

Department of Music Presents

MUSIC

The Universal Connection

PONÉ

ENSEMBLE FOR NEW MUSIC

Studley Theatre

Tuesday, March 7

7:30 p.m.

“Art is intrinsically the expression of heightened human longing, and the work of art per se is the explosion of heightened feelings. Absolute art is revolution.”

- Erwin Schulhoff

Welcome to the Poné Ensemble for New Music’s late winter 2023 concert.

We are pleased to present this evening one of the 20th century’s iconic (and iconoclastic) musical works, *Pierrot lunaire*, by Arnold Schoenberg. Deepest gratitude goes to our guest artists this evening, mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski and conductor Mark Powell.

Tonight’s program also features Erwin Schulhoff’s *Divertissement*, for oboe, clarinet and bassoon.

Many thanks to the music department at SUNY New Paltz for their help in presenting this program.

Please stay after the concert to meet the musicians and members of the board of the ensemble.

The Poné Ensemble for New Music

Jeffrey Marchand, bassoon

Larry Tietze, clarinet

Susan Seligman, cello

Christiana Fortune-Reader, viola

Marcia Gates, flute

Joël Evans, oboe

Ruthanne Schempf, piano

GUEST ARTISTS

Katherine Ciesinski, mezzo-soprano

Mark Powell, conductor

THE PONÉ ENSEMBLE FOR NEW MUSIC *Program*

Divertissement (1927)
oboe, clarinet and bassoon

Erwin Schulhoff
(1894-1942)

- I. Ouverture*
- II. Burlesca*
- III. Romanzero*
- IV. Charleston*
- V. Tema con variazioni e fugato*
- VI. Florida*
- VII. Rondino – Finale*

Pierrot lunaire, Op. 21 (1912)
voice, flute, clarinet, violin, 'cello and piano

Arnold Schoenberg
(1874-1951)

Part One

- 1** Mondestrunken
(Drunk with Moonlight)
- 2** Colombine
(Columbine)
- 3** Der Dandy
(The Dandy)
- 4** Eine blasse Wäscherin
(A Pallid Washerwoman)
- 5** Valse de Chopin
- 6** Madonna
- 7** Der kranke Mond
(The Sick Moon)

Part Two

- 1** Nacht (Passacaglia)
(Night)
- 2** Gebet an Pierrot
(Prayer to Pierrot)
- 3** Raub (Theft)
- 4** Rote Messe
(Red Mass)
- 5** Galgenlied
(Gallows Song)
- 6** Enthauptung
(Beheading)
- 7** Die Kreuze
(The Crosses)

Part Three

- 1** Heimweh
(Homesickness)
- 2** Gemeinheit!
(Foul Play)
- 3** Parodie
(Parody)
- 4** Der Mondfleck
(The Moon Spot)
- 5** Serenade
- 6** Heimfahrt
(Journey Home)
- 7** O Alter Duft
(O Ancient Fragrance)

Guest Artists

Mark E. M. L. Powell, DMA is currently Associate Professor and Director of Orchestral Studies at the Aaron Copland School of Music (ACSM) at Queens College, CUNY where he conducts the Symphony, Chamber, Opera, and Studio Orchestras and leads the Copland Summer Series Conducting Workshop at Queens College. He is the founding music director of the American Radio Chamber Orchestra (ARCO) and served on the faculty of the Eastman School of Music's Institute for Music Leadership from 2010 to 2019. Guest conducting and teaching activities have recently taken him to the 2022 Ohio All State Orchestra, Interlochen Arts Academy, the University of Alabama, the Boston Conservatory, the University of Oregon, Augustana University, SUNY New Paltz, Grinnell College, the College of New Jersey, and back to his alma mater, the Eastman School of Music, where he was Visiting Associate Professor in the Conducting and Ensembles Department for the 2020-2021 academic year. His most recent conducting students have gone on to successes at Peabody, the Cincinnati College Conservatory, and at Aspen.

As guest conductor, he has led the Fort Worth Symphony, the Korsholm Music Festival Orchestra (Finland), the Rochester Philharmonic, the Texas Festival Chamber Orchestra, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and many others. In 2019, with the Queens College Orchestra, he performed the North American premiere of Leif Segerstam's Symphony No. 253. The first commercial recording of the Queens College Orchestras, *From the North: Music of Norgård, Nielsen, Segerstam, Abrahamsen, and Sibelius* is due out on the Centaur label later this year.

