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Music Beat

## Bassoons are coming to Auer Hall

By Peter Jacobi H-T Columnist 4 hrs ago



Courtesy photo Bassoonist Bram van Sambeek will perform as part of Bassoon Day 2018 at Indiana University Bloomington.

Joris-Jan Bos

If you love the bassoon, carve out a couple of hours Saturday evening when — as part of Bassoon Day 2018 — a faculty/guest/student recital in Auer Hall offers you full aural exposure to that favored instrument of yours, in numbers.

There'll be a dozen bassoons played at once. There'll be a string ensemble, clarinet, and an accordion. There'll be two premieres and, from the Netherlands, two notables: composer Chiel Meijering and bassoonist Bram van Sambeek. Canadian concert accordionist Joseph Petric will perform, along with Jacobs School faculty bassoonists William Ludwig and Kathleen McLean (plus students of theirs) and faculty colleague, clarinetist James Campbell.

The above should be enough of a tease for anyone who values that long, unwieldy, gorgeous sounding instrument we mostly view somewhere at the rear of an orchestra. That's why, says Kathleen McLean, "We've been presenting this bassoon event annually since 2013: to promote our noble instrument to the community and to make the general public aware of its right on stage as a solo instrument, not merely one at the back of an orchestra. Our guest bassoonist, Bram van Sambeek, has accomplished that task in Europe after leaving his post as principal of the Rotterdam Philharmonic to embark on a solo and teaching career." Ludwig and McLean are keeping busy — through teaching, playing, and their own promoting — as ambassadors here at home.

Saturday evening's program concludes a long day of classes and performances designed not only to prove to those of us on the outside how significant is the bassoon but, say Ludwig and McLean, to show students in the Jacobs School and interested high school woodwind players that to be a bassoonist is an honor to be sought.

The two premieres of the evening come courtesy of the visiting composer, Chiel Meijering, who has been here previously, along with his music, which proved to be winningly accessible and awash in efforts to make his music enjoyable. It boggles the mind that Meijering, now in his early 50s, has written more than 1,000 compositions, quite a few of them heralding titles that suggest he seeks to attract listeners: “I Hate Mozart,” “If the Camels Don’t Get You, the Fatimas Must,” “Background-Music for Non-Entertainment Use in Order to Cover Unwanted Noise,” and “Blue shadows flower into light.”

He reportedly has composed more than 100 bassoon concertos and chamber concertos (including the bassoon) for Kathleen McLean. She traces that feat: “In the summer of 2016, I was preparing for a sabbatical recording project, and I wanted to include an international composer for the recording. I remembered that in 2010, Bill Ludwig and I performed a work for two bassoons by Chiel at the International Double Reed Conference in Norman, Oklahoma.

“I found his music,” she continues, “to be interesting and musically and technically challenging. He began reworking a few recorder concertos of his for me and, soon after, began to compose new bassoon concertos in an amazingly rapid outpouring and creative flow. He has composed what I think to be some of the most challenging concertos ever written for the instrument.”

McLean praises Meijering’s music. “How fortunate I’ve been, and how rare it is for a musician, to work on a very significant and historical collection of concertos with a highly respected international composer.”

Meijering premiere number 1 is “Tribulations of Modern Love,” for Clarinet, Bassoon, Accordion, and Strings. McLean explains how it came to be: “After having written several solo bassoon concertos, Chiel discussed with me options to collaborate with other musicians in future planning to create a bigger network. I mentioned Jim Campbell and Joseph Petric to him, among others. Chiel had a long history of writing for the accordion,

and Joseph had been aware of his many pieces for years. Both were delighted to play this music. Chiel dedicated the first of five of these triple concertos to the three of us, and on Saturday, we will premiere his second of the five, 'Tribulations.' The three of us are all Canadian-born and have performed together in chamber music and new music scenes in Toronto and throughout Canada. This is all an extension of the partnership."

McLean relayed Meijering's description of "Tribulations," as "three dancers — two men and a lady — represented by clarinet, bassoon and accordion — dancing themselves to total exhaustion," to which McLean adds: "His omnivorous tastes for all styles of music creates collisions and tensions into moments of sheer frenzy. It has musical elements that include romantic, Celtic, Eastern European and pop. One highlight is followed by another, and when you expect the piece to finish, even more highlights are poured out."

Premiere number 2, "the reed that bends in the wind," gives musical flowering to Arundo Donax, "the fast growing and resilient reed that overtakes plant life in southern climates and is the material that bassoon reeds are made of. Chiel took the title from Confucius ('the green reed that sways in the wind is stronger than the mighty oak that breaks in the storm').

