

Quatuor de Trombones de Louisiane

Program Notes by Jackson Harmeyer

Our program this afternoon opens with a triumphal selection from *The Creation*, the famed oratorio **Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)** composed towards the end of his career. Inspired during his visit to London by the oratorios of George Frideric



Joseph Haydn

Handel and especially their performance at the Handel Festival at Westminster Abbey, Haydn returned to Vienna ready to compose his own great oratorio. Haydn's

patron Baron Gottfried van Swieten enthusiastically accepted the offer to write the text, having previously fostered in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart an interest in Handel's music. The oratorio, composed between 1796 and 1798 and first

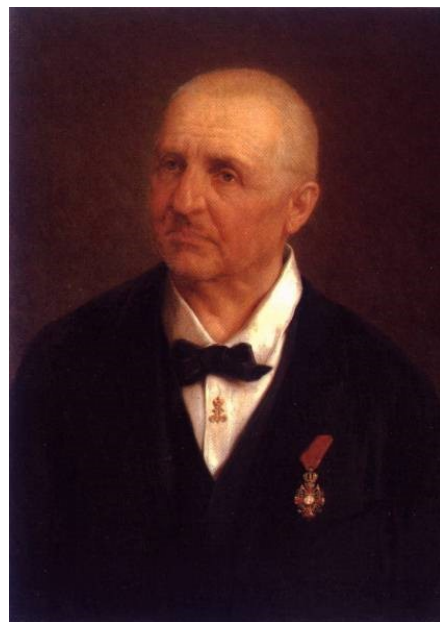
premiered in Vienna on March 19, 1799, tells the story of God's creation of the world as modelled after both *Genesis* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The selection heard this afternoon "Achieved is the Glorious Work" concludes Part II of *The Creation* and finds the chorus celebrating the universe's completion. This arrangement by Donald G. Miller has become a popular choice on recitals for trombone quartet.

The trombonist and composer **Patrick McCarty (born 1928)** has served as librarian to the American Composers Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Opera Orchestra of New York. He has also been a copyist for noted American composers Lukas Foss and Elie Siegmeister. Before relocating to New York in 1982, McCarty performed with theatre orchestras in Cleveland where he accompanied such popular icons as Tony Bennett, Burt Bacharach, and Henry Mancini of *Pink Panther* fame. His *Recitative and Fugue* for trombone quartet dates from 1960.

The Polish composer **Kazimierz Serocki (1922-1981)** was one of the co-founders of the Warsaw Autumn Festival of Contemporary Music which from its inception in 1956 became one of the leading centers of discourse for the composers of Poland's emerging avant-garde. Serocki composed his Suite for trombone quartet in 1953 before, however, he had fully embraced the musical language of the avant-garde. At the time, his chief influences were instead Polish folksong and the Stravinsky-inspired Neo-Classicism he would have picked up in Paris as a student of Nadia

Boulanger. The Suite is in seven brief movements of which five are played this afternoon. Each movement assumes the character of a short form, most Baroque or earlier in origin. The first movement is called *Intrada* after the opening procession in a mass or another musical ceremony. The *Interludium* which follows is fast-paced and playful. This movement is also notable for its call-and-response echo effects which are further expounded in the *Intermezzo*. The *Arietta* is slow and lyrical, letting soloists bask in beauty for long stretches. The *Toccatina* which concludes the suite is a miniature fanfare. As it is similar in mood to the *Intrada* which opened the Suite, the *Toccatina* brings a nice resolution to the composition.

The output of Austrian composer **Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)** seems peculiarly divided between that of a fierce symphonist dedicated to the music of Richard Wagner and that of an intensely spiritual man devoted to the earliest music of Catholic worship. In the cosmopolitan Vienna was his post as professor of harmony and counterpoint, and near Linz was his spiritual home at the Augustinian monastery of St.



