Kirchner: Lamento d’Orfeo (1986)

David Volkner Kirchner is a German-born composer who spent the former half of his musical career as a concert violist. His compositional style pays homage to the German late-romantic era whilst exploring new techniques and ideas: a style that is quite prominent in this piece. *Lamento d’Orfeo* is the first movement of a set of three entitled *Tre Poemi*. *Tre Poemi* is derived from a song cycle for horn, piano and baritone, which is a setting of Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Sonette an Orpheus*. Kirchner expresses Orpheus’ anguish through a wide range of extended technique in the horn and its relationship with the piano. The horn alternates between stages of desperate cries that are reduced to faint whispers while playing into the body of the piano, distorting the resonance of both instruments. To exemplify Kirchner even further, I have chosen to perform this piece with a sanitary cover over my bell in hopes of creating a sound that has not yet been produced on the horn.

Plagge: A Litany for the 21st Century

*Libra nos, Domine.* Wolfgang Plagge chose this chant to express his despondency on contemplating the building of the Berlin Wall. *A Litany for the 21st Century* is the first of four sonatas that Plagge composed for horn. It is one of his first works that includes chant. Plagge studied composition with Lyetiti and Schnitke at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, Germany. While his music is deeply influenced by his teachers, as well as prominent 20th Century composers such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev, it is equally guided by tradition. This is especially evident within this sonata. In the first movement, all of the melodic material is based on [013] and transpositions of this trichord. However, The use of a clear sonata structure in the first movement as well as inclusion of chant in the second movement demonstrates his connection with traditional forms. When asked about these influences, Plagge stated, “...chant has a specific way of dealing with matter. It is extremely quiet and also extremely intense. So, you have those two very strange and opposite values.” Plagge’s innovative writing prompted Frøydis Ree Wekre to commission *A Litany for the 21st Century* in 1989, which was the beginning of a long-standing collaboration.

Wilder: Sonata No.1 for Horn and Piano

Once upon an autumn day, while I pondered, eager and gay,
Over many a quaint and curious volumes of music for horn —
As I searched, deeply sighing, my computer screen I was eyeing
I came across something worth buying, buying from an online store.
“Tis David Jolly,” I muttered, “I’m eyeing on this online store—
Alec Wilder, Sonata for horn.”
Ah, distinctly I remember twas a sunny, Texas November
Within two days, for I was a member, I received my CD for horn
   Eagerly I wished to play, new music that I was given that day
   And inserted it in such a way — a way that I would mourn —
For it got stuck in my car radio, which with it I chose to adorn
   Stuck here for evermore

   Now the CD, never swaying, still is playing, still is playing
inside my car thrust in like a thorn.
   And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming
   And the image of him still gleaming sits upon my car floor
Tis David Jolly’s picture resting on my car floor.
“Alec Wilder, Sonata for horn.”

That was Help me I can’t get this CD out of my car
A poetic parody of The Raven
by Spencer Bay

**Schumann: Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70**

The year 1849 saw Schumann turn his focus to wind instrumental music. In an intense week in February, he composed both the Fantasiestücke for Clarinet and Piano and then the Adagio and Allegro for Horn and Piano. Adagio and Allegro embodies Schumann’s two-sided emotional nature, beginning with a deeply introspective Adagio and followed by a fiery and passionate Allegro. This piece was designed to showcase the virtuosic capabilities of the valved horn, a new instrument that had been struggling to replace its predecessor, the natural horn. Unlike other romantic composers, Schumann capitalized on the newly found capabilities of the horn in order to write an extraordinary and virtuosic piece. I decided to conclude my recital with Adagio and Allegro in hopes of reflecting Schumann’s optimism for the valved horn towards the upcoming year. As the former half was a lament for the events of the pandemic, hopefully the latter half brought a much needed breath of fresh air.