

*La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin*

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)  
Arr. By David Hite

*Magic Forest Scenes*

Paul Richards (1969-)

I. “*Lazy Blues-Snake River God Courts the North Wind*”

II. “*Tiny Hyper Spirit-Bear Escapes the Grumpy Goblins’ Lair*”

*Konzertstück Nr. 2 in D minor*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

I. *Presto*

II. *Andante*

III. *Allegretto grazioso*

Keith Northover- *basset horn*

*Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra with Harp and Piano*

Aaron Copland  
(1900-1990)

I. *Slowly and expressively*

II. *Cadenza*

III. *Rather Fast*

(Played without pause)

## Program Notes

Celebrated as one of the most prominent French composers of the twentieth century, **Achille-Claude Debussy** is connected closely with the musical movement of impressionism. Ironically, Debussy despised the term ‘impressionism,’ considering his work the pursuit of “something new-realities- as it were: what imbeciles call ‘impressionism.’” Despite the limitations of this label, the genuine novelties of Debussy’s music are evident: no other figure of his era did more to expand the possibilities of form, harmony, voice leading, and timbre. Among his greatest compositions include orchestral works such as *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*, *La Mer*, and piano works like *Clair de Lune*, and *The Children’s Corner*.

Towards the end of his life, Debussy composed *Préludes*, a two part collection of 24 piano preludes, from 1909-1913. In contrast to previous cycles of twenty-four preludes, like that of Chopin, Debussy’s are liberated from contrivance, and do not adhere to a set pattern of key signatures. Rather, the preludes arbitrarily progress through the keys, utilizing only five of them. Uniquely creating every prelude with a variety of moods and styles, Debussy endows each with an invocative title, yet does not place the title as the header of the first page. Treated like an afterthought, the title appears as the footer on the last page, suggesting that the title is inspired by the music and not the other way around.

Taken from the first book, *La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin*, or “The Girl with the Flaxen Hair,” is praised for its emotional depth, despite its technical and harmonic simplicity. Illustrating the pastoral image, Debussy depicts a Scottish maiden with golden hair, as adapted from Leconte de Lisle’s poem:

Who sits upon the blooming lucerne,  
Singing from the earliest morn?  
It is the girl with the flaxen hair,  
The beauty with cherry-red lips.

Love, in the bright summer sun,  
Sang with the lark.

Your mouth has divine colors,  
My dear, and is tempting to kiss!  
Do you wish to chat upon the blooming grasses,  
Girl with long lashes and delicate curls?

Love, in the bright summer sun,  
Sang with the lark.

Do not say no, cruel girl!  
Do not say yes! I shall better understand  
A long gaze from your large eyes  
And your pink lips, o my beauty!

Love, in the bright summer sun,  
Sang with the lark.

Farewell to the deer, farewell to the hares  
And the red partridges! I wish

To kiss the flax of your hair,  
To press upon the crimson of your lips!

Love, in the bright summer sun,  
Sang with the lark.

Currently one of the residing composers and professors at the University of Florida, **Dr. Paul Richards** is hailed in the press as a composer with a “strong, pure melodic gift, an ear for color, and an appreciation for contrast and variety.” Born in New York City in 1969, Richards was involved in music from early childhood, including popular music styles, the Western canon, and Jewish sacred music. Throughout his career, he achieved accolades in a multitude of competitions including the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra’s Fresh Ink 2002 Florida Composers’ Competition, and the International Section of the 2000 New Music for Sligo/IMRO Composition Award, among others.

Written for Professor Mitchell Estrin in 2000, *Magic Forest Scenes* are a “pair of surreal evocations from a composite imaginary other-world drawn from a lifelong love of fiction and mythology,” (taken from forward of piece by Paul Richards). When asked about the specific meaning of the piece, Dr. Richards encouraged that the listener and performer alike develop their own conclusions: “I don’t want people envisioning the Hobbit or Pan, but I want the performer to create their own story.”

