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# CHAMBER MUSIC @ BEALL

## 2015-16



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UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON

School of Music  
and Dance

# AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET

Kevin Cobb, trumpet | Louis Hanzlik, trumpet | Eric Reed, horn | Michael Powell, trombone | John D. Rojak, bass trombone

February 21, 2016 | 3 p.m. | Beall Concert Hall

Three Venetian Canzoni edited by Raymond Mase  
 Canzon 19 Gioseffo Guami (c. 1540-1611)  
 Ricercar del sesto tuono Andrea Gabrieli (c. 1520-1586)  
 Canzon 22 Bastian Chilese (fl. 1600)

Incisioni — Five Engravings in Brass Vittorio Rieti (1898-1996)  
 Introduzione  
 Corale primo  
 Sinfonia da caccia  
 Corale secondo  
 Allegro fugato

Shine for Brass Quintet Robert Paterson (b.1970)  
 I. Ringing Brass Bells  
 II. Quicksilver  
 III. Veins of Gold  
 IV. Bright Blue Steel

## — INTERMISSION —

Brass Quintet No. 1 “Circus” Clint Needham (b. 1981)  
 Entry  
 Clowns  
 The Ringleader  
 The Contortionist  
 Finale

Canons of the 16th Century edited by Raymond Mase  
 Vive le roy Josquin des Prés (1440-1521)  
 Pleni sunt caeli Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)  
 J’ay pris amours Johannes Martini (c. 1440-1497)  
 Pleni sunt caeli; Agnus Dei Josquin; Palestrina

Colchester Fantasy (1987) Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)  
 The Rose and the Crown  
 The Marquis of Granby  
 The Dragoon  
 The Red Lion

The American Brass Quintet is represented by Kirshbaum Associates, New York. This performance is made possible in part by the American Brass Chamber Music Association, Inc. The American Brass Quintet appears by arrangement with Stanton Management, New York.

Among the first important instrumental musical forms, the *canzona* (from the French *chanson*) is uniquely light, with a characteristic long-short-short rhythm. The composers of *Three Venetian Canzoni* (here in an edition by Raymond Mase) lived primarily in Venice, considered to be the cultural center of Europe in their time. Gioseffo Guami and Andrea Gabrieli (nephew of the better-known composer Giovanni) were the head organists at San Marco; little is known about Bastien Chilese, but his canzoni, along with those of Guami, appear in the 1608 collection *Canzoni per sonare con ogni sorte di stromenti*.

Three centuries after those early Italian pioneers, Vittorio Rieti switched from economics to music as a young student, and in 1924 went to Paris, attracted by the presence of Stravinsky, his primary influence. His 1967 *Incisioni* comprises, as he wrote, “five engravings in brass.” In his elegant style, they exhibit strong rhythmic motion, rich harmonies, and lyrical lines. The odd-numbered movements are the most developed, the third a fast tarantella and the fifth a well-constructed fugue. “Corale Primo” and “Corale Secondo” provide contrast and show Rieti’s strong attraction to rich sonorities and key relationships.

Robert Paterson’s *Shine* aims at the essence of metal itself—he developed an affinity for brass watching his sculptor father casting in a foundry. The piece explores brass, gold, mercury and steel: “Ringing Brass Bells” (which refers to both bell-like sounds and the bells of the instruments) features repeated flourishes, creating a sort of brief fanfare; the scherzo-like “Quicksilver” gradually rises in tessitura like mercury in a thermometer. “Veins of Gold” focuses on each instrument like a mini-concerto for quintet, and “Blue Steel” is the fast, powerful finale—the title refers both to the color steel blue, as well as to the tempering process that reduces brittleness and increases toughness.

Clint Needham drew inspiration for his Brass Quintet No. 1 from traumatic childhood memories of a circus. “Entry” depicts the initial chaos, with noise, sights, and smells emeshed. “Clowns” portrays the titular characters in a demonic waltz, while “The Ringleader” is a grotesque fanfare. “The Contortionist” portrays the only calm and beautiful memory, evoking slow movements and frozen positions. The finale gallops feverishly, as in Needham’s memory, he made a mad dash for the door as the performers returned and was welcomed by the comforting sight of an old Spanish mission.

