

2019

# Graduate recital in oboe

David Thompson  
*University of Northern Iowa*

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GRADUATE RECITAL IN OBOE

An Abstract  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Music in Oboe Performance

David Thompson  
University of Northern Iowa  
May 2019

This Study by: David Thompson

Entitled: A GRADUATE RECITAL IN OBOE

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music

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Date

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Dr. Heather Peyton, Chair, Thesis Committee

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Date

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Dr. Danny Galyen, Thesis Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Cayla Bellamy, Thesis Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: David Thompson

Entitled: A GRADUATE RECITAL IN OBOE

Date of Recital: March 1, 2019

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Music

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Date

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Dr. Heather Peyton, Chair, Recital Committee

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Date

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Dr. Danny Galyen, Recital Committee Member

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Dr. Cayla Bellamy, Recital Committee Member

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

## ABSTRACT

David Thompson presented a Graduate Oboe Recital on March 1, 2019 in Davis Hall of the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at the University of Northern Iowa. This recital was given in partial fulfillment of the Master of Music degree in Oboe Performance. Natia Shioshvili collaborated on piano for each of the pieces. The first piece on the program was Johann Sebastian Bach's *Sonata for Oboe and Piano in G Minor* BWV 1030b. The edition performed was by C.F. Peters, based on the publication by Raymond Meylan. The second piece performed was Franz Wilhelm Ferling's *Concertino Op. 5 for Oboe and Orchestra*. The edition presented was edited by Gunter Joppig and transcribed for piano by Josef S. Durek. Finally, Henri Dutilleux's *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* was performed, concluding the recital. The repertoire performed displayed the abilities appropriate for a graduate level performance through mastery of several musical styles from the Baroque era to the twentieth century; the ability to display virtuosity, technical skill, and lyricism; professionalism and maturity through collaboration; as well as consistent discipline in musical preparation and reed making.

### Johann Sebastian Bach: *Sonata for Oboe and Piano in G Minor*

Johann Sebastian Bach lived from 1685-1750. During his life, he was considered a virtuoso organist with a perfect balance of outstanding musicianship, supreme creativity, and technical mastery. He started his career composing music for churches in Weirmer, Arnstadt, and Mühlhausen. Later, he became the Kantor of Thomaskirche in Leipzig, while also leading the university's student ensemble, Collegium Musicum. In addition to the multitude of cantatas, concertos, and keyboard works that he wrote, he is well known for the *Brandenburg Concertos*, *Mass in B Minor*, *St. Matthew Passion*, and

the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Since the Bach Revival movement of the nineteenth century, Bach has become known as one of the greatest composers of all time.<sup>1</sup>

As modern scholars began to study Bach's works, questions about authenticity and composition dates emerged. Since virtually no original instrumental scores have survived, most modern performance editions have been reconstructed from secondary works, and some are simply autographed as 'Bach'. One of these questionable works includes his *Sonata in G Minor*. A score autographed as 'Bach' exists from 1736, but it is the flute *Sonata in B Minor*. The flute and oboe sonata are nearly identical. The transposition is the only major change. It is believed that the *Sonata in B Minor* was given to one of Bach's master flutists, Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin, as it is considered one of his greatest and most difficult works for flute. A copy of the harpsichord part also exists in G minor. This raises questions concerning whether or not the sonata was originally intended to be in B minor, or if it was even intended for the flute.<sup>2</sup> Musicologist Robert L. Marshall, author of "J.S. Bach's Compositions for Solo Flute: A Reconsideration of Their Authenticity and Chronology," suggests that since the vocal-like quality of the opening theme bears an uncanny resemblance to the opening chorus of his G major cantata *Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut BWV 117*, and the right-hand accompaniment bears striking resemblance to the obbligato cello line in the cantata, it is possible that the two were written around the same time. This would date the G minor version of the sonata

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Emery and Christoph Wolf, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *Grove Music Online* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) accessed February 13, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.6002278195>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert L. Marshall, "J.S. Bach's Compositions for Solo Flute: A Reconsideration of Their Authenticity and Chronology," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 32, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 487.