He also serves as Lead Conductor of the New Conductors Orchestra in Manhattan, providing mentorship to both young conductors and civic musicians. Powell recently, premiered two new compositions, *Unsoftly to the Night* and *Nanosecond*, by the American composer J. Matthew Curlee. Over the past three seasons, Powell also delivered lectures for the "Q Class Online" series, the Oxford Conducting Institute, and regularly contributes invited reviews to *The Association for Recorded Sound Collections Journal*.

Powell is an alumnus of Interlochen, the University of Michigan, the Moores School of Music, Tanglewood, and the Eastman School of Music, where he was awarded the Walter Hagen Conducting Prize. He counts among his mentors Brad Lubman, Jorma Panula, Peter Eötvös, and Elizabeth Green.

The New York Times called Katherine Ciesinski “a singer of rare communicative presence, and a musician of discrimination and intelligence.” An accomplished American mezzo-soprano who pursues a fully integrated career, Ciesinski explores the world of today’s composers as well as the established classics of the lyric stage.

Ms. Ciesinski is a frequent clinician at the annual International Symposium on Care of the Professional Voice in Philadelphia, created the Vocal Workshop for the annual International Composition Seminar at the Royaumont Foundation in France, and lectured in and served on the steering committee for the University of Texas School of Public Health’s Healthcare and the Arts Series. In addition, she is one of the thirty-four elected members of the American Academy of Teachers of Singing.

Ms. Ciesinski has also performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the Cleveland, Minnesota, and Philadelphia Orchestras, the Symphonies of Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Houston and Toronto; and in Europe, with the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics, L’Orchestre de Paris, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Dresden Staatskapelle, and L’Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Her contemporary chamber music activities have included performances at the Caramoor Festival, New York; Musica Festival, Strasbourg; Ars Musica Festival, Brussels; Festival d’Automne, Paris; Voix Nouvelles, Fondation Royaumont; Schlern International Festival in Italy, and with the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris. She received a Grammy nomination for her Paulina in The Queen of Spades with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony (BMG) and won

the Grammy for her performance in Alban Berg's *Lulu* with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hans Graf.

Ms. Ciesinski made her opera directing debut in 2007 with Handel's *Flavio* for the Moores Opera Center, following with Britten's *Turn of the Screw* in 2008.

She is the Martin E. and Corazon D. Sanders Professor of Voice at the Eastman School of Music and serves as the Chair of the Voice and Opera Department, as well as a University of Rochester Faculty Diversity Officer. For fifteen years, she served on the international faculty of the Artescénica Encuentro Operístico in Mexico and for the last half decade, the voice faculty of Opera Vivain Verona, Italy. In addition to her teaching, her research interests in physician education have been the focus of her recent work at the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry, from which she holds the Master of Science degree in Medical Humanities.

Notes

Erwin Schulhoff was born in Prague on 8 June 1894. Thanks to a letter of recommendation by Antonín Dvořák, he was accepted as a piano pupil at the Prague Conservatory at the early age of ten. He continued his studies in 1906 in Vienna (with Willy Thern), in 1908 in Leipzig (piano with Robert Teichmüller, music theory with Stephan Krehl and composition with Max Reger) and in 1911 in Cologne (with Lazzaro Uzielli, Carl Friedberg, Franz Bölsche, Ewald Sträßer and Fritz Steinbach). After his military service in the Austrian Army during the war, he was resident in Germany until 1924. This was where his interest was particularly aroused by the radical direction taken by the avant-garde: Dadaism and jazz, but he additionally absorbed influences from Impressionism, Expressionism and Neo-Classicism. He also struck up a lively correspondence with Alban Berg. The brilliant pianist Schulhoff was considered as a specialist of Alois Hába's quarter-tone music. On his return to Prague, Schulhoff became the successor of Max Brod as the music critic of the newspaper *Prager Abendblatt*. After 1933, he was unable to continue his career in Germany due to his Communist convictions (he had for example set the Communist Manifesto to music) and his Jewish roots.