Anton Bruckner

Florian. Aside from largescale masses and requiems, Bruckner also wrote smaller motets which set sacred Latin texts for unaccompanied voices. *Christus factus est (Christ became obedient; 1884)* is one such work with its text drawn from St. Paul's *Epistle to the Philippians*. In its arrangement by Elwood Williams for four trombones, this *graduale* reclaims its Wagnerian lineage while still displaying Bruckner's intensely religious side.

The French composer **Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)** contributed many works to the chamber and instrumental repertoires, writing fluently and sensitively for many wind instruments including the trombone. A piece like *New Orleans* for bass trombone and piano, for example, is often asked of trombone students giving auditions, whereas other works are more frequently played by faculty during recitals. Bozza composed his *Trois Pièces* for trombone quartet in



Thelonious Monk

1964 by which time he had left Paris to become director of the *École Nationale de Musique* in Valenciennes near the Belgian border. The first piece has the character of a not entirely stable fanfare. The slow second piece is the darkest of the three,

possessing a lonely almost monastic sound. The brief third piece is full of humor as the instruments hurry through an enthusiastic motive and, in their haste, nearly lose control on several occasions. Having reached artistic maturity between the wars, *Bozza* displays in his music the characteristic wit and eclecticism of Neo-Classicism even at this later stage in his career.

This afternoon's program ends with arrangements of two pieces well-known in the popular sphere. The first is the jazz standard *'Round Midnight* composed in 1944 by **Thelonious Monk (1917-1982)** with further embellishments coming from Cootie Williams and lyrics added by Bernie Hanighen. The arrangement for trombone quartet played this afternoon was created by the jazz trombonist and composer Slide Hampton. The lonely atmosphere and desperate chromaticism of *'Round Midnight* has inspired jazz artists and classical composers alike from Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock to Milton Babbitt and George Crumb. *Pleasant Moments* by **Scott Joplin (c.1868-1917)** concludes our program on a lighter note. Joplin wrote this piece in 1909 during the first, quite happy years of his marriage to Lottie Stokes when the newlyweds were managing a successful boarding house in New York City. With this business as financial security, Joplin had more freedom than ever to compose and teach piano. Joplin calls the piece a "ragtime waltz," and sets it in

the triple meter of the classic Viennese waltzes. Its relaxed tempo greatly contributes to the pleasant atmosphere. The arrangement heard this afternoon for trombone quartet is by Ralph Sauer, retired principal trombone of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

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About Jackson. Jackson Harmeyer is a composer, music scholar, and advocate of music. Jackson graduated *summa cum laude* from the Louisiana Scholars' College located in Natchitoches, Louisiana in May 2013 after completing his undergraduate thesis "Learning from the Past: The Influence of Johann Sebastian Bach upon the Soviet Composers." As series director of the successful Abendmusik Alexandria chamber music series from May 2014 to April 2016, Jackson played a vital role in the renewal of interest in chamber music across Central Louisiana. This interest has encouraged the creation of the annual Sugarmill Music Festival and the new series *Nachtmusik von BrainSurge*, both of which Jackson will remain active in as concert annotator and creative consultant. Jackson has in fact written program notes for many of Central Louisiana's key music presenters, including the Rapides Symphony Orchestra, Arts Council of Central Louisiana, and Northwestern State University. He also blogs at MusicCentral where he shares concert experiences, gives listening recommendations, posts interviews with contemporary composers, and offers insights into his own compositions. Jackson has followed classical music around the world, including trips to Colorado's Aspen Music Festival and the BachFest Leipzig in Germany. As a composer, he has worked to integrate a modern vocabulary into established classical forms in ways that are not only innovative but also engaging to the general listener. His four-movement Suite for solo guitar, Op. 21 received its world premiere on November 5, 2015 and has also been aired on public radio. In fall 2016, Jackson will begin graduate studies at the University of Louisville with the ultimate goal of earning his doctorate in musicology.



Read additional program notes by Jackson at www.JacksonHarmeyer.com.