

WIGMORE HALL

Friday 19 April 2024
1.00pm

Peter Moore trombone
Zeynep Özsuca piano

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

Parable XVIII for solo trombone Op. 133 (1975)

Zygmunt Stojowski (1870-1946)

Fantaisie for trombone and piano Op. 27 (1905)

Anon

Romance for trombone and piano
attributed to Carl Maria von Weber

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Pulcinella suite from the ballet *edited by Jonathan Freeman-Attwood & Daniel-Ben Pienaar*
I. Sinfonia • II. Serenata •
III. Scherzino – Allegretto – Andantino •
IV. Tarantella • V. Toccata • VI. Gavotta •
VII. Vivo • VIII. Menuetto – Finale

Eric Cook (1916-1985)

Bolivar (1954)

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Someone To Watch Over Me from *Oh, Kay!* (1926)
arranged by Joseph Turrin



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Familiar to generations of music students as the author of a comprehensive textbook on harmony in the first half of the 20th Century, **Vincent Persichetti** cultivated a remarkably expansive range of expression in his equally expansive catalogue of compositions. His *Parables*, 25 pieces created between 1965 and 1986, amount to a series of captivating snapshots of material largely drawn from earlier works to be developed in fresh ways. He described them as 'non-programmatic musical essays about a single germinal idea', a definition ideally suited to *Parable XVIII* for solo trombone. The expressive nature of Persichetti's writing courses through the repeated notes and sighing phrase endings that mark the work's opening, growing in intensity with periodic diversions into the instrument's upper register. The music's plaintive qualities, coloured by the use of a cup mute, give way to a more agile un-muted central section driven by choppy rhythmic riffs, death-defying leaps and lip trills, the acrobatics of which eventually yield to a lyrical return of material from the work's beginning.

Zygmunt Stojowski, born near the city of Kielce in the Russian partition of Poland, studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Delibes and also received lessons from Paderewski, Saint-Saëns and Massenet. He toured extensively as a concert pianist and eventually settled in New York, where he consolidated his reputation as a fine composer and highly skilled teacher. The *Fantaisie* for trombone and piano, a tremendous advertisement for Stojowski's fecund melodic invention and compositional mastery, was written in 1905 for the Paris Conservatoire as a *morceau de concours* or set piece for the institution's annual final examination. The first prize-winning performance was given that year by Joannès Rochut, who later became principal trombone of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the invitation of its conductor, Serge Koussevitzky. While the piece tests the fluency and precision of the trombonist's slide technique, especially so with its initial fanfare figures and rapid ascending chromatic scale, it chiefly requires the player to produce an expressive, legato singing style.

Despite strong evidence that Carl Maria von Weber had nothing to do with its composition, the **Anonymous** *Romance* for trombone and piano continues to appear under his name on examination lists and in publishers' catalogues. The lowest notes in the solo part fall below those available to the trombones of Weber's day, adding strength to the argument that the piece was conceived for bassoon or perhaps even euphonium, an instrument not invented until the early 1840s, almost two decades after Weber's death. Whatever its provenance, the *Romance* amounts to a glorious romantic aria for trombone. Its melancholy piano introduction sets the scene for a lyrical main theme, complete with ear-catching melodic ornaments, giant leaps across the trombone's range and quicksilver changes of expression and mood. The work's establishing theme, interspersed with brief piano transitions, is repeated with subtle variations and in a different key, creating a sense of departure and return. The piece ends with a short coda marked by haunting repeated

cadences that drop down the trombone's register to rest on a low C.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood and **Daniel-Ben Pienaar** have grown the repertoire for trumpet and piano with their shared arrangements of everything from miniatures by the English virginalists – Byrd, Gibbons and Tomkins among them – to sonatas by Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn. Their beguiling transcription for trombone and piano of eight movements from **Stravinsky's** *Pulcinella* suite stands at the heart of Peter Moore's lunchtime recital. In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, hard-edged modernist music felt at odds with the exuberant mood and carefree spirit of the Roaring Twenties. Stravinsky was among those who turned to the past for models of a new music, supposedly objective and free from emotional excess. His ballet *Pulcinella*, first staged in Paris by the *Ballets Russes* in 1920, evoked the joie de vivre of the 18th-century *commedia dell'arte* with help from melodies then attributed to the famous Neapolitan composer Pergolesi (but now known to be the work of, among others, Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer and Domenico Gallo). Stravinsky himself set the precedent for *Pulcinella* spin-offs by arranging select movements for various solo instruments and piano.

It is easy to appreciate why **Eric Cook's** *Bolivar*, with its catchy Latin rhythms, bold sonorities and debonair solo lines, has become a favourite trombone showpiece. The piece was created in the early 1950s for soloist and concert band and is performed today in the composer's punchy arrangement for trombone and piano. Cook learned his craft while playing piano with military dance bands during the Second World War; after moving from his native England to Australia in 1964, he took charge of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Showband and wrote soundtracks for popular television shows. *Bolivar* weaves seductive lip trills into its main theme and dramatic solo cadenza. Cook's composition channels the spirit of the great Venezuelan military and political leader Simón Bolívar, a daring fighter against Spanish colonialism and determined opponent of the slave trade.

Joseph Turrin, a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music, numbers a concerto and sonatina for trombone in his long list of compositions. His arrangement of 'Someone To Watch Over Me' started life in 1998 as one of 2 *Gershwin Portraits* commissioned by the New York Philharmonic Society for trumpeters Wynton Marsalis and Philip Smith, and was first performed by them with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Kurt Masur in New York's Central Park. He subsequently made a version for trumpet or flugelhorn and piano, which translates with ease to trombone. 'Someone To Watch Over Me' proved the standout hit from **George Gershwin's** 1926 Broadway musical *Oh, Kay!*, thanks not least to the English actress Gertrude Lawrence's tender delivery of it to a rag doll found by the song's composer in a Philadelphia toy shop.

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