

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: OBOE QUARTETS: 1970–2020  
Sarah Rose Balzer, Doctor of Musical Arts,  
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Dissertation directed by: Professor of Oboe, Mark Hill, and School of  
Music

Over the last fifty years, the oboe quartet genre has continued to grow. The repertoire has garnered a great variety of works ranging in form and style from dance suites, to programmatic storytelling, to twelve-tone works. This dissertation explores works for oboe quartet composed between 1970 and 2020 with the aim of showcasing the breadth of literature, while highlighting some of the more important and underperformed works. A brief history of the genre from the early classical through mid-twentieth century explores the ensemble's development and lists many prominent works within the oboe quartet idiom. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of the genre since 1970, including several influential oboists and ensembles. These works are examined in several categories, providing an overview of the scope of the literature. First, works that are based on classical or baroque forms and styles are examined. Following this is a discussion of several works that are based on variations. Next, works that are based on dances are discussed. Following that, pieces that can be described as single-movement atonal works will be examined.

Several programmatic works or pieces that evoke a specific image are then detailed. This is followed by a discussion of several works that utilize extended techniques. Finally, works that utilize English horn with string trio are covered. Appendices include a full repertoire list, suggestions of works for various levels, personal top picks, publication information for detailed works, commercially available recordings of detailed works, and a list of other works by composers detailed featuring the oboe. A CD recording of the recital which accompanies this project may be found via the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

Recital: February 21, 2020 at 5pm, Gildenhorn Recital Hall, University of Maryland

|                                                 |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Dance Suite</i> (2001)                       | John Biggs       |
| <i>Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)</i> (2010) | Martin Bresnick  |
| <i>The Rainbow: Elegy</i> (1981)                | Alan Ridout      |
| Oboe Quartet op. 34 (1977)                      | Francis Routh    |
| Miniature Quartet (1998)                        | Allan Stephenson |

Olivia Ren (violin), Sinan Wang (viola), Katherine McCarthy (cello)

OBOE QUARTETS: 1970–2020

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
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## Preface

My own interest in the oboe quartet began when I first came to know Benjamin Britten's *Phantasy Quartet* op. 2 nearly three years ago searching for works to perform on my first year recital. I was drawn to the combination of oboe and string trio with its variety of textures, timbres and styles. In addition to the power of the music I felt, I was also deeply inspired by the experience of working on the piece.

Working on this piece in chamber class, we were fortunate enough to receive coaching by both Dr. Stern and Professor Hill. Learning through the lens of string playing widened my perspective of my own wind instrument as well. Considering the differences in which string players and wind players conceptualize creating sound pushed me to see things in new and different ways. I find the most growth personally, when challenged to see things from another perspective. I see this as an opportunity to ask how that perspective can inform my own or parallels my own perspective in a different expression.

This kind of mixed chamber ensemble requires both the oboist and the strings to find ways to at once emulate each other's sound and, accentuate the inherent differences. In this way, I find this type of chamber ensemble to be an important commentary on conversation. An exercise in finding common ground as well as acknowledging and honoring differences. From a space of openness and willingness, the conversation leads to an enhanced sense of understanding among all participants. Through this experience, I was drawn to researching more into this ensemble and the music written for it.

The oboe quartet boasts a large number of important works in the canon of oboe literature. While this ensemble continues to grow in importance, the number and variety of works has developed over the last fifty years to be a substantial part of the literature. This project is designed as a repertoire guide to works composed for oboe quartet in the last quarter century. Works were chosen to demonstrate a range of repertoire and arranged in categories to provide a sampling of styles and forms. The categories are not intended to be definitive; many works fall into several categories, and are meant for illustrative purposes. It is my hope that this survey provides an accessible introduction to the music of the modern oboe quartet.

## Table of Contents

|                                                                         |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Preface.....                                                            | ii |
| Table of Contents.....                                                  | iv |
| Chapter 1: Introduction and Background.....                             | 1  |
| Introduction to the Ensemble and History .....                          | 1  |
| Current Influential Oboists and Quartets .....                          | 4  |
| Janet Craxton and the London Oboe Quartet.....                          | 4  |
| Peggy Pearson and Winsor Music .....                                    | 5  |
| Scope and Preview of Dissertation .....                                 | 6  |
| Chapter 2: Works Based on Baroque and Classical Forms .....             | 7  |
| Thomas Christian David, Quartet (1979).....                             | 7  |
| Bruce Adolphe, Quartet for oboe and strings (1985) .....                | 10 |
| Allan Stephenson, Miniature Quartet (1998)* <sup>1</sup> .....          | 13 |
| James Primosch, Oboe Quartet (2015) .....                               | 16 |
| Chapter 3: Variations .....                                             | 19 |
| Elizabeth Maconchy, Oboe Quartet (1972) .....                           | 19 |
| Francis Routh, Oboe Quartet (1977)* .....                               | 22 |
| Yehudi Wyner (1999–2000) .....                                          | 25 |
| Chapter 4: Dances and Dance Suites .....                                | 29 |
| John Biggs, <i>Dance Suite</i> (1999)* .....                            | 29 |
| Kári Bæk, Obo Kvartett (2009) .....                                     | 31 |
| Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Quartet (2004).....                               | 33 |
| Chapter 5: Single Movement Atonal Works.....                            | 37 |
| Oliver Knussen, <i>Cantata</i> op. 15 (1977) .....                      | 37 |
| Helen Grime, Oboe Quartet (2011) .....                                  | 40 |
| Elliott Carter, Quartet (2001).....                                     | 42 |
| Chapter 6: Programmatic/Imagery .....                                   | 46 |
| Eric Nathan, Quartet for oboe and strings (2012).....                   | 46 |
| Thea Musgrave, <i>Cantilena</i> (2008) .....                            | 48 |
| Martin Bresnick, <i>Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)</i> (2010)* ..... | 50 |
| Chapter 7: Extended Techniques .....                                    | 54 |
| Istvan Lang, <i>Constellations</i> (1975).....                          | 54 |
| Colin Matthews, Second Oboe Quartet (1997).....                         | 57 |
| Edwin Roxburgh, <i>Ecclissi</i> (1971) .....                            | 60 |
| Chapter 8: English horn and String Trio.....                            | 63 |
| Jean Francaix, Quartet (1971).....                                      | 63 |
| Alan Ridout, <i>The Rainbow: Elegy</i> (1981)* .....                    | 65 |
| Willy Hess, Quartet op. 141 (1996) .....                                | 66 |
| Chapter 9: Conclusion.....                                              | 71 |
| Appendices.....                                                         | 72 |

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<sup>1</sup> \* Denotes works performed as a part of the accompanying recital.

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Bibliography ..... | 84 |
|--------------------|----|



# Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

## Introduction to the Ensemble and History

The combination of oboe, violin, viola, and cello as an ensemble, is commonly referred to as the oboe quartet. This combination has existed as an ensemble with music composed for the instrumentation specifically since the early Classical era.<sup>2</sup> The ensemble may have originated from the popular baroque form of the trio sonata and the early classical string quartet.

The oboe was traditionally used in small ensembles of mixed chamber groups including the trio sonata. The trio sonata, a popular form in the late baroque, was most often comprised of an interchangeable ensemble of players. Composers would indicate multiple instruments on scores, allowing for flexibility of instrumentation. Even when instruments were specified, idiomatic writing was less common. As availability of instruments varied from place to place, substitutions of different instruments were often necessary. The ensemble commonly consisted of two soprano-range voices and a basso continuo accompaniment, usually played on harpsichord, and sometimes doubled with a bass instrument like bassoon or cello. The instrumentation of the solo voices was often written for two violins, flutes, recorders, or oboes. While the writing for some of these works clearly indicates violin, many fit well on flute, oboe, or recorder as well. The flexibility of instrumentation continued into the Classical era.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick W. Meyer. "Oboe Quartets from 1750–1825." DMA diss., Eastman School of Music, 1973.V.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 1.

The genesis of the oboe quartet may also be found in the string quartet, which was widely popular from 1760 onward. Early string quartets were similar in character and style to four-part symphonies of southern Germany and Austria.<sup>4</sup> The four-part symphonies were often played without continuo and were frequently “indistinguishable from one-to-a-part solo ensemble music.”<sup>5</sup> Some of these early string quartets were in fact published with wind parts like trio sonatas. These works varied in form and style from three to five or more movements, and from homophonic to intensely polyphonic. These are likely sources for the origin of the oboe quartet given the voicings and roles of the instruments in the group.

In the early eighteenth century, many instruments saw mechanical developments, allowing for more nuanced, idiomatic writing displaying the unique capabilities of each instrument. The oboe also saw significant developments to the mechanism and began to gain popularity as a solo soprano instrument. Innovations in the mechanism by makers like the Hotetterre family provided an instrument which was more flexible and agile. With the rise of virtuoso players like Giuseppe Sammartini, the Besozzi family, and Johan Christian Fischer, among others, the oboe became a veritable solo instrument.

Works written specifically for oboe and three string instruments during this time were common; a 1973 dissertation located 117 works for oboe and three strings from this era.<sup>6</sup> Many of these quartets were written for oboe with various

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<sup>4</sup> Cliff Eisen, Antonio Baldassarre, and Paul Griffiths, “String Quartet,” *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>6</sup> Frederick W. Meyer. “Oboe Quartets from 1750–1825.” DMA diss., Eastman School of Music, 1973. 3.

combinations of strings, including many for one oboe, two violas, and one cello. Quartets by Johann Christian Bach, Leopold Gassman, Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Karl Stamitz, and Franz Kromer were often three to four movement works in the classical style. One of the more commonly performed works in this genre, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Oboe Quartet K.370/368b composed in 1781, has gained recognition and continues to be one of the most well-performed works in the oboe quartet literature.

While there are few known works for oboe quartets in the Romantic era, the genre saw a resurgence of popularity in the early twentieth century, spearheaded by works such as Benjamin Britten's op. 2 *Phantasy Quartet* (1932). A comparatively large number of works were composed in Britain during this time including quartets by Rutland Boughton (1932, 1945), Ernest Moeran (1946), Joseph Horowitz (1956), and Malcolm Arnold (1957). This popularity of the genre in Britain can be attributed in large part to Leon Goossens (1897–1988), principal oboist of the London Philharmonic and professor at the Royal Academy of Music. Included among the many works composed for Goossens are several works for oboe quartet and oboe quintet (oboe and string quartet). These include Benjamin Britten's *Phantasy Quartet* op. 2 (1932), Gordon Jacob's *Quartet* (1938), Jacob's pupil Malcolm Arnold's *Oboe Quartet* op. 61 (1957), and quintets by Arnold Bax (1922) and Arthur Bliss (1927).

In the twenty-first century, interest in entrepreneurship and innovations in chamber performance has often been driven by performers. Oboe quartets have been increasingly commissioned by influential individual players, chamber ensembles, and

groups of performers. Two particularly important oboists and their ensembles are discussed in detail below.

### *Current Influential Oboists and Quartets*

#### *Janet Craxton/London Oboe Quartet*

Carrying the flame of Goossens, Janet Craxton arose as one of the most influential oboists of the mid-twentieth century. Craxton was born in London on May 17, 1929, the youngest of six and the only daughter.<sup>7</sup> She attended the Royal College of Music (RCM) where her father, Harold Craxton was a professor from 1919 to 1961.<sup>8</sup> Craxton studied at the RCM from 1945 to 1948, studying oboe with Helen Gaskell.<sup>9</sup> She attended the Paris Conservatoire from 1948–1949, studying with Pierre Bajeux and attending Nadia Boulanger’s seminars.<sup>10</sup> In 1949, Craxton became the principal oboist of the Hallé Orchestra.<sup>11</sup> She also played principal with the London Mozart Players from 1952 to 1954 and the BBC Symphony Orchestra from 1954 to 1963.<sup>12</sup> She later played with the Covent Garden orchestra and was a professor at the Royal Academy teaching oboists, including the prominent soloist Nicholas Daniel.<sup>13</sup> Throughout her career, Craxton was well respected as a soloist and chamber musician

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Stoker, 2004, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, “Janet Helen Rosemary Craxton.”

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Howell, 2013, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, “Harold Hunt (Thomas) Craxton.”

<sup>9</sup> Richard Stoker, 2004, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, “Janet Helen Rosemary Craxton.”

<sup>10</sup> John Warrack, “Janet Craxton,” *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Stoker, 2004, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, “Janet Helen Rosemary Craxton.”

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>13</sup> Jeremy Polmear, liner notes to *Janet Craxton music for oboe and strings*. The London Oboe Quartet, Oboe Classics CD, 2011.

in addition to her orchestral playing. She premiered works including Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Ten Blake Songs* (1958), Lennox Berkeley's *Sonatina* for oboe and piano op. 61 (1967), and Berkeley's *Sinfonia Concertante* op. 84 with large orchestra commissioned by the BBC Symphony for the 1973 Proms Concerts, as well as numerous pieces composed for oboe quartet.

Craxton founded the London Oboe Quartet in 1967 with Perry Hart (violin), Brian Hawkins (viola), Kenneth Heath (cello 1968–1977), and Charles Tunnell (cello 1977–1981).<sup>14</sup> During the years in which the group was active, they commissioned a substantial number of works for oboe quartet and garnered a large following. Works commissioned by Craxton and the group include quartets by Lennox Berkeley (1967), Nicola LeFanu (1968), Alan Rawsthorne (1970), Richard Stoker (1970), Elisabeth Lutyens (1971), Elizabeth Maconchy (1972), and Francis Routh (1977). Craxton passed away suddenly on July 19, 1981, but her reputation as a dedicated teacher and her contributions to the oboe repertoire should not be understated.

### *Peggy Pearson/Winsor Music*

Oboist Peggy Pearson is well-regarded as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player. Having played with the Bach Aria group and the Emmanuel Chamber Orchestra, both groups focusing on performing Bach; Pearson is especially respected as an interpreter of Bach's music. She has toured with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Stoker, 2004, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Janet Helen Rosemary Craxton."

Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and Music from Marlboro.<sup>15</sup>

Pearson is founder of the Winsor Music Consortium, a project to commission works for the oboe.<sup>16</sup> She has premiered and recorded Mario Davidovsky's Quartetto for oboe and strings (1996) and commissioned Yehudi Wyner's Quartet for Oboe and String Trio (1999-2000).<sup>17</sup> Other quartets commissioned by or written for Pearson include Fred Lerdahl's Oboe Quartet (2002), Peter Child's *Pantomime Lyric Scenes* (7) for oboe quartet (2007), James Mattheson's Quartet for oboe and strings (2008), Helen Grime's Oboe Quartet (2011), Kay Rhie's Oboe Quartet (2011), Eric Nathan's Quartet for oboe and strings (2012), and James Primosch's Oboe Quartet (2015).

### Preview of Dissertation

Looking in depth at the repertoire of oboe quartets, many works can be placed into specific categories or types of pieces. In this dissertation, several works from each category will be examined to illustrate the wide-ranging scope of the repertoire. While many of these works fall easily into one category or another, many fall less clearly into one style or form, and rather straddle two or three. These designations are meant purely as a framework for discussion and examination, rather than as a definitive designation. The intention behind this dissertation is to provide something of a repertoire and performance guide. These general categories, identified for organizational purposes, are: works that are based on classical or baroque forms and

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<sup>15</sup> "Artistic Director," Winsor Music, <http://winsormusic.org/artisticdirector>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.,

styles, works that utilize variations, works that are based on dances, works that can be described as single-movement atonal works, programmatic works, works that utilize extended techniques, and finally, works that employ English horn instead of oboe.

## Chapter 2: Works Based on Baroque and Classical Forms

These works utilize either a classical form or style as the basis for their form or material. Thomas Christian David's Oboe Quartet (1979), Bruce Adolphe's Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1984), and Allan Stephenson's Miniature Quartet (1998) are three-movement works based on sonata form or dance forms. James Primosch's Oboe Quartet (2015) is a five-movement work whose most substantial middle movement is based on a baroque dance form and contains cantata elements.

