

Eric High, Trombone Gail Novak, Piano

Katzin Concert Hall
Guest Artists Concert Series
Monday, November 24, 2008 | 7:30PM

Program

Sonata for Bass Trombone and Piano

David Gillingham

Allegro

(b. 1947)

Lento misterioso

Alla fugue

Sonatina

Halsey Stevens

Moderato con moto

(1908-1989)

Andante affetuoso

Allegro

* Intermission *

Concerto

Robert A. Spillman

Allegro

(b. 1936)

Vivace

Andante

Concert Allegro

Alexey Lebedev

(1924-1993)

Sofa No. 1

Frank Zappa

(1940-1993)

trans. and arr. Eric High

(1940-1993)

Assisted by Jason Malloy, Matthew Lennex, Charles Hopkins, trombones
Matthew Coleman, drums



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Program Notes:

Sonata for Bass Trombone and Piano – David Gillingham

From the composer:

The Sonata for Bass Trombone and Piano was written for my good friend and colleague, Curtis Olson, Professor of Trombone at Michigan State University. The musical language of the sonata results as a collaboration between the bass trombone and the piano. Cast in three movements, the first movement is organized in sonata-allegro form. The two themes contrast one another, with the first being very dramatic with wide leaps over an incessant pattern of sixteenth octaves in the piano and the second being more lyrical and diatonic, using the octatonic scale as a resource for melody and harmony. Following an extensive and thorough development, a recapitulation of the 1st theme occurs in augmentation ensued by the second theme remaining at the tonic level and a ‘barn burning’ coda. The second movement is a set of four variations set to a dark and mysterious theme crafted out of chromatic mediant relationships. This movement has become a favorite of bass trombonists because of its expressive and mesmerizing quality. The third movement is marked ‘*ala fugue*’ and alternates between a syncopated theme treated fugally and a dramatic and lyrical second theme in a homophonic texture. A sort of rondo-like structure develops by the simple alternation of these themes with the first theme being developed each time taking on the appearance of an episode. The movement has a frivolous and yet celebratory ambiance as it progresses from d-minor tonality to the joyous parappel of D major at its conclusion.

Sonatina for Trombone (or bass tuba) and Piano – Halsey Stevens

From www.halseystevens.com:

The Sonatina for Trombone (or bass tuba) and Piano was written for Dan Waldrop in 1960 while Mr. Stevens was on the faculty of the University of Southern California. Along with his many works for solo instruments, Mr. Stevens composed for orchestra, various chamber groups, keyboard, and chorus, receiving numerous commissions and two Guggenheim Fellowships (1964-65, 1971-72). In addition to his composing, Mr. Stevens was an internationally respected musicologist and authored the definitive and monumental work *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók*. He passed away in 1989 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

Concerto for Bass Trombone – Robert A. Spillman

From Blair Bollinger’s *Fancy Free*:

Written while the composer was on the faculty of the Eastman School of Music, Robert Spillman’s Concerto is a standard in the repertoire for the bass trombone. With an American style, its open intervals and widely spaced chords follow in the traditions of Aaron Copland and Howard Hanson. Currently teaching at the University of Colorado - Boulder, Mr. Spillman is an accomplished accompanist as well as a composer.

Concerto Allegro – Alexey Lebedev

From Randall Hawes’s *Melodrama*:

Born to a father who was a surgeon and a mother who was a math teacher, Alexey Konstantinovich Lebedev joined the army after his graduation in 1942. He was wounded, hospitalized and returned home to play tuba in a Moscow military band. He then studied tuba and composition at the Ippolotov-Ivanov Musical College and Moscow State Conservatory. He went on to be the solo tubist with the State Academic Bolshoi Theater and to teach at the Moscow State Conservatory from 1950 until his death in 1993. In addition to composing over sixty songs and pieces for brass chamber music for brass, Lebedev wrote two concertos for tuba: *Concerto in One Movement* (1947) and *Concerto No. 2* (1986) as well as the *Concert Allegro* (1949).

Sofa No. 1 – Frank Zappa

A well known tune to Frank Zappa fans everywhere, *Sofa* was frequently performed during live shows. Since Zappa’s instrumentation would differ greatly from album to album and tour to tour, there are no fewer than six different recorded versions: *Sofa* from the live recording *Zappa in New York*, *Sofa #1* from *The Best Band You Never Heard in Your Life*,



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You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore, Vol. 1, and One Size Fits All (the one that was transcribed here), and Sofa #2 from One Size Fits All and You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore, Vol. 1. Performed either as an instrumental or sung (often in German), the version of Sofa #1 from You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore, Vol. 1 is preceded by the singer Marc Volman trying to convince the audience "that he was nothing more, nothing less than a fat maroon sofa".

Biography

Dr. Eric High has been assistant professor of music at St. Norbert College since 2005. He conducts the Instrumental Jazz Ensemble and the Concert Band as well as smaller brass chamber ensembles. In addition to the various performing ensembles, Eric also teaches Low Brass, Comprehensive Musicianship, Low Brass Methods, and Evolution of Jazz. Prior to his appointment at St. Norbert, Eric taught public school in Gilbert, Arizona for five years.

Eric graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Superior with a Bachelor of Music degree and moved to Phoenix, AZ to attend graduate school at Arizona State University where he received his Master of Music degree in 2000 and his Doctorate of Music in 2006.

An active performer, Dr. High has given recitals in Minnesota, Arizona, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. While living in Arizona, he played with the Arizona Opera, the Salt River Brass Band, and the Southwest Brass, and the Pine Mountain Music Festival. Since moving to Wisconsin, Eric has performed with the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, the Fox Valley Symphony, and Aretha Franklin. Finally, for the past five summers, he has performed on bass trombone with the Bear Valley Music Festival Orchestra in Bear Valley, CA



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