



Hugh Hodgson School of Music

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents a
Graduate Recital

Joshua Wood, *horn*
Damon Denton, *piano*

March 25, 2024

7:30 pm, Edge Recital Hall

Song of a New World

Richard Bissill
(b. 1960)

Amazing Grace

John Newton
(1725-1807)
Arr. James Naigus
(b. 1987)

8 Moods for Horn and Piano

Joshua Wood
(b. 1999)

- I. Extravagant
- II. Moonlight
- III. Carousel
- IV. Motif
- V. Tango
- VI. Enigma
- VII. Longing
- VIII. Groove

Dr. James Naigus, *piano*

-Brief Pause-

Trio for Horn, Oboe, and Piano

Carl Reinecke
(1824-1910)

- I. Allegro moderato

Marissa Ankeny, *oboe*
Calvin Stovall, *piano*

Suite No. 1 for Horn, Tuba, and Piano

Alec Wilder
(1907-1980)

- III. In a Jazz Manner
- IV. Berceuse
- V. Alla Caccia

Elizabeth Toles, *bass trombone*

Vuelta del Fuego

Kevin McKee
(b. 1980)

Andrew Morris, *trumpet*
Gilbert Villagrana, *trumpet*
David Cain, *trombone*
Robert Boone, *tuba*

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Master of Music in Performance.
Joshua Wood is a student of Dr. Jean Martin-Williams and Dr. James Naigus.*

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Song of a New World

(Richard Bissill)

Richard Bissill began his career in performing with esteemed groups such as the London Philharmonic (1984-2009) and London Brass (1990-pres.). Beyond his eminent performance career, Bissill's name resonates in the realm of composition and arrangement, where he has written for various ensembles including the admired London Horn Sound. *Song of a New World* stands out among his compositions. This piece was written for Sarah Willis, who sought to push the boundaries of her virtuosic low horn playing abilities. Bissill eagerly accepted this challenge, completing the piece within a mere week.

In *Song of a New World*, Bissill pushes the boundaries of horn performance by infusing an improvisatory jazz style. Despite the horn's historical roots, *Song of a New World* has emerged as a staple work for horn players. Its extreme register changes, along with range of dynamics and intricate musicality, initiate a challenge for any soloist. However, these elements foster an eloquent dialogue between the horn and piano. At times, the horn seems to echo the piano, showcasing its versatility in a playful manner. This witty exchange not only captivates audiences, but also highlights the horn's frequently overlooked range and flexibility.

Amazing Grace

(John Newton/arr. James Naigus)

While *Amazing Grace* is universally celebrated as a hymn, its origin story often goes unnoticed. John Newton, once a commander of slave ships, endured significant trials after leaving the Navy to become a servant. Through many close encounters with death, Newton's spiritual life blossomed, leading him to embrace Christianity and eventually serve as a pastor in Olney, Buckinghamshire. During his ministry, he collaborated with poet William Cowper, resulting in the creation of the Olney Hymns collection, which includes *Amazing Grace*.

Arrangements of well-known songs, such as *Amazing Grace*, offer audiences a fresh auditory experience that contrasts with their expectations. Naigus explores this concept with his arrangement by "creating a fantasia of sorts, with unexpected twists and turns to heighten the overall emotional affect." This fantasy-like rendition fragments the melody, allowing it to swell and fade over a backdrop of dark, whimsical, and almost melancholic harmonies. Such treatment makes the full arrival of the melody seem more evocative, perhaps signifying that through life's trials and tribulations, *Amazing Grace* endures as a beacon of hope and resilience.

8 Moods for Horn and Piano

(Joshua Wood)

Throughout my time at the University of Georgia, I have been encouraged to stretch my musical boundaries by both Dr. Jean Martin-Williams and Dr. James Naigus. Though I define myself primarily as a performer/aspiring teacher, I recently became aware of my newfound passion in composition. *8 Moods for Horn and Piano* was originally a project assigned by Naigus in an independent study of composition techniques. Naigus motivated me to write a set of miniatures, in which each movement best symbolizes an emotion or environment within the span of no more than two minutes. I accepted this challenge, creating eight contrasting ideas within the following weeks.