### Quartet (1979) by Thomas Christian David

Thomas Christian David was born December 22, 1925 in Wels, Upper Austria.<sup>18</sup> At the age of nine, David and his family moved to Germany. His father, Johann Nepomuk David, a composer and teacher who studied with Joseph Marc at the Vienna Academy of Music, was influenced by Debussy and Scriabin.<sup>19</sup> Following his early music training at home, David attended the Thomasschule in Leipzig and the Leipzig Musikhochschule in 1943.<sup>20</sup> Following World War II, David continued his education at the Salzburg Mozarteum where he studied flute, piano, organ, harpsichord, composition, and conducting.<sup>21</sup> In 1948, David moved to Stuttgart to study at Tübingen University where he also directed the Süddeutscher Madrigalchor.<sup>22</sup> Following several concert tours as a flautist and conductor, David was appointed to a post at the Vienna Music Academy in 1957, eventually teaching

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<sup>18</sup> Herbert Vogg, "Thomas Christian David," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.,



composition beginning in 1963.<sup>23</sup> In 1967, he married Persian opera singer Monsooreh Ghasri and they moved to Iran. Living in Tehran, from 1968 to 1973, David helped to set up the music school at the university and conducted the orchestra of the Iranian National Television NITV.<sup>24</sup> In the mid-1970s, they returned to the Vienna Musikhochschule where David remained, teaching music theory and composition, until his retirement in 1985.<sup>25</sup> He was principal conductor of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester, Berlin from 1980 to 1995, artistic director of the Cairo Opera House in 1992, and president of the Österreichischer Komponistenbund (Austrian Composers' Association) from 1986 to 1988.<sup>26</sup> David continued conducting throughout Iran from the 1960s to the 1990s. David died in Vienna in 2006 at the age of eighty.

David's compositions contain many small chamber works, sonatas, concerti, and several operas. His compositional style is accessible and clear, its "expanded tonal idiom is characterized by the development of extensive complexes from small motivic units and synthesis of accomplished polyphonic writing and cantabile lines."<sup>27</sup> David uses short motives that gradually alter as the music develops, the voices in a continuous dialogue. His music is often in the concertante medium with a solo voice (played either solo or homophonic) above a bass line, this form a nod to his view of the importance of rational dialogue.<sup>28</sup> The conversation between voices is a constant in David's music.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.,

The Quartet, composed in 1979, is set in three movements. The work makes apparent many of David's compositional techniques, including the building of short motivic passages and a clear dialogue all the way through. The structure of the work resembles a concerto, the first movement is in sonata form. The middle movement is slower and more lyrical, and the final movement is fast and full of energy.

The first movement, marked *Allegro leggiero* is an exciting, driving movement. Threes against twos and repeated eighth notes create a sense of forward momentum. The opening melody is introduced by the oboe following a short three-bar introduction by the strings, their rising eighth notes a step ladder leading to the declamatory melody overtop of repeated, articulated, and driving eighth notes. The next section is ushered in as the opening fades into pizzicato strings and a bouncy repetitious melody in the oboe. Articulated groupings in the oboe bring out the shape of the melody amidst the pointed texture. This texture is interrupted as the strings return to their bows and reintroduce the primary theme. The oboe returns with the melody and the ensemble is back in the declamatory, polyrhythmic character. The bouncy second character then returns, but this time the violin remains arco through the section as the excitement builds. The opening melody returns once more after a tutti silence as a coda to conclude the movement.

The second movement, marked *Andante*, begins as a simple, lilting melody in 6/8. As the movement progresses, influences of jazz rhythm and harmonies pervade the solo line. The texture of the movement is layered with consecutive staggered entrances of motivic ideas sweeping across the ensemble. The rhythms become more complex and short phrases ebb and flow across a wide dynamic range as the

movement builds. The movement fades slowly out as the rhythms slow down and become again simplified in the strings and the oboe's jazzy melody evaporates into the ether.

The third movement, marked *Allegro con brio*, begins in the culminating and exciting character of a finale. The opening melody is driven and raucous with large dotted leaps interspersed in running scalar passages. After this opening section, the melody returns to the polyrhythmic texture with long winding triplet passages in the oboe, strong beats in the middle voices, and a syncopated bass line in the cello. A series of staggered rising entrances bring back the opening motive and the raucous, driving character. The repeated rhythms building with a sense of frantic culmination before suddenly coming to a halt. This surprising break at a climactic moment gives way to a coda from the second movement, the andante character reappears as a calm breath and a moment of repose. This quietude does not last long as a short fermata brings a sense of suspense before launching back into the faster tempo of the finale. The reintroduction of the finale is even more joyous and playful with running lines of rising thirds in the oboe and call and responses from across the ensemble. An *accelerando* brings us to the final section- back into 6/8 but this time in a fast tempo, and the excitement builds all the way until the final, excited tutti figure.

*Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1984) Bruce Adolphe*

“In music, what some call rules  
Are the tips of a metaphor.

Tradition is an accepted  
Manifestation of the metaphor.

Following a tradition

Creates a sense of the inexorable,  
A feeling that there is a greater  
Force than the self.

“Broken rules” are commentaries  
On the metaphor until they  
Are absorbed into it.”<sup>29</sup>

In his 1996 book, Bruce Adolphe discusses his inspiration in composition and music performance. The short writings are an intimate look at Adolphe’s perception of his work and provide an interesting insight into his composition. Adolphe advocates for what he calls ‘listening with the mind’s ear’, a concept he describes as listening to memories in silence while developing the ability to aurally imagine sounds of memories or music.<sup>30</sup> Considering the above quote displays Adolphe’s sense of aural imagination and his role as a composer to at once transcend rules and to also see one’s place in them.

Bruce Adolphe was born in New York in 1955. Adolphe graduated from the Juilliard School in 1976.<sup>31</sup> Among his teachers include Milton Babbitt. An avid educator, he taught at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts from 1983 to 1993 and at Yale University from 1984 to 1985 in addition to spending nearly twenty years on faculty at the Juilliard pre-college division from 1974 to 1993.<sup>32</sup> In 1992, Adolphe was appointed education director and music administrator for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.<sup>33</sup> As part of his role at Lincoln Center, Adolphe is founder and director of *Meet the Music* family concerts as well as the Society’s

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<sup>29</sup> Bruce Adolphe, *What to Listen for in the World* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1996), 38.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>31</sup> James P. Cassaro, “Bruce Adolphe,” *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.,

resident lecturer.<sup>34</sup> The Society's 'Inside Chamber Music' series includes many videos of Adolphe discussing various works and can be viewed on the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's YouTube page.

Adolphe has also authored several books including *What to Listen for in the World* (New York, 1996) from which the above quote was extracted, and *The Mind's Ear* (St. Louis, 1991).<sup>35</sup> He also authored a chapter on composition in the book *Secrets of Creativity: What Neuroscience, the Arts, and Our Minds Reveal* (Oxford University Press, 2019).<sup>36</sup> He co-founded The Learning Maestros with Julian Fifer, a company "dedicated to creating new works and related curricula that integrate music with other disciplines, including science, literature, history, and issues of social conscience".<sup>37</sup> Adolphe was also appointed composer-in-residence at the Brain Creativity Institute in Los Angeles.<sup>38</sup>

Adolphe's musical style is "characterized by harmonies built on extended tonal chords which relate in non-key-centered progressions."<sup>39</sup> The progressions are often derived from church modes like the music of Stravinsky, Messiaen, and Takemitsu.<sup>40</sup> The Quartet for Oboe and Strings was composed in 1984 for Gerard Reuter and An die Musik (an ensemble founded in 1976 which specializes in performing works for oboe, strings, and piano). Set in three movements: *Aria*, *Waltz*,

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<sup>34</sup> "Biography," Bruce Adolphe. <https://bruceadolphe.com/biography>.

<sup>35</sup> James P. Cassaro, "Bruce Adolphe," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>36</sup> "Biography," Bruce Adolphe. <https://bruceadolphe.com/biography>.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>39</sup> James P. Cassaro, "Bruce Adolphe," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*,

and *Presto*, the work inhabits a neo-classical sound world. Throughout the work the oboe plays the role of a soloist against the string trio.

The first movement, *Aria*, begins with flowing sextuplets passed between the two higher string voices overtop sixteenths in the cello which create a polyrhythmic feeling. Above this flowing accompaniment, the oboe sings a lyrical, voice-like melody. The movement can be separated into four sections, each beginning in the original tempo and slowing into a moment of pause and a fermata before the next section begins.

The second movement, *Waltz*, sets characteristic waltz patterns in the strings accentuated with glissandi. Several bars in common time play with the expectations, and give this dance a playful, off-kilter sense.

The third movement, *Presto*, is a playful, fast movement in sonata form. Off-beat accents give a feel of polyrhythm against the otherwise staunchly indicated beats. Following the opening section, a drunken character is indicated, an *espressivo* downward slurring oboe line sits atop lugubrious string glissandi, sounding like hiccups. The work finishes off with a return to the opening, playful character of the movement.

#### *Miniature Quartet (1998) Allan Stephenson*

British composer and cellist, Allan Stephenson was born in Wallasey, near Liverpool, England, in 1949.<sup>41</sup> Stephenson studied cello and composition at the Royal

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<sup>41</sup> Allan Stephenson, *Miniature Quartet*. (Wargau, Germany: Accolade Musikverlag, 2003).

Manchester College of Music, earning his Associate Degree in 1972.<sup>42</sup> He played briefly in the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra before moving to South Africa, where he assumed the position of principal cello in the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra. Stephenson remained with the Cape Town Symphony until its dissolution in 1997.<sup>43</sup> Stephenson taught both cello and composition at the University of Cape Town (UTC) and was music director of the UTC College Orchestra from 1978 to 1988.<sup>44</sup> He also founded the Cape Town Chamber Orchestra.<sup>45</sup> Residing in Cape Town, Stephenson works as a composer and conductor, and plays cello with the Cape Town Philharmonic.

Reminiscent of other composers of the English late romantic school, such as Elgar, Stephenson's works combine this sensibility with modern rhythms and harmonies. A note in the score from the publisher states: "Stephenson's credo, the music should entertain and please the listener, is always apparent."<sup>46</sup> While his decidedly English influences are apparent, Stephenson also cites Nielsen, Rachmaninoff, Walton, and Bartók as major influences.<sup>47</sup> In discussing his music's accessibility, Stephenson stated:

I have a simple theory, derived from Beecham, who said, "The British know nothing about music, but they love the noise it makes." And so my theory is that if I can't stand the noise my music makes, how can I expect anybody else to? So I am not going to write something that people really battle with, and also I get rather frustrated with music if I cannot find any form or any line that is developing through the piece.

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<sup>42</sup> Erik Behr, "An Oboe and Oboe d'Amore Concerto from the Cape of Africa: A Biographical and Analytical Perspective." DMA diss., Rice University, 2011. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>46</sup> Allan Stephenson, *Miniature Quartet*, (Warngau, Germany: Accolade Musikverlag, 2003).

<sup>47</sup> Erik Behr, "An Oboe and Oboe d'Amore Concerto from the Cape of Africa: A Biographical and Analytical Perspective." DMA diss., Rice University, 2011. 13.

If that is the case, then one should just sit and punch buttons on a computer. At least with me, I think people know where the music is going as I have pretty clear signposts along the way, so nobody gets lost.<sup>48</sup>

True to his word, Stephenson's music is clear, accessible, and compelling.

Stephenson's output is prolific and contains many works for oboe. His compositions include two symphonies, three operas, several concerti-including one for oboe (1978) and one for English horn (2000), as well as many instrumental and chamber works.

The oboe quartet, *Miniature Quartet*, is in three movements in the common fast-slow-fast form. The first movement is in binary form and presents a playful character. Marked *giocoso*, the first movement's main thematic material alternates between marching rhythms and a more pastoral character. The music inhabits the sound world of late English romantic works.

The second movement, *quasi lento*, is slow and lyrical in character often featuring homophonic string accompaniment and a soaring oboe melody in g minor. The pulsating syncopation of the string voices supports the lyricism of the idiomatic oboe writing. The second section places the cello in conversation with the oboe melody, and the dialogue trades off in richly expressive lines. The movement ends hopefully, with a shift to g major.

The third movement, *vivace*, is tarantella-like in character. The tarantella, a dance originating in southern Italy, is a lively dance in a brisk 6/8.<sup>49</sup> Stephenson uses the four instruments in various permutations of groupings and trades off portions of

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>49</sup> Erich Schwandt, "Tarantella," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.



the melody between players. The movement contains several virtuosic sixteenth note passages for the oboe, reminiscent of the final movement of Mozart's Oboe Quartet K.370/368b.

Oboe Quartet (2015) James Primosch

James Primosch was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1956.<sup>50</sup> He studied at Cleveland State University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Colombia University.<sup>51</sup> Primosch's main teachers include Mario Davidovsky, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick.<sup>52</sup> As a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, Primosch studied with John Harbison.<sup>53</sup>

His works have been performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Twenty-First Century Consort.<sup>54</sup> He has composed works commissioned by the Chicago Symphony, the Albany Symphony, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, to name a few.<sup>55</sup>

Honors presented to Primosch include a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and three prizes from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.<sup>56</sup> An active pianist, Primosch frequently performs specializing in contemporary music.<sup>57</sup> Primosch has been on the faculty of University of Pennsylvania since 1988, where he directs the Presser Electronic Music Studio.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "Biography," James Primosch, <https://jamesprimosch.com/biography/>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.,

Primosch's Oboe Quartet was commissioned by Peggy Pearson and Winsor Music and was premiered by Peggy Pearson and the Apple Hill String Quartet on April 12, 2015.<sup>59</sup> The piece is set in five movements. Primosch notes his inspiration for the work being Pearson's sound in playing baroque works.<sup>60</sup> The work derives inspiration from baroque forms (the work's central movement is a passacaglia), while aspects of the other movements contain passages with a cantata or aria style to them.<sup>61</sup> The five movements create an arch with the middle movement being the darkest and most expressive. Material from the first movement returns in the last, creating a symmetrical form to the piece. The work feels like a song cycle, lyrical movements hinting at aria or recitative. Primosch utilizes the voices in an equal manner, each member of the ensemble playing an important part rather than oboe as the melody instrument the whole way through.

The first movement's material is evocative of a recitative, with long melismas moving through the phrases. The melody passes from oboe to violin and back again. The character is melancholy and reflective as the movement ends slowly and quietly.

The second movement, *Allegro con fuoco*, is fiery and driving. Strings build and layer above one another in increasing intensity. Declamatory statements pass around the ensemble; with heavy articulated passages and tutti rhythmic sections. A frenzy of downward runs into a tutti moment ends with a halt. The movement ends

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<sup>59</sup> James Primosch, *Oboe Quartet*, (Malvern, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Company, 2015).

<sup>60</sup> "Oboe Quartet Comes to Penn," James Primosch, <https://jamesprimosch.com/2017/03/22/oboe-quartet-comes-to-penn/>.

<sup>61</sup> "Biography," James Primosch, <https://jamesprimosch.com/biography/>.

with lyrical melodic fragments passed around the ensemble. The character is more reserved and pensive.

The most substantial movement of the work, the middle movement, is a passacaglia. A passacaglia is a baroque dance form which utilizes a bass melody as the basis for a variation.<sup>62</sup> The movement opens with cello solo presenting the ground bass and is dark and plaintive. The low, quiet melodies are interrupted by the quick, accented, and short commentaries of other instruments; the overlapping variations respond and comment on each other. The movement intensifies, rising in pitch and rhythmic speed, into a series of high, quick motives in the oboe, freely descending in a quasi-cadenza passage. The subsequent music is quieter and more reflective, ending with the solo cello fading into silence.