around 1729-1731. It may have been rewritten to the more flute friendly key of B minor years later.<sup>3</sup>

The edition performed for this recital was reconstructed by Raymond Meylan from two sources: a copy of the harpsichord part in G minor and the autographed flute version in B minor.<sup>4</sup> The composition of this sonata is very different from earlier sonatas written by Bach. Flute scholar Kyle J. Dzapo, author of *Notes for Flutists: A Guide to the Repertoire*, indicates “While most Baroque flute sonatas include skeletal keyboard accompaniments—Bach, in the *Sonata in B Minor* composed a complete harpsichord part, engaging the two instruments (three lines) as equal partners in the contrapuntal texture.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the version of this sonata for oboe and piano in G minor is unique in the way that both instruments have an equal voices in the texture.

The first movement of the sonata bears no tempo indication or title. Dzapo states, “The first movement is an unusually lengthy and complex one in which Bach skillfully moves among three textures:

1. counterpoint among equally important voices engaged in different lines,
2. counterpoint among equally important voices imitation, and
3. melody with accompaniment.”<sup>6</sup>

The movement begins in G minor with rich counterpoint among all three voices, which is an example of the first type of texture. A newer, more ornate theme in measure 21 changes the texture to solo oboe and piano accompaniment, which is an example of

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<sup>3</sup> Marshall, 464-485.

<sup>4</sup> Raymond Meylan, preface to *Sonate G-Moll für Oboe (Flöte), Cembalo und Viola da gamba (ad lib.)* by J.S. Bach (New York: Edition Peters, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Kyle J. Dzapo, *Notes for Flutists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Dzapo's third type of texture. The opening theme in Dzapo's first type of texture returns in m. 33, a fifth lower. In m. 38, the right hand becomes the soloist with the left hand and oboe providing the accompaniment, once again returning to the third type of texture. Dzapo's second type of texture first arrives in m. 44, built on imitation and sequence between the voices. A full cadence in m. 58 is finally achieved, leading to a lighter, more dolce solo and accompaniment section, which is another example of Dzapo's third type of texture. Counterpoint returns in m. 63 with rapid changes in textures and keys until m. 87. The imitative texture then predominates until a major full cadence in m. 116.<sup>7</sup> In the final measures, themes from the entire movement are used until the movement cadences conclusively in G minor.

The second movement, titled "Siciliano," presents a more subdued, beautiful, and elegant character than the first movement. This song-like movement in B-flat major is full of rich harmonies and is in binary form. Dzapo suggests that the movement bears striking resemblance to the "Air" of *Bach's Third Orchestral Suite* as it is a "song without words."<sup>8</sup> Both halves of the movement are filled with syncopated repeated figures and elegant ornamentations. The second half moves to the dominant of F major, as is expected in binary form. The movement concludes by returning to the home key, cadencing on B-flat.

The final movement, marked "Presto," is presented in two parts: a fugue and a gigue. The movement begins with a forceful statement from the oboe that begins a fugue in three-part counterpoint. The subject of the fugue is eight measures long, beginning in

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<sup>7</sup> Dzapo, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

G minor, with the piano responding in D minor. In this section, the fugue statement undergoes modulations throughout several presentations before returning to G minor, with a dominant cadence in m. 83. The second half of the movement has the character of a gigue in binary form. The initial theme in m. 84 is repeated and sequenced throughout the gigue, traveling through G major and B minor. The sonata ends with a final presentation of the theme at the end of the gigue.<sup>9</sup> Dzapó dubs the sonata a “contrapuntal tour de force exemplifying once again the formidable skill of the great Baroque master.”<sup>10</sup> This “tour de force” of a sonata is an excellent selection for a graduate level recital. The technical mastery and lyrical sensitivity required, along with the endurance and creative approach to Baroque music, makes this a challenging work for a Master’s level student. Customizing a lighter reed with little resistance, and breaking in the reed over a few hours of playing is essential to achieve those requirements.

