) Arr. William Winstead

Fantasia di Bravura on motives of Donizetti's La Figlia del Reggimento (2006)

Giuseppe Tamplini (1808-1888)

Steven Dibner (b.1954)

Born in Bologna, Italy, bassoonist Giuseppe Tamplini performed with *La Scala Orchestra* in Milan and moved to London in 1847, where he served as the principal bassoon with Her Majesty's Theatre Orchestra.[2] He was given the patent of his twenty-three-keyed bassoon in 1853, which significantly improved the higher range of the instrument and allowed the musician to play with more precise control and a wider range of dynamics.[3]

The *Fantasia di Bravura* highlights the high range of the bassoon. The highest written pitch in this piece is an E^b5. Despite the extensive range on the modern bassoon (most instrument makers can drill an extra tone hole for the access of $G^{\#}/A^b5$), it was considered very impressive to be able to play in that register in the mid-19th century. Sixty years after Tamplini received the patent for his new instrument, Igor Stravinsky premiered his famous ballet *Le Sacre du printemps* in 1913, which requires the principal bassoonist to play a C5 in the entrance; this passage continues to be challenging and stressful for many professional bassoonists.

Tamplini's inspiration for his twenty-three-keyed bassoon originated from the work of Charles-Joseph and Adelphe Sax, who demonstrated a twenty-four-keyed metal bassoon at the London Exhibition in 1851, two years before he received his patent.[4] The twenty-four-keyed was the ancestor of the *Boehm System* bassoon, which eventually

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[2] Lyndasey G. Langwill, *The 'Boehm' Bassoon: A Retrospect,* The Galpin Society Journal, Vol.12. May 1959. p.66.
[3] Christin Schillinger, *Repertory and the historic bassoon.* Early Music, Vol. 46, No.3 (August 2018), p.534-534
[4] William Waterhouse, *Bassoon.* Grove Music Online. 2001.

developed into the modern bassoon which has thirty keys. William Waterhouse has a photograph showing the evolution of the bassoon from the early-18th century through the mid-19th century. The design and the look of *Boehm System bassoon* is very similar to the modern bassoon.

Figure 1 . From left to right: 1. Three keyed by Johann Christoph Denner, Nuremburg, 1700 ca. 2. Four keyed by Thomas Stanesby. 3. Seven-key by Friedrich Kirst, Potsdam, late 18th century. 4. Boehm system, with thirty keys, by Triébert-Marzoli-Boehm, Paris, c1855. *Source:* adapted from William Waterhouse, *Bassoon*. 2001.

Steven Dibner, former Associate Principal bassoonist of the San Francisco Symphony, rearranged Tamplini's *Fantasia di Bravura on motives of Donizetti's La Figlia del Reggimento* in 2006. The term *Bravura* is used to characterize a piece or an aria that showcases either the vocalist's or the instrumentalist's brilliant skills.[5] The piece explores several selected motives from Donizetti's opera *The Daughter of Regiment* in the form of a theme and variations, showcasing both the expressive lyricism and the dazzling technical virtuosity of the performer. The piece features elements from a variety of arias and recitatives including *Le camarade est amoureux* and *Je suis soldat* at the end of Act I.

The original opera *The Daughter of Regiment* was premiered in February, 1840 featured the *bel canto* style. Owen Jander defines *bel canto* as an Italian vocal style that features beautiful legato and light sound in the high register from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is almost exclusively applied in opera works by Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti.[6] In my interpretation of this work, I utilized light articulation for technical passages, and tender, singing-like tone for the lyrical phrases contrasting greatly with the heavier tonal approach to the German romantic operas style.

Suite from an Imaginary Opera (2005)

John Steinmetz (b.1951)

Born in 1951, John Steinmetz is an American composer, performer and educator in the Los Angeles area. As a composer, his works have been commissioned by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the South Bay Chamber Music Society, the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music, and Pacific Serenades. As a bassoonist, he has performed with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and many other professional groups. As an educator,

[5] Owen Jander, *Bravura*, Grove Music Online. 2001.
[6] Owen Jander, *Bel Canto*, Grove Music Online. 2001.