The fourth movement begins with flowing lines in duets. The violin and oboe in fifths rocking back and forth over a slower viola and cello melody. Expressive leaping melodies flow through the ensemble. The open fifths above the lyrical melodies are evocative of a dream-like state.

The fifth movement, like the first features a series of melismatic lyrical lines in the oboe. Tutti sections drive the music forward. A break in the drama and a bar of silence precede the next section. Strings on repeated, staccato eighth notes are instructed to play with a “poker face.” The seriousness breaks as members “crack a smile,” and the movement develops into a dancing, playful, excited character. The work ends with a powerful, tutti section, driving to the end.

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<sup>62</sup> Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 345.

### Chapter 3: Developing Variations

The works in this section are variations. Several utilize a primary motive, introduced in the beginning of the work as the basis for the rest of the piece, while others more loosely utilize theme and variations in their work. Elizabeth Maconchy's Oboe Quartet (1972) develops out of an opening oboe solo, Francis Routh's Oboe Quartet (1977) is a set of twelve variations on an opening string motive, and Yehudi Wyner's Oboe Quartet (1999–2000) features a series of variations.

#### Oboe Quartet (1972) Elizabeth Maconchy

Maconchy attended the Royal College of Music from 1923 to 1929 where she studied composition with Charles Wood and Ralph Vaughan Williams.<sup>63</sup> Despite her studies with Vaughan Williams, Maconchy's music is unique; her desire was not to become another member of the English pastoral school.<sup>64</sup> Following her studies in England, Maconchy was the recipient of an Octavia Travelling Scholarship.<sup>65</sup> Maconchy travelled to Prague to study, taking lessons with Karel Boleslav Jirák, finding music of Eastern Europe compelling. Maconchy also found inspiration in the music of Bartók.<sup>66</sup>

Maconchy's individuality as a composer is most apparent in her chamber works, and specifically her thirteen string quartets written between 1933 and 1983 which she described as "my best and most deeply felt works."<sup>67</sup> Maconchy likened

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<sup>63</sup> Hugo Cole and Jennifer Doctor, "Dame Elizabeth Maconchy," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*,

the genre of string quartet to an “impassioned argument.”<sup>68</sup> Her music is full of compact motives, counterpoint, and dialogue. Maconchy also composed an oboe quintet, for oboe and string quartet, in 1932. The oboe quintet was popular at this time, evidenced by works including Arnold Bax’s Oboe Quintet (1922), Arthur Bliss’s Oboe Quintet (1927), and Gerald Finzi’s Interlude op. 21 (1936).

Maconchy’s daughter, Nicola LeFanu, also a composer, wrote a work for oboe and string trio as a student in 1968, several years before her mother. LeFanu’s quartet was composed for Dutch oboist Victor Swillens and the Netherlands Oboe Quartet.<sup>69</sup> The work won both the Cobbett Prize and the BBC Composer’s Prize.<sup>70</sup> The Cobbett Prize was adjudicated by Elisabeth Lutyens.<sup>71</sup> LeFanu discussed Maconchy’s work:

This Quartet comes at the same time as her very powerful tenth String Quartet, and particularly as the monodrama *Ariadne*, with which it shares the same emotional world; there are even some echoes between the material of the two pieces... It is an uncharacteristically poignant piece of my mother’s. Maconchy would have known [Craxton] playing well; both were major presences on the contemporary London musical scene of the 1960s; Janet’s sound and phrasing would have been in her head.<sup>72</sup>

The aforementioned monodrama, a dramatic piece for soprano and orchestra, *Ariadne* (1970–1971) is notable for its expressive freedom and “its intricate, multi-linear orchestration.”<sup>73</sup> In interpreting LeFanu’s comparison of *Ariadne* and the Quartet, Jeremy Polmear says, “So Janet is a kind of Ariadne, then, abandoned by

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>69</sup> Jeremy Polmear, liner notes to *Janet Craxton music for oboe and strings*. The London Oboe Quartet, Oboe Classics CD, 2011.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>73</sup> Hugo Cole and Jennifer Doctor, “Dame Elizabeth Maconchy,” *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

Theseus on the island of Naxos, experiencing the loss and anger of a deserted woman?”<sup>74</sup> This points to the impetus behind this intensely dramatic work.

Maconchy’s compositions are freely atonal but her use of specific intervals, perfect fourths and tritones, make her music recognizable.<sup>75</sup> The Quartet is in four movements, somewhat akin to a string quartet.

The work begins with an oboe solo whose character is intense and yearning. The solo previews nearly all the harmonic and melodic content which appears throughout the rest of the piece.

The second movement is a scherzo. The fragments of melody explode from the oboe and a continual feeling of stopping and starting brings out the playful character of a scherzo within a more serious musical landscape.<sup>76</sup>

The third movement, LeFanu says, is the most clearly like *Ariadne*. Three chords marked *dolente* return throughout the movement, which is perhaps the most integrated of the piece.<sup>77</sup> The movement is most like Maconchy’s string quartets with all four voices playing equal roles in exploring the music as it unfolds. Large, slurred leaps intensify the drama. The ending of the movement is intense with the final chord being open fifths with no root in the bass oboe which the oboe moves down a half step, clashing with the fifths and creating a hanging tension leading into the fourth movement.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Jeremy Polmear, liner notes to *Janet Craxton music for oboe and strings*. The London Oboe Quartet, Oboe Classics CD, 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.,

The fourth movement is energetic and driving, marked *Allegro molto*. This character makes way for sections of more improvised, cadenza-like character, and a brief return to the scherzo character of the second movement. The work ends swapping between a lento character with double stopped glissandi and the forward-moving *Allegro molto*. The work ends with an exciting drive to the end.

Oboe Quartet op. 34 (1977) Francis Routh

Francis Routh knew Janet Craxton from the Royal Academy of Music, where they were both students.<sup>79</sup> In 1958, Craxton performed a concert featuring contemporary British composers in a concert series that was a precursor to the Redcliffe Concerts of which Routh was the artistic director.<sup>80</sup>

Routh's oboe quartet was intended as a virtuoso piece for Craxton, Routh stating "I wanted to write Janet a virtuoso piece, something that showed off her artistry."<sup>81</sup> On working with Craxton, Routh said, "We had always talked a lot about music generally. Then when I was composing the piece, I worked very much in conjunction with her, going to the family home in Kidderpore Avenue, north London. I would try out individual phrases on her, which she would comment on."<sup>82</sup> From this perspective, it is easy to see why the piece lies so well on the oboe, it is very clearly idiomatic for the instrument and displays the strengths of the oboe nicely.

Routh was born in England on January 5, 1927.<sup>83</sup> He studied classical Greek and Roman literature at King's College Cambridge from 1948 to 1951 and then went

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>83</sup> David C.F. Wright, "Francis Routh, "Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online.

on to study at the Royal Academy of Music for two years.<sup>84</sup> His interest in composition stemmed partially from a desire to explore what was new and novel about music in the twentieth century.<sup>85</sup> In 1954, Routh began private studies with Mátyás Seiber whose music combined influences from his native Hungary, including travel and study, with Kodály and the works of Bartók with influences of the second Viennese school as well as jazz.<sup>86</sup> The influences of Seiber's music can be seen in Routh's works, which combine the folk music roots and "orderly Stravinskian neoclassicism with certain English traits."<sup>87</sup> By the 1970's, Routh began to explore a new concept of tonality, one which strayed from the familiar concept of tonal center but nevertheless sought to provide the same sense of logic and continuity for the listener.<sup>88</sup>

The Oboe Quartet op. 34, composed in 1977, marked the transition to a new period in the composer's career, one that was more intense and personal. While the op. 34 contains elements familiar to Routh, including a quote from one of his organ works, the "shape and direction of the melodies, and the varied tonal focus [is new]".<sup>89</sup> Routh explained of the piece: "...I was experimenting with an extended tonality at the time, and used a whole tone scale plus a perfect fourth. This was a scale I found very fertile..."<sup>90</sup> The work is a set of variations based off a four-note

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>85</sup> Redcliffe Edition, "The Music of Francis Routh." London; Redcliffe Editions, 1981. 2.

<sup>86</sup> David C.F. Wright, "Francis Routh," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>88</sup> Redcliffe Edition, "The Music of Francis Routh." London; Redcliffe Editions, 1981. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>90</sup> Jeremy Polmear, liner notes to *Janet Craxton music for oboe and strings*. The London Oboe Quartet, Oboe Classics CD, 2011.



motif introduced by the strings in the opening bars. The twelve variations are grouped into three larger sections akin to a concerto played in one continuous movement, with an introduction and coda:

*Allegro moderato – Vivace (var. 1–5)*  
*Lento liberamente (var. 6–8)*  
*Vivace (var. 9–12)*  
*A tempo moderato (coda)*

As is common with the oboe quartet genre, the oboe plays the role of a soloist, making the work more akin to an oboe concerto than a string quartet. After the introductory theme, announced by the strings, the opening five variations are a dialogue, declamatory and playful, between the oboe and the string trio. The second section, variations 6–8, features homophonic textures, and slower impressionistic harmonic changes.<sup>91</sup> The music in this section is more inward and contemplative. Violist Brian Hawkins said, “The parts are well written for the instruments, and fall nicely under the fingers... When composers want the string trio to sound like a quartet, as in variation 6, I have to do double stopping on the viola, but again it is well written for the instrument.”<sup>92</sup> The seventh variation is a cadenza for oboe, written very well for the instrument as it displays the lyrical and virtuosic abilities of the oboe in contemplative and interesting cadenza. The third section, variations 9–12, back in a vivace, develops the first.<sup>93</sup> Finally, the coda restates the theme of the introduction, making the work pseudo-cyclical.

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<sup>91</sup> Francis Routh, Oboe Quartet op. 34, (Great Britain: Redcliffe Editions, 1981).

<sup>92</sup> Jeremy Polmear, liner notes to *Janet Craxton music for oboe and strings*. The London Oboe Quartet, Oboe Classics CD, 2011.

<sup>93</sup> Francis Routh, Oboe Quartet op. 34, (Great Britain: Redcliffe Editions, 1981).

The first performance was given by the London Oboe Quartet during a tour of West Germany on October 19, 1977. Members of this ensemble included Janet Craxton (oboe), Perry Hart (violin), Brian Hawkins (viola), and Charles Tunnell (cello).<sup>94</sup>

Oboe Quartet (1999–2000) Yehudi Wyner

Yehudi Wyner is the son of Lazar Weiner, a distinguished composer of Yiddish song and Jewish liturgical music.<sup>95</sup> Lazar Weiner studied composition in the United States with Frederick Jacobi, Robert Russell Bennett, and Josef Schillinger and was heavily influenced by both Eastern European Jewish art song and chant, as well as Debussy and Mussorgsky.<sup>96</sup> Yehudi Wyner was born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada in 1929, and his early training was as a concert pianist.<sup>97</sup> At the age of fifteen, Wyner entered Juilliard where he studied with Lonny Epstein, before deciding to transfer to Yale, where he studied composition with Hindemith.<sup>98</sup> However, the great German composer spent most of his time in Germany and worked mainly with graduate students, so Wyner spent most of his time with Robert Donovan.<sup>99</sup> After receiving his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music from 1946 to 1951, he spent one year at Harvard where he studied analysis and composition with Walter Piston, before returning to Yale to finally study with Hindemith.<sup>100</sup> After this time Wyner

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>95</sup> Howard Pollack, *Harvard Composers: Walter Piston and His Students, from Elliott Carter to Frederic Rzewski* (Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992), 305.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>97</sup> Vivian Perlis, “Yehudi Wyner,” *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.,

spent time at the American Academy in Rome from 1953 to 1956 and as a freelancer and teacher in New York City.<sup>101</sup> Wyner later taught at Yale (1963–1967), SUNY Purchase (1978–1989), and Brandeis University (1989–2005).<sup>102</sup>

Wyner's early music is influenced largely by his father, Lazar Weiner.<sup>103</sup>

Wyner became interested in jazz, especially during his years in Rome, where he made demonstration tapes of his own jazz style derived from the bebop styles of Dizzy Gillespe and Charlie Parker.<sup>104</sup> Wyner met Elliott Carter in 1953 and was particularly taken with the composer's early works.<sup>105</sup> In the early 1970's Wyner became one of the first composers to be associated with the term "New Romanticism", his work reflective more of Bloch's expression rather than Piston's classicism.<sup>106</sup>

Wyner writes of his work:

Without the enterprise of the eminent oboist Peggy Pearson, the Quartet for Oboe and String Trio might not have come into being. She made it plain that she wanted a piece from me, proposed the instrumental makeup of the ensemble and proceeded to put together a consortium of players and organizations to commission the work. The Quartet was begun during the summer of 1999 and completed in December. Premières by consortium members began in February 2000 and performances are continuing throughout the year. The Boston première took place on April 1st, 2000 with Pearson, violinist Bayla Keyes, violist Mary Ruth Ray and 'cellist Rhonda Rider. The Quartet is in one single movement lasting about 25 minutes. As the music unfolds, we find ourselves in zones of clearly defined character: lyric, passionate, passive, frenetic, antic, melancholic or meditative. Unexpected disjunctions and transformations are the rule.

Much of the structure of the Quartet is governed by variation technique. A ground-bass introduced by the 'cello fairly early on anchors the framework for a succession of episodes of unequal length and changing character. Later on, a loosely assembled succession of variations organizes much of the second half

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>102</sup> Vivian Perlis, "Yehudi Wyner," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>103</sup> Howard Pollack, *Harvard Composers: Walter Piston and His Students, from Elliott Carter to Frederic Rzewski* (Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992), 306.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 312.

of the composition. Such observations about the private technical methods of the composer do not begin to touch on the essential matter of the Quartet- which is to create a coherent succession of the dramatic and expressive events whose purpose it is to embrace a large world of experience and to find ways to illuminate and to share that world.

The Oboe Quartet begins with a duet between the violin and viola with the cello's ground bass providing the theme for the subsequent development and variations. The duet alternates between moments of rhythmic unison and more polyphonic writing. What begins as a soft, muted conversation grows in intensity, leading into the entrance of the oboe, a free, passionate response. Shifts in tempo give the work a sense of fluidity and flexibility as the characters push and pull.

The next section is quieter and slower: the strings marked as *agitato*, *misterioso*, and *fluttering* drive insistently forward under the lyrical, but still driving melody of the oboe. Wyner indicates these flutter figures are to be played "on the string, long shapes, avoid local accents" giving the music a sense of forward motion and direction. The music becomes more agitated and forward moving, strings moving into a "brushing" stroke. Passionate and intense, the music is always moving forward and driving with acceleration. The section culminates into a momentary rhythmic unison and melodic idea by the oboe and violin over the still driving viola and cello.

From here the music gently slows, becoming more reflective and hesitating. String trio dominates the texture in a more unified section before the oboe comes back in with an energetic run, accelerating us back to the driving character. Again, the strings' long lines of quick running notes propel the music forward. This slows slightly into a *scherzando*, dance-like section. The music speeds up in steps and becomes like a dance until a rhythmically unified string trio becomes loosely

coordinated with the oboe. The music flows through a series of alternating characters moving between dolce and semplice through faster, more flowing sections.

The next section is marked “with an easy and alluring swing” as highly stylized, swung motives in the strings undulate underneath a ballad-style melody in the oboe. The music grows in intensity to “with a manic swing”; the previously reflective character of the swing is replaced with an intensely energized swing culminating in an indication for *quasi martellato* or intensely articulated, almost hammered version of the melody. The mania gradually fades into a section of duets and provides a short moment of repose. The cello remains as the lone sustaining voice, and is interrupted with a quick series of running arpeggio figures. The music again grows rhythmic, driving, and intense.

Quiet rocking figures usher in the subsequent section, a smooth, lyrical melody in the oboe sings out over the rocking figures of the strings. The rocking gives way to a more driving, undulating series of running triplets in the strings, and eventually the oboe joins in. The music again quickly intensifies with the lower strings playing with indications for rough and brash playing.