During the 1930s, Schulhoff underwent an artistic transformation; his symphonic jazz compositions were superseded by symphonies in the style of Social Realism. This stood in sharp contrast to his activities as a jazz pianist for Prague radio in Ostrava. In 1941 Schulhoff acquired Soviet citizenship. The German declaration of war with the Soviet Union meant that he was now categorised as being a citizen of an enemy nation. He was initially interned in Prague on 23 June 1941 and subsequently deported to the concentration camp Wülzburg near Weißenburg in Bavaria where he died of tuberculosis on 18 August 1942.

The general rediscovery of the Prague composer began in 1988 with Gidon Kremer's recordings of his chamber music works. Compositions such as *5 Stücke* (1923), the *Divertimento* for string quartet (1914) and a variety of *Sonatas* for various instruments demonstrate Schulhoff's great imaginativeness

for the tonal characteristics of individual instruments. The composer's enthusiasm for aspects of the grotesque, satire and Dadaism particularly comes to the fore in his smaller scale works. Schulhoff sets texts by the Dadaist lyricist Hans Arp in *Die Wolkenpumpe* for baritone, four wind instruments and percussion (1922). In *Bassnachtigall*, three pieces for contra-bassoon also dating from 1922, the composer added his own text in the provocative form which was customary in the infamously chaotic Dada concerts: "The spark of the gods can be present in both a liver sausage and a contra-bassoon."

Schulhoff was one of the first composers to recognise the potential of dance music forms influenced by jazz within the realms of classical music. Compositions such as the jazz oratorio *H.M.S. Royal Oaks* (1930), the *Hot Sonata* for alto saxophone and piano (1930) and the grotesque dance *Die Mondsüchtige* (1925) with movement titles including Ragtime, Tango, Shimmy and Jazz which were provocative for their time, are now counted among the composer's best-known works.

Divertissement (1927) is a set of seven character sketches which show his love for jazz and Dada, yet reflects the trend of Neo-classicism. Each of the seven movements is unique and self-contained, allowing for a variety of styles, content, and tonal expression. The influence of Paul Hindemith's *Kleine Kammermusik* (1922) is heard in the highly individual part writing, counterpoint, and underlying sense of angularity. The musical style throughout is based on humor, unpredictability, and caricature both exaggerated and grotesque, using modal melodies, chromaticism, and dance rhythms. The *Rondino-Finale* brings the piece to a faux-classical finish, with the beginning of the rondo theme bearing a striking resemblance to the opening theme of George Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, written a year later.

Arnold Schoenberg was born in Vienna on September 13, 1874. The date was significant because he had a fear of the number 13 throughout his life. He began studying violin at age eight and later taught himself cello. While working as a bank clerk, he studied composition with Alexander Zemlinsky, and the two formed a close friendship. Schoenberg was into his mid-twenties before he produced any significant compositions; these include a selection of songs and a string sextet.

With Richard Strauss's help he obtained a teaching post in Berlin, but he soon returned to Vienna, having composed his gigantic cantata *Gurrelieder* (1901, orchestrated 1913). In 1904 Alban Berg and Anton Webern began their studies with him, which would profoundly shape their later artistic careers. From 1908 onward, the composer abandoned the idea of fixed tonality. During his subsequent period of "free atonality" (1907–16) he created remarkable works such as the monodrama *Erwartung* and *Five Orchestral Pieces* (both 1909). For several years, he continued to work in this pioneering style which could be described as Expressionist. In 1912, Schoenberg produced another innovative work, a cycle of 21 songs with instrumental accompaniment, entitled *Pierrot lunaire*, and consisting of 21 "melodramas," to German texts translated from verses by the Belgian poet Albert Giraud. Here he made systematic use of *Sprechstimme*, with a gliding speech-song replacing precise pitch. The work was given, after some 40 rehearsals, in Berlin on October 16, 1912, and received a polarized reaction from both critics and the public alike.

In 1924 Schoenberg's creative evolution reached a point at which he found it necessary to establish a new governing principle of tonal relationship, which he called the "method of composing with 12 different notes related entirely to one another." This method was employed for the first time in its integral form in the piano *Suite, Op. 25* (1924); in it, the thematic material is based on a group of 12 different notes arrayed in a certain pre-arranged order; such a tone row was henceforth Schoenberg's

mainspring of thematic invention. As with most historic innovations, the 12-tone technique was not the creation of Schoenberg alone but was, rather, a logical development of many currents of musical thought. Josef Matthias Hauer claimed priority in laying the foundations of the 12-tone method a few years previously; among others who had elaborated similar ideas at about the same time with Schoenberg was Jef Golyscheff, a Russian émigré who expounded his theory in a publication entitled *12 Tondauer-Musik*.

