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For my first MMus recital, I am focusing on repertoire for the baroque oboe and baroque oboe d'amore. My second recital will include works for oboe da caccia and classical oboe. This recital will explore solo works of Babel, Handel, and Couperin as well as vocal music for soprano and oboe by Purcell, JS Bach, and Montéclair.

William Babel (1690-1723) Sonata no. 7 in Bb major

William Babel's *24 Solos for a violin or hautboy with a bass figur'd for the harpsichord* were published posthumously c.1725 in London. These sonatas are an important source of eighteenth-century ornamentation "with proper Graces adapted to each Adagio by the Author", as inscribed on the title page.

The collection was published by Babel's friend John Walsh (who later became Handel's official publisher), who wrote a eulogizing preface praising the late composer. The preface ends:

In fine, our author may justly be recorded, an inexhaustible Treasure of Harmony: and, had he liv'd in Shakespear's time; we might justly have concluded him the occasion of the following lines.

*If music be the food of love, play on:
That strain again: It had a dying fall:
Oh! It came o're my Ear like a sweet sound
That breathes upon a Bank of Violets
Stealing and giving odours*

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) O Let me Weep, The Fairy Queen

O, let me forever weep:
My eyes no more shall welcome sleep.
I'll hide me from the sight of day,
And sigh my soul away.
He's gone, his loss deplore,
And I shall never see him no more.

The libretto for Purcell's semi-opera *The Fairy Queen* comes from an anonymous adaptation of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. After the semi-opera's enormous success, Purcell revised it a year later in 1693 and added two additional songs – including *O let me Weep*. The melancholic song was added in the fifth and final act, in between two joyous songs about love. The short text about the loss of a lover is presented over an ornamented descending tetrachord ostinato bass line – a common feature of a lament.

The Purcell Society published the obligato to 'O let me weep' (or 'The Plaint') from *The Fairy Queen* (1692) for violin, but it is now thought that this part was originally written for oboe. In Bruce Haynes's book *The Eloquent Oboe* he discusses this song and cites Bruce Wood's argument that the slurring in the part is more idiomatic for oboe than for violin, and that in the theatre where the music was first performed, a single violin would not have been heard well enough. Wood also points out the similarities in writing between *O let me Weep* and two of Purcell's other songs with obligato oboe and soprano.

Despite *The Fairy Queen*'s success, it soon disappeared from the repertoire because the score was lost. It was only rediscovered in the twentieth century. The semi-opera remained a popular form of theatre in England until Handel arrived and brought Italian opera to popularity.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) Sonata in F major

In 1711, fourteen years after Purcell's death, Handel ventured to London and found great success with his opera *Rinaldo*, earning him widespread recognition. Though still working as Kapellmeister in Hanover, Handel continued to pursue work in London and eventually settled there permanently until his death in 1759.

The Oboe Sonata in F Major is commonly said to have been composed between 1711-1716. However, all we know for certain is that it was composed before 1722 when it was first published as a flute sonata in G major. The 1722 version appeared in a collection of sonatas that was later classified as Opus 1. The publication was attributed to Jeanne Roger but is now known to have really been published by John Walsh, who published the collection of sonatas again in 1732 in his own name.

While the autograph manuscript of the sonata is lost, there are sources that indicate that the F major version for the oboe may have been the original. The sonata appears in four surviving copyists' manuscripts - two of which are in F major (one is indicated for solo hautboy), and two are in G major. The minuet of the sonata is also found in three other sources, two of which are in F major and one in D major. It is also evident that John Walsh had a desire to publish music for the newly popular flute, as he was responsible for several other transpositions of Handel's sonatas for the flute. David Lasocki has done the most in depth research on this topic, and his 1979 edition of the F major sonata includes in the preface a detailed list of discrepancies amongst all of the different sources of the work.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Magnificat in D Major, Quia Respexit BWV 243-3

Weihnachts-Oratorium, Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen BWV 248-39

JS Bach's Magnificat in D Major and Christmas Oratorio are two of the most commonly performed works by Bach from his Leipzig period. Both works are typically performed during the Christmas season.