Steinmetz has also frequently given master classes, conference speeches and pre-concert lectures.

Written in 2001, the *Suite from an Imaginary Opera* was originally written for English horn. Steinmetz adapted the piece in 2005 for bassoon and piano. The piece consists of five movements, inspired by the operatic genre; Steinmetz intended to create a musical narrative in the form of an "imaginary opera". The work features expressive lyricism, dramatic contrast and other operatic elements. For instance, Steinmetz gave each movement a title based on operatic terminology: *Aria* (I & IV), *Recitative* (III) and *Apotheosis* (V). Movement II, *Dance*, contrasts with the other movements in the way that it primarily highlights the mechanical nature of the instrument. Moreover, Steinmetz painted this piece in a dialogical way, intertwining the bassoon voice with piano, achieving the conversational elements of an opera.

In his own program notes, Steinmetz wrote, "Many operas start optimistically and end in tragedy, but this piece imagines the opposite trajectory, beginning in pessimism or depression and working toward a happy ending…The musical impulses are operatic, emphasizing lyricism and unabashed emotional expression." [7]

First Operatic Anthology (2001)

William Winstead (1943-2020)

American bassoonist William Winstead has influenced many professional bassoonists world-wide; many of his students currently hold core roles in major classical orchestras across the United States. Winstead was the Principal Bassoon with the

[7] John Steinmetz, *Suite from an Imaginary Opera*. Trevco Music Publishing. 2001.

Cincinnati Symphony for thirty-one years as well as a dedicated professor at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music for thirty years.

During his lifetime, Winstead made prolific arrangements for bassoon with other chamber instrumentations. Among these works, the *Operatic Anthology* series includes two collections consisting of many popular operatic excerpts. The *First Operatic Anthology* features "Sempre libera" from Verdi's *La Traviata*, "Mon couers'ouvre a ta voix" from Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah*, and "Largo al factotum"from Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Each excerpt showcases a unique character or mood from different operatic works, requiring different techniques and phrasings for performers to achieve best suitable musical interpretations.

Divertimento on various themes from Lucie de Lammermoor

Antonio Torriani (1829-1911)

Born in 1829, Italian bassoonist Antonio Torriani is regarded as one of the finest bassoonists in Italy of the nineteenth century. After his studies at the Milan Conservatory in 1850, Torriani joined his teacher at the Teatro Carcano as the Co-Principal Bassoon. He then inherited his mentor's position the following year at the Teatro alla Scala until 1893. During his time at the Teatro alla Scala, Torriani impressed many composers including Giuseppe Verdi, who wrote many important bassoon solos in his operas that were testimony to Torriani.[8] As an arranger and composer, Torriani wrote a number of works, including chamber music pieces and method books for oboe and bassoon.[9]

The *Divertimento on various themes from Lucie de Lammermoor* stands out from other works through its virtuosity and vocal qualities. The name *Divertimento* implies that

[8] Hop Vine Music. *Il Tramonto*. Accessed March 16, 2024.
[9] *Antonio Torriani*. WorldCat, Entities. 2001

the music is meant to entertain listeners rather than to display structural and emotional complexities, which are often found in sonatas or concertos.[10] As a skilled performer, Torriani knew how to write music to demonstrate the virtuosity and vitality of the bassoon. The piece explores several themes from Donizetti's opera *Lucia de Lammermoor*, including the famous duet between Lucia and Edgardo, *Qui de sposa eterna…Ah! Verrano a te sull'aure* from the end of Act I.

Carmen Fantasy (1882)

Opera, Georges Bizet (1838-1875)

Violin Work, Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908)

Arr. William Winstead (1943-2020)

Spanish violinist Pablo de Sarasate was best known for his impressive technique and expressive musicality. Sarasate began playing violin at the age of five and later studied with M.R. Sáez in Madrid and with Delphin Alard at the Paris Conservatoire.[11] He is widely considered one of the most distinguished violinists of the nineteenth century.

