Sin City Winds
Jamie Leigh O'Neil, flute
Chris Fujiwara, oboe
Erin Vander Wyst, clarinet

Graduate Woodwind Trio
Lynn Tsai, flute
Jenny Iles Davis, clarinet
Ashlea Sheridan, bassoon
Jon Holloway, horn
Eric Fassbender, bassoon

PROGRAM

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)
trans. by Jones
Elliot Carter
(1908–2012)

Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914-17)
Prelude
Fugue
Menuet
Rigaudon
Eight Etudes and a Fantasy (1950)
Maestoso
Adagio possible
Vivace
Intensely
Fantasy, Tempo giusto

INTERMISSION

Walter Piston
(1899–1963)
Carl Nielsen
(1865–1931)

Three Pieces for flute, clarinet, and bassoon
Allegro scherzando
Lento
Allegro
Quintet, Op. 43 (1922)
Allegro ben Moderato
Menuet
Praeludium- Tema con variazione

Sin City Winds and Graduate Trio are coached by Jennifer Grim.

Sunday, November 24, 2013  7:30 p.m.
Dr. Arturo Rando-Grill Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Elliot Carter Eight Etudes and a Fantasy (1950)

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winning American composer Elliot Carter first showed an interest in music when the intrinsic insurance salesman-turned-composer Charles Ives appeared in the youthful Carter’s life; he sold insurance to Carter’s parents. At the age of fifteen, Carter was present at the New York premiere of Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring, an experience that would solidify the young composer’s future in music. Carter went on to study at several universities on the east coast, and with such influential composers as Walter Piston and Gustav Holst. He also spent several years in Paris under the tutelage of Nadia Boulanger, who was perhaps the most famous teacher of fellow American composer Aaron Copland. Carter’s only work for woodwind quartet, “Eight Etudes and a Fantasy,” arose from non-traditional circumstances. While teaching an orchestration class at Columbia University in 1949, Carter gave his students an assignment to write for a woodwind quartet. Thoroughly unsatisfied with the efforts of his pupils, Carter demonstrated, with a series of “etudes” the immense orchestration possibilities available to the composer using this instrumentation. These etudes, then, are not etudes for the instrumentalists, as is traditionally the case with works bearing that title; instead they are etudes, or studies, for Carter’s own composition students. Finally, as if to demonstrate even more possibilities to his students, he composed the “Fantasy,” which cleverly combines the etudes as episodes of a fugue.

Walter Piston Three Pieces for Flute, Clarinet, and Bassoon (1925)

American composer, Walter Piston, wrote Three Pieces for Flute, Clarinet, and Bassoon in 1925 while studying composition with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Of the trio combinations possible from the wind quintet, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon have been the most commonly utilized. Piston deviated from this course by introducing the flute in place of the oboe. This results in an expression of range and agility, as well as a different yet compatible timbre. Piston’s Trio represents one of his earlier works and is also one of the first works using this combination for the chamber music repertoire. The first and third pieces are marked by vigorous activity accompanied by ostinato rhythmic figures, while the second piece has a nostalgic quality with closely and widely spaced sonorities. Following completion of this Trio, in 1926 Piston returned from Paris and joined the Harvard faculty until his eventual retirement in 1960. Over the course of nearly four decades at Harvard, he mentored a number of prominent composers who would go on to become leaders in American music composition, including Leonard Bernstein and Elliott Carter.

Carl Nielsen Wind Quintet, Op. 43 (1922)

Danish composer Carl August Nielsen (1865-1931) is perhaps best known for his six symphonies. One of twelve children and the son of a poor housepainter, Nielsen studied violin and composition at the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen. He penned three concertos, one each for violin, flute and clarinet. The flute and clarinet concertos, written late in Nielsen’s life, were written for members of the Copenhagen Woodwind Quintet for which Nielsen also composed his Wind Quintet of 1922. After using the Wind Quintet as a vehicle to explore the personalities of each member of the group in a chamber music setting, Nielsen decided to continue writing for his friends by composing a concerto for each instrument. Unfortunately, he died in 1931 having written only two of the five intended works. The Wind Quintet is a true “tour de force” for every member of the quintet, and has become a part of the standard quintet repertoire. Nielsen is not afraid to stretch the technique of every player, and requires the players to be virtuosic and flexible. The oboist, for example, must double on the English horn, and the bassoonist must use an extension (a tube placed in the top of the instrument) near the end of the work to achieve a note outside of the instrument’s normal range. This work was, in every sense, written for a group of five friends. Not only does each instrument have several distinct moments in the spotlight; the personality of each instrument and that of it’s performing member of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet shines through quite clearly. Nielsen’s most known commentary on the work a short, yet poignant comment: “The composer has here attempted to present the characteristics of the various instruments. Now they seem to interrupt one another and now they sound alone. The theme for these variations is the tune of one of Carl Nielsen’s spiritual songs, which is here made the basis of a number of variations, now gay and grotesque, now elegiac and solemn, ending with the theme itself, simply and gently expressed.”