

# ENDEAVOR WORKS FOR OBOE & PIANO

JEFFREY RATHBUN oboe MARC SHAPIRO piano with FRANK ROSENWEIN oboe

## SCHUMANN *Adagio und Allegro, Opus 70*

1. Adagio and Allegro [08:36]

## SLAVICKÝ *Suite for Oboe and Piano*

2. Pastorale [05:11] 3. Scherzo [04:13]

4. Triste [09:11] 5. Bacchanale Rustico [05:43]

## STRAVINSKY *Pastorale*

6. Pastorale [3:04]

## JEFFREY RATHBUN *4 More Diversions for 2 Oboes*

7. Fanfares [01:46] 8. (Un)changing [02:29]

9. Vibrating Ratios [03:11] 10. Speedsters [03:27]

## HOWELLS *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*

11. Placido, teneramento, ma con moto [06:57]

12. Lento; assai espressivo e tranquillo [05:32]

13. Allegro mosso, scherzando [08:17]

14. Epilogue: tranquillo, mesto, ma con moto [03:15]

DAVID KULMA program notes

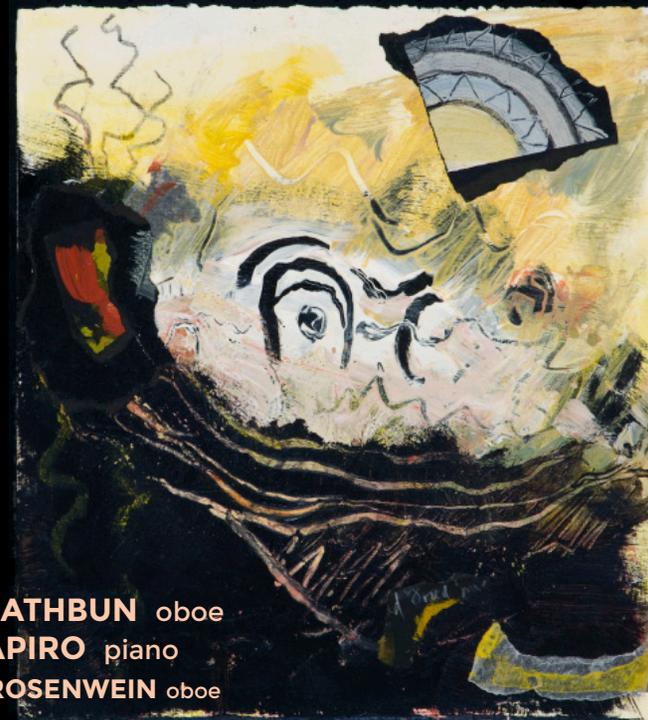
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## A NOTE FROM JEFFREY RATHBUN

The making of this CD has been in my mind for many years, mostly for getting the Howells recorded. Marc Shapiro and I performed this greatest of oboe sonatas starting in the late 1980s, soon after it was published. Our performances continued into the 90s and beyond, and we always talked about recording it, so finally....

In wanting to round out the CD, I was having trouble finding the right 15-minute piece, so I happened to ask the conductor, Jakub Hrusa, if he knew of any good Czech oboe compositions. He put me in touch with the great Czech oboist—and now good friend of mine—Vilem Veverka. Vilem introduced me to a few really good pieces, and one masterpiece: Klement Slavicky's Suite for Oboe and Piano. After looking into this piece, Marc and I agreed that we just had to include it (although at 23 minutes, longer than I intended, but worth it). It really is a pleasure to discover a fantastic composition like this one later in my career.

So many thank yous: my amazing parents, Ron and Sharon Rathbun, my patient and beautiful wife Anna, Thom Moore and Michael Bishop, Frank Rosenwein, Justine Myers, Jeanette Yu, everyone at Buffet Crampon, Vilem Veverka, and especially my partner-in-crime, Marc Shapiro.

I hope you enjoy this Endeavor, and wish everyone success in theirs.



 Jeff Rathbun is a Buffet artist and recorded this CD with his Green LinE Buffet Orfeo.

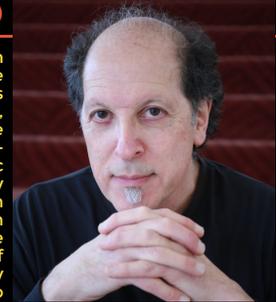
## A NOTE FROM MARC SHAPIRO

John Mack introduced Jeff to me in the mid-1980s with the idea that we might just hit it off. As it turned out, he was spot on. I was already playing the oboe repertoire extensively, but hadn't yet heard of the Howells and the Koehlin sonatas, both of which Jeff had his eye on tackling in the near future, at that time. Once I heard these pieces, I understood...and with a combination of absurd humor we both share and dead seriousness of pretesting this and other repertoire at the highest level we could muster, our musical partnership and friendship was forged. Many, many thanks, Jeff, for these most-worthy Endeavors!