Inspired by George Bizet's most popular opera work, *Carmen*, Sarasate borrowed and integrated several motives from the opera into his show piece, the *Carmen Fantasy* in 1882; later, Winstead created an arrangement for bassoon and piano. In this arrangement, due to the nature of bassoon, Winstead modified many double stops to singular melodies by either splitting the harmony to accompaniment voice, or only picking the top voice of the double stop. Additionally, Winstead utilized the various articulations one can achieve with a wind instrument to mimic a variety of string acoustics. For example, the crispness of bassoon staccato is a perfect substitute for the pizzicato on a violin; additionally, the

[10] Hubert Unverricht, revised by Cliff Eisen. *Divertimento*. Grove Music Online. 2001
[11] Boris Schwarz, *Sarasate, Pablo.* Grove Music Online. 2001

double-tonguing passages imitate the accelerated bowing for fast running sixteenth note passages.

Chapter Two: Dissertation Recital B, “Echoes”

February 26, 2024

5:00PM

Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Building

University of Maryland, College Park

Qun Ren, bassoon

Assisted by:

Guzal Isametdinova, piano

Sonata for Viola da gamba BWV 1029 (1730-1740) — Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Vivace
Adagio
Allegro

Liebeslied & Liebesfreud (from Three Old Viennese Dances) (1910) — Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)

Variation on a theme by Paganini (Capriccio 24) — Maurice Allard (1923-2004)

Sonata for Piano and Violoncello in E Minor, Op.38 (1862-1865) — Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo
Allegretto quasi Menuetto
Allegro

Sonata for Viola da gamba, BWV 1029 (1730-1740)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Born in Eisenach, Germany, Johann Sebastian Bach is notable for his prolific musical output and immaculate compositional style. His works cover a wide range of genres, including oratorios, operas, cantatas, instrumental sonatas and concertos. His works are best known to embody the true essence of the Baroque style. Baroque music encompasses a wide variety of dance forms and functional music (i.e. for special occasions), and music was usually written to convey a certain emotional affect. Some technical features of Baroque music include a continuous bass, which is often referred to as basso continuo, abundant ornamentation, sharp contrasts and dynamic extremes.[12]

Although the precise dates of composition have been lost in history, scholars speculate that Bach wrote his three sonatas for viola da gamba, *BWV 1027-1029* between the years 1730 and 1740. [13] Unlike the first two sonatas, *BWV 1029* is much more like a concerto. In the first movement *Vivace*, the viola da gamba introduces the primary theme, followed by an imitation on harpsichord, and the two voices gradually unite to create an intertwined contrapuntal texture. The second movement is a lyrical *Adagio* in B^b major which features beautiful linear melodies. The last movement *Allegro* recalls the dialogical imitation from the first movement.

From the perspective of performance practice, it is important to consider how the instruments were historically constructed and meant to be played, along with the general stylistic elements from that time period. The viola da gamba is a six-string instrument that was regularly played throughout the Renaissance and Baroque periods.[14] The structure and

[12] Claude V. Palisca. *Baroque*. Grove Music Online. 2001.
[13] Renée Hemsing Patten, *The Three Sonatas for Viola da gamba and Harpsichord by J. S. Bach, Their Origins, Features and Versatility*. University of Colorado, Boulder. 2020.
[14] Ian Woodfield, *Viola de gamba*. Grove Music Online. 2001.

playing setup resemble that of the modern cello, but the bows had a more extreme curvature and gut strings were often used, both of which lead to a more effervescent sound.[15] The bassoon is a wind instrument, where acoustic and artistic expression originate from players' air control and variety of articulations. It is important to utilize the air in the same way that someone uses the bow to create sound on a viola da gamba. The performer should closely observe the natural movement of bowing on a gamba to make informed phrasing decisions, i.e. whether the sound should decay, sustain or grow.