I wanted to show how the horn can truly convey many ideas, from depicting a simple carnival ride (*Carousel*) to displaying the feeling of reaching for the unattainable (*Longing*). Initially, I wanted to best convey each title separate from each other. Though they differentiate, each mood ties into the other, painting an abstract story up for interpretation. One narrative of mine depicts the moments and emotions that arise in fallen love, ultimately ending in the anger of one side for losing their partner. This is shown in the unstable ending of the entire work, symbolizing an incomplete satisfaction of one finding said love.

Trio for Horn, Oboe, and Piano

(Carl Reinecke)

Carl Reinecke, a renowned German composer, distinguished himself as a pianist and Director of Music at the Leipzig Conservatory. Due to the prominence of repertoire for clarinet and flute, the oboe was disregarded, leading to a lack of significant solo repertoire, an oversight that has been deemed as “unforgivable.” In the latter half of the Romantic Period (1886), Reinecke finished writing the trio, which not only hailed as “the golden standard for that mixed ensemble,” but also stood out as it featured the oboe.

The trio’s first movement, *Allegro moderato*, features an ongoing triadic conversation between the horn, oboe, and piano. The trio starts with a pensive and detached motif from the oboe, and gradually introduces a fugue-like interplay mirrored by the horn. Emotional depth emerges as the horn assumes a new lyrical melody, permeating a warmer color and more jovial sentiment. These two contrasting ideas bounce back and forth, seemingly locked in a battle until the contemplative, melancholic tone ultimately triumphs.

Suite No. 1 for Horn, Tuba, and Piano

(Alec Wilder)

Alec Wilder, an esteemed American composer, distinguished his compositions by adding intentionality and personal value to his music, writing for or about close friends and family. His true passion for composition was discovered on a trip with his Aunt Clara, which ultimately led him to pursue further studies at the Eastman School of Music. The inception for Wilder’s first suite was originally suggested by Wilder’s close friend Clark Galehouse, through the process of recording Wilder’s music. Despite the unusual blend of horn and tuba (or, in this case, bass trombone), Wilder’s first suite achieved remarkable success.

The final three movements of Wilder’s trio stand out from their distinct timbres and style. The third movement, *In a Jazz Manner*, includes a quirky melody that evolves throughout the three voices. Moments of rhythmic groove are interrupted by sentimental and bluesy licks, yet the original melody re-emerges as if it never evolved. *Berceuse* is a lullaby written for the daughter of Harvey Phillips, who was a close companion of Wilder that premiered the work. Muted passages evoke a sense of calming slumber, encouraged by the simple, yet flowing reoccurring melody. As the lullaby draws to a close, the *Alla Caccia* creates an exciting chase through an intricate fugue between the voices. Chaotic, yet meticulously structured, the movement concludes with a powerful convergence between the two brasses.

Vuelta del Fuego

(Kevin McKee)

While he started his work in trumpet performance, Kevin McKee grew a specialization in composing for brass chamber ensembles. McKee states that he has “never formally studied composition,” and that his main drive for composition comes from “a fascination with creativity and the creative process form the background from which I approached composition.” Translating as “Ride of Fire,” *Vuelta del Fuego* was inspired by McKee’s “love of that Mexican ‘Zorro’ sound,” complete with “unabashed flair and swagger.”

Vuelta del Fuego begins with a calm and reserved nod towards the melody foreshadowing the intensity that follows. As the tension rises, the brass quintet explodes with harsh yet full sounds, indicating the fiery expedition. Each instrument in the quintet is highlighted, but the horn shines with a *toreador* tune in the upper tessitura. A chorale follows, perhaps indicating the eye of the storm. McKee builds intensity a final time, recalling the theme from before and the *toreador* tune from the horn. This intensity is maintained until the very end, providing for an exhilarating journey for all audiences.