Contrasting with the scherzo like second movement, the first movement, “*Lazy Blues-Snake River God Courts the North Wind*,” flows in a rhapsodic, improvisatory fashion. Brisk and lively, the second movement, “*Tiny Hyper Spirit-Bear Escapes the Grumpy Goblins’ Lair*,” is given the tempo marking “fast, furious, and fun.” During the movement’s fugal section, loud high 8<sup>th</sup> notes are juxtaposed with soft low 16<sup>ths</sup>, depicting the spirit bear’s flight from the goblins’ lair. Conversely, the emphasis switches to stress the low notes, the goblins’ angry pursuit, as the quiet and nimble spirit bear tiptoes out via 16<sup>th</sup> note pairs. Finally, the movement concludes with a reprise of the opening.

The greatest child prodigy of his time, **Felix Mendelssohn** excelled as both a composer and pianist. Born to a family of intellectual prominence, Mendelssohn stemmed from a legacy of scholarly prowess. His grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn was one of the leading philosophers of his day, and his father, Abraham Mendelssohn was a skilled man of finance, working as a banker in Berlin. Successful as his predecessors, the young Mendelssohn toured much of Europe, similar to Mozart, impressing his listeners with his precocious talent. By the age of seventeen, he had created his famous *Overture to a Midsummer Night’s Dream*, op. 21 and *Octet for Strings*, op. 20. Leading a prolific career, Mendelssohn composed seven symphonies, a multitude of piano works, and chamber pieces. Dying after a brief illness in 1847, Mendelssohn shocked Europe with his sudden death, casting a bitter shroud of mourning over the people.

Written in 1833 for his good friends, father and son clarinetists Heinrich and Carl Baermann, Mendelssohn composed his *Konzertstück Nr. 1* and *2* for clarinet and basset horn. As the story goes, the Baermanns were visiting Mendelssohn, when they formed an agreement: Mendelssohn would write a piece for the three of them in exchange for the Baermann’s famous dumplings (Carl Baermann was hailed as a fantastic cook). This

collaboration resulted in the first *Konzertstück*, and was such a success, that Mendelssohn composed *Konzertstück No. 2*. Consisting of three sections, *Konzertstück No. 2* is played without pause between movements. Opening with a fiery presto, the piece proceeds through the first movement, ending with the dramatic unison accelerando. Perhaps when composing the lyrical *Andante* movement, Mendelssohn was inspired by the tantalizing smells of Carl Baermann's cooking for he later wrote, "the clarinet depicts my feelings of longing while the basset horn adds the rumbling of my stomach." Finally, the piece concludes with an exuberant and virtuosic *Allegro grazioso*.

One of America's most recognized composers, **Aaron Copland** created a distinctively American style and aesthetic in works of varying difficulty for a diversity of genres and mediums, including ballet, opera and film. Studying in the European tradition, Copland analyzed the scores past great composers such as Monteverdi, Bach, and Mahler, under the tutelage of Nadia Boulanger. Although he planned to study with Boulanger for one year, he remained for three, "finding her eclectic approach to inspire his own broad musical taste." Instrumental in developing an American style of composition, Copland maintained a balance between modern music and American folk styles, evident in works like *Rodeo*, *Appalachian Spring*, and *Fanfare for the Common Man*. In addition to composing, Copland was a teacher, lecturer, critic, writer, and conductor.

In 1947, jazz clarinetist and band leader Benny Goodman commissioned Aaron Copland to write a clarinet concerto. Goodman told Copland biographer: "I made no demands on what Copland should write. He had completely free rein... I paid two thousand dollars and that's real money... We never had much trouble except for a little fracas about the spot before the cadenza where he had written a repetition of some phrase. Aaron and I played the concerto quite a few times with him conducting, and we made two recordings." Although the two did not collaborate on the concerto, during its composition Goodman's requested modifications were made, and in 1950 the work was premiered.

Providing an analysis of the piece, Copland explains: "The *Clarinet Concerto* is cast in a two-movement form, played without pause, and connected by a cadenza for the solo instrument. The first movement is simple in structure, based upon the usual A-B-A song form. The general character of this movement is lyric and expressive. The cadenza that follows introduces fragments of the melodic material to be heard in the second movement. The overall form of the final movement is that of a free rondo, with several side issues developed at some length."

This Recital is presented in partial completion of a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education with Performance Certificate.

Mrs. Kolb is from the studio of Professor Mitchell Estrin.