Liebesleid & Liebesfreud (from Three Old Viennese Dances) (1910)

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)

Born in Vienna, Austria, American composer and violinist Fritz Kreisler is referred to as one of the greatest virtuosic soloists of all time. [16] Boris Schwarz described Kreisler's unique playing style as follows: "Without exertion (he practised little) he achieved a seemingly effortless perfection. There was never any conscious technical display. The elegance of his bowing, the grace and charm of his phrasing, the vitality and boldness of his rhythm, and above all his tone of indescribable sweetness and expressiveness were marvelled at." [17]

Liebesleid (*Love's Sorrow*), *Liebesfreud* (*Love's Joy*) and *Schön Rosmarin* (*Lovely Rosemary*) are three short pieces from Kreisler's larger work, *Alt-Wiener Tanzweisen* (*Three Old Viennese Dances*). The tender melodies and elegant ornamentation display Kreisler's witty and charming musical style. The *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud* were later adapted by Kreisler's friend Sergei Rachmaninoff for piano. [18]

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[15] Ian Woodfield and Lucy Robinson. *Viol*. Grove Music Online. 2001.
[16] Boris Schwarz, *Kreisler, Fritz.* Grove Music Online. 2001.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Geoffrey Norris. *Rachmaninoff, Serge*. Grove Music Online, 2001.

Although both pieces are simple and short, they both share a few details that Kreisler cleverly incorporated to make the music more entertaining. Both works were written in the meter of 3/4. While the piano is phrased in groups of three, emphasizing the downbeat, the violin part is phrased in a duple pattern, thus creating a feeling of syncopation and hemiola. Moreover, Kreisler used temporal and dynamic differences to help develop the mood of each piece. For example, he used the Allegro to highlight the happiness in the *Love's Joy*, as opposed to the Tempo di Ländler he used to convey the deep sentiment in the violin part from the *Love's Sorrow.*

Variation on a theme by Paganini (Capriccio 24)

Maurice Allard (1923-2004)

Born in 1782, Italian violinist and mandolinist Niccolò Paganini is remembered as one of the most dazzling violin virtuosos of all time. His violin technique was so stellar that people would often gossip about how he traded his soul with the devil to achieve such great heights in violin playing.[19] His monumental collection, *24 Caprices for Solo Violin*, symbolizes the height of violinistic virtuosity and pyrotechnics interwoven with beautiful themes and expressivity.

Caprice No. 24 was written in the form of a theme and eleven variations in a minor. The theme was later adapted by many renowned composers including Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Witold Lutosławski into their own compositions. [20]

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[19] Edward Neill. *Paganini, Nicolò*. Grove Music Online. 2001.
[20] Wenli Zhou. *Piano Variations by Liszt, Lutosławski, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff on a Theme by Paganini*. D.M.A Thesis, Rive University, 2012.

