

PROGRAM NOTES

Gymnopédies (1888) are perhaps the most famous works written by **Erik Satie** (1866 - 1925). This set of three pieces can be heard today in movies and advertisements, and are a part of the standard teaching repertoire in piano studios throughout the world. Each piece is similar in both structure, tempo, and mood, evoking a calm, almost melancholy atmosphere. The *Gymnopédies*, as well as Satie's complete body of work, defied the traditional Classical structures and harmonies, and were highly influential to Satie's contemporaries, including Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, and John Cage. Satie was known for his eccentricity and humor, and would name his pieces things like *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear*, or would include musical instructions such as, "From the end of the eyes". The author, M. T. Anderson, wrote the following in *Strange Mr. Satie*: "Satie was a genius and a crank, a magician and a child, a fool and a visionary, a gentle man with a violent temper, a medieval composer on the cutting edge of modernity." This sense of contradiction can be heard throughout the *Gymnopédies*, which quickly shift between major and minor tonalities, as if they are confused about whether they are happy or sad.

Olivier Messiaen's mother was a poet, his father, a teacher, and so Messiaen grew up in an environment of artistic and intellectual freedom. He studied and later taught at the Paris Conservatoire. Messiaen was influenced by the music of his peers, both classical and popular. His music was also highly influenced by his religious beliefs. A devout Roman Catholic, Messiaen was the organist of the basilica of La Trinité for over sixty years, and his ties to church music and to his faith influenced many of his compositions. All of these themes are prominent in Messiaen's first song set, **Trois Melodies**. Written in 1929 during his last year at the Conservatoire, this short set won the school's First Prize in Composition. The poetry of the first and third songs was written by Messiaen himself. Cécil Sauvage, Messiaen's mother, is the author of the poetry in the second song. *Pourquoi?*, the first of the three songs, is a weepy lament. Messiaen questions his sadness despite all the joys that life has to offer. In this song, one can clearly hear the influence of jazz, or perhaps more appropriately, the blues. In *Le sourire*, the subject matter is very clearly a love interest. The music is cabaret-style in its syllabic, almost spoken delivery. The third song, *La fiancée perdue*, is a prayer celebrating a lost love. Messiaen first praises this love, comparing her to all things beautiful, natural, gentle, and pure. The second half of the song is a prayer to God and Jesus for her peace.

Comment and **The Apple Tree** are the last two songs from the mezzo-soprano song cycle *Apples and Oranges*, which comes from the larger song cycle, *On the Impracticality and Sure Impossibility of Perpetually Uncomplicated and Everlasting Love*, with music by **A. Scott Parry** and text by Dorothy Parker. *Apples and Oranges* is preceded by a Baritone and Mezzo duet which ends a long-term love relationship. The end of this relationship first brings anger, then hatred, the disbelief in love, and finally the realization of what loss of love can really do to a person. *Comment* is the anti-love anthem for the broken heart. The text uses sarcasm to express her disdain of love, saying "love is a thing that can never do wrong, and I am Marie of Romania." This directly leads to *The Apple Tree*, where the singer tells of the changes in the apple tree, which is representative of herself. She recognizes the changes are directly related to her failed relationship but makes the conscious decision to not grieve over something that was fleeting.

Emile Paladilhe's Psyché, which has been described as a "sentimental neurosis," is based on a story told by the ancient Greek writer Apuleius that was later set by "The founder of the French tragedy," Pierre Corneille who stands with Racine and Moliere as the greatest of French dramatists. In the story Venus is jealous of the beautiful young mortal Psyché, and commands her son Cupid to make Psyché fall in love with the most hideous creature he could find. Instead, Cupid falls in love with her himself, and in this song tells of his adoration for Psyché. In setting this work Corneille departed from his usual tragic style to create Psyché in collaboration with Moliere in 1671. Musical interludes for this play were originally provided by Jean-Baptiste Lully, court composer to Louis XIV. As a French composer of the late romantic period, Paladilhe is most well known for his solo woodwind works. In the early 20th century, he wrote several songs in high romantic style, using texts from classic French literature.