Recording week, with partner-in-crime Marc Shapiro (even though we root for different basketball teams!)

## MARC SHAPIRO



is an acting member of the San Francisco Symphony (SFS), with whom he has toured the US, Europe, and Asia. As a featured soloist with the Orchestra, he has performed Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Saint-Saens's *Carnival of the Animals*, Frank Martin's *Petite Symphonie Concertante*, and James P. Johnson's *Yamekraw*. He is Principal Keyboardist with the California Symphony, and for nineteen years was SFS Chorus accompanist. He is a frequent performer with Composer's Inc., Chamber Music Sundaes, the SFS Chamber Music Series, Sierra Chamber Society, Mainly Mozart Festival (San Diego), and The Mohonk Festival of the Arts in New York. He has partnered with such distinguished musicians as John Mack, Timothy Day, David Wilson-Johnson, Elaine Douvas, Geraldine Walther, and William Bennett. He can be heard on the soundtracks of *Mars Attacks*, *House of Yes*, and *Hellboy*, and has recorded with heavy metal group Metallica. He has also appeared on four continents as solo pianist (and slide guitar) for the touring orchestra concert *Bugs Bunny at the Symphony*. A member of the music faculty at Mills College, Marc Shapiro holds degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of Music and has recorded for SamWorks, Cantilena, New Albion, Delos, Argo, d'Note, and Lapis Island Records.

## FRANK ROSENWEIN



joined The Cleveland Orchestra (TCO) as Principal Oboe at the beginning of the 2005-06 season. He made his solo debut with the Orchestra in February 2007, in Bach's *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 2. He has performed many times since as soloist, most recently in the R. Strauss Oboe Concerto (2012) and in the first Cleveland Orchestra performances of the Vaughan Williams Oboe Concerto (2017). Since 2006, Mr. Rosenwein has been head of the oboe department at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where in 2015 he was given the Alumni Achievement award. He also teaches at the Kent/Blossom Music Festival, and is in-demand as a guest artist and masterclass clinician in schools all over the world. An avid chamber musician, he has spent many summers at the Marlboro Festival and has performed with the Mainly Mozart Festival (San Diego), Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and Seattle Chamber Music Society. Born in Evanston, Illinois, Mr. Rosenwein holds a bachelor of music from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with former TCO Principal Oboe John Mack, and a master of music from the Juilliard School. Prior to TCO, he served as principal oboe (2002-05) of the San Diego Symphony and San Diego Opera. Mr. Rosenwein is married to Cleveland Orchestra Associate Concertmaster Jung-Min Amy Lee. They live in Cleveland Heights with their twin boys, Joshua and Julian, and their dog Sofie.



## JEFFREY RATHBUN

has served as Assistant Principal Oboe of The Cleveland Orchestra (TCO) since 1990, and was the Principal Oboe from 2001-03. He was previously a member of the Atlanta, San Francisco, Oakland, and Honolulu symphony orchestras. Rathbun won first prize at the 1988 Lucarelli International Competition for Solo Oboe Players, held at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, his New York debut recital, in April 1990, was also at Weill. Throughout much of his career, Rathbun has been invited to serve as guest principal oboe, performing with the Boston Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and during the San Francisco Symphony's 2014-15 season, he was invited to serve as Guest Principal Oboe in concert and on the symphony's 2014-15 National Tour, and has been invited back for several more weeks in recent years. He opened the Chicago Symphony's 125th anniversary season in September of 2015 in the same role. Rathbun was the only North American oboist invited to perform in the 190th Anniversary Concert for Buffet Crampon in Paris in November of 2015, and was selected to be on the jury for the Prague Spring Oboe Competition in May 2019.

Mr. Rathbun teaches at the Kent/Blossom Chamber Music Festival, and, since fall 2006, has served as Lecturer in Oboe at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory and the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has been a visiting oboe professor at Oberlin Conservatory and Indiana University, and has led master classes at the Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College of Music, and the New World Symphony, among others. He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the International Double Reed Society. In June 2019, Rathbun taught at the John Mack Oboe Camp for an unprecedented third time.

