

Georgia College
Department of Music

Senior Recital

**Rafal,
Trumpeter and Composer**
Dr. Hue Jang, Pianist

Saturday, Nov. 12, 2022

Max Noah Recital Hall, 2 p.m.

Also live-streamed on [Facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment)



Program

Concerto in E-flat

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro (Rondo)

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Rafal, trumpet
Dr. Hue Jang, piano

Fantasy on a Fictional Theme

Rafal
(b. 1999)

Dr. David Harned Johnson, violin
Dr. Hue Jang, piano

Andante et Scherzo

Henri-Paul Buesser
(1872–1973)

Rafal, trumpet
Dr. Hue Jang, piano

Emily Dickinson Songs

- I. Surgeon
- II. Alter? When the Hills Do

Rafal
Text by Emily Dickinson
(1830–1886)

Allison Ryder, soprano
Dr. Hue Jang, piano

Donestre

Electronic

Rafal

Spring Sonata

- I. Movement
- II. Give Me a Second
- III. Chaos

Rafal

Rafal, trumpet
Dr. Hue Jang, piano

This recital is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Music degree. Levi Rafal is a student of Drs. David H. Johnson and Dr. Cliff Towner.

Program Notes

Concerto in E-flat

Franz Joseph Haydn was the most celebrated composer of his time. He lived with his parents for the first six years of his life, but at age seven he was given to his uncle to be trained for music, due to exhibiting promise as a toddler. He learned how to sing and play harpsichord and violin. He was a choirboy at St. Steven's Cathedral but was fired after cutting off another member's pigtail. (He was also known for his sense of humor.) He taught himself much of what he knew about music and music theory, and eventually became the court composer for Prince Pál Antal Esterházy of Hungary. He increased the size of the court's ensembles and is often relatedly called the 'father of the symphony.'

His Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major was composed during the last years of his life, for the then-new keyed trumpet. Before the keyed or valved brass instruments, players could only play notes along the harmonic series, so compositions for trumpet tended to be rather boring. However, Haydn wrote this for a trumpet that could finally play the full chromatic scale in a reasonable range. The low and chromatic bits present in the concerto highlights this fact, and the jumpier bits are reminiscent of earlier trumpet styles.

Fantasy on a Fictional Theme

The normal title for a theme and variations (or a fantasy) on an original theme would of course be "Fantasy on an Original Theme," but I like fiction too much to let this opportunity pass by. I think music is valuable because it can take us away from our mundane realities. Many people like to read or watch stories about fictional people dealing with the real world, or maybe when you listen to music, if you imagine along a story at all, it is your own self in the story, or your memories, and the plotline is real. I have an overactive imagination and find stories about things that could reasonably happen to me boring. The characters that appeal to me are psychopaths and warlocks and talking animals. Whenever I close my eyes at a concert and envision the "story" of the music, there are lizard people killing each other over whose god-king has the most divine authority, or there are mice that are attempting to ironically navigate the plotline of a romcom in order to poke fun at humans, or there are trees whose sap is human blood, and they have been undisturbed for millennia, feasting on graveyards, only to be discovered by a moralistic scientist and eradicated, their dark (and debatable) beauty lost to time.

I invite you, if you can, to imagine something equally absurd, as absurd as you can possibly make it, when listening to this piece. As a theme and variations, I have provided you ample spots to shift the tone and direction of your daydream. If you are unable to imagine a good story or a story at all, I cannot fault you, but if you invented a good storyline, you're legally obligated to tell me.

Andante et Scherzo

Paul Henri Buesser (1872-1973) (also spelled Büsser) was a French composer, conductor, and organist. He enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire in 1889, and he won its prestigious Prix de Rome in 1893. This was basically the most prestigious scholarship a composer can possibly win, and it paid for the next few years of his life. He became a professor at the Paris Conservatoire in 1921 and went on to teach other winners of the Prix de Rome. He worked extensively with Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Jules Massenet (1842-1912).

