Senior Honors Recital (Muspe 498)

by

Katie M. Cummins

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Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

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Development of my Senior Honors Recital

This recital began developing according to my tastes and performance level on the French horn. I chose a wide variety of music all in the “modern music” category for horn. This was done with the help of my private teacher, but more importantly, we tried to select music that I could study and prepare for an entire year, resulting in a very difficult program. The program notes should explain why I chose each individual piece, but as an overview, the pieces were chosen because of their sheer beauty and powerful display of emotions through music. Research for the program notes was basically done through the Internet sources available. Most of the composers are still living and have personal web pages, which helped me create the program notes. When arranging the program notes, I knew that I was restricted to one page of real notes. Thus, I had to decide which pieces were more important than others, so that I could have a thorough overview of all of the pieces and only get specific on a few examples. The recital itself went very smoothly, I was in good physical shape from months of rehearsals, and I felt very happy with the result.
KATIE CUMMINS
French horn
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
with
Holly Hanauer, piano
Joshua Weirich, tenor saxophone
Daniel Doty, tenor

Ala Caccia (1948) ................................................................. Alan Abbott
for horn and piano (b.1926)

Medieval Variations (2002) ................................................... Kevin Purrone
for horn and tenor saxophone

Serenade, Op. 31 (1942) ....................................................... Benjamin Britten
for tenor, horn, and strings (piano) (1913-1976)
Prologue
Pastoral (Cotton)
Nocturne (Tennyson)
Elegy (Blake)
Dirge (Anon.)
Hymn (Jonson)
Sonnet (Keats)
Epilogue

... Intermission ...

for solo horn (b.1921)

Sonata (1992) ................................................................. Eric Ewazen
for horn and piano (b.1954)
I. Andante, Allegro Molto
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto

Katie Cummins is a student of Fred Ehnes and Kent Leslie.

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The theme of this recital is modern music for horn. There are a wide variety of styles, although all of the pieces were written in the past 60 years. Each composer utilizes different compositional techniques, which are explained in their respective paragraphs. By knowing the history of the composer and the piece, the listener might better appreciate the music.

**Alla Caccia- Alan Abbott**

Alan Abbott was born in Birmingham, England in 1926. He studied orchestration, conducting, and horn at the Royal College of Music. His teachers were Gordon Jacob, Richard Austin, and Frank Probyn respectively. His horn piece, *Alla Caccia*, meaning “in hunting style” represents the earliest style of horn playing, in association with hunting. The horn’s hunting heritage, with galloping main sections in the traditional 6/8 time signature (“hunting” meter), is shown in this work. The hunting scenes frame a minor-key interlude. Overall, the piece provides a depiction of the origin of the horn and serves as a perfect introduction to a horn recital.

**Medieval Variations- Kevin Purrone**

Kevin Purrone has interdisciplinary interests in the way the universe is connected. He holds degrees in music (Eastman School of Music and Indiana University) and has a PhD in Interdisciplinary studies. He has been active in the performing arts, has taught at several universities, and has recently returned to school to study Counseling Psychology. He continues to find connections between people, knowledge, and experiences. Joshua Weirich commissioned his latest composition, *Medieval Variations*, in 2002.

Medieval Variations opens with a seven-measure theme, whose notes come from a medieval mode. A number of variations and interludes along with thematic transformations generate the form of the piece. Textural interplay between the two voices is another important element. A coda of generous proportions makes use of previous material, and ends the piece. Medieval Variations conveys lighter moods and emotions of a playful and joyous nature. ---Notes from the composer

This performance is the world premiere of *Medieval Variations*.

**Serenade for Tenor Solo, Horn, and Strings- Benjamin Britten**

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) was born in Lowestoft, England. He began composing at age five, and was “discovered” by Frank Bridge at age eleven. He attended the Royal College of Music and studied piano and composition under Harold Samuel and Arthur Benjamin. Because of his contribution to the literature in almost every musical genre and instrument, he is, without a doubt, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century.

*Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* is a song cycle featuring the setting of six poems by English poets. It was written for horn player Dennis Brain and tenor Peter Pears in 1942. This serenade provides both the horn and tenor with opportunities to create “wonderful, eerie, and romantic effects”. The horn prologue and epilogue are written for "natural" (i.e. valveless) horn. Thus, the “normal” equal temperament of today’s music is ignored, producing an effect that is only possible on a horn. The notes may seem out of tune or abnormal; however, the effect strived for is “dark but unsettled”-a common trait of Britten’s music.

The first song, “Pastoral”, is a beautiful setting of the words of Charles Cotton. The high note on which the tenor enters is said to be the best note in Peter Pears’ range. The second song, “Nocturne,” features a set of cadenzas for tenor and horn that includes a variety of horn calls that
Malcolm Arnold was born in the year 1921 in Northampton, a town with considerable musical tradition, studied at the Royal College of Music. He later returned to the Royal College of Music as an instructor. His list of works includes nine symphonies, twenty concertos, a variety of chamber music, five ballets, and music for several films; he received an Oscar for his music in the 1958 film, Bridge on the River Kwai. He served many years as principal trumpet player in the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Fantasy for Horn - Malcolm Arnold**

Malcolm Arnold was born in 1921 in Northampton, a town with considerable musical tradition, studied at the Royal College of Music. He later returned to the Royal College of Music as an instructor. His list of works includes nine symphonies, twenty concertos, a variety of chamber music, five ballets, and music for several films; he received an Oscar for his music in the 1958 film, Bridge on the River Kwai. He served many years as principal trumpet player in the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Fantasy for Horn**, written for a Wind instrument competition in 1966, is one of Malcolm Arnold’s less familiar works. It is scored for unaccompanied horn and lasts about 3 minutes. However, in this short time span, he shows off many of the attributes of the horn, including technique with fast tonguing and fingering, the lyrical slow melodies idiomatic for horn, and of course the ever popular "horn call". The piece falls so perfectly under the fingers that one can tell that Arnold had experience in brass playing.