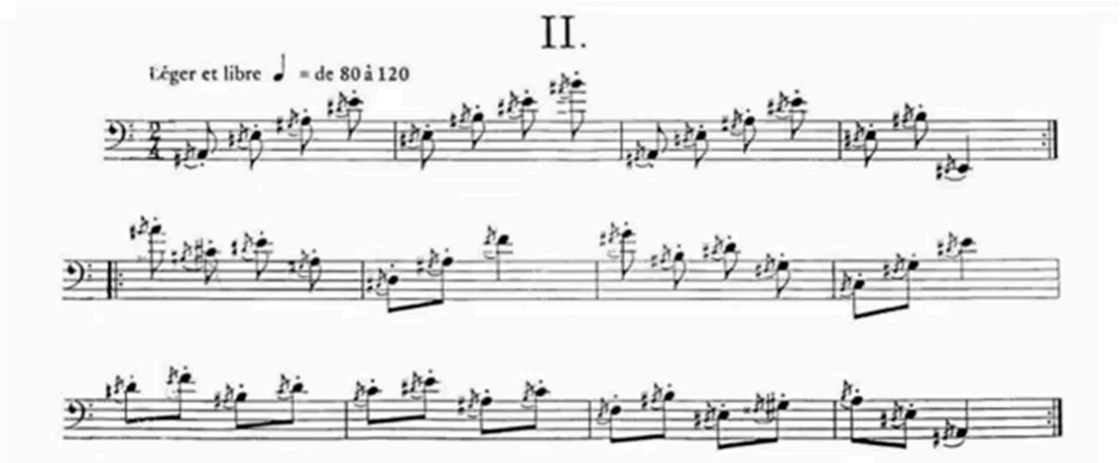

Figure 2. *Variation II*.
Source: Maurice Allard, *Variations on a theme by Paganini (Capriccio 24)*. Paris, Gérard Billaudot Éditeur, 1986.

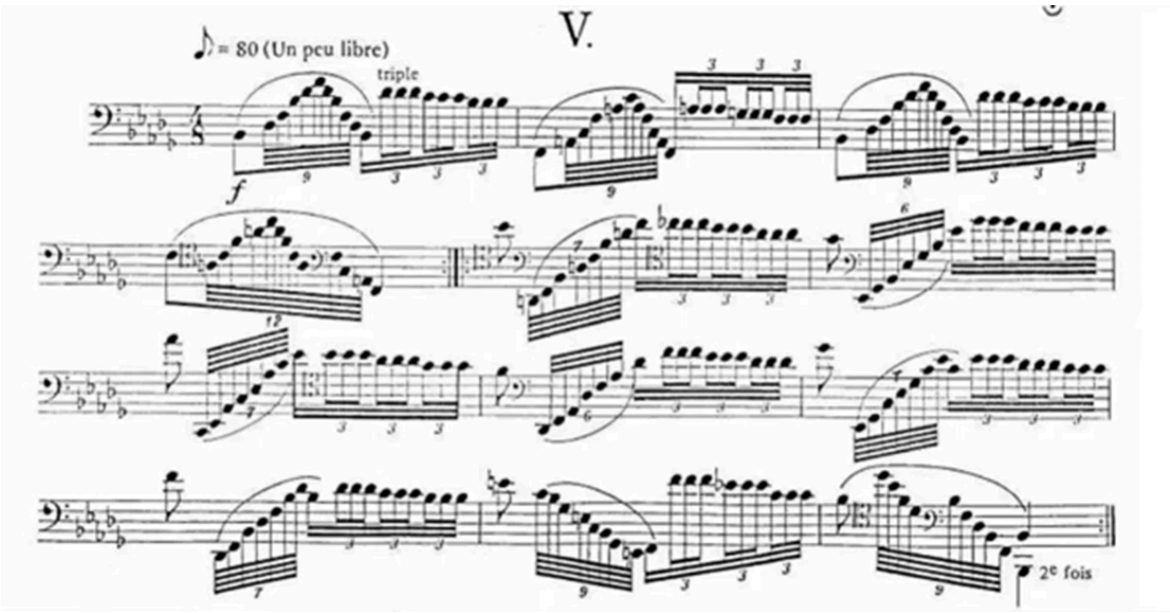

Figure 3. *Variation V*.
Source: Maurice Allard, *Variations on a theme by Paganini (Capriccio 24)*. Paris, Gérard Billaudot Éditeur, 1986.

Maurice Allard, a renowned 20th-century French bassoonist and pedagogue, adapted Paganini's No.24 Caprice for solo bassoon. In this edition, the piece kept the same form with the original theme and eleven variations and was originally written for the

French system bassoon. The French system is a type of bassoon design that grants easier access to high ranges and a unique, brighter timbre, as opposed to the German system, which produces a darker, warmer sound and does not have the advantage of a higher range. Nowadays, professional bassoonists around the globe primarily perform on the German system bassoon. In his version of the caprice, Allard utilized many extended techniques in hopes of mimicking the effects heard in the original version for violin. For instance, in variation II, the grace notes and short slurred staccatos replicate the sound effects of violin *pizzicato*; in variation V, the violin *saltando* effect is replaced by triple tonguing on the bassoon. In addition, Allard wrote the variation IV and V in the B-flat minor to showcase the lowest note on modern bassoons (both German and French system) which is the B^b1. It is reasonable to assume that Allard would've wanted the whole thing in A minor, not only the original work is in the key of A minor, also the rest of variations are in the same key as well. In my recital, I used a low A extension, and performed these two variations (IV and V) in the key of A minor, despite Allard writing them in the B-flat minor.

