

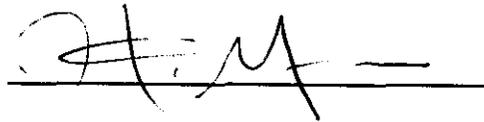
**Double Bass Senior Honors Recital**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

Kristine M. Hofmann

Thesis Advisor  
Dr. Hans Sturm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Sturm', written over a horizontal line.

Ball State University  
Muncie, Indiana

March 2003

May 3, 2003

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

**THESIS:** Senior Honors Double Bass Recital

**STUDENT:** Kristine M. Hofmann

**DEGREE:** Bachelor of Music

**DEPARTMENT:** Honors College

**DATE:** March 2003

As a double bass performance major, my senior thesis primarily consists of my Senior Honors Recital. Performed were works by Gabriel Fauré, Johann Baptiste VanHal, John Wilbye, and Serge Koussevitzky. A discussion of each composer's biography, a discussion of the piece itself, and my personal reactions are all included.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Hans Sturm for giving freely of his time to guide me through this project. I have had the privilege to work with Dr. Sturm for the past four years, his expertise concerning style and music history has been both valuable and enlightening. I would also like to thank the Ball State School of Music for the opportunity to perform with many different ensembles and performers. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Carl and Jane, sisters, Katherine and Kimberly, fiancée, David, and my friends for all of their love and support.

Kristine M. Hofmann

Senior Honors Thesis

Dr. Hans Sturm, Faculty Advisor

25 April 2003

As a Double Bass Performance Major, my senior thesis primarily consists of my Senior Honors Recital. What follows will be an in-depth discussion of the five pieces that were performed.

### **Après Un Rêve by Gabriel Fauré**

Gabriel Urbain Fauré, born 12 May 1845, was the sixth child of Honoré Toussaint and Marie-Antoinette-Hélène de Lalène, a School Master and a domestic engineer. His siblings were older than he and were at school when Fauré was growing up. His mother was very busy with domestic affairs and his father played the role a very strict and stern Head Master<sup>1</sup>. As a small child, Fauré was seen as being “reticent, self-reliant and reluctant to divulge his innermost feelings to anyone”<sup>2</sup>. This little boy was forced to find other means of expressing himself, music. His musical life began at the College at Montgauzy when he was still rather young. He listened to plainchant accompanied on the harmonium and had access to the school piano. Fauré taught himself to play the piano without any form of formal training. As crude as his training was, he impressed a member of the Assembly for Ariège, M. Dufaur de Subiac who was able to persuade Fauré’s father to enroll him in a Parisian school of music at the age of eight. The young Fauré studied at the Rue Fromentin from 1854-1865. He then studied at the Ecole

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenberg Books, 1979), 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Orledge, *Fauré*, 6.

Niedermeyer with Saint-Saëns. He earned a post as organist at St. Sulpice in 1870 and in 1877 he became the Choir Master at Madeleine.

Of his compositions, one of his more successful works is a song titled, *Après Un Rêve*. This piece is part of a collection of Italianate songs, works that are based on anonymous Italian poems that were collected and edited by Romain Bussine. Included in the group are *La Chanson du pêcheur*, *Après Un Rêve*, *Barcarolle*, and *Sérénade toscane*. Originally composed for voice and piano in 1878, *Après Un Rêve* is described as he “crowning song of the group... an emotional though restrained masterpiece which maintains its high level of inspiration to the end”<sup>3</sup>. Fauré is an important composer of this era because he is able to “capture in his settings the spirit of his time, the mood of nostalgic yearning for the unattainable”<sup>4</sup>. The popularity of this piece grew more once it was transcribed for violin and piano. Later this piece was then transcribed for the cello. Finally, Fredrick Zimmermann transcribed *Après Un Rêve* for the double bass in 1950. Among Fauré's other works are Requiems, Masses, Songs, Piano music, Chamber works, and Stage music such as his incidental music for a production of Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*. Fauré began teaching in 1897 at the Paris Conservatoire. His pupils included Ravel and Enescu. In 1905 he became director of the Paris Conservatoire, retired in 1920, after which he was able to devote himself more fully again to composition, including two chamber works, a piano trio and a string quartet. He died in Paris in 1924.

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<sup>3</sup> Orledge, *Fauré*, 52.

<sup>4</sup> “Gabriel Fauré” by HNH International Ltd. 2000 ([http://www.naxos.com/naxos/naxos\\_marco\\_polo.htm](http://www.naxos.com/naxos/naxos_marco_polo.htm)).

For me, this piece was a way to relax at the beginning of the recital. The work was like a warm up to dispel some nervous excitement. *Après Un Rêve* was an interesting piece to play and learn from because I had never really focused on sweet lyrical pieces. Playing this piece helped me to develop smooth bow exchanges; the subtle aspects of phrasing, and served as a means to learn and become more comfortable with thumb position, especially the smaller distances between pitches.

### **Concerto in D Major by Johann Baptiste VanHal**

Johann Baptiste VanHal was born in a little town called Nechanicz, Bohemia, which is now a part of the Czech republic on May 12, 1739. He showed an “unusual talent for music”<sup>5</sup> which allowed him to go to Marscherdorf in Germany to study. By his own admission, his best teacher was Anton Erban, a musician in his hometown. Under Erban, VanHal learned to play the organ, play violin, and compose works for both. By the time he was 13 he was awarded an organist position in Opoczna and soon after became a choir director in Niemeżowes. VanHal studied under Carl von Dittersdorf and taught in Venice and Vienna.

