

Oktubafest Part 1

Program Notes by Dr. Chris Dickey

After first pursuing an education in mathematics, **Jacques Castérède** (1926-2014) entered the Paris National Conservatory of Music in 1944. He studied piano with Armand Ferté, composition with Tony Aubin, and analysis with Olivier Messiaen. During his student years at the conservatory, Castérède garnered numerous accolades in performance, composition, and analysis. He won the Grand Prix de Rome in 1953 with his cantata *La boîte de Pandore* (Pandora's Box). In 1960, Castérède returned to the Paris National Conservatory to teach solfège, piano, and analysis. The Chinese government later invited him to join the music faculty at the Central Academy in Beijing. His many compositions—ranging from concertos, symphonies, ballets, to chamber music—are performed throughout the world. This *Fantaisie Concertante* from 1960 represents the hallmarks of Castérède's style. Many tuneful melodies, modal scales, and extended tertian harmonies pervade this work. After bass trombone, the two other solo instruments indicated in the score include the French C tuba and the B-flat bass saxhorn. Though less known and somewhat shrouded in mystery to American audiences, both instruments are comparable to the modern-day euphonium.

Edmond Dédé (1827-1901) was a free-born Creole musician from New Orleans, Louisiana. While a young boy, he learned to play the clarinet, but after switching to the violin, he was soon hailed as a prodigy on the instrument. Dédé studied violin with the Italian-born Ludovico Gabici until he decided to find work in Mexico at the end of the US-Mexican war in 1848. By the end of 1852, Dédé returned to the United States and worked as a cigar maker. He saved enough money to travel to Europe, first to Paris and then to Belgium. When he returned to Paris, Dédé studied at the Paris Conservatoire. In the early 1860s, Dédé held conducting posts at the prestigious Grand Théâtre and the Théâtre l'Alcazar. While maintaining a busy conducting schedule, Dédé continued to compose music he had performed at the Grand Théâtre. Some of his most often performed works include the *Quasimodo Symphony*, the opera *Morgiane, ou, Le sultan d'Ispahan*, and *Mephisto Masque*, originally composed for ophicleide and orchestra or piano. The ophicleide was a keyed brass instrument that predated the tuba. After falling out of favor with composers and audiences, the tuba found a home in the orchestra. David Werden, a long-time soloist with the United States Coast Guard Band, transcribed the euphonium version you will hear tonight.

Violinist **Kirstin Fife** (b. 1959) has enjoyed a varied career as a studio musician, composer, and teacher. She is a founding member of the Los Angeles-based Dali Ensemble. Formed in 2017, the ensemble comprising oboe, violin, and cello performs music depicting an array of styles from the Renaissance period to present day. Fife was moved by Salvador Dalí's *The Persistence of Memory* and composed a piece by the same title. The Dali Ensemble then became interested in music influenced by Spanish and Latin music traditions. The *Sonatina for Tuba and Piano*, composed in 2018, displays many of Fife's melodic and harmonic sensibilities. The opening movement is a mysterious tango that pays tribute to Astor Piazzolla. A soulful middle movement, subtitled "Hymn for Her," transitions to an energetic and fast-moving tarantella finale. Fife's tuba compositions have been performed by fellow studio musician Doug Tornquist, a tuba player who has appeared on the soundtracks of over 400 film scores, including *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015), and *X-Men: Apocalypse* (2016).

Katahji Copley (b. 1998) has quickly garnered a reputation for writing music across several contrasting genres that is equal parts emotive and energetic. His effervescent music has been performed by soloists and ensembles throughout the United States. Copley's active

participation in the Millennium Composers Initiative has propelled him to national recognition. To date, he has composed music for wind ensemble, brass choir, saxophone quartet, choir, and jazz ensemble. His low brass compositions include the Concerto for Euphonium (2020), *Limitless* (2020, a trio for euphonium, tuba, and piano), and tonight's new piece *Crossroads* (2021). About the work, Copley says, "It represents the many paths a person can take and how those paths lead to different destinations—meeting different people with unique perspectives."

Leading an impressively varied career, **Wayne Lu** (b. 1970) is a composer, horn player, publisher, and music educator based in Eldora, IA. He has composed extensively for solo brass instruments and brass ensemble. His solo, chamber, and large ensemble music has been performed throughout the United States and Canada by prominent soloists, chamber musicians, and professional ensembles. Lu's music strikes a balance between rhythmic energy and folk-like lyricism. After hearing my performances of contrasting works, he decided to compose this Rhapsody for Tuba and Piano to feature my lyricism and tone in the tuba's upper register. This piece is a beautiful blend of song-like melodies offset with moments of technical flourishes. What combines the contrasting sections is the segments where the tuba can play expressively by means of cadenzas and rubato passages. In June 2021, I lost someone incredibly special to me. My darling grandmother Lois Ann Dickey passed away after a series of health complications. She was a life-long lover and supporter of music, and I am convinced Lu's Rhapsody would be her favorite piece on tonight's program. This world premiere is dedicated to her memory.

I borrow music from other instruments all the time. Dare I say it has become a trademark of my recital programming! Low brass players are familiar with **Vladislav Blazhevich** (1881-1942) because of the plentiful—and often downright difficult—etude books he composed for tuba and trombone. Concert Piece No. 5 was composed in 1938 and is one of five of these trombone solos known today. The work is popular with undergraduate trombonists. When I heard a WSU trombone student perform it for their jury, I instantly decided the piece would be the next one I borrow, steal, or transcribe. A trombonist himself, Blazhevich wrote idiomatic passages for both trombone and piano that enable each instrument to have ample opportunities for taking artistic liberties. The Concert Piece No. 5 brings tonight's varied program to a satisfying finish.

A word of thanks

Thank you all for coming to this recital. I am truly grateful for the support of my students, colleagues, and Washington State University. Also, I must give a hearty thank you to Fabio Menchetti, my new piano colleague. His impressive combination of polish and artistic nuance has been a joy to witness as a collaborator. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the New Faculty Seed Grant program, for it funded the premieres you heard this evening. As we have more and more performances while still in this vexing pandemic, I urge you all to treasure and savor every moment. We knew it all along, but this pandemic has helped magnify the importance of the arts for all of us.

I hope to see you at Oktubafest Part 2 with guest artist Dr. Jeremy Crawford (University of Alabama) on Wednesday, October 20 at 7:30 PM here in Bryan Hall Theatre. He will be joined by pianist Karen Nguyen. This year's Oktubafest will conclude with Part 3 on Thursday, October 28 at 7:30 PM in Bryan Hall Theatre and will feature solos, duets, and quartets played by members of the tuba-euphonium studio. The recital will close with the WSU Tuba Choir.