Sonata for Piano and Violoncello in E Minor, Op.38 (1862-1865)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

German pianist and composer Johannes Brahms was one of the most influential composers during the nineteenth century. A master of counterpoint, he was gifted with creating complex harmonizations within a traditional classical structure. Although Brahms was greatly inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach, he was innovative in how he adapted musical forms and harmonic structures. [21]

[21] George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch. *Brahms, Johnnes.* Groves Music Online. 2001.

Written between 1862 and 1865, the first *Cello Sonata in E Minor* is an earlier composition, exemplifying his stylistic evolution towards structural coherence and motivic development. [22] The sonata consists of three movements, *Allegro non troppo*, *Allegro quasi Menuetto* and *Allegro*.

The most challenging part of performing this work is mimicking the cello bowings and recreating long legato phrases on bassoon while keeping the physical body at ease. The performer must manage his or her breath well in order to successfully build towards musical climaxes without having to interrupt the longer phrase. In addition to performance endurance, it is common to replace the chordal effect or double stops with quick arpeggios. Applying tenutos to the lowest note of a chord also enhances the harmonic texture and bass foundations.

[22] Michael Musgrave. *Review: Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation by Walter Frisch.* Journal of the American Musicology Society. Vol 38, Issue 3. 1985.

Chapter Three: Dissertation Recital C

March 12, 2024

5:00PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

Qun Ren, bassoon

Assisted by:

Joseph Grimmer, bassoon

Guzal Isametdinova, piano

Qian Zhong, violin

Yuanju-Liu, violin

Seth Goodman, viola

Katherine McCarthy, Cello

Cello Concerto in A Minor, H 432 (1750) — Carl Philipp Emanual Bach (1714-1788)

Allegro assai
Andante
Allegro assai

Oboe Concerto, BWV 1053r (arr. in C Major) (1738) — Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Allegro
Siciliano
Allegro

Trio Sonata in G Minor, HWV 393 (1719 ca.) — George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Andante
Allegro (energico)
Largo
Allegro (con fermezza)

Cello Concerto in A minor, H 432 (1750)

Carl Philipp Emanual Bach (1714-1788)

German composer Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach received his musical education in his early years with his father, J.S. Bach. In 1738, he served as a harpsichordist at the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia in Berlin and later as a music director in Hamburg in 1768. As a prolific composer, C.P.E. Bach composed more than one thousand cataloged works, spanning various genres including keyboard sonatas, sacred cantatas, chamber, orchestral and vocal works.[23] In his *Cello Concerto in A minor, H. 432*, we observe how C.P.E. Bach modifies and expands upon the Baroque concerto and incorporates greater structural freedom and expression. It remains one of Bach's finest and most commonly performed cello concertos today.

Written in 1750, the *Concerto in A minor, H. 432* contains three alternative solo parts for violoncello (H.432), flute (H.431) and harpsichord (H.430). There is no further evidence suggesting which instrument the piece was intended for originally.[24] The concerto utilizes sonata form and consists of three movements: *Allegro assai, Andante and Allegro assai.* In the first movement *Allegro assai*, the orchestra introduces an arpeggiated five-note motif (A-C-E-E-F) in the opening ritornello, which launches the listener into a world of excitement and drama right off the bat. The compound meter further conveys a strong sense of flow and energy that enriches the vigorous character within the work. The second movement *Andante* unfolds with a beautiful lyrical melody that later develops into sublime interwoven counterpoint with the orchestra. Finally, the five-note motif from the first movement returns in the last movement as an embellished turn that dances with the

[23] Christoph Wolff and Ulrich Leisinger. *Bach, Carl Philipp Emanual.* Grove Music Online, 2001. Chapter 1.
[24] Ibid, chapter 5.

orchestra, creating a sparkling and exciting dialogue that catapults the concerto to the finish.

