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Mostly Music at
Northeastern Illinois
University

presents

Gregory Smith, clarinet
&
Kuang-Hao Huang, piano

Sunday
March 10, 2002

4:00PM
The Barnes'
184 Old Green Bay Road
Winnetka, Illinois

Program

Premiere Rhapsody for clarinet and piano

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Sonata in E-flat Op. 120, No. 2

for clarinet and piano

Allegro Amabile

Allegro Appassionato

Andante Con Moto; Allegro

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Intermission

Concerto in for clarinet in C minor, op. 31

Allegro Vigoroso

Adagio

Rondo: Allegro Giocoso

Gerald Finzi
(1901-1956)

Gregory Smith

At age 24 Gregory Smith was appointed by Sir Georg Solti to the Second Desk Clarinet position of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1983. Prior to that he was Associate Principal and Eb Clarinet of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Principal Clarinet of the Sacramento Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared and recorded with conductors Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Klaus Tennstedt, Seiji Ozawa, James Levine, Claudio Abbado and Daniel Barenboim.

Mr. Smith was Principal Clarinet of the Scotia Festival Symphony Orchestra, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Pierre Boulez, Music Director and Principal Clarinet of the Ravinia Festival Orchestra, Chicago, IL. Nominated for a Grammy® Award for best chamber music performance with the Chicago Symphony Winds, he is also a founding member of the Chamber Soloists of Chicago heard live on nation-wide broadcasts from WFMT-FM, Chicago, IL.

Mr. Smith has been a participant in the Scotia Festival of Music, has collaborated with members of the Lincoln Center Chamber Players, and has also been a featured guest artist on the Bay Chamber Concerts with members of the Vermeer Quartet. He has toured the United States under the auspices of Columbia Artists management with the Chicago Symphony Chamber Players and has regularly been a guest chamber musician and teacher at the AFFINIS Music Festival, Tokyo, Japan. He can be heard internationally as a featured soloist and chamber musician from the CBC Radio, Canada.

Mr. Smith's principal teacher has been Robert Marcellus. He has been visiting Professor of Clarinet at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He presently is Associate Professor of Clarinet at Roosevelt University - Chicago Music College. Gregory Smith is a Buffet artist and clinician.

He and his wife, fellow clarinetist Carolee, began Gregory Smith Clarinet Products, Inc. in 1995 as a result of 45 years combined experience playing and researching fine vintage clarinet mouthpieces.

Pianist **Kuang-Hao Huang** enjoys an active career of performing and teaching. He has performed throughout the country and Europe and has been a soloist with several orchestras, including the New World Symphony Orchestra and the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra. In March of 2000, Mr. Huang premiered works by Louis Andriessen and Chen Yi at Weill Hall as part of Carnegie Hall's Millennium Piano Book Project. He has also performed on Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Memorial Series (WFMT 98.7 FM) and has won First Prize at the Union League Civic and Arts Foundation Auditions and at the Barnett Foundation Piano Competition.

Mr. Huang is an active collaborator, often performing concerts with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He has performed on Ravinia's Rising Stars series and has been broadcast on Radio France. Highlights of the 2001-2002 season will include performances with the Chicago Chamber Musicians and MusicNOW, a radio broadcast with the Sheridan Chamber Players as well as appearances on the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chamber Music Series and the Mostly Music at NEIU Series.

Mr. Huang currently serves on the adjunct faculties of Concordia University-River Forest, North Park University and the Merit School of Music in Chicago. During the summer, he coordinates the piano program at Northwestern University's National High School Music Institute.

A native of Wisconsin, Mr. Huang received his B.A. with honors and distinction from the University of Wisconsin, a Masters degree from Indiana University and is currently doing doctoral work at Northwestern University. While at Northwestern, Mr. Huang has received numerous awards and prizes, including departmental honors. During his graduate studies he was the recipient of the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, an award given by the U.S. Department of Education. From 1996-97, Mr. Huang served as a member of the New World Symphony. His principal teachers include Leonard Hokanson, Joseph Kalichstein, Howard Karp, Rita Sloan and Sylvia Wang.

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Program Notes

Claude Debussy

(born St. Germain-en-Laye, 22 August 1862; died Paris, 25 March 1918)

Beginning piano lessons at a very young age, Debussy's progress was so remarkable that he was able to enter the Paris Conservatory at the age of eleven. He remained at the Conservatory for over ten years, alternately claiming prizes and perplexing his teachers with his harmonic ideas. He won the Grand Prix de Rome in 1884, and by 1887 had begun attending the meetings of the Symbolist poets in Montmartre. The credo of the Symbolists was that art should appeal to the senses before the intellect. Debussy also fell under the influence of the French Impressionist painters of the day, in their concentration on color for its own sake and the play of light on surfaces. Both of these schools would become crucial to Debussy's developing musical style.

Debussy's earliest works are mostly pieces for voice or piano solo, including the very popular piano piece *Clair de lune*. In 1894 he composed the orchestral tone poem *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, one of the seminal works in western music history. To convey the images and atmosphere of Mallarmé's poem "*L'Après-midi d'un faune*", Debussy employed a tonal palette of sighing and sensual diaphanous harmonies. With the premiere of his only opera in 1902, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the demand for more of his music increased. Most notable among these later pieces is a work that is the closest thing to a symphony that Debussy wrote, the symphonic suite *La Mer*. Comprised of three symphonic movements Debussy called "sketches," the work is a musical "impression" (for lack of a better term, and one that Debussy loathed) of the sights and sounds of the ocean.