"For Chiel," wonders McLean, "the mighty oak could stand for conservative old standards like concertos by Weber, Mozart and Vivaldi. The green reed could stand for a rebirth of new concertos for solo, double, triple and quartet written in the past few years. The fast-growing reed could also represent Meijering's extreme proclivity for the bassoon during that period. He feels the 4.5 octave range of the bassoon has a great range for expressive quality that lends itself very well for a variety of moods. I feel that with his music, he has awakened the potential for this instrument to be truly regarded as a solo instrument. Incidentally, Chiel composed the piece last year while he was staying in Bloomington."

Works by other composers will fill out the program. I'm intrigued. I've carved out a couple of hours next Saturday to watch and hear. Perhaps, I've convinced you to join me.

Contact Peter Jacobi at [pjacobi@heraldt.com](mailto:pjacobi@heraldt.com).

If you go

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Who and What: A Bassoon Day 2018 recital features two world premieres by the contemporary Dutch composer Chiel Meijering: “Tribulations of Modern Love” for Clarinet, Bassoon, Accordion, and Strings and “the reed which bends in the wind,” for Twelve Bassoons and String Orchestra, Part 1. Composer Meijering is a guest. Also on the program is music by Bach, Burton Yun, and Azmeh. Performers include IU Jacobs School faculty (bassoonists William Ludwig and Kathleen McLean, clarinetist James Campbell); IU student bassoonists and string players; guest bassoonist Bram van Sambeek and guest concert accordionist Joseph Petric, and conductor David Jang.

When: Saturday evening at 8.

Where: Auer Hall on the Indiana University Bloomington campus.

Admission: Free.

Showtimes

- This afternoon at 1 in Auer Hall, the IU Percussion Ensemble performs under the direction of John Tafoya and Kevin Bobo. Free.
- This afternoon at 3 at Congregation Beth Shalom, 3750 E. Third St., the four-member ensemble La Luna La Mia presents a program of “Songs and Poetry of the Sephardim,” musical traditions from the Iberian Peninsula dating back hundreds of years. Tickets: \$10, cash or cards accepted.

- This afternoon at 4 in Auer, a Jacobs School faculty recital offers the fourth and last program in a “Mostly Schubert” series, this concert focused on Schubert’s Piano Trio No. 2 and Brahms’s “Zwei Gesänge” (“Two Songs”). Performers include pianists Jean-Louis Haguenauer and Kevin Murphy, violinist Jasmine Lin, violist Stephen Wyrzynski, cellist Peter Stumpf, and mezzo-soprano Marietta Simpson. Free.
- This evening at 8 in Auer, guest guitarist Edoardo Catemario performs music of Satie, Chopin, Sor, Debussy, Paganini and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Free.
- Monday evening at 8 in the Musical Arts Center (MAC), the John Raymond Jazz Ensemble presents “A Tribute to Frank Mantooth.” Free.
- Tuesday evening at 8 in the MAC, the IU Wind Ensemble, led by Stephen Pratt and Ryan Yahl, plays music by Debussy, Canfield, Ward-Steinman and Maslanka. Faculty trombonist Carl Lenthe is guest soloist. Free.
- Tuesday evening at 8:30 in Ford-Crawford Hall, Jazz Combos features the Wayne Wallace Groups. Free.
- Wednesday afternoon at 4 in MAC 070, the University of Kentucky Brass Quintet performs a guest recital. Free.
- Wednesday evening at 8 in Auer, a “collaborative recital” connects pianist Chih-Yi Chen with violinists Callum Smart, Jonathan Yi and Zoe Martin-Doike in works of Beethoven, Janacek and Prokofiev. Free.
- Thursday evening at 8 in Auer, Joe Galvin directs the Latin American Ensemble in music of the hemisphere. Free.

- Friday afternoon at 5 in Auer, a faculty/guest chamber recital unites violinist Jae-Won Bang, clarinetist James Campbell, pianist Theresa Leung, bassoonist William Ludwig, and saxophonist Otis Murphy. Free.
- Friday evening at 8:30 in Recital Hall, a faculty recital unites guest bassoonist Bram van Sambeek with IU faculty bassoonist Kathleen McLean and her colleague, clarinetist James Campbell. Free.
- Saturday afternoon at 4 in Auer, a faculty/guest recital by pianist Alexei Ulitin, cellist Emilio Colon, and baritone Anton Belov features Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata and Mussorgsky's "Song and Dances of Death." Free.

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