

University of Missouri School of Music  
Bachelor of Music Clarinet Performance, Senior Recital • 2022-2023 Series

**Mitchell Sidden, clarinet**  
**featuring**  
**Dr. Rachel AuBuchon, piano**

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 • 12:30 PM • Sinquefield Music Center • Sheryl Crow Hall

**Program**

**Concerto No. 3 in Bb Major.....Carl Philipp Stamitz**  
(1745-1801)

Allegro moderato  
Romanze  
Rondo

**Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo (1919).....Igor Stravinsky**  
(1882-1971)

I.  
II.  
III.

*Brief Intermission*

**Concerto for Clarinet, Op.57 (1928).....Carl Nielsen**  
(1865-1931)

*This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet performance. Mitchell Sidden is a student of Dr. Wesley Warnhoff.*

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## Program Notes

**Carl Philipp Stamitz** wrote this concerto as one of a collection of 11 clarinet concerti during the last 30 years of the 18th century. It is important to keep in mind that this timeframe is a rough estimate, as records are not clear with respect to Stamitz's output. There are even parts of the original manuscripts for certain concerti that have been lost and are simply inferred in modern publications. During this time, Stamitz was in collaboration with the clarinetist Johann Joseph Beer.

Born in 1745, Stamitz was among the first composers to write extensively for the clarinet, helping to make it a staple of the orchestra. The history of the clarinet is often foggy, as distinctions between predecessors to the clarinet and the modern clarinet are often disputed. Our modern clarinet coexisted for a time with a similar instrument called the chalumeau, before eventually assimilating and incorporating its range and sound to make what we would consider a modern clarinet. The first instrument referred to as a clarinet was invented by Johann Christoph Denner of Nuremberg sometime around the beginning of the 18th century. This instrument, pioneered by Denner, excelled in the upper range while its sibling the chalumeau excelled in the lower range. It is at the crossroads of these two instruments beginning to fuse that Stamitz began work as a composer.

These 11 concerti come from a rich classical tradition of improvisation. The manuscript itself is rather simple to play on a modern clarinet, however; this allows for the performer to showcase their artistry by ornamenting the melody as they see fit. This tradition has helped to make this piece a staple for the clarinet, as when done properly no two interpretations should be exactly alike.

**Igor Stravinsky** wrote this three-movement solo work in 1918, and it was premiered the following year by Edmond Allegra in 1919. *Three Pieces* was not written specifically for Allegra in the manner that the Nielsen or Stamitz concerti were for specific players. It is still important to note that Allegra had played the clarinet part in the premier for Stravinsky's *The Soldiers Tale* in the year prior, and this most certainly influenced the dedication.

Since its premiere, *Three Pieces* has marked itself as a staple work for the instrument, even going on to influence the structure of other works such as Hailstork's *Three Smiles for Tracey*, another prominent solo work for the instrument. A distinctive trait of Stravinsky's work is the dialogue within each of the three movements, as each movement is comprised of contrasting lines that follow one another. For example, one phrase may be meek in its sound, and the phrase following is bold or aggressive. This kind of contrasting nature can be applied to each of the three movements.

In the first movement of this work, the dialogue sees its characters juxtaposed by their volume. With one voice boldly rising to the front and another forced into a meek and quiet response. The second movement begins rather hectic, with one character rapidly darting across the range of the instrument before giving way. The final movement sees a switch from the more subdued and dark sound of the A clarinet to a brighter sound in the Bb clarinet. Within this movement the dialogue becomes much harder to discern, as the finale becomes dominated by an eclectic character pushing the energy higher and higher until the end.

**Carl Nielsen** composed his Concerto for Clarinet in 1928 intending it to be a part of a collection of five works written for each member of the Copenhagen quintet, which he resolved to write after being deeply moved by each member's musicianship. Tragically, Nielsen would only see three of these pieces completed, as he passed away soon after completing this work.

The piece itself darts rapidly between emotions, often compared to the man it was written for, Aagen Oxenvad. He struggled with bipolar disorder for much of his life. While this could certainly have been on

Nielsen's mind, Nielsen was also reflecting on his own life, writing in his diary around 1926: "My home soil pulls me more and more like a long sucking kiss. Does it mean that I shall finally return and rest in the earth of Funen? Then it must be in the place where I was born: Sortelung, Frydenlands parish." Nielsen wrote both the flute and clarinet concerti during this somber reflection, declaring in a 1925 article for Politiken: "If I could live my life again, I would chase any thoughts of Art out of my head and be apprenticed to a merchant or pursue some other useful trade the results of which could be visible in the end ... What use is it to me that the whole world acknowledges me, but hurries away and leaves me alone with my wares until everything breaks down and I discover to my disgrace that I have lived as a foolish dreamer and believed that the more I worked and exerted myself in my art, the better position I would achieve. No, it is no enviable fate to be an artist."

Rather than emphasizing the bipolar connection between the work and its premier performer, it's much more profound to understand the emotional weight Nielsen was working through while writing this piece. The mixing of emotions begins to sound much more like a man wrestling with his legacy rather than a commentary about the struggles of a man battling bipolar disorder.