A graduate of the University of North Texas, where he studied with Dr. Charles Veazey, Mr. Rathbun won the university's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2004; he then studied with John Mack, earned his master's degree at CIM and was awarded its Distinguished Alumni Award in 2003. A composer of chamber and orchestral works, Mr. Rathbun's compositions are published by Theodore Presser Co., Jeanne Inc., and Trevco Music. His works have been performed by numerous ensembles, including The Cleveland Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, and the San Diego Symphony, and have been conducted by Christoph von Dohnanyi, Leonard Slatkin, Jahja Ling, and Franz Welser-Möst. The Cleveland Orchestra commissioned Rathbun to write an orchestral composition, *Pantheon*, which premiered at the opening concert of fall 2018—the only world premiere performed during TCO's 2018-2019 season.

**ROBERT SCHUMANN's** (1810-1856) self-described "most fruitful year" in 1849 included multiple works for solo wind instrument and piano. Starting with the three clarinet *Fantasiestücke*, Opus 73, and ending with the three oboe *Romanzen*, Opus 94, Schumann absorbed himself in the possibilities of *Hausmusik*—the domestic genre meant for at-home amateur performance. Among these works is the *Adagio und Allegro*, Opus 70, written to explore the possibilities of the valved horn.

As implied by the title, Schumann connects a gorgeous and sinuous slow introductory movement with a heralding, fast rondo, whose slower middle is filled with reminiscences of the *Adagio* opening idea. And like all his *Hausmusik* chamber duos, the plush, chromatic, melodic lines pass back and forth, overlapping, between the two instruments.

Now, lest you think an oboist playing this music is inauthentic, Schumann specifically included extra parts for other solo instruments to increase this music's reach—and sell more copies. The cello and violin parts are original to *Adagio und Allegro*, and with a few octave adjustments to the violin part, this glorious music soars beautifully.

**KLEMENT SLAVICKÝ** (1910-1990) was a Czech composer who held firmly onto his artistic life across his country's many—and at times dangerous—regimes. Born in Tovačov, Moravia, under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he lived through both world wars, authoritarian Communist rule, the Velvet Revolution, and finally the splitting of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. During and after the Nazi occupation, he participated in the resistance and luckily was not betrayed to those in power. He later refused to join the Communist Party, which cost him his work at Radio Prague and forced him into the unsure life of a freelance composer.

His *Suite for Oboe and Piano* from 1959-60 is from a period in his work drawing on Moravian folk music. Each movement makes a play at a similar motive: a neighbor step and skips up a third and back. The opening *Pastorale* is mainly unmeasured, centering on a bittersweet—and at times intense—oboe line with small piano interjections. The constantly moving *Scherzo* jumps around changing meters and focuses on the recurring minor third motive. The movement follows the title's expected shape—the contrasting trio juxtaposes a long oboe line with piano flicks of the surrounding *scherzo's* idea. *Triste* is a mournful slow movement whose opening thought reorders the "step and skip" motive. Two climactic faster sections barge in on the sadness. *Bacchanale Rustico* boisterously spins this fascinating work to an exciting conclusion. Additionally, this movement's memorable short tune harkens back to the step/skip idea—now expanded to a third and a fourth.

As a private composition student of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, **IGOR STRAVINSKY** (1882-1971) wrote a charming soprano vocalise for the older composer's daughter Nadya to perform at a house concert in 1907. This two-minute *Pastorale* from his early years left an impression: the staccato left hand piano and odd vocal line marked an individual character in his music that he wouldn't fully explore until he began his cool, distanced Neoclassical style in 1920. In the meantime, the young composer had still to write his early *Feu d'artifice* [*Fireworks*], Opus 4, the next year and later his famous trio of ballets for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Stravinsky returned to the *Pastorale* in 1920s to make an arrangement for soprano with four woodwinds: oboe, English horn, clarinet, and bassoon. And then again in 1933 to make two more versions that replace the soprano with a violin soloist in both the piano and woodwind versions. But these new versions made with and for the violinist Samuel Dushkin are really glosses on the first two, with loads more filigree, changes in texture and line, and nearly doubling it with fifteen new measures added to the original twenty-five.

The Dushkin with piano version heard here (with its Malcolm Arnold-level fluid ornamentation) is a perfect example of how this bumpy, rhythmically chugging, transparent diatonic universe mixed with some obtuse chromatic flavors is the real Stravinsky. And the composer somehow knew it back in 1907.