The Magnificat was first performed on Christmas Eve in 1723, in its original key of Eb major. Bach produced the D major version in 1733, likely for the Feast of the Visitation. Taken from the Gospel of Luke, it was Bach's first major liturgical composition on a Latin text. It is also referred to as the Song of Mary or the Canticle of Mary, in which Mary proclaims the story of her visit to her cousin Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptiste.

The Quia Respexit is the second aria in the work and the text comes from Luke 1:48. It is scored for soprano and oboe d'amore. In a full performance of the Magnificat, the aria is elided with the *Omnes Generationes* chorus.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent

For He has regarded the lowliness of His
handmaiden.
Behold, from henceforth, I will be called
blessed

The Christmas Oratorio is a group of six cantatas that were originally performed in Leipzig between Christmas Day and the Epiphany (January 6) in 1734. The author of the text is unknown. *Flößt, mein Heiland* (colloquially referred to as the Echo Aria) is from the fourth cantata, *Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben*, which was performed on New Year's Day for the Feast of the Circumcision. The echo aria is a paraphrase from Bach's secular cantata BWV 213 from 1733. The aria is written for soprano and echo soprano, and the obbligato oboe also functions as an echo of the soprano for much of the aria. During the opening statement of the aria before the voice enters, the oboe must function as both the main voice and the echo of itself.

Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen
Auch den aller kleinsten Samen
Jenes strengen Schreckens ein?
Nein, du sagst ja selber nein. (Nein!).
Sollt ich nun das Sterben scheuen?
Nein dein süßes Wort ist da!
Oder sollt ich mich erfreuen?
Ja, du Heiland sprichst selbst ja. (Ja!)

O my Savior, does your name
instill even the very tiniest seed
of that powerful terror?
No, You Yourself say no. (No!)
Shall I shun death now?
No, Your sweet word is there!
Or shall I rejoice?
Yes, o Savior, You Yourself say yes. (Yes)

François Couperin (1668-1733) Premier Concert, Concerts Royaux

The Concerts Royaux are four dance suites written for the court of Louis XIV in 1714, and published in 1722. Each suite begins with a prelude, followed by four-six short dance movements. Court dance and music flourished under the reign of Louis XIV, who was a skilled dancer. These dances each had unique choreography which dictated a specific meter, tempo, rhythm, and affect for the music.

Couperin writes in the preface of his Concerts Royaux that he composed these suites for small chamber music concerts that Louis XIV asked him to put on almost every Sunday – suggesting that these suites would not have been danced to, but presented solely as a musical performance. Nonetheless, the music still evokes the characteristic features of each dance.

Though all of the music is written on a grand staff, Couperin writes that the works are not only suitable for a solo keyboard, but also for the violin, flute, oboe, viol, and bassoon.

Michel Pignolet de Montéclair (1667-1737) Première Recueil de Brunettes

L'autre jour m'alant promener

Je sens naitre en mon cœur

The Brunette was a popular genre of French song in the 17th century and 18th centuries. They were simple airs, usually in binary form with a pastoral text. Several French baroque composers, notably including Montéclair and Hotteterre, compiled and re-arranged existing and popular Brunettes into collections of songs for the flute. Hotteterre credits some of the original composers, whereas Montéclair does not indicate from where any of the Brunettes in his collection originated.

Montéclair's *Premier recueil de brunettes pour les flûtes traversières, et à bec, violon, viole, hautbois, etc* was published as an instructional method for the flute (or other treble instrument). Imitating the voice was an important job of the baroque woodwind player. In Bruce Haynes's book *The Eloquent Oboe* he even suggests that the desire to imitate speech in French vocal monody was a pivotal factor in the development of the oboe from the shawm in France. For this reason, Montéclair underlays the text in the flute part so that the player can articulate the music with the proper stresses. He emphasizes the difficulty of successfully executing these simple songs with good taste.

Montéclair's collection is notable because he includes the complete first verse of text, whereas Hotteterre only includes the incipit. Montéclair also explicitly discusses the option of performing the Brunettes with flute and voice together in the preface to his collection, stating that it is lovely to hear the sound of the two together in unison. He also includes suggestions for alternative clefs to accommodate different vocal ranges, confirming his intent for a possible performance with both voice and flute. Virtuoso doubles are also included for most songs, which were clearly intended for an instrumentalist alone to perform.

I'd like to acknowledge Debra Nagy for her research and performance of this music, which inspired its inclusion on my recital program.