A sudden halt in the music contrasts the previous section with a passage by the strings alternating pizzicato quarter notes interspersed with arco sixteenth notes. This introduction leads into a cantabile section, the oboe’s leaping melody growing into a more intense, unified passage, with imitative figures and cantabile expressive melodic fragments passing through the ensemble.

As the work winds to a close, the rough figures become dolce, and the strings gentle rocking underlays the dissipating oboe melody. The work ends seemingly with a question, the oboe's final, solo ascending interval a major seventh.

## Chapter 4: Dances and Dance Suites

Dance suites and works based on dance are discussed in this section. John Bigg's *Dance Suite* (1999) features dances from around the world. Kári Bæk's Obo Kvartett (2009) features two dances based on refrains of dance songs from his home in the Faroe Islands. Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's Quartet (2004) uses lazy notes and blues scales to create a swung feeling of jazz.

### *Dance Suite (2001) John Biggs*

John Biggs was born into a musical family in Los Angeles, California in 1932.<sup>107</sup> His father was an organist and composer while his mother worked as a vocalist. At the age of seven he received a scholarship to study violin at the National Institute of Music and Arts in Los Angeles.<sup>108</sup> Biggs earned his Master's in Music Composition from the University of California at Los Angeles and studied additionally at the University of Southern California and the Royal Flemish Conservatory in Antwerp, Belgium.<sup>109</sup> His teachers include Roy Harris, Lukas Foss, Ingolf Dahl, Flor Peeters, Halsey Stevens, and Leonard Stein.<sup>110</sup> Biggs' music also

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<sup>107</sup> "Biography," Consort Press, <http://consortpress.com/Bio.Reviews.html>.

<sup>108</sup> Crystal Records, liner notes to *Rendezvous and Dreams*. Crystal Records, 2000.

<sup>109</sup> "Biography," Consort Press, <http://consortpress.com/Bio.Reviews.html>.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.,

finds inspiration in the harmonic worlds of Bartók. As founder of the John Biggs Consort, Biggs toured internationally specializing in medieval, renaissance, and twentieth century music.<sup>111</sup>

Biggs notes his inspiration for *Dance Suite* coming partly from his first hearing of Britten's *Phantasy Quartet* op. 2 and his wonder at the combination of oboe and string trio. *Dance Suite* was written for Peter Christ, a close friend for whom Biggs had previously composed his oboe concerto for (1949).

*Dance Suite* is comprised of four dances: tango, waltz, basse dance, and Greek dance. Biggs notes his love of dance rhythms, as the motivation for weaving through four contrasting dances.<sup>112</sup> Each dance has its own unique character and emotion.

The opening movement is a tango, and the opening section is a call and response between the oboe and the strings. The strings begin by passing around a rhythmic ostinato and plucked strings. The oboe answers in a snappy solo line in the character of an improvisation. Biggs often groups the ensemble in pairs, trading off groups of two players against the other two. Portions of the melody are traded off in hocket between instruments as well. Both these components utilize the timbral possibilities of the ensemble in differing combinations and permutations. The movement builds in this manner with excited contrasts into a large tutti moment.

The second dance, waltz, reappears solemnly with the viola rocking back and forth. The violin and cello provide a standard waltz accompaniment. When the oboe

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>112</sup> Crystal Records, liner notes to *Rendezvous and Dreams*. Crystal Records, 2000.

enters with the first melodic material the movement ebbs and flows through chromatic lines. The movement's winding, chromatic lines raise into a faster section where the cello and oboe are heard against the two upper strings, displaying the range of timbres. The movement intensifies into a tutti section before breaking into a short coda whose character foreshadows the next movement.

The basse dance begins with the upper strings passing the beat back and forth, creating a dance-like ostinato for the bass's first iteration of the melody. This melody is rhythmic, dancing, and chromatic. This dance is playful and energetic, with octave leaps frequently passing around the ensemble.

The fourth dance erupts out into a Greek dance featuring compound meters. Bars of 7/8 are interrupted by moments in 4/4. The repeated rhythmic ostinatos in compound meter throughout the movement give the dance a driving, excited feel. The work ends with a short coda harkening back to the waltz with a questioning air.

#### Obo Kvartett (2009) Kári Bæk

The Faroe Islands are an archipelago located roughly between Iceland, Scotland, and Norway.<sup>113</sup> Kári Bæk was born in the Faroe Islands in 1950 and was educated in Denmark where he studied oboe with Paul Tofte Hansen and Ole Henrik Dahl.<sup>114</sup> Bæk is an active musician, conductor, and choral conductor in the Faroese musical scene.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> BIS Records, liner notes to *Cantus borealis*. BIS Records, 1999, 1.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*,



There are three forms of traditional Faroese music, Kvæði, Hymns, and Skaldur.<sup>116</sup> Kvæði, or ballads used for chain dance, are usually diatonic or use church modes and with a shifting rhythm of between three and four beats to the bar, creating a “polyrhythmic tension.”<sup>117</sup> Hymns are “often chromatic with ‘floating’ intervals and rhythms.”<sup>118</sup> Skaldur are songs or rhymes for children, these are usually pentatonic and “sound ancient, both in their imaginative lyrics and their melodies.”<sup>119</sup> Much of the music from the Faroes is choral music.

Bæk’s compositions include works for choir, solo instruments, and chamber ensembles.<sup>120</sup> Bæk is an active member of the Association of Faroese Composers, a group founded in 1987 to promote new compositions by Faroese composers, serving as the chair of the group for several years. Bæk’s works have been performed by the group Aldubaran, a chamber group which commissions new works by Faroese composers.

The Kvartett is in two movements, the titles being the first and second lines in the refrain of a Faroese dance ballad. The melodic material of the piece is based on three melodies found in the refrain. Faroese dance ballads usually consist of two pairs of two lines each with 4+3 beats.<sup>121</sup>

- I. *Let’s dance gay in the green Meadow;*
- II. *‘Neath the Mould shall never Dancer’s Tread go*

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>120</sup> Kári Bæk, Obo Kvartett. (TrevCo Music, 2009).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.,

The first movement is light and dancing; the melodic lines of the oboe leap octaves overtop of the driving accompaniment of the strings. Interjections of single bars of 2/4 in the 4/4 of the piece create moments that feel as if the entire ensemble is stomping on two quarter notes. The lyrical melodies are idiomatic of the oboe and showcase its range and capabilities well. The second section of the first movement moves to 6/8 but while the strings maintain a characteristic waltz accompaniment, the oboes running subdivisions are groups of eight. This polyrhythm creates a sense of drive and tension leading to a faster ending section recalling the opening material. The movement ends in a quieter character, here the music is slower and more vocally lyrical with more stepwise motion in the melody.

The second movement begins slower in a more reflective character, here the string voices are more independent, all playing a more equal role although the oboe maintains more of a solo character. The reflective character gives way to a more concentrated, faster allegro section with syncopated rhythms alternated with chromatic runs. The movement then transforms into a waltz, characteristic accompaniment and leaping melodies drive the excitement. A short cadenza by the oboe gives way to the final surge of the waltz to close out the work.

#### Quartet (2004) Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich was born in Miami, Florida on April 30, 1939.<sup>122</sup> Her early music training was on the piano, trumpet, and violin.<sup>123</sup> Her interest in

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<sup>122</sup> Robert Schwarz, "Ellen Taaffe Zwilich," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>123</sup> Andrew Ford, *Composer to composer: Conversations about contemporary music* (NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1993), 12.

composition was apparent early on, as early as her first piano lessons at the age of five, though she did not formally write down any compositions until several years later. Zwilich knew as early as elementary school that she wanted to be a composer.<sup>124</sup> During high school, Zwilich was both concertmistress of the orchestra, and first trumpet in the band at her school.<sup>125</sup> For her undergraduate studies, she attended Florida State University studying with John Boda.<sup>126</sup> Zwilich played jazz trumpet in big bands and small ensembles during her undergraduate studies and carried some of her jazz roots into her composition.<sup>127</sup> In 1964, Zwilich moved to New York City to study violin with Ivan Galamian<sup>128</sup> and where she played violin under Leopold Stokowski in the American Symphony Orchestra.<sup>129</sup> While in New York, Zwilich also attended the Juilliard School working on her doctoral studies with Roger Sessions and Elliott Carter.<sup>130</sup> Her music, however, is not immediately reminiscent of either Sessions or Carter; Zwilich's music is unique. In identifying the influence of Sessions, Zwilich said, "...I've had considerable difficulty in pinpointing exactly what it was that I got from Roger Sessions, all I know is that he kind of stood by me as I found my own voice as a composer, and I don't think there is a greater gift that a teacher can give you than that."<sup>131</sup> Zwilich was influenced by the ideas of Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School as well.<sup>132</sup> Zwilich was the first

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<sup>124</sup> Diane Peacock Jezic. "Ellen Taaffe Zwilich," in *Women Composers: The Lost Tradition Found*. Second edition. (New York, NY: The Feminist Press, 1994), 175.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>126</sup> Andrew Ford, *Composer to composer: Conversations about contemporary music*, 12.

<sup>127</sup> Robert Raines, *Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st-Century American Composers*, 12.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Schwarz, "Ellen Taaffe Zwilich," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>129</sup> Andrew Ford, *Composer to composer: Conversations about contemporary music*, 14.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 15.

woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize in composition<sup>133</sup> as well as the first woman to graduate from Juilliard with a doctorate in composition.<sup>134</sup>

Zwilich likens her composition process to “informed intuition” and says,

I want to inform myself as much as possible about everything concerning the piece that’s going to be, and then I want to trust my instincts. If I have a plan for a piece, and then, as I’m writing, the piece wants to do something different, I will always go with the piece and throw away the plan. It’s never just total inspiration, or total reliance on intuition, it’s a question of trusting yourself to make judgements that are beyond your emotional or intellectual grasp.<sup>135</sup>

Zwilich’s music since the 1980’s has been geared towards the more accessible and away from the Avant Garde. Many of her works’ structure, harmonic, and melodic material are derived from its initial motives.<sup>136</sup>

The Oboe Quartet was commissioned in 2004 for the Saratoga Chamber Music Festival and was premiered by Richard Woodhams. The work is set in two movements, the first movement opens with high harmonics in open fifths in the upper strings and a series of rising figures to a fermata. The melodic material juxtaposes the cello and oboe in lyrical singing lines. There is a sense of driving with forward momentum produced by running thirty-second note figures traded off around the ensemble. These bubbling figures give a sense of anticipation as the dramatic interest builds. Imitative passages transform the two aspects of the opening melodic material: the rising movement of the cello and falling sustained movement of the oboe. The intensity grows into a sustained tutti C spanning five octaves. The subsequent music

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>134</sup> Robert Raines, *Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st-Century American Composers*, 8.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>136</sup> Robert Schwarz, “Ellen Taaffe Zwilich,” *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

is the recapitulation, returning to the opening material with its open fifths and harmonic sonorities.

The second movement is forward moving, additive rhythms pizzicato in the strings and shift through changing meters. The music has a polyrhythmic feel as the melody moves between subdivisions of threes and twos. A series of chordal strumming patterns in the strings gives way to an iteration of the melody in the oboe which begins a blues scale. This bleeds into the violin playing a full C descending blues scale. A short transition section of solitary pizzicato leads into the second part of the movement. This section utilizes lazy triplets to give a swung feeling. The homophonic textures of the second movement create a compelling drive to the end. The work ends with four sustained tutti A's spanning the five octaves of the ensemble.

## Chapter 5: Single Movement Atonal Works

The works discussed in this category are single movement pieces without a clear, diatonic tonal center. The works examined are Oliver Knussen's *Cantata* op. 15 (1977), Helen Grime's *Oboe Quartet* (2011), and Elliott Carter's *Oboe Quartet* (2001).

### *Cantata op. 15 (1977) Oliver Knussen*

Born to a musical family in Glasgow, Scotland on June 12, 1952, Knussen's father was the principal bass player with the London Symphony Orchestra.<sup>137</sup> His early interest in composition was apparent as he began composing at the age of six.<sup>138</sup> At fifteen, he conducted the premiere of his first symphony with the London Symphony.<sup>139</sup> Knussen studied with Constant Lambert from 1963 to 1969 and later with Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood.<sup>140</sup> Knussen passed away on July 8, 2018.

In an interview with Andrew Palmer for the book *Encounters with British Composers*, Knussen writes about his music:

I don't have any particular philosophy about what my music is or isn't. I certainly don't set out to express myself, and I find that idea repellent actually. I only write what I feel compelled to write at the time, and sometimes that means: nothing. I start to compose because something new or odd occurs to me that I want to explore, or because I've come across a text that suggests music to me, or alternatively because I want to commemorate something or someone. Of course, I hope the resulting music is expressive, but that's something that should happen of its own accord. I'm most often consciously communicating with someone—a singer or player or colleague. I like to make things that will

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<sup>137</sup> Julian Anderson, "Oliver (Stuart) Knussen," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*,

stimulate them and that will also take their characteristics into account.<sup>141</sup>

The *Cantata* is the middle piece in a series of three: op. 14, 15, and 16, described by Knussen as a mini trilogy. *Autumnal* op. 14 for violin and piano and *Sonya's Lullaby* op. 16 for piano form the outer works of this trilogy. The set of works was Knussen's way of exploring harmonic areas encountered while composing his Third Symphony (1973–1979).<sup>142</sup> The quartet is a single movement piece lasting about ten minutes. Knussen named the work after noticing the series of episodes became apparently reminiscent of eighteenth-century solo cantatas alternating between recitative and self-contained numbers, arias.<sup>143</sup> The instrumentation is also very similar in this regard, the oboe receiving some of the most beautiful and important melodies in many of Bach's cantatas. Knussen says of the form of the work:

A slow introductory section proceeds, via a sequence of quasi-developmental episodes, towards a wild climactic passage featuring an elaborately ornamented (almost oriental) oboe line over manic violin and cello pizzicato. There follows an extended coda, in which the opening oboe melody reappears in altered form over a gently rocking repeated figure in the strings. Although essentially abstract, the work is certainly subjective, which fact may encourage the listener to let the music evoke whatever personal imagery it may contain.<sup>144</sup>

*Cantata* opens with a slow introduction, the oboe out of time from the strings. Quiet and sustained, the ensemble aligns with symbols indicating the player to “hold until the next bar line or coordination point.”<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Andrew Palmer, *Encounters with British Composers* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2015), 262–263.

<sup>142</sup> Oliver Knussen, *Cantata* op. 15. (London: Faber Music, 1981).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.,

The first quasi-variation is marked *Cadenza In-Tempo*. The cadenza is a leaping line for the oboe, playing with harmonics and rhythm above tremolo strings. This section accelerates into the next variation marked *corrente*, which translates to the Italian word for chain. The section is a series of overlapping and connecting melodic fragments. The subsequent section is marked *frozen*. As strings move between sustaining with and without vibrato, the oboe interjects with high articulated notes in an icy, piercing character. This flows into a more agitated section featuring a series of calls and responses between oboe and strings, growing ever more passionate and brilliant. The following sections shift through playful, mysterious, and triumphant characters, building to an intense, leaping conversation across the ensemble. The oboe and violin are briefly in rhythmic unison as a character marking of *loco* drives the ensemble into a frenzy. The oboe trills furiously into a contrasting moment. The string pizzicato and leggiero oboe are more playful in character momentarily, before becoming *brutale* with aggressive, articulated motives. These two contrasting characters trade off several times before moving into a new section.

The subsequent section features the oboe in reflection of the previous music while the strings' whisper harmonics create an ethereal atmosphere. The section becomes "...like a disembodied lullaby." The ethereal oboe melody in the upper register emerges above rocking, dotted rhythms in the strings. The final section of the work is calm, with sustained, soft strings and pizzicato-like rising calls in the oboe.