Buesser composed in a wide variety of genres, but most of his works are opera. This dramatical quality is still present in his other works. Buesser is also known for his comedic wit, and many of his operas were also comedies. Dramadies, if you will. Andante et Scherzo leads with a dramatic, mournful section, which is contrasted heavily with a light and fast dance in 7/4 time. This scherzo is humorous and dramatic, the humor feeding off the drama and the drama adding to the humor.

Emily Dickinson Songs

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was an American poet famous for her slant rhymes, unusual syntax, and rejection of contemporary poetical trends. She lived in Amherst, Massachusetts, and was almost completely unknown in her own lifetime. Her work is characterized by themes of nature and loneliness. She is my favorite poet, and one of the few I have actually read. (Don't tell my high school English teacher). Her poems are also very conveniently under public domain, meaning I do not have to perform a séance to ask for permission to set her work to music. I have set five of her poems, and given them titles based on their theme or first line.

“Surgeon” is often analyzed as being in reference to criticism. Dickinson shared her poetry with men she respected during her lifetime, but they dismissed it, or heavily edited to be more palatable.

Surgeons must be very careful
When they take the knife
Underneath their fine incisions
Stirs the culprit – Life!

“Alter? When the Hills Do” is a poem that is sometimes read as being about friendship, and how although obstacles can stand in the way of that friendship, she never intends to change herself and give up her friendship. She also implores her friend to never change. The term “friend” in this poem has been subject to much literary analysis.

Alter? When the hills do
Falter? When the sun
Question if his glory
Be the perfect one
Surfeit? When the daffodil
Doth of the dew
Ever as herself, O friend!
I ask of you

Donestre

There is an English book written in approximately the 11th century called Wonders of the East, a travelogue which contains a host of definitely-not-fictional monsters. It contains this passage:

“Then there is a certain island in the Red Sea where there is a race of people that is, among us, called Donestre. They are grown like soothsayers from the head to the navel, and the other part is like a human, and they know human speech. When they see a person of foreign race they call out to him and his kinsmen the names of familiar men and with false words they seduce him and seize him and after that they eat him, all except the head. And then they sit and weep over that head.” (translated by Asa Simon Mittman and Susan Kim)

That cannibalism and subsequent mourning has always fascinated me. I know it is only a story, but the fact that such brutality can be followed by such tenderness, as if the brutality is unavoidable and a given, and the sorrow is the aberration, is strange and delightful in a soul-hurting way. The Donestre is sometimes read as an allegory for immigration or gender nonconformance, an 11th century parable to justify xenophobia. the Donestre is “other” and poses as a normal person, adopting the language and customs of its companions, seeming perfectly friendly. However, its very existence is threatening, and the fact that it exists is what kills all those it meets, as we cannot let the impostor live among us. Some say its tears are fake, that the “other” wants “us” dead. Maybe everything it says is a lie.

But I do not believe the Donestre’s words are false, simply borrowed.

Spring Sonata

I wrote this piece inspired by the season of spring, as you may have gathered from the name. My mood changes with the seasons and the levels of light, so summer is naturally the time when I am most suited to the task of being alive, and winter is when everything is constantly difficult and terrible all the time. Spring though presents a unique problem in that is the returning of all feeling, everything imaginable, rushing in gradually and then all at once. This piece starts manic, has a dazed interlude in the middle, and then returns to being more self-unnerving than before. They say insanity is an artist’s friend, and while it certainly is inspiration, it can also be quite a hassle. This piece is the direct product of that.

This piece is also inspired by Hindemith’s “Symphonic Metamorphosis,” which I can attribute to nothing else but insanity and gleeful terror, and by the color Green, which is as fertile as it is boundless as it is wantonly merciless as it is cheerful as it determined to live, especially in places where it should not. Spring Sonata is not my newest work, but it is my piece written for trumpet, and one of my favorites. It is my love letter (and hate letter) to everything that is too much.