

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH



# Techno & Tonada

A Classical Clarinet Recital

May 12<sup>th</sup>, 11am

The Reid Hall, Edinburgh

Techno Parade - CONNESSON

Clarinet Concerto, Movement 2 - MOZART

Sonata for Clarinet & Piano - GUASTAVINO

*featuring:*

KATIE RAWSON - clarinet

CHRIS BAXTER - piano

PAOLO MINHAS - flute

MONTY MILNER - piano



# Programme

GUILLAUME CONNESSON (b. 1970)

*Techno Parade (2002)*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

*Clarinet Concerto, Movement II - Adagio (1791)*

CARLOS GUASTAVINO (1912 - 2000)

*Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1970)*

*I- Allegro Deciso*

*II- Andante*

*III - Allegro spiritoso*



# Introduction

This programme draws together works of three composers - Connesson, Mozart and Guastavino - whose compositional approaches come from vastly different eras, places and aesthetic philosophies. What ties them together in this programming is their connection to innovation and identity: one pushing into the future, one that defined conventions of the clarinet canon, and one grounded in the past.

While Connesson's *Techno Parade* and Guastavino's *Sonata* may be ideologically opposed, where they come together is through their grounding in rhythm and dance. For Connesson, this is in the underground, relentless pulsing of techno, while for Guastavino this is through the influence of the Argentine folk music that weaves through his compositional output. The *Adagio* movement of Mozart's *Concerto* provides a moment of stillness and reflection in between the vibrant, rhythmic pieces.

# *Techno Parade* (2002)

## Guillaume Connesson

Guillaume Connesson, despite rarely being performed in Britain, is one of the most widely performed living French composers worldwide. According to the composer himself, he prioritises a physical connection with the music, meaning his music is very pulse-centred, although this pulse is usually disrupted in some way. He described his compositional approach as ‘felt’ and spontaneous, rather than intellectualised and worked out on paper, lending a physicality and dance-like quality to his music.

Song and dance are at the heart of his musical viewpoint, which is particularly evident in *Techno Parade*, a piece inspired by techno music. Connesson’s works are often inspired by contemporary popular genres, with other works of his including *Disco-Toccata, Remix, Night-Club* and *Prelude and Funk*.

In *Techno Parade*, Connesson pushes the clarinet, flute and piano to their technical extremes, making use of many extended techniques. Here, the piece is described in the composer’s own words:

*‘Techno Parade is built within the framework of a sole movement based upon a continuous beat throughout. Two pithy motifs swirl about and collide, providing the piece with a character at once festive and anxiety-ridden. The clarinet’s screams and the obsessional patterns in the piano attempt to recapture the brute energy inherent in the various types of techno music. At a central point in the piece the pianist - assisted by his page turner - continues his rhythmic pursuits inside the piano, using a brush and sheets of paper placed on the strings, accompanied by sound effects produced by the flute (something akin to snare drum timbre) and clarinet glissandos...’*

# Clarinet Concerto, Movement No.2 - Adagio (1791)

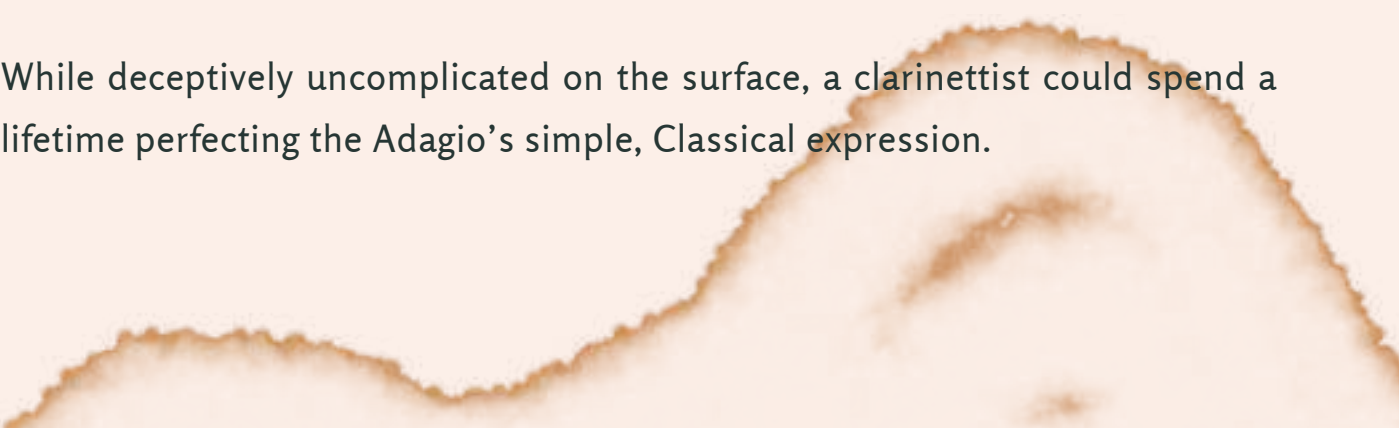
## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Widely considered a 'masterwork', Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* is one of the most important pieces of clarinet repertoire, and is one that clarinetists return to time and time again throughout their careers.