The first performance was given September 17, 1979 at the National Gallery in Athens as part of the ISCM World Music Days. It was performed by Janet Craxton (oboe) and members of the Nash Ensemble with Marcia Crayford (violin), Brian



Hawkins (viola), and Christopher van Kampen (cello).<sup>146</sup> The score is marked ‘In memory of Kenneth Heath’, the cellist in Craxton’s quartet who passed away the same year.

Oboe Quartet (2011) Helen Grime

Helen Grime was born in 1981 in York, England and raised in Scotland.<sup>147</sup> Grime began her musical studies on the oboe. Her early music education was at the City of Edinburgh Music School, a state funded specialist music school, receiving education on several instruments, general musicianship, aural, and keyboard skills, as well as composition.<sup>148</sup> Her first composition teacher, at the age of twelve was Sally Beamish followed by lessons with Haflidi Hallgrímsson and Jennifer Martin.<sup>149</sup> She received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from RCM in 2004.<sup>150</sup> Premiering her own Oboe Concerto in 2003, Grime won a British Composer Award.<sup>151</sup> Grime spent two years at Tanglewood, as both a Leonard Bernstein Fellow (2008), and the following year as a guest composer. While at Tanglewood she worked with Michael Gandolfi, John Harbison, Shulamit Ran, and Augusta Read Thomas.<sup>152</sup> As an orchestral composer, Grime’s work *Virga* (2007), was performed at the BBC Proms.<sup>153</sup> Grime was composer in residence with the Hallé Orchestra from 2011 to 2015, and composer in residence at Wigmore Hall for the 2016-2018 seasons.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>147</sup> Christian Carey, “An Introduction to the Music of Helen Grime,” *Tempo*: v.73, issue 289 (July 2019): 42.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.,

Oliver Knussen was a great supporter of Grime's music, presenting her music at Tanglewood and premiering several of her works including *Cold Spring* (2009) and the Piano Concerto (2017).<sup>155</sup> Her music is in many ways reminiscent of Knussen's, contrasting sections of complex additive rhythms with more reflective, sustained sections.

The 2011 Quartet is a single movement consisting of several contrasting sections which she describes as "essentially an abstract piece."<sup>156</sup> Grime writes of her work:

The piece is cast in one continuous movement although it falls into several shorter sections. The oboe is the protagonist throughout with the string trio set against it in a unit, sometimes opposing, sometimes shadowing, commenting, or expanding upon on the oboe's line. The character of music moves between plaintive, virtuosic, and fantastical to reflective and somewhat melancholy.<sup>157</sup>

The work begins with a progressively growing oboe melody, slowly moving at first and gradually increasing in rhythmic motion and intensity. This melody sings overtop of "gentle rocking figures in the trio".<sup>158</sup> These ideas become entangled and grow in intensity. Imitative figures move through the ensemble as the rhythms become more dance-like and agitated.

The ensemble drives into a fantastical, raucous section. The writing here is interlocking and virtuosic. Grime's writing shows her familiarity with the oboe as the part is difficult but incredibly well written for the instrument. As the work develops, the music becomes more direct and condensed, leading to a driving, more unified

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>156</sup> Helen Grime, *Oboe Quartet*. (Sussex, England: Chester Music, 2011).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.,

section. Forward moving, additive rhythms create a sense of phrenetic dance. The dance drives to a peak as the oboe wails out several low Bbs, the lowest note in the range, above intensely articulated and driving figures in the strings. The intensity slows and dissipates, like a train slowing into a station.

The following section is cadenza-like marked *ad libitum*; the oboe melody is leaping and reflective. Several cadenza-like sections are interjected by more agitated, articulated responses from the trio. These commentaries gradually decrease in intensity as the piece finishes with a more reflective and lyrical section of polyphonic writing. The oboe, in the upper end of the register, sits above rocking figures and soft glissandi in the strings. The work ends quietly and calmly, fading out gradually.

The Oboe Quartet was commissioned by Peggy Pearson and Winsor Music, and was premiered at Follen Community Church in Lexington, Massachusetts in March of 2012.<sup>159</sup>

#### Oboe Quartet (2001) Elliott Carter

Elliott Carter was born in New York, NY on December 11, 1908 and passed on November 5, 2012.<sup>160</sup> Carter grew up in New York during a time where the city was experiencing the new musical sounds of Cowell, Stravinsky, Scriabin, and Varèse.<sup>161</sup> The young Carter was introduced to Ives, the older composer mentoring Carter and discussing the modern music with him. Though Carter was not actively pursuing composition at this time, Ives' commentary on the new music left an

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>160</sup> David Schiff, "Elliott Carter," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.,

impression on the young musician.<sup>162</sup> Carter studied English literature, Greek, and philosophy at Harvard. During his time at Harvard he took lessons at the Longy School studying piano, oboe, and solfege.<sup>163</sup> He received his Master of Arts at Harvard in 1932 studying with Walter Piston, Edward Burlingame Hill, A.T. Davidson, and Gustav Holst.<sup>164</sup> Carter spent the years from 1932 to 1935 studying with Nadia Boulanger privately and at the École Normale de Musique in Paris, France.<sup>165</sup> During this time, Carter became especially immersed in the Cantatas of J.S. Bach.<sup>166</sup> Upon completing his studies, Carter returned to New York in 1935. He worked writing for *Modern Music* and directed the Ballet Caravan until 1940.<sup>167</sup> Carter held many teaching positions over the course of his career, the longest of which being a post at the Juilliard School (1964–1984). His other teaching positions included St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland (1939–1943), the Peabody Conservatory (1946–1948), Columbia University (1948–1950), Queens College CUNY (1955–1956), Yale University (1960–1962), and also appointments at MIT and Cornell.<sup>168</sup> Among Carter’s many compositional awards are two Pulitzer Prizes (1960, 1973), the National Medal of the Arts (1985), and a 1998 induction into the Classical Music Hall of Fame.<sup>169</sup>

Carter’s early style of composition drew often on baroque elements like cantus firmus, fugues, and ostinato bass- techniques he studied with Boulanger.<sup>170</sup> As

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.,

his style developed, his compositions became more harmonically adventurous but maintained a strict sense of formal structure. His mature works synthesize the European modernism of Debussy, Bartók, and Berg; with those of the American ultra-modernists Ives, Crawford, and Nancarrow.<sup>171</sup> Carter's late music moved more towards the ultra-modern, finding a welcome reception by the European conductors like Knussen, Boulez, and Holliger.<sup>172</sup> Composed in 2001, the Oboe Quartet was written for Heinz Holliger, a long champion of Carter's work and for whom the Oboe Concerto had been written (1986–1987). The first performance was given on September 2, 2001 at Matthaeskirche in Lucerne, Switzerland with Heinz Holliger (oboe), Thomas Zehetmair (violin), Ruth Killius (viola) and Thomas Demenga (cello).<sup>173</sup>

Carter's Quartet is a series of duets. He writes of the work:

The Oboe Quartet is built up from a series of six duets, which cover every possible combination of the four instruments. Each duet lasts just a minute or two, and the other two instruments provide an accompaniment. When I wrote the Oboe Concerto for Heinz Holliger he showed me the amazing things he could do, such as multiphonics and glissandi, and I incorporated them into the concerto. But this new piece doesn't have any of those sounds in it. My works now are not really experimental in terms of special effects, but rather in the way the music is organized.<sup>174</sup>

Carter's Quartet weaves through these duets, changes in character and timbre accentuating the instrumentation nuances. The work opens with a series of staggered entrances; the first duet between violin and oboe contrast portions of a tone row. Violin and viola provide the duet material next, with oboe and cello providing

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>173</sup> Elliott Carter, *Oboe Quartet*, (London, England: Boosey & Hawkes, 2001).

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.,

sustained underpinnings. Overlapping, additive rhythms create a mosaic of sound as the work twists through its material. Leaping, arpeggiated figures build tension. The violin and viola take up the role of duet, with long, sustained, dissonant intervals.

The next section is more active, with a duet between oboe and viola with figures of quick tremolos. Short, bouncing motives are passed back and forth between the two voices in the style of a hocket; the viola with a series of quick alternations between arco and pizzicato. This culminates in a series of polyrhythmic alternations. From here, the cello takes up the duet with the oboe, their jumping melodies accentuated by the chordal commentary of the viola and the accents of the violin. The melodic material becomes more sustained as long lines leap wildly around.

The next section is marked *tranquillo*, the sustained chords of the oboe, violin, and viola dominating the texture. This gives way to a more agitated character introduced by the cello as the duet moves to the viola and cello. Marcato lines run polyrhythmically opposing one another, accented by sharp commentary from the violin. The oboe reenters leading into a more sustained passage, the strings acting more in unison with their additive rhythms driving forward. The duet moves to the cello and violin; more sustained sounds are accented by interjections in the viola and oboe. Intensity grows in the duet leading to a more energetic section led by the duet between oboe and violin. Quick running arpeggio figures in polyrhythms shift back and forth from more sustained motives. The piece ends with the trio in a sustained chordal texture and a declamatory oboe statement before fading out with light pizzicato. The ending of the work feels more like a question than finality.

## Chapter 6: Programmatic/Imagery/Dialogues

The works in this category are programmatic in nature, inspired either by a place, story, or a dialogue. In this section, detailed are Eric Nathan's Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2012) inspired by a conversation, Thea Musgrave's *Cantilena* (2008) which provides a choreographed commentary on the members of the ensemble, and Martin Bresnick's *Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)* (2010) which paints a picture of his ancestral home.

### Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2012) Eric Nathan

Nathan earned his BA from Yale College studying with Kathryn Alexander, John Halle, and Matthew Suttor.<sup>175</sup> He received his masters from Indiana University studying with Claude Baker and Sven-David Sandstrom.<sup>176</sup> Nathan received his doctorate from Cornell University studying with Steven Stucky, Roberto Sierra, and Kevin Ernste.<sup>177</sup> As a fellow at Tanglewood, Aspen, and Aldeburgh, Nathan worked with John Harbison, Augusta Read Thomas, Bernard Rands, Michael Gandolfi, Oliver Knussen, Colin Matthews, Christopher Rouse, and George Tsontakis.<sup>178</sup>

Nathan's Oboe Quartet was composed in 2012 and was written for Peggy Pearson. Nathan says of his work:

I think of my Quartet for Oboe and Strings as a sort of theatrical play. I treat the oboe and string trio as characters in a drama, engaging them in a series of dialogues and conversations that follow an emotional arc and trajectory. While I didn't have a specific story in mind writing this piece, my work follows a narrative in the

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<sup>175</sup> "About," Eric Nathan, <http://www.ericnathanmusic.com/new-page-3>.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.,

abstract-the characters lead us on an emotional journey, one that leave us someplace new by the end, with memories of the musical events and interactions that have transpired. One may think of the oboe as the main protagonist, its lines quickly shifting between seriousness, playfulness, humor, declamation, passion, consolation, and more. At times the string trio works together conversing with the oboe, but in other instances the violin, viola, and cello each act as major characters in their own right, engaging in dialogue with the other instruments, or talking past them to the audience. All this said, I would recommend not worrying about catching every note “said” between our four players, but sitting back and letting them bring you along with them.<sup>179</sup>

The Quartet is set in a single movement flowing through different sections of contrasting character and style. The string trio acts mostly as a unit, conversing with the oboe at times as a group and at others as individual voices.

The Quartet opens with a rising introductory figure, out of which the oboe appears; this figure returns several times throughout the piece. The first section of the work features a singing lyrical melody in the oboe overtop of “jumpy, agitated strings”<sup>180</sup> which act largely in rhythmic unison; a congealed group against the character of the oboe. As the oboe’s melody develops, grace notes seem to respond to the more agitated character of the strings.

The rising introductory figure is heard again, leading to the oboe’s restatement of the melody. This time, the viola takes up conversation with the oboe, and then violin; the strings responding to the oboe’s lyrical melody. This is followed by passages of imitative counterpoint, the members of the ensemble imitating and responding to each other.

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<sup>179</sup> “Quartet for Oboe and Strings,” Eric Nathan, <http://www.ericnathanmusic.com/quartet-for-oboe-and-strings>.

<sup>180</sup> Robert Kizinger, liner notes to *For Multitude, Solitude: Eric Nathan*. Albany Records, CD.



The middle of the work is marked by an oboe “cadenza-like soliloquy.”<sup>181</sup> The violin responds to this emotional outpouring with its own melody, overtop of strummed chords in the violin and cello. During this section of the piece, the oboe frequently becomes part of the accompanying strings in response to the melodic string dialogue.

This ramps up into an excited, technical passage, pitting the oboe again against the string trio. Running, articulated technical passages in the strings contrast with the wildly expressive and more lyrical oboe melody. Sections of imitative counterpoint again appear in the strings. The closing coda is reflective but playful in the closing commentary; the last moment is a tutti figure, giving one final moment of unification at the ending of this conversational work.

### *Cantilena (2008) Thea Musgrave*

Scottish composer Thea Musgrave was born May 27, 1928.<sup>182</sup> Musgrave began her musical studies at the University of Edinburgh with Hans Gál and was also heavily influenced by the compositions of Donald Tovey.<sup>183</sup> Moving to Paris, Musgrave studied privately with Nadia Boulanger from 1949 to 1954.<sup>184</sup> In 1954, she won the Paris Conservatoire’s Lili Boulanger Memorial Prize.<sup>185</sup> She spent the four subsequent years teaching at the Dartington Summer School.<sup>186</sup> As Musgrave’s music

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>182</sup> Jennifer Barnes, “Thea Musgrave,” *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.,

gained recognition, she travelled to study at Tanglewood with Aaron Copland.<sup>187</sup> In 1959, she began lecturing at London University at Teddington.

Musgrave's early work was "declamatory, [and] often modal."<sup>188</sup> As her personal style developed, she began to sense an importance for "dramatic confrontation."<sup>189</sup> Her music combines elements of strict serialism, elements of modalism, drama, and lyricism. Conversation, drama, and formal freedom are also important elements of Musgrave's work. Many of Musgrave's works involve staging or movement of players throughout the piece. In her 1968 Clarinet Concerto, the soloist walks between concertante groups which form the orchestra, "visually underpinning the musical structure."<sup>190</sup> Many of her other works include these staging elements to enhance or visually depict the music, including the Viola Concerto (1973).

*Cantilena*, composed in 2008, is a single movement work that utilizes staging directions to visually depict the musical drama. The drama in Musgrave's work deals with the dynamics of the oboe quartet. Of her work, Musgrave says:

The work is a short, lyrical piece where an outsider [the oboe] joins the group [a string trio] and adds to their dialogue. At first the newcomer is treated with a mixture of suspicion and agitation, but eventually is made welcome.

The oboe is invited to share the musical theme that has been established which he then proceeds to embellish and adorn. He leads the harmonic changes that result in the theme being heard in many different keys. He then introduces a new theme. The excitement grows and leads to a climax.

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.,

A peaceful coda re-establishes the original theme and all ends harmoniously among the integrated quartet.<sup>191</sup>

In the music and choreography, the oboe as the outsider attempts to join the already existing string trio. This staging is an interesting commentary on the ensemble, which often juxtaposes the wind instrument from the string instruments. The form of the work reflects a conversation in synthesizing the instruments into a cohesive ensemble. The work begins with the strings, already an established group stating the opening melody. The oboe plays its opening several melodies offstage, before walking on upstage right, and turning to face the viola as it reaches the upper end of its register. The strings at first react to the oboe with suspicion and uncertainty. The oboe “becomes aware of” the cello, turning to the next member of the ensemble. As the work develops, the oboe continues its commentary, moving a step closer, and a step closer to the string trio, until it stands behind the viola. The strings begin to converse more with the outsider wind player. As the oboe takes on more of a solo role, and leads the harmonic changes, the strings begin to respond more. A new theme is introduced by the oboe and leads to the climax of the piece. The work ends with a coda which reestablishes the opening theme, this time with the ensemble as a cohesive unit. The work ends peacefully with the ensemble as a unified group.

*Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem) (2010) Martin Bresnick*

Composer and oboist Martin Bresnick was born in New York City in 1946.<sup>192</sup> As an instrumentalist, Bresnick began playing the oboe at age eleven and continued to

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<sup>191</sup> Thea Musgrave, *Cantilena*, (London, England: Novello & Co., 2008).

<sup>192</sup> “Longer Bio,” Martin Bresnick, <http://www.martinbresnick.com/#/LongerBio/>.

perform throughout his graduate studies. His main composition teachers include Gyorgy Ligeti, John Chowning, and Gottfried von Einem.<sup>193</sup> He received degrees from the University of Hartford (Bachelor of Arts '67), and Stanford University (Master of Music '68, Doctor of Musical Arts '72). From 1969 to 1970, Bresnick received a Fulbright to study at the Akademie fur Musik, Vienna. Bresnick was accepted to study with Ligeti in Vienna though it was not until Bresnick returned to Stanford that he was finally able to study with Ligeti. On studying with Gyorgy Ligeti, Bresnick states, "His work has always illuminated terrains and places I never imagined."<sup>194</sup> As a teacher, Ligeti's emphasis was on realizing what the intention of the music was; as Bresnick recalls: "There's no justification for anything you do that doesn't sound like what it should sound like."<sup>195</sup> Bresnick's compositions are grounded in a firm sense of the realities of performance.

Also a dedicated teacher, Bresnick holds the position of Professor of Composition and Coordinator of the Composition Department at the Yale School of Music.<sup>196</sup> His other teaching positions included San Francisco Conservatory (1971–1972), Stanford University (1972–1975), as well as visiting positions at Amherst College, Duke University, Eastman School of Music, Florida State University, Mannes College, and University of Michigan, among others. He is the winner of the

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<sup>193</sup> "Longer Bio," Martin Bresnick, <http://www.martinbresnick.com/#/LongerBio/>.

<sup>194</sup> Robert Raines, *Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st-Century American Composers*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>196</sup> Robert Raines, *Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st-Century American Composers*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47.

Charles Ives Living Award, the Rome Prize, the Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Koussevitzky Commission.<sup>197</sup>

With compositions ranging from opera, chamber, and symphonic music, Bresnick has also delved into the genres of film scores and computer music. His orchestral works have been performed by orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, the National Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony.<sup>198</sup> His chamber works have been performed by ensembles such as The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Nash Ensemble, and the Da Capo Chamber Players.<sup>199</sup>

Commissioned by the Double Entendre ensemble to compose an oboe quartet, *Going Home* is a recollection of sorts for Bresnick, harkening back to both his youth as an oboist and to his time with his grandparents. Inspired by memories of his family's hometown of Vysoke, a small Russian-Polish town in Belarus, Bresnick writes of his work:

I intended to take a gentle musical journey back to my youthful studies and beloved instrument. Instead, without willing it, I was taken back to childhood memories of my mother and my grandparents - to their songs and stories of "Vysoke Litovsk", the small Russian-Polish (now Belarusian) town where they and my ancestors had lived for many generations.

I was taken back to memories of my own visit to Vysoke in 1995. Just as my mother and grandparents remembered, I found the dense birch and pine forests, the small railway station and the Potocki estate. The Catholic Church, just being restored, stood not far from the brilliant blue and gold onion domes of the Orthodox Church. And, as they remembered, the Pulwa river (a tributary of the Bug river) ran beside the lunke or meadow. Goats and horses were grazing there, tethered to the green grass. The ruined Synagogue, at the

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<sup>197</sup> Robert Raines, *Composition in the Digital World: Conversations with 21st-Century American Composers*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47.

<sup>198</sup> Martin Bresnick, "Longer Bio."

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.,

edge of the meadow, was just a short distance down an unpaved dirt road that led to a small wooden house, once the home of my family.<sup>200</sup>

This single movement work is through-composed and can be divided into three sections. The overall tone and character of the work is nostalgic and atmospheric. *Going Home* opens with a feeling of stasis, the violin and oboe trading off unison figures in quasi-imitative fashion and gradually widening intervals. As the section continues, the oboe's figures become reminiscent of bird calls. Bresnick labels the second section a lullaby, the relentless *ppp* in the strings creates a haunting, yet beautiful accompaniment to the nostalgic oboe melody. Somewhat misplaced, while the string parts maintain the triple meter, in this section, the melody of the oboe line is in the duple meter, creating a sense of gentle rocking back and forth. This polyrhythm creates a sense of displacement, a feeling of not being quite solidified. The final section is heralded by the first written change in tempo; the quicker section is filled with more energy. The melodic figure is traded off between instruments until coming to a tutti section at the climax. The work ends with each voice dropping out until the oboe is left with its lonely plaintive cry.

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<sup>200</sup> Martin Bresnick, *Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)*, (New York: Carl Fischer Music, 2010).

## Chapter 7: Extended Technique

Several works written for oboe quartet utilize extended techniques in the oboe to create new textures and sounds. These extended techniques range from the use of harmonics juxtaposed with regular fingerings for color changes, as well as multiphonics, which can resemble string double or triple-stops, and other such techniques. Works examined in this category include Istvan Lang's *Constellations* (1975) which uses extensive multiphonics and quarter tones, Colin Matthews' *Second Oboe Quartet* (1997) which utilizes harmonics to create timbral variety, and Edwin Roxburgh's *Ecclissi* (1971) which uses harmonics, chords, and rolling tones in the oboe.

### *Constellations for oboe, violin, viola, cello (1975) Istvan Lang*

Hungarian composer Istvan Lang was born in Budapest, Hungary on March 3, 1933.<sup>201</sup> Lang studied at the Liszt Academy of Music from 1950 to 1958 studying with János Viski and Ferenc Szabó.<sup>202</sup> He held the position of musical director at the State Puppet Theatre from 1966 to 1984. In 1973 he began teaching in the chamber music department of the Liszt Academy.<sup>203</sup> He also held positions as guest lecturer at the University of Colorado, the University of New Mexico, and CNM Mexico City.<sup>204</sup>

Lang's music combines aleatorism, or use of chance, and serialism.<sup>205</sup> Much of his music is set as a series of short movements based on small motifs.<sup>206</sup> Lang

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<sup>201</sup> Antal Boronkay; rev. Rachel Beckles Willson, "Istvan Lang," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*,

frequently explored and manipulated the timbral capabilities of individual instruments as evidenced in his chamber works.

*Constellations*, composed in 1975, features a series of short episodic ideas. Utilizing extensive extended techniques in the oboe, Lang provides a page of instructions. These instructions include fingerings for quarter tones, or pitches in between the half steps in traditional Western scales. Multiphonics, and multiphonic trill fingerings allow the oboe to sound several notes at once. There are indications for broken sounds, or overblown notes, as well as flutter-tongue and rolling sound. Throughout the episodes, which are separated by fermatas of differing lengths, Lang utilizes free time, indicating in the score the alignment and approximate number of seconds for specific events.

The first episode passes a line like a wavering drone around the ensemble. Movement in rhythm around different pitch centers features at most two moving voices at a time, creating a sense of improvised speech. A long, held note, the highest pitch in the work so far, crescendos in the oboe to an overblown declamation. Next, the cello tremolo cues the listener into the subsequent thicker texture, the inner strings' repeating, articulated pitches against swirling lines on oboe and cello. As the section develops, the middle voices play with indicated glissando and accented tremolo. Coordination is loosely indicated through repeated, independent lines and timed fermatas.

The next section is more lyrical, with slower rhythmic and harmonic changes in all voices. Large intervallic leaps and staggered dynamics in all voices emphasize the drama.



The following section presents the first indicated time signature of common time. This section has a thicker texture with sustained strings. The timbre of this section is dominated mainly by the string voices, while the oboe interjects with shorter multiphonics. Lang's use of this extended technique in this passage enhances the chordal texture of this episode.

The next section returns to a faster character. Quick runs pass through the ensemble, at times the strings playing a more rhythmically prominent role against the oboe's improvised solo lines. The texture thins out, but the intensity builds, as the remaining voices play to their maximum before dropping off. After the oboe's final, intense, sustained quartertone sharp high C-sharp, a sudden drop to a timed, quiet multiphonic is a stark contrast.

The following section is again more chordal in nature, flutter tongue and multiphonics in the oboe overlay a chordal, sustained character in the strings. The oboe takes on a quieter, more sustained character, while the string writing becomes more polyphonic. Intensity grows through increasing dynamics before suddenly dropping into independent, quiet runs in the strings. The string trio begins to build intensity again as the oboe enters with a series of repeated notes, alternate fingerings shifting the tone color and over-blowing notes; this creates a feeling of great exasperated improvisation. A thick texture of freely timed rhythms on repeated notes in the strings underlay the oboe's twirling energetic lines.

A sudden stop again brings about the slower moving chordal character. This transitions into a series of repeated, independent motives. The motives are repeated a specific number of times before the subsequent voice layers itself above. Time in this

section is free and improvised though Lang's indications of rhythms are precise. The layers turn into a much thicker texture and the ensemble rises together into a sudden stop.

The subsequent section is metered with a metronome marking indicated. Rhythmic interest creates motion here through short, articulated notes which bounce out of the otherwise sustained texture. The ensemble seems to finally meld together as the final motive brings the first rhythmic unison of the work.

Lang utilizes extended techniques in this work to expand the possibilities of the oboe, in ways mimicking more natural capabilities of string instruments. The oboe provides its own characteristic take on these colors, enhancing the possibilities of the full ensemble.

#### *Second Oboe Quartet (1997) Colin Matthews*

British composer Colin Matthews was born in London, England on February 13, 1946.<sup>207</sup> Matthew's early music education was encouraged by his parents as Colin and brother, David, also a composer, began piano lessons.<sup>208</sup> There was no music program available in their school, so the Matthews' grew up listening to symphonic music on the radio and began composing in their teens.<sup>209</sup> Colin spent several years aiding musicologist Deryck Cooke on a transcription of Mahler's tenth symphony.<sup>210</sup> Matthews studied literature at the University of Nottingham, receiving his Bachelor

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<sup>207</sup> David C.H. Wright, "Colin Matthews," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>208</sup> Andrew Palmer, *Encounters with British Composers* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2015), 299.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*,

of Arts in 1966.<sup>211</sup> He then went on to study composition there with Arnold Whittall and Nicholas Maw.<sup>212</sup> Matthews then began his doctoral studies at the University of Sussex, specializing in the music of Mahler and completing his Doctor of Philosophy in music in 1978.<sup>213</sup> During the 1970's, Matthews worked as an assistant for Benjamin Britten at Aldeburgh (1971–1976) and with Imogen Holst.<sup>214</sup> From 1992 to 1999, Matthews worked as Associate Composer for the London Symphony Orchestra, composing, among many other works, a cello concerto for Rostropovich.<sup>215</sup> From 2001 to 2010 he was Associate Composer and is now Composer Emeritus at the Hallé Orchestra.<sup>216</sup> He has composed works for the BBC Symphony, the Concertgebouw, San Francisco Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic.<sup>217</sup> Matthews administers the Holst Foundation, chairs the Britten Estate and is a founder trustee and Music Director of the Britten-Pears Foundation. Along with Oliver Knussen, Matthews co-directed the Aldeburgh Composition Course beginning in 1992.<sup>218</sup>

Matthew's music inhabits a middle ground between high modernism and tonal traditionalism.<sup>219</sup> In discussing his influences, Matthews says: "I was aware of, and open to, the influence of (to take a few extremes) Terry Riley, Milton Babbitt, John Cage, and Cornelius Cardew. I also had a close interest in non-Western music."<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> David C.H. Wright, "Colin Matthews," *Oxford Music Online*, *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>215</sup> "Biography," Colin Matthews. <https://colinmatthews.net/>.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>219</sup> Andrew Palmer, *Encounters with British Composers* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2015), 299.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

Matthews has composed two works for oboe quartet, Oboe Quartet (1981) and Second Oboe Quartet (1997). The Second Oboe Quartet was composed for the Berlin Oboe Quartet following a performance they gave of Matthew's first oboe quartet in 1988. Of his second quartet, Matthews says: "The work is, like the earlier quartet, in a single movement, with quite a complex structure of overlapping variations; but the oboe has more of a concertante role, and the music is on the whole faster and more concentrated."<sup>221</sup>

The quartet begins with the indication *floating*, this character being immediately apparent in the wavering string parts, alternating between pitches at slightly different tempi: quintuplets against sixteenths against triplet sixteenths. The oboe enters, floating above with a soft, sustained, ethereal call. Intensity quickly builds into a tremolo in the strings and an improvisatory cry in the oboe, followed by a series of calls and responses from the oboe to the strings. The first cadenza-like moment for the oboe is the initial use of extended technique. Here, Matthews chooses to contrast repeated notes with harmonic fingerings. The strings respond with a rhythmically homogenous call. The section continues with the call and response until the strings respond by launching into a faster, more concentrated section. The string voices pass around a series of quick runs and pizzicato melodic material, which the oboe imitates.

The next section, marked *vigorous*, is an excited and driving rhythmic ostinato in the strings with a dance-feel, which supports the improvisational, leaping lines of the oboe. The ostinato breaks into smaller sections, separated by slower calls in the

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<sup>221</sup> Colin Matthews, Second Oboe Quartet. (London: Faber Music, 1997).

oboe. The section culminates by driving into the main oboe cadenza of the work. Throughout the cadenza, rhythmically homogenous strings interject a frantic response into the oboe's cries. The cadenza contains extensive use of contrasted harmonic fingerings to regular fingerings. These sudden color shifts create surprising transitions of color throughout the line.

A more polyphonic string section responds to the oboe, mirroring the intensity. The next section is marked *agitato* and features imitative writing, and running, rhythmically interesting leaping lines. This intensity and drive give way to a soft, chordal texture, becoming increasingly quieter and softer. The work ends with a rising run throughout the strings, seeming to dissipate into the air like rising smoke.

The quartet was premiered by the Berlin Oboe Quartet at London's Purcell Room February 9, 1990 as part of the Park Lane Group Concert. The Berlin Oboe Quartet is composed of members Nigel Shore (oboe), Florian Donderer (violin), Brett Dean (viola), and Anna Carewe (cello). The Berlin Oboe Quartet has recorded both of Matthew's quartets on Costa Records.

*Ecclissi for oboe, violin, viola, cello (1971) Edwin Roxburgh*

Edwin Roxburgh was born in Liverpool, England on November 6, 1937.<sup>222</sup> He studied at the Royal College of Music from 1957 to 1960 and St. John's College, Cambridge from 1961 to 1963.<sup>223</sup> His teachers at the RCM included Herbert Howells for composition and Terence MacDonagh for oboe.<sup>224</sup> He also spent time abroad

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<sup>222</sup> Andrew Burn, "Edwin Roxburgh," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*,

studying with Nadia Boulanger and Luigi Dallapiccola.<sup>225</sup> Roxburgh co-authored the book *The Oboe* (1977) with Leon Goossens. Roxburgh taught composition at the Royal College of Music, where in 1971, he founded and became director of the department of twentieth century performance studies.<sup>226</sup>

As an oboist, Roxburgh held the position of principal oboe with the Sadler's Wells Opera from 1964 to 1967. During his time there he became well-known as a soloist, particularly as a performer of modern works including Berio's *Sequenza VII*.<sup>227</sup> Roxburgh's compositions display the composer's interest in color and texture with the utilization of both extended techniques and electronics.

