School of
Music
College of Arts and Sciences
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

WSU School of Music

Presents

Graduate Recital

Calby Van Hollebeke, Oboe

Elena Panchenko, Piano and Harpsichord

Sonata Duodecima, Op. 16 — Isabella Leonarda (1620 - 1704)
- *Adagio*
- *Allegro, e presto*
- *Vivave, e largo*
- *Spiritoso*
- *Aria, allegro*
- *Veloce*

Three Romances for Oboe and Piano, Op. 94 — Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)
- *Romance No. 2*
- *Romance No. 3*

-Intermission-

Niobe — Thea Musgrave (b. 1928)

Oboe Concerto in D minor, Op. 20 — Ruth Gipps (1921 - 1999)
- *I. Allegro moderato*
- *II. Andante*
- *III. Allegro vivace*

Bryan Hall Theater – October 30, 2025

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Isabella Leonarda was born in 1620 to a family of minor nobility in Novara, Italy. She took her vows and entered the Congregation of the Virgins of St. Ursula at the age of sixteen and remained at the convent until her death in 1704. Leonarda was one of the most prolific nun composers of the seventeenth century, publishing over 200 works. She likely studied with Gasparo Casati who was the *maestro di cappella*, or music director, of the Novara cathedral. Leonarda also held several positions during her time in the convent including *Superiora*, which was likely the highest-ranking position available in the convent.

Sonata Duodecima was published in 1693 as part of a volume of twelve instrumental church sonatas. However, based on their style and form the sonatas were likely written earlier in Leonarda's life. The first eleven sonatas are for two violin soloists with organ continuo, also called a trio sonata. The twelfth, *Sonata Duodecima*, is the only sonata in the volume for a single violin soloist with continuo accompaniment. Since instrumental sonatas did not yet have a standardized form at this point in the seventeenth century, the piece is split into sections rather than movements that contrast in meter, tempo, and melodic content. These sections are titled: *Adagio; Allegro, e presto, Vivave, e largo; Spriritoso; Aria, allegro*; and *Veloce*.

Robert Schumann was born in Germany in 1810 and would become a notable composer and music journalist of the nineteenth century. In 1840, Schumann married the piano virtuoso and composer, Clara Wieck. Together, the Schumann's worked together to promote composers they felt should receive greater appreciation. This included emerging nineteenth-century composers like Johannes Brahms and Frédéric Chopin, as well as established masters such as J. S. Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, and Beethoven. Robert used his skills as a writer to promote these composers through his music journal, the *Neue Zietschrift für Musik*, while Clara used her reputation as a virtuoso pianist to put on recitals that featured music by the composers Robert discussed in his journal. Although Robert is known primarily for his nearly 250 lieder, a type of German song for solo voice, he also contributed significantly to many instrumental genres.

Romances No. 2 and *No. 3* were written in 1849 as a Christmas present for his wife, Clara. It is one of the few solo pieces written for the oboe during the nineteenth century that has become part of the oboe's standard repertoire. The three *Romances* are characterized by their chromaticism and long, lyrical melodies. *Romance No. 2* is often regarded as the most difficult of the three *Romances*, due to the endurance and breath control required by the soloist. A nineteenth century Belgian oboist named Eugène Dubrucq, who was well known in England, even refused to perform the second *Romance* as he deemed it "quite impossible to play." *Romance No. 2* opens with a lyrical melody in A major that is infused with chromaticism. Approximately halfway through the piece there is a sudden shift in character. A dramatic and stormy melody takes over, with the eighth notes in the oboe line clashing with the triplets in the piano accompaniment to create a churning sense of motion. Once the storm has calmed, the piece shifts back to major and the melody from the beginning of the piece returns. The piece closes with a brief coda that plays with themes heard in the opening of the piece and ends peacefully.

Romance No. 3 opens with the oboe and piano playing an arpeggiated melody A minor, first in octaves then in unison. From here, the oboe and piano split from one another and have more conversational melodic lines, almost as if they are searching for a theme together. The middle section of the piece transitions from A minor to F major, with the piano coming in with a gradually ascending melody. The oboe then responds to the piano with a statement of the same melodic line and plays off the triplets present in the piano line, continuing their conversation. After this sunny interlude, the melodic material from the beginning of the piece returns and is restated in its entirety. Like the second *Romance*, *Romance No. 3* closes with a short coda. The coda begins with an almost weary sounding melody before shifting blissfully to A major in the final measures of the piece, almost as if the sun is peeking through the clouds after a long, overcast day.