Oboe Concerto in F Major, BWV 1053r (1738)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Born in Eisenach, Germany, Johann Sebastian Bach is notable for his large productivity and quality of compositions. His works cover a wide range of genres from vocal to instrumental, such as oratorios, operas, cantatas, instrumental sonatas and concertos. He and his works are often referred to as the representation of the Baroque style. Baroque music is often associated with dances and has characteristics of simplicity.

Due to the loss of the original manuscript, the *Oboe Concerto in F Major, BWV 1053r* is a reconstructed work, hence named with an "r" after the catalogue number; this concerto was later arranged by Johann Sebastian Bach for harpsichord, which became the *Concerto in E Major, BWV 1053*, in 1738. The concerto has three movements, with the slow second movement taking on the form of *Siciliano.* The term "siciliano" refers to a type of dance or song that features swinging, lilted rhythms and is often composed in a compound duple meter originating from Sicily.

Trio Sonata in G Minor, HWV 393 (1719 ca.)

Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759)

Born in Halle, Germany, George Friedrich Handel is renowned for his prolific compositional output, with a special emphasis on his operas, oratorios and instrumental sonatas. The *Trio Sonata in G Minor, HWV 393* dates from one of his collections that he

wrote during his stay in Dresden.[25] In Anthony Hick's encyclopedic article on *George Frideric Handel*, he states that the work was probably composed around 1719; however, he also noted that there is not enough evidence to fully support the authenticity of HWV 393, as it is difficult to place the work within Handel's output based on its unique characteristics.[26]

The *Trio Sonata in G Minor* was originally composed for two violins and harpsichord. The work contains four movements: *Andante, Allegro, Largo* and *Allegro*, which is a typical form structure for Baroque church sonatas.[27] Adapting this work for bassoon presents distinctive challenges. One of the difficulties is replicating Baroque string bowing techniques and articulations. It requires refined air control for a wind player to imitate string bowings in order to convey musical gestures and dynamic changes. Furthermore, it is important to bring out the dialogical and lyrical qualities that lend towards an authentic and engaging performance of repertoire in the Baroque style.

[25] Anthony Hicks, *Handel*, *George Frideric.* Grove Music Online. 2001, Ch. 17.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

Conclusion

Performing and exploring arrangements in Western Classical music has become a common practice for modern musicians. It offers artists the opportunity to engage thoroughly with compositions beyond the original scope of their instruments and provides them with valuable learning experiences that they can use to extend their musicianship. These arrangements allow musicians to transcend traditional performance boundaries and limitations imposed by our primary instruments, leading to a more fulfilling and well-rounded artistic experience. I hope this project will somehow contribute to help broaden the repertoire in the bassoon community through different levels and interests.

The course of learning these arrangements has been joyous, challenging and rewarding. These three unique programs examine the great potential of the lyricism of bassoon beyond its standard repertory. By performing selections originally written for voice, strings, and other wind instruments, I found the bassoon to be an effective medium to express my musical voice. Out of the three programs, I found the music originally written for cello to be the most challenging: The uninterrupted musical phrases require high stamina as well as the strategically planned breathing, that is often not only breathing air in the middle of a line without breaking phrases, as well as exhaling properly to avoid stuck breaths. However, whether I am mimicking lyrical vocal phrases or bow strokes through a variety of articulations and musical gestures, I have discovered unique ways to achieve artistic satisfaction and fulfillment. I believe it is critical for classical musicians to be knowledgeable of different perspectives in order to be a sensitive, beautiful and well-developed artist.

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