

## **GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685 - 1759)**

Oboe Sonata in C minor, HWV 366

- I. Largo
- II. Allegro
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro

George Frideric Handel, a prominent composer of the Baroque era, was of German-British origin. He gained renown for his compositions, including operas, oratorios, concerti grossi, and organ concertos. In addition to his masterpiece, the oratorio "Messiah," Handel demonstrated a particular fondness for the oboe, crafting numerous sonatas for various individual instruments.

The basso continuo establishes the piece's emotional tone with a dignified walking bass, while the oboe delivers a plaintive, yearning melody above. Melodies are enriched with scale-like embellishments, intensifying the feelings of sorrow and distress. In the second movement, a fast-paced and energetic fugue opens with a forceful oboe entrance, which is followed by a basso continuo. This movement frequently employs call and response interplay between the oboe and basso continuo. The third movement features intertwining melodies and poignant suspensions. The fourth movement adopts a Bourrée-style dance, divided into two parts, each reprised with a flourish of ornaments. The composition concludes with an escalating display of embellishments, concluding grandly in the home key of C minor.

Handel's sonatas are renowned for their demanding nature, often leaving oboists fatigued due to extended phrases and minimal opportunities for rest.

## **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835 - 1921)**

Sonata for Oboe and Piano, Op. 166

- I. Andantino
- II. Ad libitum - Allegretto - Ad libitum
- III. Molto Allegro

This sonata is the initial entry in a trio of compositions by Saint-Saëns tailored for wind instruments, with the other two being the clarinet and bassoon sonatas. These were created during the composer's final year, with the intent of broadening the solo repertoire for instruments that had seen minimal attention.

The opening movement, an Andantino, exudes a pastoral quality and follows a ternary structure (ABA). The oboe's solo introduction features a melody reminiscent of the Westminster chimes.

The second movement commences with a grand Bb major chord from the piano, as the oboe beckons to the natural world, painting a vivid picture of a breathtaking sunrise over mountains. Following a moment of free and lyrical oboe expression, the music shifts into a waltz-like style, evoking a leisurely and carefree afternoon, complete with rocking chair-like dotted rhythms.

In the third movement, labeled "Molto Allegro," the tempo accelerates, delivering passages of considerable technical complexity and virtuosity. The oboe showcases a flurry of rapid runs, utilizing the full range of the instrument. The composition concludes with a triumphant ascent of a D major scale, bringing the piece to a brilliant close!