Roxburgh's interest in and apparent skill with modern oboe works is evident in his 1971 *Ecclissi*. Composed in a single movement, the work is comprised of several connected sections. Beginning with a page of instructions for the oboe, Roxburgh details specifics of the extended techniques. Techniques include indications for color change, requesting a closed, distant quality with alternate fingerings. Fingerings for chords including double harmonics, rolling tone, as well as interjected notes in chords are also provided. Roxburgh also instructs the cello in harp pizzicato to simulate a harp, an idea provided by colleague Ross Pople.<sup>228</sup>

The work opens with the oboe playing a long, sustained melody utilizing various color fingerings and multiphonics. The strings act as a unit, interspersing more energetic, pizzicato commentaries. The oboe's color fingerings against the harmonics of the strings create an ethereal and hazy sound world. A quieter,

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>228</sup> Edwin Roxburgh, *Ecclissi*, (England: United Music Publishers Ltd., 1976).

polyphonic section follows with long, slow glissandi, as well as tremolo harmonics in the strings against rolling tones in the oboe. The oboe's rolling tones against the tremolo strings and sul ponticello explore the extremes of timbral possibility. The work flows through a series of short sections, contrasting texture and timbre and gaining momentum as the music becomes louder and more condensed. A brief passage of polyphonic string soli leads into the climax of the piece, as the oboe reenters with intensifying multiphonics. The strings end while the oboe is left calling out a series of loud multiphonics and trills. The writing for the oboe becomes contrapuntal: the multiphonic becomes quieter and is accented by a more aggressive line poking out underneath. The following section returns to a tutti texture; short spurts of energy are interrupted by full ensemble fermatas. The music becomes slower and freer, as more reflective motives pass around the ensemble in lyrical polyphonic and polyrhythmic ideas. The work ends quietly with the oboe alone.

## Chapter 8: English horn and String Trio

Some composers have opted to write for English horn and string trio, which creates a unique timbral landscape, differing from the works for oboe and string trio. Three significant examples of this are Jean Francaix's Quartet (1971), Alan Ridout's *The Rainbow (Elegy)* (1981), and Willy Hess's Quartett op. 141 (1996).

### Quartet for English horn, violin, viola, and cello (1971) Jean Francaix

Born in Le Mans, France on May 23, 1912, Jean Francaix showed an early proclivity for composition in his musically-oriented household.<sup>229</sup> As his parents exposed his early music to publishers, it came under the eye of Nadia Boulanger who began to mentor the young pianist and composer.<sup>230</sup> She played or conducted the premieres of several of his works.<sup>231</sup> Francaix studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire with Isidore Philipp, winning a *premier prix* in 1930.<sup>232</sup> He toured as a concert pianist, frequently presenting his works in concerts in the United States and Europe.

Francaix's compositional output is prolific, with over two hundred works in his catalogue.<sup>233</sup> His compositions include many works for piano, several operas, concerti, chamber works, large-scale sacred works and orchestrations. A well-respected orchestrator, Francaix provided orchestrations of many works by Chopin, Mozart, and Poulenc.<sup>234</sup> His works inhabit a distinctly French character, tonal but

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<sup>229</sup> Muriel Bellier, "Jean Francaix," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*,



with expressively free harmonic language, reminiscent of Ravel and distinctly neo-classical.<sup>235</sup> His music is often virtuosic and demanding of the player.

Francaix's 1971 Quartet utilizes English horn and string trio. His choice of English horn rather than oboe in this ensemble was no doubt influenced by his intimate knowledge of instrumental colors in his work as an orchestrator. The work is set in five movements.

The first movement is playful and contains influences of ragtime. The opening theme, first introduced in the violin, passes to English horn; the bouncy, joyous melody fits the character of the instruments well. The melody transforms through a series of harmonic shifts and color changes but maintains its light-hearted, playful character.

The second movement is lyrical and expressive, exploiting the melancholy, nature of the English horn. Reflective and singing, the English horn is supported by sections of soft, sustained strings and strums of violin pizzicato, and sections of richly polyphonic string writing. The long and winding chromatic melodies weave in and out of various instrumental combinations through the ensemble.

The third movement is a scherzo, with a running and playful character. The jaunty melody bounces around the ensemble with outbursts of a more intense, driving character. These upward moving, driving lines leading to a suddenly calmer reiteration of the melody are characteristic of Francaix. A string soli passage drives chromatically downward into a more ethereal character, leading into the fourth movement. The fourth movement is slower, more introspective, and melancholy in

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid.,

character. Double stops in the violin melody alternating with the more somber oboe melody give a rich, reflective character. This movement is the most serious of the work and prominently displays the English horn's proclivity for melancholy, lyrical lines.

The fifth movement is playful and exciting. Quick, articulated motives are passed around the ensemble in this virtuosic and playful movement. Iterations and transformations of this playful theme are interspersed with more unified sections of building intensity. The work culminates with an exciting tutti section.

*The Rainbow (Elegy)(1981) Alan Ridout*

British composer Alan Ridout, born in Kent, England in 1934, began his musical studies at the Guildhall School of Music at the age of fifteen.<sup>236</sup> However, finding his training at Guildhall unsatisfactory, Ridout began seeking out the input of other composers to guide him. In 1950, the sixteen-year-old, looked up Benjamin Britten's address and sent the composer a set of variations for oboe and string orchestra hoping for comment. Britten's response to the teen Ridout encouraged him to continue writing music despite his education situation.<sup>237</sup> In 1951 Ridout began studies at the Royal College of Music with Herbert Howells and Gordon Jacob, and later studied privately with Peter Fricker and Michael Tippett.<sup>238</sup> From 1957 to 1958 Ridout received a scholarship from the Dutch government to study with Henk Badings. Badings was a Dutch composer whose experiments with tapes and

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<sup>236</sup> Hugo Cole, "Alan Ridout," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

<sup>237</sup> Alan Ridout, "A composer's life" London; Thames Publishing, 1995. 31.

<sup>238</sup> Hugo Cole, "Alan Ridout," *Oxford Music Online, Grove Music Online*.

electronics inspired Ridout's *Psalm for Sine Wave Generators* (1959), one of the first electronic works by a British composer.<sup>239</sup> Upon his return to Britain, he studied with Thurston Dart and from 1960 to 1984 taught theory and composition at the Royal College of Music.<sup>240</sup> Ridout was also well-known for his radio broadcast talks 'Background to Music'.<sup>241</sup> In 1964 he began a creative partnership with organist Allan Wicks that resulted in a vast number of choral works, canticles, and the settings of both St. Matthew's Passion and St. John's Passion.<sup>242</sup> Ridout's compositional output is prolific with over nine hundred works including children's operas, ballets, as well as educational works.

*The Rainbow (Elegy)* was composed in 1981 and dedicated to the memory of Morris Shapira. This reminiscent elegy, with its romantic tonal language, is a single movement in binary form. Inhabiting the lush tonal world of late English romantic writing, the work is richly textured and sets the English horn as a solo voice against a homophonic string sound. Long melodies rise and fall while evoking a sense of nostalgia and hope. The work is an arch form, it's rising opening phrase building momentum under the English horn as the strings intensify with tremolo. From the climax, the work quickly recedes to a recollection of the opening, bringing a sense of nostalgia to this elegy.

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.,

Quartet in f minor op.141 (1996) Willy Hess

As a musicologist, Willy Hess's contributions to the world of Beethoven scholarship should not be understated. The Swiss composer and musicologist was born in Winterthur, Switzerland on October 12, 1906.<sup>243</sup> Hess studied piano and theory at the Zurich Conservatory with Volkmar Andreae, head of the conservatory and the Tonhalle Orchestra (1906–1949), as well as Paul Muller-Zurich, and Walter Frey.<sup>244</sup> Following a year studying in Berlin (1929–30), he continued piano lessons with Frey. From 1942 to 1971 Hess was a bassoonist with the Winterthur Stadtorchester.<sup>245</sup>

An active musicologist and scholar, Hess studied the work of Beethoven extensively. His published works include a definitive catalogue of Beethoven's works (1957), and over four hundred additional published works including Beethoven studies, fourteen volumes of supplements to the complete Beethoven edition, and numerous editions of other works.<sup>246</sup> His non-Beethoven writings deal mainly with form in Bruckner's music, modern music, and the Swiss explorer Sven Hedin.<sup>247</sup> As a composer, in addition to the editions of Beethoven's works, including several arrangements and orchestrations, Hess's compositions include many tonal works based on Classical models.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Jurg Stenzl, "Willy Hess," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 8: 334.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.,

The Quartet in f minor op. 141 for English horn, violin, viola, and cello was composed in 1996. The work is a variation suite; it's seven movements are common instrumental pieces and dances.

The first movement, Kanzone 1, is derived from the canzone, a sixteenth century imitative piece. This form is indicated by several contrasting sections, lively character, and marked rhythms.<sup>249</sup> This opening movement can be viewed in several progressive sections. The opening melodic material is introduced by the English horn; the line is song-like at first before the texture becomes like an undulating ocean, with leaping counterpoint-like figures in the English horn supporting the melody in the cello. The middle section's texture changes with the melody in the viola, the English horn tacet, and pizzicato in the outer strings. In the next section, the viola takes up the counterpoint with the outer strings returning to arco. The English horn reappears with a rising line of developing melodic material. The movement ends with an imitative coda as the fragmented melody is heard echoing down the range of the ensemble.

The second movement is an Allemande, a highly stylized dance in common time with continuous movement in binary form.<sup>250</sup> The perpetual sixteenth notes pass off around the strings, creating rhythmic interest, while the English horn maintains a simpler lyrical melody. Syncopations create excitement through a sense of forward momentum across the ensemble, as the four voices drive to the end.

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<sup>249</sup> Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 350.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, 372.

The third movement is a Menuett, traditionally a couple dance in a moderate triple meter.<sup>251</sup> This dance is differentiated from a waltz in its emphasis: a minuet is felt in three with the third beat going into the downbeat, whereas a waltz is felt in one with the impetus coming away from the downbeat. The form of the movement is true to the minuet: a trio section is mirrored on each side by a repeated opening section. The opening portion features the strings in a polyphonic texture, all three voices having melodic interest and being equal. The trio section is the only place in which the English horn is present in this movement. During this section, the texture and timbre change as the strings move to a more homophonic accompaniment role with the English horn in a prominently melodic role.

The fourth movement Kanzone 2, uses melodic material derived from the opening Kanzone 1. This movement feels more forward moving, with repeated driving figures in the strings as the tempo speeds up through a series of *accelerandi* before the character changes. The second half of this movement slows back down and an ethereal-sounding section marked “*wie eine Orgel, ohne Vibrato*” (like an organ without vibrato) emerges. The movement ends with a return to the opening timbre but with a more somber and quiet character.

The fifth movement is a Gavotte, a lively dance in duple-meter which commonly uses the rhythm short-short-long.<sup>252</sup> This movement, like the minuet, has an ABA form with a middle contrasting trio section. This movement is full of lively character and balances the voices in importance and prominence.

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.,

The sixth dance is a Bourrée, an energetic dance in cut time in binary form. Excitement derives from a series of off-beat accents, and layers of imitative voicing cascading up and down with quick dynamic shifts.

The finale is an exciting dance in three, alternating between a triple and duple division of the beat. The movement is fugal in nature, the marked opening statement heard in the cello finding its response in the viola and then violin. The English horn enters in the first shift from triple to duple division. This section brings a softer, more lyrical melody and more homophonic texture. A return to the opening character brings more imitative writing and development of the themes. The consequent return to the more homophonic second character soon shifts through a series of accelerations into a rousing presto to finish the work.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

### Conclusion

Over the last fifty years, the oboe quartet has grown as an ensemble in variety and breadth of literature. Works written for this instrumental grouping showcase the diversity and possibility inherent in the nature of an ensemble that groups a wind voice with a range of string voices. The combination of oboe, violin, viola, and cello certainly has a wide potential for timbral variety, and many composers have utilized this strength to compose works that are interesting, unique, and complex.

In the years between 1970 and 2020 a large number of pieces have been composed for this ensemble spanning many styles. Some works look to the past, utilizing baroque or classical forms and elements. Other pieces are forward-looking and experimental, pushing the known boundaries of timbre and sound. The genre of the oboe quartet has proved itself to be incredibly versatile and has sparked the imagination of many composers who have contributed to this important body of repertoire.



## Appendices

### **Appendix A:**

#### Chronological List of Oboe Quartets Composed between 1970 and 2020

|                        |                                                                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jean Francaix          | Quatuor for English horn and string trio (1970)                 |
| Claude Lefebvre        | Naissances: pour 4 joueurs (1970)                               |
| Ton de Kruyf           | <i>Mosaico</i> op. 24 (1970)                                    |
| Alan Rawsthorne        | Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1970)               |
| Ricard Stoker          | <i>Polemics</i> op. 40 (1970)                                   |
| Elisabeth Lutyens      | Oboe Quartet op. 81 “Driving Out the Death” (1971)              |
| Edwin Roxburgh         | <i>Ecclissi</i> for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1971)       |
| Elizabeth Maconchy     | Oboe Quartet (1972)                                             |
| Lars-Erik Larsson      | <i>Aubade</i> op. 63 for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1973)  |
| Richard Rodney Bennett | Quartet for Oboe and String Trio (1975)                         |
| Oliver Knussen         | <i>Cantata</i> op. 15 (1975)                                    |
| Istvan Lang            | <i>Constellations</i> for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1975) |
| Ezra Sims              | <i>Flourish</i> for Oboe and String Trio (1975)                 |
| Phyllis Tate           | <i>The Rainbow and the Cuckoo</i> (1976)                        |
| Francis Routh          | Oboe Quartet op. 43(1977)                                       |
| Bruce Adolphe          | Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1978)                             |
| Michael Kibbe          | Quartet op. 41 for Oboe and String Trio (1978)                  |
| Thomas Christian David | Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1979)               |
| Richard Wernick        | <i>In Praise of Zephyrus</i> (1981)                             |
| Colin Matthews         | Oboe Quartet (1983)                                             |

|                      |                                                                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tom Flaherty         | Oboe Quartet (1989)                                                |
| Blake Neely          | In Memoriam (1994)                                                 |
| Isang Yun            | Quartett (1994)                                                    |
| Joseph Bednarik      | Pâtisserie aux quatre (1995)                                       |
| Mario Davidovsky     | Quartetto No.2 (1996)                                              |
| Willy Hess           | Quartet op. 141 for English horn and String Trio (1996)            |
| Alan Ridout          | <i>The Rainbow (Elegy)</i> for English horn and String Trio (1996) |
| Colin Matthews       | Second Oboe Quartet (1997)                                         |
| Allan Stephenson     | Miniature Quartet (1998)                                           |
| John Biggs           | Dance Suite (1999)                                                 |
| Yehudi Wyner         | Quartet (1999–2000)                                                |
| Elliot Carter        | Oboe Quartet (2001)                                                |
| Emily Doolittle      | Falling Still (2001)                                               |
| Fred Lerdhal         | Oboe Quartet (2002)                                                |
| Ellen Taaffe Zwilich | Quartet (2004)                                                     |
| Michael Kibbe        | Hymn to Spring op. 143 for English horn and String Trio (2005)     |
| Peter Child          | Pantomime Seven Lyric Scenes (2007)                                |
| James Mattheson      | Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2008)                                |
| Robert Broemel       | Love's Labors Waltz for Oboe d'amore and String Trio (2008)        |
| Stephen Burke        | Ripples (2008)                                                     |
| Thea Musgrave        | Cantilena (2008)                                                   |
| Kári Bæk             | Obo Kvartett (2009)                                                |
| Harrison Birtwistle  | Oboe Quartet (2009)                                                |

|                      |                                                 |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Martin Bresnick      | <i>Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)</i> (2010) |
| Helen Grime          | Oboe Quartet (2011)                             |
| Kay Rhie             | Oboe Quartet (2011)                             |
| Peter Maxwell Davies | Oboe Quartet (2012)                             |
| Robert Mueller       | <i>Emblems</i> for oboe and string trio (2012)  |
| Eric Nathan          | Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2012)             |
| Dan Shore            | Suite in a minor (2012)                         |
| Ursula Mamlock       | Fünf Fantasiestücke (2012–2013)                 |
| Russell Platt        | Jack and the Beanstalk (2013)                   |
| Sven-David Sandstrom | Oboe Quartet (2014)                             |
| James Primosch       | Oboe Quartet (2015)                             |
| Andrew Ardizzioia    | Rhapsody (2018)                                 |

