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PREVIEW
NOTES

Curtis Chamber Orchestra
Joel Smirnoff, conductor; Jeffrey Khaner, flute
Sunday, December 5 • 3:00 PM • Perelman Theater

Background

The Curtis Chamber Orchestra draws its members from the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and has performed under the batons of Christoph Eschenbach, James Levine and Wolfgang Sawallisch, among others. Conductor Joel Smirnoff is the former first violinist of the Juilliard Quartet and current president of the Cleveland Institute of Music. Flutist Jeffrey Khaner has been a Curtis faculty member since 1985 and Principal Flute of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 1990.

Program (all PCMS premieres)

Pulcinella

Igor Stravinsky

Born: June 17, 1882 in Orianenbaum, Russia

Died: April 6, 1971 in New York, NY

Composed: 1949

Duration: 23 minutes

This ballet based on the music of Pergolesi was an important turning point in Stravinsky's career, as it led him into the so-called "neo-classical" style which was to dominate his output for the next several decades. Unlike his earlier ballets, *Pulcinella* is relatively simple and sparse and sticks mostly to time signatures that had been used two centuries earlier. However, he managed to put his own stamp on it through his use of modern harmonies and occasional rhythmic modifications.

Ballade

Frank Martin

Born: September 15, 1890 in Geneva, Switzerland

Died: November 21, 1974 in Naardan, the Netherlands

Composed: 1939

Duration: 8 minutes

Over the course of his career Frank Martin produced a series of pieces he called Ballades, all one-movement works featuring a solo instrumental part. Martin originally composed this one as a compulsory piece for a flute competition. The particular challenge it poses for the performer is the negotiation of the composer's wide melodic leaps while retaining a lyrical, legato line.

Le Boeuf sur le Toit

Darius Milhaud

Born: September 4, 1892 in Aix-en-Provence, France

Died: June 22, 1974 in Geneva, Switzerland

Composed: 1919

Duration: 17 minutes

Milhaud named "The Bull on the Roof" after a Brazilian popular song and initially subtitled it "Cinéma-Symphonie," explaining that he hoped it might be used to accompany a Charlie Chaplin film. However, the poet Jean Cocteau immediately appropriated it for an absurdist stage production he conceived, set in a Prohibition-era American speakeasy and performed in slow motion by the Fretellini acrobats and clowns

Poem

Charles Tomlinson Griffes

Born: September 17, 1884 in Elmira, NY

Died: April 8, 1920 in New York, NY

Composed: 1918

Duration: 11 minutes

Completed a year before Griffes' death, *Poem* reveals Griffes' lingering interest in the Impressionist movement. Low murmuring in the strings, reminiscent of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, leads to an upwardly striving melody, and robust development by the orchestra leads to variations and extensions on the theme and then to a repeat of the opening idea and a husky final comment from the flute.