With the coming to power of Hitler in 1933, Schoenberg as a Jew was forced to leave Germany. He traveled to Paris and decided to leave the Lutheran church, where he had been for over 30 years, to return to Judaism. He failed in his attempts to immigrate to Britain, instead settling in Los Angeles in 1934.

In Los Angeles, he began to work with tonal music once more, although his teaching job at UCLA meant that he produced little for some years after 1936. Schoenberg suffered a heart attack in 1945, after which he ceased to teach and wrote an expressionist string trio, *A Survivor from Warsaw*.

Schoenberg was subject to superstition in the form of triskaidecaphobia, the fear of the number 13; he seriously believed that there was something fateful in the circumstance of his birth on the 13th of the month. Noticing that the title of his work *Moses und Aaron* contained 13 letters, he crossed out the 2nd “an in Aaron to make it 12. When he turned 76 and someone remarked facetiously that the sum of the digits of his age was 13, he seemed genuinely upset, and during his last illness in July 1951, he expressed his fear of not surviving July 13; indeed, he died on that date.

“Read the preface, looked at the poems, am delighted. Brilliant idea, just my kind of thing.”

-diary of Arnold Schoenberg

Dreimal sieben Gedichte aus Albert Girauds "Pierrot lunaire" ("Three times Seven Poems from Albert Giraud's 'Pierrot lunaire'"), commonly known simply as Pierrot lunaire, Op. 21 ("Moonstruck Pierrot"), is a melodrama composed in 1912 at the request of actress Albertine Zehme, whose acquaintance Schoenberg had made soon after he moved from Vienna to Berlin in 1911. Schoenberg composed Pierrot very quickly, all but two of the pieces were composed between March 12 and May 30, and fourteen of them were each written within a day.

Its instrumentation – flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano - in this case with the addition of a vocalist – is an important ensemble in 20th- and 21st-century classical music and is referred to as a Pierrot Ensemble.

The music of this period is also marked by a style that is referred to as expressionist, and Schoenberg had contact with, and a great deal of admiration for, the expressionist painters and writers (Schoenberg himself painted in an Expressionist style). These ideals can be seen in the dark and dreamlike atmosphere conveyed in Pierrot lunaire with the kinds of internal conflicts we associate with Freud and his school of psychoanalysis played out in exquisite musical detail.

Pierrot Lunaire consists of three groups of seven poems. In the first group, Pierrot sings of love, sex and religion; in the second, of violence, crime, and blasphemy; and in the third of his return home to Bergamo, with his past haunting him. Pierrot is both hero and fool, acting in a drama that is also a concert piece, performing cabaret as high art and vice versa, and doing it with song that is also speech. The atonal, expressionistic settings of the text, with their echoes of German cabaret, bring the poems vividly to life. Sprechstimme or Sprechgesang (literally "speech-singing" in German) is a style in which the vocalist uses the specified rhythms and pitches, but does not sustain the pitches, allowing them to drop or rise, in the manner of speech.

Schoenberg, who was fascinated by numerology, also makes great use of seven-note motifs throughout the work, while the ensemble (with

conductor) comprises seven people. The piece is his opus 21, contains 21 poems, and was begun on March 12, 1912. Other key numbers in the work are three and 13: each poem consists of 13 lines (two four-line verses followed by a five-line verse), while the first line of each poem occurs three times (being repeated as lines seven and 13).

Founded in 1974 by Latvian-American composer Gundaris Poné (1932-1994) and his wife, pianist Karen Poné (1935-2005), The Poné Ensemble for New Music is dedicated to the performance of contemporary chamber music. Each concert brings guest artists to join with the core musicians of the Ensemble in offering the music of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Ensemble is also committed to the encouragement of newly-emerging composers.

THE MUSICIANS of the Poné Ensemble have all been principal and leading members of the Hudson Valley Philharmonic for many years, with distinguished careers as soloists, teachers and recording artists. Several are faculty members of the Department of Music in the State University at New Paltz, and some have been members of the Poné Ensemble for New Music since its earliest performances.

Concerts are made possible with funds from generous individuals, matching grants from IBM, and grants from the BMI Foundation. The Poné Ensemble for New Music is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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