Franz Wilhelm Ferling: *Concertino Op. 5 for Oboe and Orchestra*

Franz Wilhelm Ferling was born in Halberstadt on September 20, 1796. Few records of his career exist, but documents in the museums and archives of Lower Saxony provide some insights into his life. From 1807-1813, Ferling served as a clarinetist in the court of Jérôme Bonaparte in Kassel, the seat of the Royal Court of Westphalia. It is presumed that Ferling was a student of the court’s oboist, Friedrich Remm, who also served as Mozart’s oboist. Ferling joined the Brunswick Court Orchestra in 1818 and was officially appointed as principal oboist on November 13, 1823. He held this position for

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<sup>9</sup> Dzapó, 20-23.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 23.

63 years until his official retirement on January 1, 1859. Ferling died in Brunswick on December 18, 1874.<sup>11</sup>

Ferling's *48 Etudes for Oboe Op. 31* is regarded by the oboe community as his most important and well-known work. This collection of etudes is also considered one of the most standard pedagogical tools for training oboists. John de Lancie, the former principal oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra and director of the Curtis Institute of Music, stated that Ferling's etude book, along with the studies by Apollon Marie Barret and Henri Brod, "contain the musical guidelines that have undoubtedly been a major factor in the development of oboists throughout the western world for the last 150 years."<sup>12</sup> Though Ferling's etude collection is well-known by oboists today, his other compositions, including the *Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra Op. 5*, have only recently been rediscovered in the late twentieth century. Performances of these works continue to bring life back into these pieces and inspire scholarship into the forgotten works of this time period. The skills acquired from studying Ferling's *48 Etudes for Oboe Op. 31* prepare oboists to understand and learn the skills required to perform his *Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra Op. 5*.

Ferling's *Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra Op. 5* displays many typical traits of a nineteenth century concerto. The *Concertino* is an example of the expansion and modification of eighteenth-century concerto form with the influence of nineteenth-century opera. The influences from opera that transformed the eighteenth-century

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<sup>11</sup> Gunther Jopping, preface to *Concertino Op. 5 for Oboe and Orchestra* by Franz Wilhelm Ferling (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1987).

<sup>12</sup> John de Lancie and Marilyn Zupnik, linear notes to *A Guide to Classic Oboe Etudes*, DLM Records, B002QMB10I, © 1998.

concerto into the nineteenth-century concerto include the incorporation of recitative and aria, a strive towards continuity that eliminates breaks between movements, and the influence of the bel canto style.<sup>13</sup>

There are three main movements to the concertino, though they are through composed. The first movement is “Allegro vivace,” from mm. 1-212. The movement follows the typical sonata-allegro form of the first movement of an eighteenth-century concerto, while incorporating operatic recitatives. The recitatives are clearly labeled in the score and are performed with rhythmic freedom by the oboist. These expected elements of opera were designed to showcase the expressive and technical abilities of the performer.<sup>14</sup> A few difficult aspects of this movement include collaborating with the pianist or orchestra through the very free recitatives, allowing the recitatives to flow in a musical manner, and precisely executing the ornamentations and articulations in a lyrical, bel canto style.

The first movement of the concertino blends seamlessly into the second movement, titled “Adagio” (mm. 213-293).<sup>15</sup> In order for the bel canto style to come through with the added ornamentations and flourishes, the music will be counted with a slow eighth note pulse of approximately 90 beats per minute. Some aspects of the bel canto style Ferling uses in this movement include melodies spun out in long, elegant, and breathless lines; smooth legato and evenness of tone throughout the entire register;

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<sup>13</sup> Heather Peyton, “From Pedagogy to Performance: Exploring the relationship between the 48 Studies for Oboe, Op. 31, and the Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra, Op. 5, by Franz Wilhelm Ferling.” (Michigan State University, Hart Recital Hall, April 9, 2012), 23.

<sup>14</sup> Peyton, 25.