Debussy remains well-known for his piano music, and his two books of piano Preludes contain much of his best writing. The descriptive titles of these pieces were added by the composer after their completion. "*Footsteps in the snow*" is the title given to the *Prelude, Book II: no. 6* and is a fine example of Debussy's evocative writing for the piano.

The first performance of *Première Rhapsody* for clarinet and piano was at the Paris Conservatory, for the concours held at the end of the school year [July, 1910] Debussy completed a version for clarinet and orchestra in August 1911.

Johannes Brahms

(born Hamburg, 7 May 1833; died Vienna, 3 April 1897)

Brahms studied the piano from the age of seven and theory and composition (with Eduard Marxsen) from 13, gaining experience as an arranger for his father's light orchestra while absorbing the popular alla zingarese style associated with Hungarian folk music. In 1853, on a tour with the Hungarian violinist Reményi, he met Joseph Joachim and Liszt; Joachim, who became a lifelong friend, encouraged him to meet Robert Schumann. Brahms's artistic kinship with Robert Schumann and his profound romantic passion (later mellowing to veneration) for Clara Schumann, 14 years his elder, never left him. Though well known as a pianist he had trouble finding recognition as a composer, largely owing to his outspoken opposition - borne out in his d Minor Piano Concerto op.15 - to the aesthetic principles of Liszt and the New German School. But his hopes for an official conducting post in Hamburg (never fulfilled) were strengthened by growing appreciation of his creative efforts, especially the two orchestral serenades, the Handel Variations for piano and the early piano quartets. He finally won a position of influence in 1863-4, as director of the Vienna Singakademie, concentrating on historical and modern a cappella works. Besides giving concerts of his own music, he made tours throughout northern and central Europe and began teaching the piano. He settled permanently in Vienna in 1868.

Brahms was possibly the most important figure in chamber music for the clarinet in the 19th century. By 1890 he had resolved to stop composing but nevertheless produced in 1891-4 some of his best instrumental pieces, inspired by the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, an extraordinary Viennese clarinetist with the Meiningen Orchestra. Brahms was exposed to the lyrical capabilities of the clarinet by the playing of Mr. Muhlfield and wrote two sonatas, a trio and a quintet for the clarinet. The technical possibilities of the clarinet had been written well for by the likes of Weber and Rossini in his Introduction, Theme and Variations for Clarinet and Orchestra. It was the lyrical, singing quality that had been overlooked for so long.

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Gerald Finzi

(1901-1956)

Finzi's individual voice was predominantly influenced by Vaughan Williams and Elgar: his principal works include concertos for clarinet (1948-49) and cello (1951-55), a large-scale choral setting of Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality* (late 1930s, 1949-50), and two further sets of Hardy songs, *Earth and Air and Rain* (1928-32) and *Before and After Summer* (1932-49).

Finzi's obvious love for the deep-hued tones of the clarinet is apparent in the instinctive idiomatic writing for the instrument in the Five Bagatelles and the Concerto for Clarinet and Strings. The concerto, written for Frederic Thurston, received its premiere at the 1949 at the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford with Finzi conducting. The dynamic of the first movement lies between the orchestra's attempts to establish the agitated mood of the opening and the soloist's quiet determination to affirm its calm lyricism, as in the manner in which the strings' opening theme is immediately transformed by the clarinet into an altogether gentler character.

After a still, delicate introduction, the Adagio is cast as a meditation on a simple songlike theme, a reminder that song lies at the core of Finzi's art. Over it the soloist rhapsodizes with decorative embellishments and later introduces a second, distinctly sadder melody. The soloist leads the music to a state of rapt serenity, before an impassioned orchestral climax. In the finale, between appearances of the beguiling Rondo theme come a waltz-like episode and another flowing Finzian melody characteristically tinged with wistfulness. The opening of the concerto returns, before a short coda gives the soloist a final chance for display.

Andrew Burn

DISCOVER

chamber music at northeastern

UPCOMING CONCERTS:

Sunday, March 17, 2002 at 4:00 pm

Choral Sounds of Chicago - Renaissance Flora and Fauna

Three Arts Club 1300 N. Dearborn

Friday, April 12, 2002 at 8:00 pm

KLANG—NEIU Recital Hall 5500 N. St. Louis Ave.

Sunday, April 21, 2002 at 4:00 pm

Ensō String Quartet

Home of Jan Feldman - 810 Ingleside Place Evanston, IL

Sunday, April 28, 2002 at 4:00 pm

Young Award Winners from the Chicago Youth Symphony

North Side Residence

Sunday, May 19, 2002 at 4:00 pm

Pianist Soyoung Kee - winner of the 2001 Cliff Dwellers Club Competition

Home of Jan Feldman 810 Ingleside Place Evanston, IL

Tickets: \$25, \$20, and \$15 for students

Please RSVP to the Concerts in the Homes 773-442-4978