One of **JEFFREY RATHBUN's** (b.1959) most successful works is *3 Diversions for 2 Oboes*, which he wrote in 1987. Search for it on YouTube, and you will find a number of college students ripping through its flashy arpeggios and honking out its arch multiphonics. It is not surprising why *Diversions* caught on. Rathbun writes idiomatically (and chromatically) for his own instrument: the music sounds wickedly virtuosic, but the music is reasonable to play with some practice. Both players have equally complex and gratifying parts. And Rathbun is one of the few writers of multiphonics who chooses the right ones and allows them to be justly silly.

So here is *4 More Diversions for 2 Oboes*—and it has all the characteristics of the first set that make it a barnburner in recital. *Fanfares* builds off of shooting arpeggios with an impressive motivic foreshortening as it dies away, while *(Un)changing* hammers home a signature Rathbun melody amidst musical quotes as funny, inside jokes for oboists. *Vibrating Ratios* plays with the performers' vibrato speeds, while *Speedsters* zips along with flashy scales, trills, and along the way gives both players an extended cadenza to show off their wares. Rathbun offers these comments:

“

Since writing my *3 Diversions for 2 Oboes* in 1987 for John Mack and myself, I had been thinking about composing another oboe duet. Finally, 25 years later, in 2012, I wrote *4 More Diversions for 2 Oboes* for Frank Rosenwein and myself, and we premiered it at the 2012 IDRS Conference at Oxford, Ohio in July.

**1. Fanfares** This opening movement features fanfare-like motives and themes that are passed back and forth, played together, and juxtaposed between the two oboes. The movement ends with a simple march motive, with the time signatures becoming more and more compressed until the final measure.

**2. (Un)changing** This movement has a meandering melody, stated six times, that never changes (a lower octave is used twice). What does change with the six presentations is the accompaniment, ranging from complimentary to disruptive, thus the “(Un)” before “changing”. In one instance, multiphonics are used for distraction, and another time there are quick quotes from famous oboe concertos. The movement ends with the 1st oboe stating the melody, and the 2nd oboe quoting a Sousa march. One interesting feature of this unchanging melody is that the note ‘C’ only appears as the last note.

**3. Vibrating Ratios** There are specific instructions on the various uses of vibrato for this movement. A slower movement mostly in 9/8, the performers are instructed, at various moments, to use their normal vibrato, no vibrato, accelerate and decrease the speed of their vibrato, and even vibrate in steady, rhythmic, pulses.

**4. Speedsters** This concluding movement begins with the oboes starting their engines and then going on a fast, free-spirited drive. The listener might hear engines revving, horns beeping, and other effects. Each oboe part has a solo section (perhaps driving stunts?), but eventually the speedsters are pulled over by the police, this being announced by multiphonics. After a cautious, slow restart, the oboes go back to full speed, finishing off the piece. ”

**HERBERT HOWELLS** (1892-1983) is likely not a household name among classical music fans in this country, but across the pond in the UK, he is an important composer, especially of choral and church music. As a student of Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford, he had the institutional pedigree to make a name for himself in high places, but as is the case with the 20-years-older Ralph Vaughan Williams, Howells's music is clearly pastorally English, distinctly modal, and heavily influenced by Debussy and Ravel.

During World War II in 1942, Howells was acting organist at St. John's College, Cambridge, replacing Robin Orr who was then on active duty with the Royal Air Force. In the midst of spending half of each week away from London, he finished a *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* for the great Léon Goossens, whom he had known since his student days at the Royal College of Music. The oboist apparently balked at the sprawling, long-lined work, and this is why the music didn't see the light of day until 1978, when Christopher Palmer wrote his study of the composer. Asked much later about the shelving of the sonata, Goossens said he had “serious reservations about the structure of the piece” at the time, and that Howells replied he would “have another go at it.” In the end, this major oboe sonata was finally premiered by Sarah Francis and Peter Dickinson in 1984. Novello published the music in 1987, and since then this beautiful work has slowly entered the repertoire.

Nearly 25 minutes long, the Howells ranks with the sonatas of Charles Koechlin and David Maslanka, and the concerto of Richard Strauss, as one of the longest and most intense tests of an oboist's endurance. And like these other works, it requires that it sound effortless and suave throughout. Howells's sonata is in four movements and two halves. Featuring a recurring, spinning motive that ends in an appoggiatura, the placid and tender first movement wanders through many moods, then leads directly into the gorgeous pastoral slow movement focused on B major. The bouncy third movement includes a brusque 7/8 middle, and ends in a cadenza with premonitions of the opening arpeggios of Vaughan Williams's concerto from two years later (this kind of “Englishness” was apparently in the air). The cadenza moves smoothly into the slow *Epilogue* that calmly brings this beautiful, extended story to its tranquil, yet piquant A-major close.



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