<sup>15</sup> Franz Wilhelm Ferling, *Concertino Op. 5 for Oboe and Orchestra* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1987), 4-5.

virtuosity; the ability to effortlessly execute all manner of embellishments to decorate the vocal lines with the use of extravagant floritura; and a lighter yet penetrating sound in the upper register.<sup>16</sup> Specific examples of the bel canto style in the “Adagio” include the melodic flourish in m. 233, the wide range of the oboe used in m. 287, and ornamentations including trills, turns, grace notes, and fermatas throughout the movement. The main difficulties presented include allowing the lines to remain breathless and flowing, executing the ornamentations in a lyrical manner, and portraying the various changes in color and voicing.

The lyricism of the second movement is interrupted by the lively “Rondo, Allegro” movement (mm. 294-473). A brisk tempo, with the half note equaling 80 beats per minute, will allow the scalar passages and virtuosic lines to flourish. The movement is filled with technical lines to showcase the abilities of the performer. These lines use several technical patterns to display virtuosity, including major and minor scales, scales with upper and lower neighbors, chromatic scales, major and minor arpeggios, dominant seventh chords, and diminished seventh chords. These virtuosic passages are expected of a concerto, as well as in an opera in the bel canto style.<sup>17</sup> The performer is challenged to master all of the technical passages in order to allow the music to move at a brisk and seamless tempo, as well capture the virtuosity and musicality of the work. The length of the work, along with the seamless lines of the second movement and virtuosity in technique require a reed that is lighter, but the technical and musical demands of bel canto style require that the reed retains a dark tone and stable intonation.

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<sup>16</sup> Peyton, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 68-74.

## Henri Dutilleux: *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*

Henri Dutilleux was a French composer and pianist who lived from 1916-2013. He held important positions, including the Head of Music Production for Radio France, teaching positions at École Normale de Musique de Paris and Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, and Composer in Residence for Tanglewood. Dutilleux was extremely critical of his own music, dismissing all of his works before his piano sonata in 1947, and only publishing select works thereafter. Even after publication, he subjected his works to further revisions including added interludes, changes in titles, and minor adjustments throughout. How his scores looked was important to him, including the calligraphy and depiction of the music's shape within the score. Dutilleux's style, while distinct, resembles modern French music in its focus on timbre and modality. Some influences on his music include the impressionism of Debussy and Ravel, the works of Bartok and Stravinsky, as well as art, literature, and spirituality.<sup>18</sup>

The *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* (1947) was written as a *Solo de Concours* piece at the Paris Conservatory. These year-end competition pieces were meant to showcase the abilities and challenges specific to the oboe.<sup>19</sup> At this time, Dutilleux was seeking stylistic simplicity, as well as attempting to deepen harmonic structures.<sup>20</sup> When describing the sonata, James Harding, a well-known music writer, states that the work presents a “bewitching exercise in the play of light and shadow.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Caroline Potter, “Dutilleux, Henri,” *Grove Music Online* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) accessed January 30, 2019, <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.uni.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08428>.

<sup>19</sup> Maurice Bourgue, “SONATA FOR OBOE AND PIANO - H. Dutilleux,” *The Double Reed* 32, no. 2 (2009) 60.

<sup>20</sup> James Harding, linear notes to *Oboe Sonatas*, CD, Virgin Classics Limited, © 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Harding.

Dutilleux's play between light and dark can be heard throughout the sonata. The sonata begins with a movement titled "Aria." The tempo is marked *Grave* in the score, with the half note equaling fifty beats per minute.<sup>22</sup> The movement creates deep sense of intimacy, beauty, and tension within a soft, mysterious, and opaque atmosphere. It begins by depicting the darkness of the dawn.<sup>23</sup> Dutilleux showcases this mysterious darkness by scoring the piano in the lowest notes of its range, only indicating *pianissimo* and *piano* from the beginning until three measures before Rehearsal 2, as well as indicating *calme et unifrome* (calm and uniform) from the beginning. The brilliance of daylight begins to shine through three measures before Rehearsal 2 as a *crescendo poco a poco* is indicated. The oboe continues to rise through its range and a *sempre forte* is reached at Rehearsal 2. Measures are no longer indicated until the end of the movement as a freer and less metric portion of the movement has arrived. The oboe screams for several beats on an F6, while the piano pounds away with heavily accented, wide spread chords, spanning six octaves. After two cadenza-like passages, the music calms down again with the dynamics returning to *piano*.<sup>24</sup> The main technical difficulties of the movement for the performer come from the intervals that need to remain legato and in tune, the skill to express extreme dynamics, as well as the ability to portray the transition of colors throughout.<sup>25</sup>

