

## **Brent Crites, horn**

**Sarah Noé, piano**

Monday, 20 April 2026

Mabee Performing Arts Hall, Bell Cultural Events Center

### **BARBARA YORK: *Arioso Gloria* (2003/ed. 2012)**

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Barbara York was a modern composer who contributed mainly to music for brass. She was born in Canada in 1949 and later moved to and worked in the United States, notably Kansas City, for over forty years. She began her music career playing piano and cello, and she started composing at age seven. After she graduated from McGill University, she began to teach at Manitoba Theatre School and soon after began to work as a music director, composer, and arranger through the theatre. During her time in Kansas City she mainly served as an accompanist and educator. York eventually set her sights on composing for tuba and euphonium after accompanying tubist Michael Fischer and is most known for these compositions. She eventually retired and took a position as a staff accompanist for Pittsburg State University where she served until she passed away in 2020.

Originally written for tubist Michael Fischer in 2003, *Arioso Gloria* has also been adapted for horn and euphonium by the composer. The melody is based on the hymn *Gloria in excelsis Deo* - Latin for "Glory to God in the highest". The piece also fits into the vocal-like, emotional, and expressive category of an arioso. The rhythmic and flowing melody of the horn floats throughout the range of the instrument and showcases the lyricism that the instrument can produce alongside the piano.

### **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART: Concerto No. 3 in E-flat Major, K. 447 (ca. 1787)**

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Mozart is a name that needs no introduction. He is one of the most well-known composers of all time and is widely considered one of the three greatest composers of the Classical Era as well. Mozart practiced music from a young age. He was taught by his father, Leopold Mozart, and traveled around Europe with him, learning music as he went along. Growing up, Mozart became very fond of Joseph Ignaz Leutgeb, a horn player and friend of his father,

who served with Leopold Mozart in the Esterhazy orchestra in Salzburg. In total, Mozart had four completed concertos for horn, two rondos, and two incomplete concertos all written for and dedicated to Leutgeb. Leutgeb was known for his lyrical ability on the natural horn as he was adept at the stopping technique which added more notes to the range of the horn.

*Concerto No. 3* was written in Vienna after Mozart's release from the service of Archbishop of Salzburg. It was likely composed in 1787 for Leutgeb and has a narrower range, perhaps to accommodate for an aging Leutgeb. It is organized as most of Mozart's concertos are with three movements organized into a fast-slow-fast structure. The first movement is full of motifs that showcase the staple composition style of Mozart and follow a scalar contour. The second movement, *Romanze*, allows one to imagine the lyrical acumen of Leutgeb. The third movement speeds back up and brings with it the motives of old hunting horns that would have been typical for the instrument during this era.

### **ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV: *Rêverie*, op. 24 (1890)**

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Alexander Glazunov was a gifted musician with an exceptional ear and musical memory from an early age. His musical journey started young, learning piano at age nine and beginning his composing career at age eleven. At fourteen, he began to study with the prolific Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. He was with him for less than two years because he was so gifted, and, according to Rimsky-Korsakov, progressed "*not from day to day but from hour to hour*". Glazunov continued his compositional journey and completed his first symphony at age sixteen, thus gaining the attention of art patron Mitrofan Belyayev. Belyayev helped promote the musical endeavors of many young composers throughout Russia and supported the '*Belyayev Circle*' in their pursuit of musical compositions and starting a national Russian school. Later in his life, Glazunov was appointed as a professor at St. Petersburg Conservatory where he served for 30 years until he resigned due to the dismissal of Rimsky-Korsakov, but returned later that year to serve as the director of the conservatory until 1930.

Glazunov composed *Rêverie* while he was a young student. He was a good horn player and played a wide variety of instruments to aid in his understanding of composition. *Rêverie*

shows off the wide range and melodious qualities of the horn, even progressing into the lower range written in bass clef. The piece concludes with a beautiful echo of the main melody through the use of stopped horn to create the effect.

### **STEPHEN GRYC: *Reflections on a Southern Hymn for Horn Alone* (1988)**

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Stephen Gryc was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota in 1949. He earned four degrees in music, including a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan, where he studied composition with Pulitzer Prize laureates Leslie Bassett and William Bolcom. He is Professor Emeritus of Music Composition and Theory at the Hartt School of the University of Hartford where he taught full-time for thirty-five years.

Commissioned by Peter Landgren, the former Associate Principal Horn of the Baltimore Symphony, this work is an impactful unaccompanied reflection based on the three-voice hymn, *Wondrous Love*, from 'The Sacred Harp of 1859'. 'The Sacred Harp of 1859' was a tunebook used primarily in the Christian worship tradition in the pre-Civil War South. Gryc composed this piece in May of 1988 at the MacDowell Colony, a residency that allowed musicians to live and work with peers for the purpose of composition and other artistic avenues. The first movement, *Intonation*, is based on the main melody of the hymn in the tenor line. The third movement, *Pastoral*, is based on the melodic ideas of the bass line. The last movement, named after the hymn, is simply a presentation of the original tune.

### **JEAN FRANÇAIX: *Canon in Octave* (1953)**

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Jean Françaix was born into a very musical family. With his mother being a singer and vocal teacher and his father a composer, pianist, musicologist, and director of the *Le Mans Conservatoire*, Françaix began to study music very early on. His musical gifts were even recognized by the famous composer Maurice Ravel. Françaix studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire and won a *premier prix* in 1930, later won the Florence Gould prize in 1950, and the *Prix International Arthur Honegger* in 1992. Françaix was a prolific composer, with

his output amounting to more than two hundred pieces. He used many traditional compositional forms and styles for his works like the concerto, symphony, or cantata, and, even in his shorter pieces, loved the exposition-development-recapitulation structure. His sound is notably tonal, but moves throughout harmonies very freely showing off his charming eclecticism and his desire to make others happy.

Françaix's piece *Canon in Octave* notably showcases his playful style. The first two measures outline the main melody of the piece that echoes between the piano and horn like a conversation. The piece can be split into three sections: the first outlining the exposition, setting up the main melody and harmonic structure, the second shifting the key and developing the piece with more dynamic and rhythmic contrast, and the third bringing back the main melody from the first section in a recapitulation. The piece is light and fun with a fast onslaught of eighth notes that keep the work dancing along. The dynamic contrast of the piece changes dramatically as it changes from section to section, diverting expectations and continuing to engage the listener at every moment.

Program notes by Brent Crites