A quintet in four movements, Clarinet Quintet Op. 115 by **Johannes Brahms** evokes a depth and richness that echos the waning of the late romantic period. Written in 1891 for clarinet virtuoso Richard Mühlfeld, this deeply romantic work opens with an ascending arpeggio that propels the listener through a tonal variance of closely related keys D Major and B Minor, creating the *langsam* autumnal mood that characterizes this later work. The second movement *Adagio*, described as "a tender love song whose wistfulness seems to reflect the entire decline of the late Romantic musical ethos," revels in Hungarian arabesques and sinewy long lines of dreamlike evocations. The *Andantino* takes on a sweet, uplifting quality not seen in the other movements and borrows themes from the opening *Allegro* movement but with more jocularly and whimsical grace. The *Presto* takes on a theme and variation form. Here Brahms continues the sweetness of the third movement in the form of Hungarian dance rhythms heard in the second movement and closes with the original theme, fading to nothing. - Excerpt taken from Peter Bates at allmusic.com

In a description of his composition, **Victor Morosco** states the **Blue Caprice** is "A virtuosic set of twelve unaccompanied classical and jazz influenced variations on the blues for solo alto saxophone." It is a fun, fast-paced work that unapologetically uses the altissimo range (notes above the normal register) of the instrument. The piece was written in 1986 and has been dedicated to jazz saxophonist Phil Woods.

Duke Ellington's Orchestra introduced **Mood Indigo** at the Cotton Club in New York City in 1930. This tasty ballad is downright soulful. Many jazz greats have added it to their repertoire throughout the years including Ella Fitzgerald, Charlie Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, and Dee Dee Bridgewater. Originally titled "Dreamy Blues," it was one of the first tunes that Duke wrote for microphone transmission.

All Blues (1959) is one of the most well known jazz charts ever written. Band-leader/trumpetist **Miles Davis**, along with saxophonists John Coltrane and Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, pianists Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly, bassist Paul Chambers, and drummer Jimmy Cobb, created a masterpiece out of this simple jazz waltz, using minimal harmonic movement and a modal flavor. The chart follows a basic 12-bar blues form and, through its simplicity, exercises sound and space equally. "All Blues" is among four other tunes on the *Kind of Blue* album, released in 1959 and continues to be best-selling jazz record of all time.

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Opening Jazz Combo

Gymnopédie No. 1	Erik Satie (1866-1925)
All Blues	Miles Davis (1926-1991) arr. Zack Cross
Trois Mélodies Pourquoi? Le sourire La fiancée perdue	Oliver Messiaen (1908-1992)
Mood Indigo	Duke Ellington (1899-1974) arr. Zack Cross
Gymnopédie No. 2	Erik Satie
Comment & The Apple Tree	Scott Parry
Psyché	Émile Paladilhe (1844-1926)
Clarinet Quintet Op. 115 Allegro Adagio Andantino Con Moto	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Gymnopédie No. 3	Erik Satie
Blue Caprice	Victor Morosco (b. 1936)

Closing Jazz Combo

Other works to include:

Joshua Redman's Hide and Seek arr. by Steven Rogers
Brad Mehldau's When it Rains arr. by Jacob Polancich
Nirvana's Heart-Shaped Box arr. by Zack Cross



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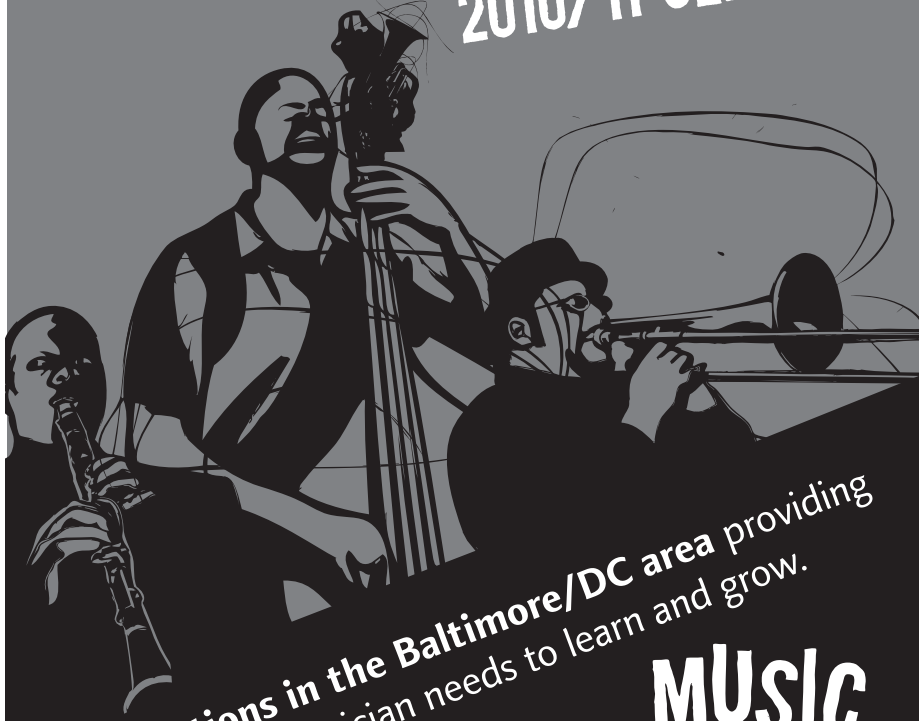
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