

PROGRAM NOTES

Eternal Source of Light Divine (1713)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

George Frideric Handel was a celebrated Baroque composer born in Halle, Germany, in 1685. His career lasted over thirty years and spanned many different countries, becoming renowned for his innovative operas and oratorios. Handel's masterpiece, the oratorio *Messiah*, remains one of the most beloved works in classical music, showcasing his exceptional ability to blend dramatic storytelling with musical brilliance. Some other notable works of Handel's includes his opera seria *Giulio Cesare*, which was written for the Royal Academy of Music in 1724, and his *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, which he composed for King George II in celebration of the end of the War of Austrian Succession in 1749.

Eternal Source of Light Divine is a cantata written by Handel in 1713 not only to celebrate the Treaty of Utrecht that ended the War of Spanish Succession, but also to celebrate Queen Anne's birthday—hence its second name, *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*. This work, set to the libretto by Ambrose Phillips, was originally scored for three solo voices, choir, and chamber orchestra. While it is speculated whether or not Queen Anne actually heard this work performed due to personal matters, Handel still received a pension of 200 British pounds a year for the rest of his life. The original piece includes seven stanzas of text, each evoking the greatness of Queen Anne. However, there have been many different instrumentations and adaptations, such as this one for piccolo trumpet, solo soprano, and piano, which simplifies the texture while staying true to Handel's original work.

Sonata for Trumpet and Piano (1956)

Kent Kennan (1913-2003)

Kent Kennan was an American composer, music theorist, and educator whose work left an indelible mark on twentieth-century music. Inspired by the likes of Paul Hindemith and Aaron Copland, Kennan's deep engagement with both traditional techniques and modern innovations shaped his distinctive compositional voice. He wrote for many different genres during his career, spanning orchestral, chamber, and vocal, each noted for its clarity of structure, refined harmonic language, and innovative integration of counterpoint and modern dissonance. Beyond his creative achievements, Kennan was a passionate educator who co-authored the textbook *The Technique of Orchestration*, an important resource that has influenced generations of composers.

Kennan's *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* is a work that exemplifies his skillful fusion of classical form with mid-century harmonic innovations. Structured in three movements, the sonata opens with a vigorous sonata-allegro section in which the trumpet introduces bold, declarative motifs that are developed through a dynamic dialogue with the piano. Kennan's intricate counterpoint and subtle harmonic shifts create an atmosphere of tension and release, with subtle chromatic inflections that hint at more modernist influences while remaining rooted in Classical traditions. The second movement offers a lyrical, contemplative respite, allowing the trumpet's sustained phrases to soar over the piano's delicately interwoven textures. In the final movement, rapid-fire passages, rhythmic complexity, and sudden dynamic contrasts demand agility and attention, transforming the piece into an exhilarating technical and expressive challenge. Kennan's work has become a staple in the trumpet repertoire, being one of the most frequently performed sonatas for trumpet and piano.

The Caregiver (2019)

Clarice Assad (b. 1978)

Clarice Assad is a Brazilian composer, pianist, vocalist, and educator who is known for blending cultural musical traditions with contemporary classical, jazz, and other world music elements. Born and raised in Brazil, her use of indigenous rhythms and popular melodies laid the foundation for her distinctive compositional voice, intertwining traditional Brazilian folk influences with modern experimental techniques. Assad's compositions, ranging from chamber works to orchestral pieces, are celebrated for their intricate harmonic textures, dynamic rhythms, and lyrical expressiveness. In addition to her prolific output as a composer and performer, she has dedicated much of her career to education, inspiring a new generation of musicians through masterclasses, lectures, and collaborative projects around the globe.

Assad's *The Caregiver* is the second movement of the larger work *Pendulum*. Heavily contrasting from the syncopated rhythms of the first movement and the alternating duple and triple sections of the last movement, *Caregiver* is more mellow and lyrical, evoking the warmth and comfort of friendships and relationships with long, soaring melodic lines. Along with the repetitiveness of the melody, the work's constant modulation between tonic and dominant keys is not only smooth and pleasing to the ear but also serves as a metaphorical reminder of the constant that is the relationships we share with others.

Napoli (1908)

Hermann Bellstedt (1858-1926)

Hermann Bellstedt was a German-American composer who greatly contributed to brass literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Originally born in Bremen, Germany, he immigrated at the age of nine to Chicago, Illinois, where he gained a reputation as a virtuoso cornetist thanks to the encouragement of his father, who was also a cornetist. Bellstedt quickly became one of the most renowned cornetists of his time, gaining the nickname "Boy Wonder" as he performed with some of the most prestigious bands across the country, namely Patrick Gilmore's Band and the John Philip Sousa Band. While Bellstedt was mainly known as a performer, he also composed music for band, orchestra, violin, piano, and cornet.

Arguably Bellstedt's most notable work, *Napoli* is a cornet solo in theme-and-variations form, based on Luigi Denza's famous Italian folk song *Funiculì, Funiculà*. Bellstedt masterfully takes Denza's lively melody, introduced in the theme, and transforms it into a technical showcase of rapid articulations, wide intervallic leaps, and virtuosic ornamentation. In the two variations, Bellstedt wanted to showcase as many challenges as possible, including great agility, scalar runs, triple-tonguing technique, and lyrical embellishments—all to highlight the technical and musical skills of the soloist. Today, Bellstedt's *Napoli* is famous for being one of the most performed "show off" solos, earning its place as one of the essential works in the virtuoso cornet repertoire.