

UNCSO

UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
TONU KALAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.
Beasley-Curtis Auditorium, Memorial Hall

PROGRAM

Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Richard Wagner
(1813–1883)

Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra

Toccata: Allegretto vivace

Recitativo: Lento

Tema con variazioni: Andantino — Valzer — Polka — Siciliana —
Scherzo — Sarabanda — Galop

Nino Rota
(1911–1979)

Jessica Kunttu, bassoon

Suite from *The Tender Land*

Introduction and Love Music

Party Scene — Finale: The Promise of Living

Aaron Copland
(1900–1990)

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VIOLIN I

Siana Wong, *concertmaster*
Ayman Bejjani
Tony Feng
Gilda Ferrie
Sharayu Gugnani
Martha-Grace Jackson
Christopher Kim
Hannah Lee
Michael Lee
Maria Manning
Frances Norton
Ameer Qaqish
Alanna Zhang
Amber Zhen

VIOLIN II

Anant Malpani, *principal*
Lauren E. Burris
Christopher Cooper
Charlsie Doan
Michael Dolschenko
Woody Livesay
Mandy Lubinski
Hope Lusby
Ellis Murphy
Aditya Pillutla
Julia Reich
Sophie Shan
Lilliana Soucaze
Krista Wiese Telford
Perry Tseng
Henry Woodburn

VIOLA

Tate Jones, *principal*
Jacob Bandy
Abbey Benzinger
Natalie Druffner
Dana Lee
Alexandra Love

Monica Macharios
Annagabriela Redding
Lauren Southwell
Kinza Syeda Subzwari

CELLO

Kevin Agner, *principal*
Katherine Chay
Shudy Du
Olivia Fults
David Daehyun Kim
Arush Narang
George Nielsen
Aaron Osborne
Ellie Rogers
Claire Warr

BASS

Matthew Gimbel, Jr., *principal*
Benjamin Burch
Julien Cox
Olivia Jones
Katherine Ropp
Cindy Xu

FLUTE AND PICCOLO

Hylton Baker, *principal*
Emily Qiu, *co-principal*
Abigail Poirier

OBOE AND ENGLISH HORN

Emily Harmon, *principal*
Stephen Litt

CLARINET AND BASS CLARINET

Matthew Svec, *principal*
Andrew Byerle, *co-principal*

BASSOON

J Suddreth, *principal*
Marni Weinreb

HORN

Monet Jowers, *principal*
Blayne Owens, *co-principal*
Harrison L. Dixon
Thayer Hicks

TRUMPET

Nico McLaurin, *principal*
Naomi Major, *co-principal*
Mia Sabin

TROMBONE

Jordan Shirtz, *principal*
Derek Yao
Andrew Kuntz, *bass*

TUBA

Daniel Horn

TIMPANI

Ben Frens

PERCUSSION

Joey Padow
Nikolai Sbityakov

HARP

Matthew Gillespie

PIANO

Kyle Finley

STAGE MANAGER

Kinza Syeda Subzwari

String players are listed alphabetically following the principals in each section

SOLOIST

Dr. Jessica Kunttu (she/her) is a highly sought-after performer and educator based in Raleigh, NC. As an orchestral player, Dr. Kunttu plays bassoon and contrabassoon regularly with the North Carolina Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Carolina Ballet, and North Carolina Opera, among others, and has appeared as Guest Principal Bassoon with the North Carolina and Charlotte Symphonies.

A proponent of new music, Dr. Kunttu maintains an ongoing collaboration with New York City-based Korean American composer Seong Ae Kim, whose works center on social justice issues. Two recent compositions include “Fever Dream” for bassoon and piano, which is an allegorical message for how to combat racism, and “Gravity-Levity” for solo bassoon, which symbolizes the coexistence of growth and depression. “Gravity-Levity” was premiered at the International Double Reed Society Conference in 2022.

Dr. Kunttu teaches bassoon at both the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, and maintains a large private studio of middle school, high school, and adult students. Her approach to teaching involves creating a safe space for students to learn, grow, and make mistakes, but also helping students understand how to transfer skills learned in music to all areas of life.

Dr. Kunttu earned a Doctor of Musical Arts and a Master of Music from Stony Brook University, where she studied with Frank Morelli. She received her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts in Italian degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she studied with John Pederson and was a member of the inaugural class of Kenan Music Scholars. She received a high school diploma with concentration in Bassoon Performance from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where she studied with Mark Popkin.

PROGRAM NOTES

Wagner: Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Richard Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* differs from his other music dramas by being a comedy, and also by being based on historical events rather than mythology. Completed in 1867, between the composition of the last two operas in his monumental cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, it remains one of the longest operas still in the standard repertory, running close to six hours including intermissions.

The imposing Prelude incorporates many melodic motives found in the opera, often combining them in skillful contrapuntal strands, and serves virtually as a self-contained short tone poem. It was the first part of the opera to be composed and was premiered in Leipzig with the composer conducting in 1862, six years before the complete opera was first produced in Munich.

— *Tonu Kalam*

Rota: Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra

Italian composer Nino Rota (originally Giovanni Rota Rinaldi) was born into a musical family in Milan in 1911. Hailed as a prodigy, he had many compositions performed before his teenage years. As a young adult, he attended the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, befriended American composer Aaron Copland, and was introduced to a wide variety of American music.

After the conclusion of World War II and the death of Mussolini, Italian art and cinema took a humanist turn towards stories of ordinary people and day-to-day occurrences. Rota’s music, which blended classical forms and orchestration with heavy influence from vernacular styles of the time, was perfectly suited to help tell these stories.

Rota is best known for his immense contributions to film music, having written over 150 film scores. He composed scores for films of Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, Franco Zeffirelli, and Francis Ford Coppola, among others. His score for *The Godfather Part II* won an Academy Award in 1974.

Rota’s music as well as his personality are best described as joyful, dazzling, and imaginative. These qualities are clearly portrayed in his Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra, which he began in 1974 and completed

in 1977, two years before his death. The piece, while written with great attention to form, counterpoint, and other technical concerns, is melodic, approachable, and joyful.

Performing the Rota with the UNCSCO is personally significant to me for many reasons. I first studied this concerto as an undergraduate at UNC, as a double major in Music Performance and Italian Studies. In my career, my personal projects and solo performing often center on heavy subject matter, such as social justice issues, as well as a focus on extended techniques and pushing the boundaries of my instrument. By contrast, the Rota reminds me to enjoy the simple things in life, enjoy the view, and not take things too seriously. After all, it's a bassoon concerto.

— Jessica Kunttu

Copland: Suite from *The Tender Land*

The Tender Land is the only full-length opera created by the great American composer Aaron Copland. It was originally commissioned in 1952 by NBC for broadcast on television, but the production was canceled without explanation. It was eventually premiered by the New York City Opera in 1954, but it did not receive great acclaim, partly due to the difficulty of taking a work originally conceived on a smaller scale for the television screen and then having to mount it on a large opera stage.

As Copland himself once commented regarding the premiere, “I can’t honestly say that it was a ‘wow’—something less than a ‘wow’.” But he felt strongly that the music was successful, and in 1958 he fashioned a suite out of three sections of the opera, concluding with the stirring finale of the first act, “The Promise of Living.”

The story takes place in the Midwest during the Great Depression, and centers on a farm family whose older daughter struggles with her coming of age. The plot is simple—there is no great *verismo* drama, and nobody dies—which may have partially accounted for its lukewarm reception, but the overall effect is quietly touching in its honest humanity.

— Tonu Kalam