VanHal’s composed over thirteen-hundred pieces, which were produced by Haydn at Esterhaza. Included in this collection of works is VanHal’s only concerto for the contrabass. It is thought that he composed this piece for his good friend and teacher, Carl von Ditters(dorf) who was a virtuoso contrabass player and a fellow composer. The concerto is three movements in length and follows the format of the Classical Concerto structure, fast slow fast. The first movement is Allegro Moderato in tempo and uses a

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<sup>5</sup> Dlabacž’s Biographical Sketch: “Wanhal, Johann Baptiste” as found in: *Johann Wanhal, Viennese Symphonist: His Life and His Musical Environment* by Paul Bryan, (Stuyvesant, Ny: Pendragon Press. 1997.), 5.

theme that returns in each of the three movements in different guises. This piece is classical in nature in that it is to be performed with light dance-like feel.

Example 2: Double Bass motive in movement 1



Example 3: Motive in movement 2



Example 4: Motive in movement 3



This piece was challenging to play because of the Classical style. It helped me to develop my speed and fluidity in the upper registers, clarity of phrasing, and bow strokes that gave the piece its dance-like feeling. At the recital, I played this piece under the tempo directions so that I could feel comfortable with technical aspects, such as large shifts and awkward fingerings, and also get some of the stylistic aspects, such as the light dance-like evocation. In the future, as I further my studies on double bass, I wish to perform this piece again at a much quicker tempo and include all of the cadenzas.

## Weep, O Mine Eyes by John Wilbye

John Wilbye was born the third son to Matthew Wilbye on March 7, 1574. Not much is known about his upbringing or his musical studies. What is known is that he was a domestic musician who worked as a servant to the wealthy Kytson family. At this time in England, there were basically two types of musicians. The musical servant such as Wilbye, and the church musician that led the choir in church, played the church organ, and sang. The church musicians centered their lives on liturgical and sacred music. Wilbye, on the other hand was most interested in secular music. He composed two books of madrigals, *Weep, O Mine Eyes* belongs to the first set. *Weep, O Mine Eyes* can be characterized as a canzonete, which is a musical form with three distinct sections. The first and last section being repeated with an unrelated bridge section that separates the A and B sections. The form being AABB, quite unlike a typical canzonete, which has an AABCC form this piece omits the optional middle 'B' section. Without repeats the form would look something like this: ||:A:||:B:||. The text for this madrigal is as follows:

Weep, O mine eyes, & cease not:  
Your springtides out alas, me thinks increase not.  
O when begin you to swell so high,  
That I may drown me in you?<sup>6</sup>

His text involves ideas of love, though Wilbye never married. Originally written for organ and voice, this piece was then transcribed for a double bass trio by Fredrick Zimmermann in 1971.

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*Weep, Oh mine Eyes* helped me to develop my skills as an ensemble member. I had to listen intently to the other players and strive for seamless phrasing.

### **Chanson Triste by Serge Koussevitzky**

Serge Koussevitzky was born in Vyshniy Volochek, Russia in 1874 to a family of musicians. He was the first Russian conductor to gain international recognition and was also a double bass virtuoso. He became the principal bass of the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra at the age of twenty-seven. He conducted throughout Europe and settled in America as the music director for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Koussevitzky composed a group of four short pieces for the double bass in 1902. One of these pieces is the *Chanson Triste*. This piece is a slow piece, whose title is translated as “A Sad or Sorrowful Song”. It is in ||:A:||BA form. This form is reminiscent of the Classical period minuet and trio form where the A section (minuet) is repeated. Then the B section (trio) is played and optionally repeated, after the trio is played, the A section is again repeated one final time. A unique characteristic that differs from the Classical period minuet and trio is the addition of a short, nine-bar cadenza that separates the B section from the final return of the A section.

The challenges of this piece include playing triplets in time, having accurate intonation during diminished scalar passages, and contrasting the style of the slower A section to the quicker, dance-like B section.

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**KRISTINE HOFMANN**

**double bass**

**in a**

**SENIOR RECITAL**

**assisted by**

Ji-Young Jeoung, piano and harpsichord

David Blakley, violin

Patrick O'Hara and Michael Neeley, double bass

Après Un Rêve ..... Gabriel Fauré  
(1845-1924)

Concerto in D Major..... Jan Baptiste VanHal  
I. Allegro moderato (1739-1813)  
II. Adagio  
III. Allegro

... Intermission ...

Sonata in A Major Op. 1 ..... Francesco Geminiani  
I. Adagio Presto (1687-1762)  
II. Allegro  
III. Grave  
IV. Allegro

Ji-Young Jeoung, harpsichord - David Blakley, violin

Weep, Oh Mine Eyes..... John Wilbye  
(1574-1638)  
Patrick O'Hara and Michael Neeley, double bass

Chanson Triste ..... Serge Koussevitzky  
(1874-1951)

Kristine Hofmann is a student of Hans Sturm.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Music.

PRUIS HALL  
Friday, March 7, 2003  
5:30 p.m.

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