The work is a culmination of the technological and stylistic changes surrounding the clarinet's role in the 18th Century. As advancements increased the instrument's range and agility, and deepened and warmed its tone, the clarinet moved from a trumpet-like role to one of more melodic and emotional significance. The instrument's capabilities led composers to liken it to the human voice, a quality that is fully manifested in the *Adagio*. Like Connession, Mozart pushed the clarinet to the technical extremes of the time, setting a new standard for use of the clarinet's full range in a wholly virtuosic and expressive manner.

Mozart composed the Concerto for virtuoso Anton Stadler to perform on basset clarinet - an adapted clarinet with an extension to play an additional two tones lower. This instrument is now only occasionally used for historically-informed performances of Mozart's *Concerto* and *Clarinet Quintet*, so it is the job of performers playing on a standard clarinet to replicate the depth that those additional two tones provided for Stadler.

While deceptively uncomplicated on the surface, a clarinetist could spend a lifetime perfecting the *Adagio*'s simple, Classical expression.



# *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1970)*

## Carlos Guastavino

Carlos Guastavino was an influential Argentinian composer and a talented concert pianist whose conservative, Neo-Romantic compositional style contrasted with contemporaries such as Alberto Ginastera. Guastavino voiced his heavy disapproval of the moderne and avant-garde trends surrounding him, remaining aligned with the tonal, lush writing of previous eras. While most celebrated for his vocal works, his gift for lyricism permeates his instrumental pieces.

His strongly nationalistic ideology shows through in his artistic output via subtle reference to folk traditions via their rhythmic and harmonic devices. This blend of a nationalistic perspective with a Neo-Romantic, Western compositional style made him a popular nationalist figure within the Argentinian musical world.

In his *Sonata*, one of his most well known instrumental works, his compositional style and mastery for lyrical writing are on full display. It's structure moves from a whimsical sonata-allegro into a monothematic, improvisatory reflection, before surging into a vibrant, unrelenting rondo.

According to Saunders, the work is unified by elements of *tonada* - a folk form usually sung by two female voices accompanied by guitar. The clarinet evokes the female voice in its curved melodies, while the piano often adopts a guitar-like texture, particularly in the third movement. Guastavino also adopts the style's cross-rhythms and shifts between duple and triple metres. The sonata's harmonic language is rich and complex, with a tendency towards minor chords and secondary dominants that creates a sense of melancholy and nostalgia that is often found in folk music.



# Katie Rawson



Katie Rawson is a clarinetist and saxophonist in her final year studying Music at the University of Edinburgh, where she is taught by Jean Johnson. She is co-principal clarinet of both the University Symphony and Chamber Orchestras, and has been a part of many musical theatre and opera ensembles, most recently *Kiss Me Kate*, *Cendrillon* and *Iolanthe*. She is passionate about accessible, creative music education and both works as a music teaching assistant and has been a part of two children's community music projects.

# Chris Baxter

Scottish Pianist Chris Baxter is in constant demand as a soloist, accompanist and chamber musician, and has given many performances throughout the UK and internationally. As an accompanist, Chris has been involved with several international instrumental competitions, masterclasses and festivals.

Activities as an educationalist have seen Chris give masterclasses and seminars on piano technique and repertoire across the globe. Chris holds posts as Staff Pianist at the University of Edinburgh, Staff Accompanist at the RCS, and piano teacher and accompanist at the specialist music school of Douglas Academy in Glasgow.

# Paolo Minhas

Alongside completing his Physics degree, Paolo Minhas has been actively involved in the university's classical music societies as a talented flautist and conductor. As principal flute of the Sinfonia Orchestra, and co-principal flute of the Chamber Orchestra, he has played in venues across Edinburgh including Greyfriars Kirk and St Giles Cathedral. As a talented conductor, he has recently organised and conducted a highly successful concert in collaboration between the University Chamber Orchestra and musicians from the Italian Institute of Culture.

# Monty Milner

Monty is a versatile young pianist, violinist and conductor with a growing reputation for dynamic performances across a wide range of musical genres. Since beginning his Mathematics PhD at the University of Edinburgh, he has been the conductor of the EUMS Sinfonia Orchestra, and has worked closely with Will Conway as the assistant conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, with which he has also been involved as a player. While studying previously at Durham University, he conducted the main university symphony orchestra, a number of performances of *Don Giovanni*, and was associate conductor with the Choral Society.