

SAN LUIS OBISPO
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

FALL 2024 | NOV 14-17

**Oboe Master Class
with Xiaodi Liu**

Thursday, NOV 14, 7:00 PM

Community Baptist Church, SLO

**Notable Insight:
Oboe Quartet**

Friday, NOV 15, 5:30 PM

Park Ballroom, Paso Robles

**Master Class
with Scott Yoo**

Saturday, NOV 16, 10:00 AM

Community Baptist Church, SLO

**Notable Dinner:
Brahms Quartet**

Saturday, NOV 16, 5:30 PM

Cypress Ridge Pavilion,
Arroyo Grande

Thank you to the Paderewski Festival
for loaning the Steinway piano.

Fall Chamber Concert

Sunday, NOV 17, 2:00 PM

Harold J. Miozzi CPAC,
Cuesta College

Free Pre-Concert Lecture on the stage
at 1:00 PM with Dr. Craig Russell

ARTISTS

XIAODI LIU

Oboe

BEN ULLERY

Viola

SCOTT YOO

Violin

IEVA JOKUBAVICIUTE

Piano

ROBERT DEMAINE

Cello

CONCERT PROGRAM

GORDON JACOB

Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1938)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegro molto—Presto

Andante semplice

Rondo: Allegro molto

*Xiaodi Liu, oboe; Scott Yoo, violin;
Ben Ullery, viola; Robert deMaine, cello*

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

Viola Sonata, H. 355 (1955)

Poco andante

Allegro non troppo

Ben Ullery, viola; Ieva Jokubaviciute, piano

CLARA SCHUMANN

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, op. 22 (1853); arr. for oboe

Andante molto

Allegretto

Leidenschaftlich schnell ("Fervent, fast")

Xiaodi Liu, oboe; Ieva Jokubaviciute, piano

INTERMISSION

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Piano Quartet No. 2 in A major, op. 26 (1861)

Allegro non troppo

Poco adagio

Scherzo: Poco allegro

Finale: Allegro

*Ieva Jokubaviciute, piano; Scott Yoo, violin;
Ben Ullery, viola; Robert deMaine, cello*

PROGRAM NOTES

GORDON JACOB (1895–1984)

Quartet for Oboe and Strings (1938)



What do typical twenty-two-year-olds do? They date other young people; many go to college or start working at one of the ten jobs they are likely to hold before the age of thirty-eight. Few of them spend their time teaching themselves music theory while incarcerated as prisoners of war. Gordon Jacob, however, made the most of his confinement in a German prison camp during World War I; he wrote for the camp "orchestra," using whatever

instruments the prisoners could obtain. Upon his release (he was one of only sixty survivors from his 800-man battalion), he enrolled in the Royal College of Music—and soon after his graduation, he joined the conservatory's faculty, teaching there for over forty years. He was a highly regarded composer, even contributing to the coronation ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II.

Although Jacob suffered a hand injury as a child and could not play *any* instruments himself, he had a special affinity for instrumental composition—a gift that is particularly apparent in his Quartet for Oboe and Strings, written for virtuoso Leon Goossens. Not long before his death, Jacob pointed to the Oboe Quartet as one of the works by which he would like to be judged.

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ (1890–1959)

Viola Sonata, H. 355 (1955)



Bohuslav Martinů's father was a cobbler with two side hustles: he was a fire-watcher and rang the bells for church services. Those two extra gigs allowed him and his family to live in an apartment at the top of the church tower—and thus Bohuslav heard church bells from his earliest infancy. He started violin lessons at age seven and gave much-applauded recitals at age fifteen, to the extent that his small Bohemian hometown raised the

funds to send him to Prague University. He was a miserable student!—and was eventually expelled—but he had discovered composition and thus pursued an independent path to a career.

Having fallen afoul of the Nazis during World War II, Martinů fled to the United States. Although he crossed the Atlantic repeatedly after the war, Communist control of Prague meant that he never saw his homeland again. Still, it is possible to "hear" Czech aspects in pieces such as the Viola Sonata. The piano's opening block chords may evoke the church tower of his youth, while the subsequent jaunty viola melody resembles Bohemian folk music. The second movement, while modern in many ways, also has folk-like moments, suggesting that Martinů never recovered from homesickness.

CLARA SCHUMANN (1819–1896)

Three Romances, op. 22 (1853); arr. for oboe



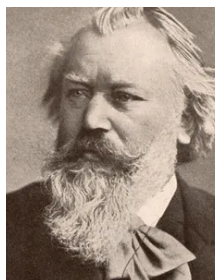
Virtuoso performers in the nineteenth century were expected to write works that showcased their abilities, and thus we can still experience a bit of their artistry, even though most of the biggest Romantic "stars"—Paganini, Liszt, and so forth—lived before the era of recordings. The prodigy Clara Wieck was no exception; in the 182 concerts she gave before her marriage, nearly every performance featured a work she had written. Thus, her father (a celebrated

piano instructor) was strongly opposed to Clara's suitor Robert Schumann, since Herr Weick feared marriage would undercut Clara's career. Still, after a successful lawsuit, the young couple were wed in 1840.

In the subsequent years, Clara devoted herself to performing her husband's music (and raising their seven surviving children); her composing was limited to times when it would not disturb her high-strung husband. In 1853, however, they moved to a larger house, where she could write at any time. A sudden flowering of new pieces emerged, including the three opus 22 Romances. Sending them to their dedicatee Joseph Joachim, she declared, "You can be truly pleased with what is coming!" Although written for violin and piano, their flowing lyricism also suits the oboe very well.

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1896)

Piano Quartet No. 2 in A major, op. 26 (1861)



Johannes Brahms never married. That does not mean that he never *loved*, however. Many historians are persuaded that Brahms harbored more than platonic affection for his dear friend Clara Schumann, while his amorous pursuit of (and rejection by) Agathe von Seibold is well documented.

Understandably, listeners routinely search for signs of his emotions in his works from the years of thwarted romance, such as his Piano

Quartet No. 2 in A major, op. 26. Brahms's good friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim, declared early on that the quartet's slow movement was filled with "veiled passion."

No matter what inspired Brahms, he approached the quartet with energy, creating the longest chamber piece he would ever write. In the opening movement, he repeatedly regroups the performers: is this a piano sonata? Is it a string trio? After this antiphonal start, the four performers quickly come together to play in a beautifully balanced partnership that seems almost orchestral at times. The *Poco adagio* is rhapsodic, with the players embellishing each other's motifs in varied ways. The *Scherzo* is intense and muscular, while the energetic *Finale* reflects Brahms's fondness for Hungarian rhythms, and then concludes the quartet as if it all had been a light-hearted romp.