Scottish-American composer **Thea Musgrave** was born in Scotland in 1928 and has lived in the United States since the 1970s. At 97 years old, Musgrave is a widely known and respected composer. Her compositions have won several awards and have been performed across the globe. Much of her music focuses on expanding the amount of drama instrumentalists can achieve through different soundscapes. For example, Musgrave experiments with spatial

soundscapes in her *Clarinet Concerto* by having the player move around the stage while performing. In her *Horn Concerto*, Musgrave again plays with spatial soundscapes by requiring the orchestral horn players to be placed in different areas of the concert hall. Musgrave's instrumental works also focus heavily on the performer acting as a vehicle for drama conveyed through music.

Niobe was written in 1987 for oboe and pre-recorded tape accompaniment. The following is a note from the composer that is provided in the score of *Niobe*: "In Greek mythology Niobe was the daughter of Tantalus and wife of Amphion, King of Thebes. She unwisely boasted to Leto about her many sons and daughters. Leto, who only had two children, Apollo and Artemis, was angered. As punishment Apollo slew Niobe's sons and Artemis her daughters. Out of pity for Niobe's inconsolable grief, the Gods changed her into a rock, in which form she continued to weep." In Musgrave's interpretation of Niobe's metamorphosis, the oboe part represents Niobe lamenting the loss of her fourteen children as well as her husband Amphion, who later committed suicide or was also killed by Apollo. Over the course of *Niobe*, Musgrave weaves numerical significance into Niobe's lament by having the oboe and tape play certain notes or figures a specific number of times. For example, the oboe plays fifteen individual upper register Es and Gs over the course of the piece. This number corresponds directly to the number of people she is grieving, her husband and their fourteen children. Musgrave describes the prerecorded tape of bells, high voices, and gongs as an "evocative and descriptive accompaniment." However, she incorporates numerical significance into the tape accompaniment as well. For example, there are fifteen bells that sound on an E over the course of the piece. Additionally, the high voices enter on a C a total of nine times, corresponding to the nine days Niobe's children went without burial while she grieved.

Ruth Gipps was born in Bexhill-on-Sea, England and began studying music with her mother Hélène at the age of four. She quickly became known as a child prodigy on piano, winning several competitions and even having her first composition published at just eight years old. She went on to study composition at the Royal College of Music with R. O. Morris and Ralph Vaughan Williams. While attending the RCM, Gipps began playing oboe as her secondary instrument and took lessons with Léon Goossens. She and quickly achieved great proficiency on the instrument and enjoyed a brief professional

career as an orchestral oboist, playing second oboe and English horn with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 1944. However, she did not get to occupy this position for long as she was pushed out of the orchestra by the male members of the orchestra. Gipps then turned her focus to conducting and in 1969 she became the first woman to conduct at the Royal Albert Hall.

The *Oboe Concerto in D Minor* was written in 1941 for her close friend and fellow oboist Marion Brough, who Gipps met while studying at the RCM. When Gipps wanted to learn how to compose for a certain instrument, she would offer her services as an accompanist to people who played the instrument. When she felt that she had gained enough knowledge on how to sufficiently write for that instrument, Gipps would cease offering her services as an accompanist to that person and move on to the next instrument she wanted to learn. However, Gipps did not continue this process with Marion, and their collaboration would lead to Gipps writing several works for their duo. Despite being Despite being written in 1941, the concerto was not premiered in the United States until 2021 by Katherine Needleman with the Richmond Symphony.

The concerto's three movements are characterized by pastoral and folk-like melodies. The first movement opens with an introduction of the main themes from the piano. The oboe's first entrance hints at some of the interesting harmonic shifts that will take place later in the movement. The oboe line then moves to firmly establish the home key and states the main themes. The middle of the movement is marked by the spooky sounding harmonic shifts, with arpeggiated sixteenth note runs in the oboe that wander through different tonalities. The end of the movement hears the return of the main theme and re-establishes D minor as the home key. The second movement is characterized by its pastoral mood and lyrical, flowing melodies. There are several interesting harmonic shifts throughout the movement, notably in the second half, where the oboe line seemingly outlines one harmony while the piano part suggests another. The third movement offers a distinct contrast from the second movement, opening with an incredibly energetic and lively theme in D major. From here, the movement shifts between the spirited D major theme and mysterious secondary theme in D minor. After the final statement of the secondary theme, the D major theme returns and the concerto closes with a high-spirited accelerando.