Program notes

I. **Scaramouche** is a mix of Brazilian and French street music. It is a three-movement suite originally intended for two pianos, then becoming popular enough for numerous arrangements. This piece was intended for a theatrical performance. The first movement *Vif* should resemble a jaunty piano tune off the streets of Paris playing games with Brazilian folk music. By exploring bitonality, Milhaud keeps the listener eager to hear what comes next. The tight duet between saxophone and piano creates a piece that is rife with *jeunesse*, or youth and laughter.

The second movement *Modéré* is a lovely reflection of French song, and contrasts the two outer, lively movements. The *Moderate* tempo heightens anticipation for the next downbeat and next entrance. Is à borrowed theme from an opera he previously wrote titled *Bolivar*. It paints a familiar French theme into 2/4 and 6/8 time. When the initial theme returns in the end, it comes with an aura of relief because of the major, tonal feel.

Concluding with *Brazileira* brings us back to Milhaud’s time in South America. It is written in the form of a samba, a typical musical form performed at Carnaval celebrations in Brazil. It is in duple meter, with a dance-like beat, lots of syncopation and lively inflections. The interlocking piano and saxophone parts tie so well together that it makes this piece as fast as it is popular. Milhaud also proves himself as an exquisite arranger because the saxophone, clarinet, and woodwind choir versions of this piano duo all have striking similarities in the techniques used. This movement is so popular that it is often performed as a stand-alone piece.

II. **Lullaby**: From Dr. Higdon herself “*Lullaby* was written in honor of the birth of Samantha Clausen, the first daughter of my friends, Karen and Marty Clausen. It was originally scored for mezzo [voice], flute, and piano, but quickly became popular in this two-flute version.”

The arrangement for two saxophones and piano is just as idyllic. Higdon has arranged eight scorings of this piece by herself.

III. **Scenes From the City** is a piece of music that requires the use of extended techniques and different voicings in the saxophone. In a duet, a saxophone, typically alto, is usually paired with piano or another like instrument, for example a flute or clarinet. This piece took baritone saxophone, two iterations of saxophone lower than alto; and vibraphone, a metallic and electronic version of the marimba.

Each movement is named for a place or emotion that should be evoked. *Early Morning Fog* is as nebulous as it sounds. Unclear and somewhat strange, it is to be appreciated for what lies in its opportunities. Techniques used include glissandi and
blowing through the reed, to create a hissing sound from the saxophone, trading off with the vibraphone.

*Chez Albert* is a popular restaurant in Porto, Portugal. The pressaging shape of this movement should almost construct a day at one of Marques’s favorite places to eat.

*Late Night Movie* is a clear reference to an old drive in movie. This movement features accompaniment from the vibraphone to the melodic saxophone. An intense and intimate vibrato warms this piece to a sort of cinematic nostalgia. The drama of this piece comes from the 11/8 time section which one could allude to finding the antagonist of the scene. Concluding with chord stacking and gentle shaping, the closing sounds of the entire piece lead to gentle satisfaction.

IV. **Fusion Suite** is a diverse collection from fusion-jazz influence to an ethereal sonata. Each of the three movements is vastly different than the last, and yet all cohere with a level of elegance. This piece should be likened to attending a jazz-band on a warm august night.

*Fusion,* aptly named from its jazz influences, is a powerhouse of sound from top to bottom. This piece is written in a straight-ahead fashion and performed as a tribute to strength and precision. There is a strong trade off between baritone saxophone and piano that gives an intensive edge to the sound.

*August Beguine* gets its name from a type of dance, the beguine, similar to a foxtrot. This piece contrasts a flowing legato style with syncopation and three-note stabs. It is an interesting swing dance that transitions into a mambo in the middle. A gentle return to the original theme is led by the saxophone.

*Cygnus and Aquila* is the name of two constellations. The Swan and The Eagle. A celestial feeling is evoked from the open chords at the beginning. Both constellations are said to be Zeus or sent by him. The powerful, majestic birds later take flight with ascending and rhythmically accelerating patterns. Not to forget that this entire piece is reflective of an august night, this stargazing concludes the band’s set, and Kenna’s recital.

~ A special thank you to Catherine McMichael, for driving from her home in Michigan to coach Kenna and her pianist on her composition. It was truly an honor to work with you and further women composers. This recital has been a very large portion of research and is only possible because of people reaching out and being ready to perform new music

~Thank you to you, reader, for coming. Your enjoyment is appreciated~

Biographies

1. **Darius Milhaud: (1892-1971)** was born in the southern French town of Marseille to a Jewish immigrant family. He started as a violinist and later studied music composition at the Paris Conservatory. He worked as the secretary to Paul Claudel, a poet/dramatist and the French ambassador to Brazil. Milhaud took a strong liking to Brazilian music and proliferated his worked with ballets and popular influenced pieces like *Scaramouche*. After the invasion of France by the Nazi’s in 1940, the Milhaud’s were forced to emmigrate to the United States. Jazz pianist Dave Brubeck became one of Milhaud’s most famous students when he worked at Mills College in California. He passed away at the age of 81 and is buried in Aix-en Provence, near where he grew up.

2. **Jennifer Higdon: (b. 1962)** grew up in Atlanta, Georgia before moving to Tennessee. She joined band in high school starting on percussion in marching band and flute in concert band. Due to her lack of classical training, she struggled to catch up in her early college years of Flute Performance at Bowling Green State University. Her professor, Judith Bentley, encouraged her to explore composition. She mentions that her unorthodox upbringing gave more appeal to newer styles of music. She has historically favored music that “makes sense” rather than adhering to classical structure. The League of American Orchestras lists Higdon as one of the most performed living American composers, in 2008. She now has her Doctorate in Composition from the University of Pennsylvania and lives with her wife in Philadelphia.

3. **Telmo Marques (b. 1963)** leads a private life from Porto, Portugal. He is a multi talented composer, pianist and educator. He attended the Porto Conservatory of Music for Piano and Composition where he graduated with top grades. He completed a Master of Arts in Music Education at the University of Surrey Roehampton in Great Britain. He takes part in many recordings of portuguese artists as a pianist/arranger/producer. Marques has also contributed to many types of music such as documentaries, musical theatre pieces, and commercial jingles. Currently he is a professor of music analysis, arrangement, and composition techniques at the ESMAE (Escola Superior de Música e das Artes do Espectáculo) - Porto Polytechnic Institute.

4. **Catherine McMichael (b. 1954)** is an accomplished pianist, arranger, composer, and publisher for a wide range of instruments, voices, and ensembles. McMichael holds degrees from the University of Michigan in Piano Performance and in Chamber Music. She is a highly prolific and qualified composer for 20 years and counting. Much of her professional music life is at Saginaw State University where she teaches and the First United Methodist Church in Saginaw where she conducts the handbell choir. McMichael has published music for all levels of musicianship and is committed to making chamber and ensemble music more widely available. Many of her works comprise of piano, organ, strings, flute, brass choir, voice, and saxophone. She is highly diversified and available for commission on any instrument or voice. She has also kindly offered to work with Kenna on *Fusion Suite*. 