Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Concerto in C minor for Oboe and Violin, BWV 1060  I. Allegro

One of the greatest composers of his time, Bach wrote hundreds of masterpieces that fundamentally defined the Baroque period of music. Historians are unsure exactly when Bach composed this concerto duet, or the exact instrumentation for which it was originally written. It was likely composed between the years 1717 and 1723, when Bach was working at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen and composed most of his concerti. The only surviving score of this work is Bach’s own transcription written for two harpsichords. It is clear why Bach also wrote this version for oboe and violin, however, when one hears how well the unique timbres of the oboe and violin allow the two solo melody lines to complement each other. The instruments’ contrasting colors create an extra level of interest in the movement’s question and answer themes. Bach expertly balances the technical and tonal similarities and differences of the two solo instruments, creating an exciting, spirited opening movement for this concerto.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005  III. Largo  IV. Allegro assai

Sonata No. 3 is part of a set of three sonatas and three partitas for solo violin without accompaniment composed by Bach during his time in Cöthen, Germany. Though they were finished by 1720, his violin sonatas weren’t published until 1802, more than fifty years after his death. The third movement of Sonata No. 3 is the only “Largo” movement of the set. It is slow in tempo, comprised of lyrical phrases emphasized with rubato. The frequent use of chords acts as the “basso” accompaniment, giving the impression of a bass line in addition to the melody. “Allegro assai” is a perpetual motion movement, consisting mainly of continuous 16th notes in a fast tempo. It is in binary form, divided into two sections separated by a repeat, which both start with the same motive. The first section starts in C major, modulating to end in G major, while the second continues in G before returning to the original key of C.

Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

Sonata for Oboe and Piano  I. Lento  III. Adagio

Labeled as a neo-classical composer, Gordon Jacob mostly used traditional musical forms and diatonic textures, but occasionally made use of looser musical form and chromatic harmonies more consistent with twentieth century music. Jacob wrote more than 450 works for an extremely wide variety of genres and instrumental combinations. His Sonata for Oboe and Piano was written in 1966, the year he retired from his 40-year teaching position at the English Royal College of Music. Although Jacob was often described as possessing a somewhat ascetic dedication to the styles of the Baroque and Classical periods, this sonata certainly leans toward emerging trends in atonality. Both the first and third movements create an ethereal feeling that showcases the oboe’s full range of dynamics and styles.

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906-1975)

2 Preludes, Op. 34:  No. 10 “Moderato non troppo”; No. 24 “Allegretto”
Dmitry Shostakovich was one of the most important Russian composers of the 20th century. Perhaps most well-known for his symphonies, he also wrote chamber works, concertos, ballets, and film scores. The 24 Preludes for solo piano were completed in 1932-33, between a symphony and his first Piano Concerto. 19 of the Preludes were subsequently arranged for violin and piano by Dmitri Tsyganov, who was first violinist of the renowned Beethoven Quartet, which often collaborated with Shostakovich and premiered his string quartets.

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)

*Introduction, Theme, and Variations for Oboe and Orchestra, Op. 102*

Once a student of Mozart, Salieri, and Haydn, Johann Nepomuk Hummel is a composer whose music characterizes the transition from the Classical to Romantic eras. Hummel’s music was remarkably popular in his day, but faded from the spotlight as the music of more dramatic Romantic composers such as Liszt and Paganini began to take over. Hummel was nearly forgotten until the 1950s, when a re-discovery of his trumpet concerto begin a revival of his music. Today, Hummel is best known as a piano virtuoso, and he arranged *Introduction, Theme, and Variations for Oboe and Orchestra* in 1824 from a nocturne he had originally written for two pianos. The piece reflects the harmonies and figurations of the classical period, while introducing listeners to the dramatic style that would soon characterize music of the Romantic period. A cheerfully simple theme and theatric variations contrast with the intensity of the piece’s slower sections and make the piece an excellent example of the changing musical time period.

Eduardo Lalo (1823-1892)


Eduardo Lalo was a French composer who studied violin and composition in Paris from the age of sixteen. During the 1850s he was mainly interested in writing and performing chamber music, a genre that was largely ignored in France in that era. Due partially to Lalo’s influence, chamber music started to gain popularity again. He went on to compose operas, ballets, and several orchestral works. *Symphonie Espagnole* was premiered in 1875 by virtuoso violinist and composer Pablo de Sarasate, who also played his F Major Violin Concerto a year previously. Written for violin and orchestra, *Symphonie Espagnole* is one of his most well-known and frequently performed pieces. It’s divided into five movements: “Allegro non troppo,” “Scherzando: Allegro molto,” “Intermezzo: Allegro non troppo,” “Andante,” and “Rondo: Allegro.”