**Sonata for Horn and Piano - Eric Ewazen**

Eric Ewazen, born in 1954 in Cleveland, OH, studied under Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Warren Benson, Gunther Schuller, and Joseph Schwantner at the Eastman School of Music, Tanglewood and The Julliard School of Music. He has been a member of the faculty at Julliard since 1980. He has experience in composing for all brass performers, and continues to be a favorite for these instruments.

**Sonata for Horn and Piano**, which was commissioned by Scott Brubaker (a member of The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra), is a big, bold four-movement sonata, with expansive themes, and resonant harmonies. This piece requires a wide range for the horn player, as well as flexibility between the upper and lower registers. It "pushes the horn player to the limit" with fast tonguing and technique as well as melodic passages that last extended periods of time. This piece, lasting about 20 minutes, explores all of the depths of the horn, giving a challenge to the performer, and an entertaining piece for the audience.

A senior recital is a tough accomplishment for any student, but I couldn’t have accomplished this feat without some help. I would like to thank Holly Hanauer for accompanying me; it is always a joy to work with such a talented musician. A special thank you goes to Josh Weirich, for putting up with “classical musician-Katie” and having such a talented composer write a piece for us. Kevin, it was a pleasure working with you, I hope we get this opportunity again sometime. Dan, I got lucky finding such a talented singer. I am extremely glad that I got the opportunity to perform the Britten, and I am glad that I did not have to play so unbearably soft. You have a wonderful voice, and I am glad that we performed this together. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my two teachers; Dr. Ehnes, I miss working with you, and Kent, it was a pleasure.

Thanks for coming to my recital.
Text for Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*

**Pastoral-** Charles Cotton (1630-1687)
The Day's grown old; the fainting Sun Has but a little way to run, And yet his Steeds, with all his skill, Scarcely lug the Chariot down the hill.
The shadows now so long do grow, That brambles like tall cedars show; Molehills seem mountains, and the ant Appears a monstrous elephant.

A very little, little flock Sheds thrice the ground that it would stock; Whilst the small stripling following them Appears a mighty Polyphemus.

And now on benches all are sat, In the cool air to sit and chat, Till Phoebus, dipping in the West, Shall lead the world the way to rest.

**Nocturne-** Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)
The splendour falls on castle walls And snowy summits old in story: The long light shakes across the lakes, And the wild cataract leaps in glory: Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying, Bugle blow, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying, dying, dying.

O bark, O hearl how thin and clear, And thinner, clearer, farther going! O sweet and far from cliff and scar The horns of Elfland faintly blowing, Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying, Bugle blow; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in your rich sky, They faint on hill or field or river: Our echoes roll from soul to soul And grow forever and forever. Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying, And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying, dying, dying, dying, dying.

**Elegy-** William Blake (1757-1827)

O Rose, thou are sick! The invisible worm That flies in the night, In the howling storm, Has found out thy bed Of crimson joy; And his dark secret love Does thy life destroy

**Dirge-** Anonymous (15th Century)

This ae nighte, this ae nighte, Every nighte and alle, Fire and fleet and candle-lighte, And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past, Every nighte and alle, To Whinnymuir thou com'st at last; And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gav'st hos'n and shoon, Every nighte and alle, Sit thee down and put them on; And Christe receive thy saule.

If hos'n and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane, Every nighte and alle, The winnies shall prick thee to the bare bane; And Christe receive thy saule.

From Whinnymuir when thou may'st pass, Every nighte and alle, To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last; And Christe receive thy saule.

From Brig o' Dread when thou may'st pass, Every nighte and alle, To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last; And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gav'st meat or drink, Every nighte and alle, The fire shall never make thee shrink; And Christe receive thy saule.

If meat or drink thou ne'er gav'st nane, Every nighte and alle, The fire will burn thee to the bare bane; And Christe receive thy saule.

**Hymn-** Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair, Now the sun is laid to sleep, Seated in thy silver chair, State in wonted manner keep: Hesperus entreats thy light, Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade Dare itself to interpose; Cynthia's shining orb was made Heav'n to clear when day did close; Bless us then with wished sight, Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart, And thy crystal shining quiver; Give unto the flying hart Space to breathe, how short so-ever: Thou that mak'st a day of night, Goddess excellently bright.

**Sonnet-** John Keats (1792-1821)

O soft embalmer of the still midnight, Shutting with careful fingers and benign, Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light, Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:

O sourest Sleep! if so it please thee, close In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes, Or wait the "Amen" ere thy poppy throws Around my bed its lulling charities.

Then save me, or the passéd day will shine Upon my pillow, breeding many woes, - Save me from curious Conscience, that still lords Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole; Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards, And seal the hushèd Casket of my Soul.