

Benjamin Haas, alto saxophone

Jonida Lazellari, piano

1. Program Notes

a. Decruck

- i. Born in 1896 in Gaillac, France, Fernande Decruck studied both organ and composition at the prestigious Paris Conservatory. There, she became well known for her works in both art forms. She moved to the United States where she met and married Maurice Decruck, a saxophonist. Perhaps her most famous work is her *Sonate en ut# pour saxophone alto et piano*, or her *Sonata in C#* for the alto saxophone, which is dedicated to the famed saxophonist Marcel Mule. Because the saxophone was still a relatively new instrument, there is debate on whether this piece was originally written for the alto saxophone or the viola, and both parts come with the score. There are subtle differences between the two, but the form of the two remain mainly the same. There are four movements: “*Tres Modere, Expressif*,” a highly impressionistic and romantic opening movement; “*Noel*,” which references an old French Christmas carol; “*Fileuse*,” a spinning song; and “*Nocturne et Rondel*,” a two-part finale. The piece was composed in 1943, and contains significant elements of both impressionism and romanticism.

b. Mignon

- i. Robert Schumann, born in 1810 in Zwickau, Germany, is most well known for his piano music and contributions to the Romantic Period of music. *Mignon* features Schumann at his finest; similar to Decruck’s *Sonata*, it is heavy in its use of chromaticism and romantic feelings. *Mignon* comes from his 1893 piano book titled “*Album for the Young*”, which features music for children and families. While it may not sound overly complex, one of its significant challenges is conveying the intense emotions intended by the composer.

c. Singelee

- i. Born in 1812 in Brussels, Belgium, Jean-Baptiste Singelee is considered to be one of the most important and influential composers for the saxophone. One of the first composers to treat the saxophone as a serious instrument, Singelee studied at the Royal School of Music in Belgium, where he met and befriended Adolphe Sax, the inventor of the saxophone. *Concertino* was composed in 1861, and was dedicated to his friend Jules Demeur. *Cinquieme Solo De Concert*, or *Fifth Concert Solo*, was composed in 1863. While both pieces of music were composed in the Romantic Period, they sound more classical in nature, as they follow the traditional classical structure and format.

d. Ireland

- i. Born in 1983 in Yokohama, Japan, Ryota Ishikawa is most well known for his works for the saxophone. He studied at the Tokyo College of Music and graduated in 2005, and per his website, his music is both artistic and entertaining. *Blooming Ireland* combines these two elements, as it is comprised of four classic Irish folk songs, with hints of more in the piano score. Composed in 2013, this is the most recently composed piece on this program, although just from listening to it, you may not be able to tell that. The saxophone plays the role of many different instruments throughout this piece- pan pipes, ocarina, and bagpipes to name a few.

e. Eddie

- i. Virtuoso guitarist Eddie Van Halen comes from a subgenre of rock called Glam Metal, or Hair Metal. Glam Metal is known for its showiness, outlandish performances, and incredible feats of musicianship, whether it be from the lead vocalist, the guitarist, the drummers, or the band as a whole. This subgenre was born in Los Angeles, and is comprised of other bands such as Kiss, Guns N Roses, Motley Crue, and Bon Jovi, just to name a few. One of the most virtuosic guitarists of this or any genre is Eddie Van Halen, famous for his tapping, heavy use of the whammy bar, blistering licks, and his legendary Frankenstrat. Composer David Schumacher, born in 1974, aimed to capture Eddie's outlandish style in *Deconstructing Eddie*, which was commissioned by Joshua Thomas, saxophonist for the US Coast Guard Band. All of the aspects of Eddie's playing are here- deep bends, a (simulated) whammy bar, tapping, and, of course, a LOT of notes. As Schumacher says in his notes, this one's for all of us that ever wanted to be a rock star.