The second movement continues without pause from the first and is titled "Scherzo." Its indicated performance tempo, quarter note equaling 144 beats per minute, emphasizes the bright and lively quality Dutilleux was after when he included the

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<sup>22</sup> Henri Dutilleux, *Sonate pour Hautbois et Piano* (Paris: Éditions Musicales Alphonse Leduc), 3.

<sup>23</sup> Bourgue, 60.

<sup>24</sup> Dutilleux, 3-5.

<sup>25</sup> Bourgue, 60.

marking *vif* in the score.<sup>26</sup> This movement of the sonata presents a disjointed dance, influenced by Bartok. It ends with the initial aria theme, suggesting that the first two movements act as a whole, and hinting at a rounded binary form for the two.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the challenges of the movement, French oboist Maurice Bourgue states, “Here one is confronted with the difficulty of harmoniously regulating the rapport rhythm/sound/dynamics, which is not always obvious from the first readings.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, the performer must be able to create a clear and seamless presentation of the dance feeling, harmonies, and melodies, while traversing difficult rhythms and frequent, rapid changes in dynamics.

After a brief pause, the sonata ends with the fitting title “Final.” Dutilleux’s indication, *Assez allant*, requires liveliness and movement, with the half note equaling 96 beats per minute. The piano introduces the main melody in m. 3 and the oboe repeats it in m. 8. The theme is repeated ten measures after Rehearsal 11, transposed up a perfect fourth. A more difficult syncopated section arrives from Rehearsal 12 through 15. The syncopated section is interrupted by the theme stated in a more forceful, accented, and separated manner at Rehearsal 15. The music then quickly switches to a softer and lyrical section, until the theme returns in its original form and transposition at Rehearsal 16. A codetta finishes the piece, ending on five octaves of B-flats between the oboe and piano.<sup>29</sup> The finale of the sonata is much simpler and less elaborate than the earlier movements, with fewer difficulties presented. The main difficulty is the uncertainty of the response of

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<sup>26</sup> Dutilleux, 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> Bourgue, 60-61.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 61.

<sup>29</sup> Dutilleux, 15-23.

the low B-flat between the performer's instrument and reed. Between the alternation of rhythmic and lyrical sections, the performer must bring out the sweeping melodic lines.<sup>30</sup> A reed with very tight sides and clear attacks are required to keep the high notes in tune, as well as to allow for very soft attacks and smooth, legato lines. The extremities in dynamics also require a reed that is open enough to reach the loudest dynamics, while also being customized to allow for a minimal amount of air to produce the softest dynamics.

The repertoire performed for Mr. Thompson's Graduate Recital in Oboe displayed the abilities appropriate for a Master's level performance. The program included musical styles to master from the Baroque era to the twentieth century. Elements of virtuosity, technicality, and lyricism were displayed through each work. Collaboration with Ms. Shioshvili was executed professionally through mature communication, rehearsal, and performance. Finally, consistency in reed making and musical preparation provided for a successful recital. The skills required for this recital display the cumulation of the Master of Music degree.

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<sup>30</sup> Bourgue, 61.

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School of Music  
University of Northern Iowa

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presents

David Thompson, Oboe  
In a Graduate Recital

assisted by:  
*Natia Shioshvili, piano*

In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the Master of Music degree in Oboe Performance  
From the Studio of Dr. Heather Peyton

Sonata for Oboe and Piano in G minor, BWV 1030b  
Andante  
Siciliano  
Presto

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

Brief Pause

Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra, Opus 5  
Allegro Vivace, Adagio, Rondo

Franz Wilhelm Ferling  
(1796-1874)

Brief Pause

Sonata for Oboe and Piano  
Aria  
Scherzo  
Final

Henri Dutilleux  
(1916-2013)