This program returns to the Baroque with the canon, the strictest form of musical imitation. In *Vive le roy*, likely written for King Louis XII of France, Josquin accompanies a *cantus firmus* with a three-part canon; Martini’s setting of the popular *J’ay pris amours* juxtaposes its parts so closely that they seem in danger of becoming unison. Josquin and Palestrina’s settings of *Pleni sunt caeli* are canons at the interval of the major second that mask their strict imitation and create unusual harmonies, and the *Agnus Dei*, from Palestrina’s all-canon *Missa ad fugum* is a perfectly developed double canon.

Written for the American Brass Quintet, Eric Ewazen’s 1987 *Colchester Fantasy* takes its movement titles from pub names in Colchester, Britain’s oldest recorded town. “The Rose and Crown” is filled with bright, sonorous chords, energetic rhythmic patterns, and constantly fluctuating motives. The “The Marquis of Granby” (a name which I associated with a distant, faded aristocracy) is a stately, chorale-like movement with somber themes. “The Dragoon” brings forth the sounds of battle with clashing harmonies, agitated rhythms and fragmented melodies. Finally, “The Red Lion” (a name with its intimations of royalty and nobility) is a resonant fugue, propelled forward with motoric motion, and a rapid, spinning theme.

Hailed by *Newsweek* as “the high priests of brass,” the American Brass Quintet is internationally recognized as one of the premier chamber music ensembles of our time, celebrated for peerless leadership in the brass world. As 2013 recipient of Chamber Music America’s highest honor, the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award for significant and lasting contributions to the field, ABQ’s rich history includes performances in Asia, Australia, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Canada and the United States; a discography of nearly 60 recordings; and the premieres of over 150 contemporary brass works.

ABQ commissions by Robert Beaser, William Bolcom, Elliott Carter, Eric Ewazen, Anthony Plog, Huang Ruo, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, William Schuman, Joan Tower and Charles Whittenberg, among many others, are considered significant contributions to contemporary chamber music and the foundation of the modern brass quintet repertoire. The ABQ’s Emerging Composer Commissioning program has brought forth brass quintets by Gordon Beeferman, Jay Greenberg, Trevor Gureckis and Shafer Mahoney. Among the quintet’s recordings are 11 CDs for Summit Records since 1992 including the ABQ’s 50th release “State of the Art—The ABQ at 50” featuring recent works written for them.

Highlights of their 2015-2016 season include two performances at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, an annual recital in Juilliard’s Paul Recital Hall and an appearance at the 60th-anniversary season of the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Connecticut. The Quintet plays a program at these colleges of extremely varied music, including Little Suite of Miniatures by Steven Sacco, ABQ commissions Shine by Robert Paterson, Cadence, Fugue, Fade by Sebastian Currier, Colchester Fantasy by Eric Ewazen, early music from Gesualdo, Palestrina, Elizabethan consort music, among others. In early 2016 the ABQ joins bandoneon player Daniel Binelli and organist Ezequiel Menendez as participants in the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians at Hartford Cathedral, and in February 2016 the ABQ performs at the Oregon Bach Festival. In addition to the Ewazen and Paterson commissions, the Quintet offers a Brass Quintet by Robert Sanders and Anders Hillborg, as well as Three Venetian Canzoni and Canons of the 16th Century in spring of 2016 at Ball State University and a recital in Mobile, Alabama.

Committed to the development of brass chamber music through higher education, the American Brass Quintet has served as Ensemble-in-Residence at The Juilliard School since 1987 and the Aspen Music Festival since 1970. Of the ABQ’s residency at Juilliard, President Joseph Polisi states, “With intelligence, artistry, and imagination, the ABQ has exemplified the highest standards of chamber music for brass instruments during its remarkable existence.” Since 2000 the ABQ has offered its expertise in chamber music performance and training with a program of short residencies as part of its regular touring. Designed to offer young groups and individuals an intense chamber music experience over several days, ABQ residencies have been embraced by schools and communities throughout the United States and a dozen foreign countries. This season, the Quintet devotes a day as resident artists at the University of Connecticut in fall of 2015.

*The New York Times* recently wrote that “among North American brass ensembles none is more venerable than the American Brass Quintet,” and American Record Guide has lauded the ABQ “of all the brass quintets, the most distinguished.” Through its acclaimed performances, diverse programming, commissioning, extensive discography and educational mission, the American Brass Quintet has created a legacy unparalleled not only in the brass community, but in the chamber music field at large.

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