## **Appendix B:**

### **Suggestions of works at various levels**

#### **Works Appropriate for an Undergraduate/Amateur Group**

|                        |                                                                    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thomas Christian David | Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1979)                  |
| Willy Hess             | Quartet op. 141 for English horn and String Trio (1996)            |
| Alan Ridout            | <i>The Rainbow (Elegy)</i> for English horn and String Trio (1996) |
| Allan Stephenson       | Miniature Quartet (1998)                                           |
| John Biggs             | <i>Dance Suite</i> (1999)                                          |
| Kári Bæk               | Quartet (2009)                                                     |

#### **Works Appropriate for a Graduate Group**

|                      |                                                |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Francis Routh        | Oboe Quartet op. 43(1977)                      |
| Ellen Taaffe Zwilich | Quartet (2004)                                 |
| Martin Bresnick      | <i>Going Home, Vysoke: my Jerusalem</i> (2010) |
| Eric Nathan          | Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2012)            |
| James Primosch       | Oboe Quartet (2015)                            |

#### **Works Appropriate for a Professional Ensemble**

|                |                                                           |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Edwin Roxburgh | <i>Ecclissi</i> for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1971) |
| Oliver Knussen | <i>Cantata</i> op. 15 (1975)                              |
| Yehudi Wyner   | Quartet (1999–2000)                                       |
| Elliot Carter  | Oboe Quartet (2001)                                       |
| Helen Grime    | Oboe Quartet (2011)                                       |

## **Appendix C:**

### **Personal Favorites**

#### **My Top Personal Choices**

Alan Rawsthorne Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1970)  
Colin Matthews Second Oboe Quartet (1997)  
Yehudi Wyner Quartet (1999–2000)  
Martin Bresnick *Going Home, Vysoke: my Jerusalem* (2010)  
Helen Grime Oboe Quartet (2011)

**Appendix D:**

Publications of Works Discussed

|                                                                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bruce Adolphe<br>Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1978)                        | Lauren Keiser Music Publications |
| Kári Bæk<br>Obo Kvartett (2009)                                             | TrevCo Varner Music              |
| John Biggs<br>Dance Suite (1999)                                            | Consort Press                    |
| Martin Bresnick<br><i>Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)</i> (2010)          | Carl Fischer Music               |
| Elliott Carter<br>Oboe Quartet (2001)                                       | Boosey & Hawkes                  |
| Thomas Christian David<br>Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1979) | Doblinger                        |
| Jean Francaix<br>Quatuor for English horn and string trio (1970)            | Schott Music                     |
| Helen Grime<br>Oboe Quartet (2011)                                          | Chester Music                    |
| Willy Hess<br>Quartett, op. 141 for English horn and String Trio (1996)     | Amadeus                          |
| Oliver Knussen<br><i>Cantata</i> op. 15 (1975)                              | Faber Music                      |
| Istvan Lang<br><i>Constellations</i> (1975)                                 | Editio Musica Budapest           |
| Elizabeth Maconchy<br>Oboe Quartet (1972)                                   | Chester Music                    |
| Colin Matthews<br>Second Oboe Quartet (1997)                                | Faber Music                      |
| Thea Musgrave<br><i>Cantilena</i> (2008)                                    | Novello                          |

|                                                                             |                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Eric Nathan<br>Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2012)                          | Nathan Arts Music Publishing |
| James Primosch<br>Oboe Quartet (2015)                                       | Theodore Presser Music       |
| Alan Ridout<br>The Rainbow (Elegy) (1996)                                   | Emerson                      |
| Francis Routh<br>Oboe Quartet op. 43(1977)                                  | Redcliffe Publishing         |
| Edwin Roxburgh<br><i>Ecclissi</i> for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1971) | United Music Publishers LTD. |
| Allan Stephenson<br>Miniature Quartet (1998)                                | Accolade                     |
| Yehudi Wyner<br>Quartet (1999-2000)                                         | Associated Music Publishers  |
| Ellen Taaffe Zwilich<br>Quartet (2004)                                      | Presser Music                |

**Appendix E:**

Commercially Available Recordings of Works Discussed

Bruce Adolphe Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1978)  
N/A

Kári Bæk Obo Kvartett (2009)  
N/A

John Biggs *Dance Suite* (1999)  
CD Camus, WA: Crystal Records 2001 “Rendezvous and Dreams”

Martin Bresnick *Going Home (Vysoke, My Jerusalem)* (2010)  
CD Boulder, CO: Starkland 2014 “Prayers Remain Forever”

Elliott Carter Oboe Quartet (2001)  
CD New Rochelle, NY: Bridge 2003 “The Music of Elliott Carter Volume 5”

Thomas Christian David Quartet for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1979)  
N/A

Jean Francaix Quatuor for English horn and string trio (1970)  
CD England: Collins Classics 1994 “Jean Francaix”  
CD Germany: SWR Classic rec.1999 prod.2006 “Jean Francaix”

Helen Grime Oboe Quartet (2011)  
CD Berlin: Costa Records Classics “Phantasy”

Willy Hess Quartett, op. 141 for English horn and String Trio (1996)  
N/A

Oliver Knussen *Cantata* op. 15 (1975)  
CD London: Unicorn-Kanchana 1988 “Oliver Knussen”  
CD London: NMC Recordings 2012 “Oliver Knussen”

Istvan Lang *Constellations* for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1975)  
N/A

Elizabeth Maconchy Oboe Quartet (1972)  
CD Oboe Classics “Janet Craxton: music for oboe and strings”

Colin Matthews Second Oboe Quartet (1997)  
CD Berlin: Costa Records Classics “Phantasy”

Thea Musgrave *Cantilena* (2008)

CD Burbank, California: Harmonia Mundi 2012 “Thea Musgrave: Chamber Works for Oboe”

Eric Nathan Quartet for Oboe and Strings (2012)

CD Albany, NY: Albany Records 2015 “Multitude solitude”

James Primosch Oboe Quartet (2015)

N/A

Alan Ridout The Rainbow (Elegy) (1996)

N/A

Francis Routh Oboe Quartet op. 43(1977)

CD Oboe Classics “Janet Craxton: music for oboe and strings”

Edwin Roxburgh *Ecclissi* for oboe, violin, viola, and cello (1971)

CD Northallerton: Metier Sound 2008

Allan Stephenson Miniature Quartet (1998)

N/A

Yehudi Wyner Quartet (1999-2000)

CD New Rochelle, NY: Bridge Records 2003

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich Quartet (2004)

CD Lansing, MI: Blue Griffin Recordings, Inc. 2018



## Appendix F:

### Other works featuring the oboe by composers detailed

#### Bruce Adolphe

*Night Journey* for woodwind quintet

*Bridgehampton Concerto* (fl, ob, 2 vlms, vla, vcl, db, hpd) (1992)

*The Tiger's Ear: Listening to Abstract Expressionist Paintings* (fl, ob, vln, vla, vcl, pf) (2006)

*Into a Cloud* for oboe and piano

#### Kári Bæk

*Kaeti-Playfulness* for oboe and bassoon

*Hugleiðingar-Fantasia* for woodwind quintet (1994)

*Vögguljóð* (text T.N.Djurhuus) for guitar, oboe, and voice (1977)

#### John Biggs

Concerto for oboe and string orchestra op.4 (1958)

*Summer's End* for oboe and soprano CP162 (2012)

Double Reed Concerto for oboe, English horn, bassoon, and string orchestra CP321

*Invocation* for English horn and organ CP110

*Three Flemish Duets* for two oboes

Fantasy for woodwind octet CP134

*Medieval Dance Fantasy* CP146 (ww qt, tpt, pf)

Scherzo for woodwind quintet CP107

*Studies in Texture* for woodwind quintet CP108

#### Martin Bresnick

Theme and Variations for solo oboe (1964)

Introit (2 fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 bsn, 2 hn, 2 tpt, 2 trb) (1969)

*Ants* (ww qt, st qt, db, perc, hp, S, M, T, B, 5 actor/mimes) (1976)

*Just Time* for woodwind quintet (1985)

*Bread & Salt* (2 fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 bsn, 2 sax, 2 hn, vcl, db) (1984)

#### Elliott Carter

Pastoral for English horn and piano (1940)

Woodwind Quintet (1948)

*Eight Etudes and a Fantasy* (fl, ob, cl, bn) (1949-1950)

Sonata for oboe, cello, and harpsichord (1952)

Oboe Concerto (1986-1987)

Quintet for piano and winds (1991)

Trilogy for oboe and harp (1992)

*A 6-letter Letter* for English horn (1996)

*HBHH* for oboe (2007)

*Nine by Five* for wind quintet (2009)

*Figment VI* for oboe (2011)

Thomas Christian David

Oboe concerto (1975)

Concerto for 9 solo instruments (fl, ob, cl, bn, hn, vn, va, vc, db) (1961)

Wind Quintet no.1 (1966)

Wind Quintet no.2 (1979)

Serenade (2 ob, 2 cl, 2 hn, 2 bn)(1985)

Jean Francaix

Septett (fl, ob, bsn, 2 vln, vcl, pf)(1933)

Quartet (fl, cl, ob, bsn)(1933)

Quadruple Concerto (fl, ob, cl, bn, orch)(1935)

*L'heure du berger* (fl, ob, cl, bsn, hn, pf) (1947)

Divertissement (ob, cl, bsn)(1947)

Wind Quintet no.1 (1948)

*L'horloge de Flore* (ob, orch) (1959)

Neuf pieces caracteristiques (2 fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 bsn, 2 hn)(1973)

*Le gay Paris* (tpt, fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 hn, bsn, cbsn) (1974)

Concerto grosso (wind quintet, string quintet, orch)(1976)

*Variations sur un theme plaisant* (pf, 2 fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 hn, 2 bsn) (1976)

*Quasi improvvisando* (fl, pic, 2 ob, cl, bcl, bsn, cbsn, 2 hn, tpt) (1978)

*Petite valse europeenne* (tuba, 2 fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 bsn, 2 hn) (1979)

*Huit danses exotiques* (fl, pic, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 bsn, 2 hn, tpt, perc) (1981)

Dectet (fl, ob, cl, bsn, hn, 2 vln, vla, vcl, db)(1987)

Wind Quintet no.2 (1987)

Wind Sextet (1991)

Trio (ob, bsn, pf)(1994)

Helen Grime

Oboe Concerto (2003)

*Three Miniatures* for oboe and piano (2013)

*Arachne* for solo oboe (2013)

Willy Hess

Wind Quintet in Eb for oboe, bassoon, and 3 horns Beethoven

Trio Sonata TWV 42:a6 G.P. Telemann

TWV 42:C2 G.P. Telemann

Oliver Knussen

*3 Little Fantasies* op. 6a for wind quintet (1970 rev.1976)

*Ophelia Dances bk 1* op.13 (fl, eh, cl, hn, celeste, str trio, pf) (1975)

*Elegiac Arabesques* op. 26a (eh, cl) (1991)

*Songs without Voices* op. 26 (fl, eh, cl, hn, vn, va, vc, pf) (1991-1992)

Istvan Lang

Wind Quintet no.1 (1963)  
Wind Quintet no.2 (1966)  
*Impulsioni* (ob, instrument groups) (1969)  
Wind Quintet no.3 (1975)  
*Linea melodica* for oboe (1987)

Elizabeth Maconchy

Quintet for oboe, 2 violins, viola. And cello (1932)  
Concerto for oboe, bassoon, and string orchestra (1955-1956)  
Suite for oboe and string orchestra (1955-1956)  
*Reflections* (ob, cl, vla, hrp) (1960-1961)  
Three Bagatelles for oboe and harpsichord (1972)  
Touchstone for oboe and chbr org (1975)  
Trittico for 2 oboes, bassoon, harpsichord (1980)  
Wind Quintet (1981)  
O time turn back for SATB, woodwind quintet, cello (1983-1984)

Colin Matthews

*Rainbow Studies* for woodwind quintet and piano (1977)  
Oboe Quartet no.1 (1981)  
Five Concertinos for wind quintet (1990)  
*Schumann: Mondnacht* for oboe quartet (1990)  
*Duologue* for oboe and piano (1991)  
*Night-Spell* for oboe and piano (1992)  
*Figures, Suspended* for solo oboe (2017)  
Postludes for oboe octet (2019)

Thea Musgrave

Trio for flute, oboe, and piano (1960)  
Chamber Concerto no.1 (ob, cl, bn, hn, tpt, tbn, str tio) (1962)  
Impromptu no.2 for flute and oboe (1970)  
*Space Play* for wind quintet and string quartet (1974)  
*Niobe* for oboe and tape (1987)  
Wind Quintet (1992)  
*Helios* for oboe and orchestra (1994)  
*Echoes of Time Past* for english horn, trumpet, and strings (1999)  
*The Mocking-Bird* (baritone, fl/pic, ob, vn, vc, perc) (2000)

Eric Nathan

*Spires* for woodwind quintet (2010 rev.2013)  
*Why Old Places Matter* for oboe, horn, and piano (2014)  
*Ahi, disperata Vita* for oboe and string quartet (2014)  
*Dancing with J.S. Bach II* for oboe and string orchestra (2018)

James Primosch

*Labyrinth* for oboe solo (1979)

Aria for oboe and tape (1982)  
Five Miniatures (fl, ob, cl/bs, cl, hn, tp, tb, vn, va, vc) (1982)  
Septet (fl/pc, ob/eh, cl/bs, cl, vn, va, vc, pf) (1985)  
*Matins* for SATB chorus, solo oboe, and strings (2003)  
Quintet (ob, vn, va, vc, pf) (2017)  
Four Sketches for woodwind quintet (2019)

Alan Ridout

Concertante for woodwind quintet (1972)  
Overture for oboe and harpsichord (1973)  
Suite for oboe and piano (1974)  
*The Devout Lover* for narrator, flute, and oboe (1975)  
*Combat* for oboe and piano (1983)  
Concertino for wind quintet and strings (1983)  
Three Arias for oboe and pianoforte (1985)  
*The Ages of Man* for woodwind quintet and piano (1987)  
Romance for oboe and piano (1988)  
Concertino for oboe  
Concertino for English horn

Francis Routh

*Tragic Interludes*, op.43 (1982)  
Oboe Concerto op.46 (1984)

Edwin Roxburgh

*At the Still Point of the Turning World* (amplified ob, electronics) (1978)  
Elegy for oboe with electronic foot-pedal (and fl, cl, vn, vc, perc) (1982)  
Wind Quintet no.1  
Wind Quintet no.2 (1983)  
*Shadow-play* (2 ob, eh) (1984)  
*Antares* (ob, pf) (1988)  
*Voyager* (3 ob, 3 eh, 3 bsn) (1989)  
*Refractions* (fl, ob, cl, tpt, pf) (1990)  
*Sinfonia concertante* (ob, hn, vn, vc) (1990)  
*Cantilena* (ob, pf) (1991)

Allan Stephenson

Pofadder Variations I for flute, oboe, bassoon (1977)  
Pofadder Variations II for flute, oboe, bassoon (1977)  
Divertimento for woodwind quintet (1977)  
Trio for oboe, violin, and guitar (1978)  
Concerto for oboe with string orchestra (1978)  
Concerto for English horn (2000)  
Duo for oboe and bassoon (2000)  
Double Reed Suite for 2 oboes, English horn, 3 bassoons, and contrabassoon  
Mini-Trio for two oboes and English horn (2007)

Miniature Quartet for English horn and string trio (2014)

Yehudi Wyner

Dance Variations for wind quintet, trumpet, trombone, cello (1953 rev.1959)

Wind Quintet (1984)

The Second Madrigal for soprano, string quintet, and wind quintet, percussion (1999)

Into the Evening Air for woodwind quintet (2013)

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

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more. The resource allows one to find works in the Library of Congress system.

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