Department of MUSIC
College of Fine Arts

presents a

Doctoral Recital
Clinton L. Williams, conductor

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 103
   Allegro
   Andante
   Menuetto, Trio
   Finale (Presto)

Chris Fujiwara, oboe
Alexandra Gilroy, oboe
Kim Kehau Chai II, bassoon
Brock Norred, bassoon

INTERMISSION

Jean Françaix (1912–1997)

Octuor
   Moderato, Allegrissimo
   Scherzo
   Andante
   Mouvement de valse

Tallyn Wesner, clarinet
Brian Marsh, bassoon
Fred Stone, horn
James Harvey, violin

Dmytro Nehrych, violin
David Chavez, viola
Anthony Rodriguez, cello
Christopher Davis, double bass

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts in Applied Music.

Clinton L. Williams is a student of Thomas G. Leslie.

Wednesday, April 17, 2013  2:30 p.m.  Room 160
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Ludwig van Beethoven, *Wind Octet in E-flat Major, op. 103*

In 18th-century Vienna and the provinces it ruled, not many noblemen were wealthy enough to support a full-scale orchestra, but many of them maintained small cadres of wind performers to play at dinnertime and at whatever festivities might be planned for the rest of the evening, plus occasional events like weddings, graduation parties, and the like. The basic ensemble of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns—two each—could be augmented by extra horns, basset-horns (clarinet cousins), or a double-bass. The general term for such groups, and the music composed or arranged for them, was Harmoniemusik, and virtually every composer of the day contributed to the genre. The titles of the pieces varied, but whether called Divertimento, Serenade, Cassation, or Parthia, their intent was the same: to produce light, enjoyable music for pure entertainment. In those days before broadcasting, CDs, and the internet, Harmoniemusik also became a vehicle to popularize melodies from operas, tunefully transcribed for this readily accessible medium.

The Opus 103 Wind Octet and its companion Rondino both date from his Bonn years; the Octet certainly, and the Rondino probably, were performed in 1792 by the musicians employed by Maximilian Franz. He took the pieces with him to Vienna, but he didn’t think them worth publishing. (The high opus number of the Octet is accounted for by the fact that it wasn’t published till much later.) Though he didn’t make it public in its original form, he thought highly enough of the music itself to transform it into a string quintet (Op. 4). Over the course of four relatively short movements, he lays out a symphony in miniature.

The opening Allegro is in sonata form, with two main themes contrasted not so much by melodic shape—they’re quite similar—as by key and instrumentation. The first (E-Flat) theme is given to the oboe, and the second is stated by bassoon and clarinet in B-Flat, the dominant key of E-Flat and a somewhat brighter-sounding one. A new motive is presented by the clarinet during the short but intricately-worked development section. In the recapitulation, all the instruments participate in the themes’ restatement and reunification. The Andante, in B-Flat, is a “song form” movement, two similar passages framing a contrasting one. This particular instrumental song could more properly be called a duet, since the principal theme is a dialogue between oboe and bassoon. In traditional 18th-century fashion, the Octet’s third movement is labeled a Minuet, but this one should really count as one of Beethoven’s first Scherzos: both humorous and intense, it is full of dynamic contrasts and complex figurations. The Presto finale is in a similar mood and moves even faster, with constant variations on the main fanfare-like theme, and a coda that gives a special voice to the horns. Program Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux (accessed April 5, 2013).

Jean François, *Octuor*

Jean François was born in 1912 in Le Mans, into a prominent musical family. His father was a composer, pianist, historian and director of the local conservatory, and his mother a teacher of singing. Jean started composing at age six and his early music caught the attention of a publisher who brought the boy to that fount of musical wisdom, the supreme pedagogue and encourager of major talent, Nadia Boulanger. He studied as well with the pianist Isidor Philipp at the Paris Conservatory. At the 1936 Baden-Baden Chamber Music Festival, the critic-musicologist Heinrich Strobel, more commonly identified with the avant-garde during his long career, wrote of the occasion: “It was a triumph unusual in such a meeting of specialists. After so much problematic music... this Concertino [with the young composer as piano soloist] was like fresh water which springs out of the source with gracious spontaneity, and at the same time, as the creation of an intelligent artist who possesses lucidity and consciousness, which are rare nowadays.”

The octet begins with a slow introduction that leads into a frisky theme passed, basketball-like, among the winds, becoming fast (ultimately achieving an allegrissimo marking), with pizzicato strings, and sounding for all the world like accompaniment music to a WB cartoon. The delicately-scored scherzo opens with a clarinet theme, then one for horn—every part is scored for a virtuoso player—both developed, in sequence, by bassoon and strings, strings alone, clarinet and strings, and so on, with plenty of lively counterpoint before the slower coda, marked “reminiscenza,” arrives. The andante slow movement, in essence a lullaby, is a superb example of the composer’s gift for the memorably simple tune—and which, like many a lullaby, also suggests a slight feeling of menace, or at least uncertainty. The finale begins with a portentous call to attention: utterly serious (utterly mock-serious?), before sliding into a delicious waltz. Easy for us oldtimers to picture Wondrous Willi swinging and swaying to its blithe measures, with his equally mobile clarinet (and Vienna Octet) partner, brother Alfred Boskovsky, swaying right along. À huit, following a La Valse-like (after Ravel, another Français favorite) set of discords and some more cartoon-character scurrying, concludes with a compressed version of the “portentous” opening of this final movement. Program notes by Herbert Glass (accessed April 5, 2013).