

Lin Shu-Yu — Junior Recital

French Horn

Pianist: Nicolas Loh

25 November 2025 · 11:20–11:50 AM

YST Conservatory Concert Hall

Programme

Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987)

Parable VIII, Op. 120

Lin Shu-Yu, French Horn

Verne Reynolds (1926–2011)

Partita for Horn and Piano

I. Malinconia

II. Caccia

III. Aria

IV. Alla Marcia

Lin Shu-Yu, French Horn

Nicolas Loh, Piano

Programme Notes

Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987)

Parable VIII, Op. 120 (1972)

Vincent Persichetti's *Parable VIII* (1972) is one of a series of twenty-five *Parables*—works that each tell a self-contained story through sound. Written for solo horn, this piece unfolds as a psychological landscape where the performer journeys through solitude, struggle, and serenity. Persichetti's signature blend of lyricism and tension—what he called “grace and grit”—permeates every phrase. The horn sings, shouts, whispers, and searches; it is at once narrator and wanderer.

To me, *Parable VIII* feels like stepping into a dense, unknown forest at dusk. At the beginning, I walk slowly, hearing only soft echoes between the trees. There is curiosity in every step, but also the faint pulse of fear—fear of not knowing where the path leads. As I move deeper, the light changes; the ground begins to feel familiar, and a quiet confidence grows within me. But just when things seem peaceful, a sudden storm of sound erupts. Notes scatter like gusts of wind; rhythms twist unpredictably. It feels as if the forest has come alive—chaotic, unyielding, overwhelming.

Then, as abruptly as it began, the turbulence fades. The air clears, and the horn breathes again. The melodies return, but they are no longer innocent—they carry memories of what has been endured. Even in calmness, a subtle shadow lingers, like the way painful experiences continue to live in one's heart long after they have passed.

Performing this work has felt like tracing my own musical life. When I first began studying music, I was curious and eager, stepping into something beautiful and vast. Over time came confusion,

failure, and moments of doubt—like getting lost among tangled branches. Yet, each time I found my way out, I emerged more aware, more centered. The music reminds me that calmness does not mean the absence of difficulty; it is the peace that comes after facing it.

By the end, the horn finds stillness again—not naïve or unscarred, but wiser, stronger, and quieter. To me, *Parable VIII* is not only Persichetti's story; it is mine. It is about learning to walk through uncertainty, to lose and rediscover direction, and to listen—to the forest, to silence, and to oneself.

Verne Reynolds (1926–2011)

Partita for Horn and Piano (1961)

Verne Reynolds's *Partita for Horn and Piano* (1961) is a four-movement work that showcases both the horn's versatility and the composer's intimate understanding of its voice. Though the structure is neoclassical, the emotional world of the piece is vividly human—filled with light, color, and memory. Each movement feels like a distinct scene, as if watching fragments of a story through shifting lenses of time and feeling.

The opening **Malinconia** reminds me of an impressionist theatre scene: a dim stage, a single table, and a lemon resting quietly under a spotlight. The piano enters, and suddenly the light shifts, casting a different shadow on the same lemon—now softer, now colder, now tinged with gold. Each return of the motif feels like that beam of light changing direction, offering a new emotional perspective on the same moment. To me, this movement is about subtle transformation—how repetition never truly repeats, and how the same memory can feel different each time you revisit it.

The second movement, **Caccia**, is full of playfulness and adventure. I imagine a young hunter stepping into the forest, eyes bright with excitement, unaware of how wild and unpredictable nature can be. There is something endearingly naïve about his energy—the rhythms bounce like footsteps on uneven ground, the horn calls ring out like laughter echoing between trees. The music is alive with youthful confidence, but beneath it lies the faint tension of not knowing what lies ahead. When I play this, I feel as though I am reliving my own growing years—the joy of discovery, the thrill of trying, and the innocence of not yet fearing failure.

The third movement, **Aria**, is where time seems to stop. The melody unfolds slowly, almost like a memory being remembered in fragments. Every time I perform it, I feel a wave of tenderness and sorrow, as if the horn were whispering something too fragile to say aloud. Sometimes, as the final line rises and fades away, I find myself on the edge of tears—it reminds me of quiet nights when sadness visits unannounced, not destructive, but deeply human. This movement, to me, is about accepting vulnerability—allowing oneself to feel loss, and to find beauty within it.

The final movement, **Alla Marcia**, bursts open like a celebration. It's festive, sparkling, and full of childlike joy. When I play it, I imagine the streets during Lunar New Year or Christmas Eve—children running, lanterns glowing, laughter echoing in the air. The middle section turns briefly lyrical, like a family gathering around to sing by candlelight, before the music erupts again into a parade of sound. The horns and piano seem to dance together, clapping, rejoicing, until the very last note shines like fireworks in the night sky.

To me, *Partita* feels like a reflection of life's full spectrum: wonder, adventure, sorrow, and joy. Each movement is a season, and together they form a circle—a reminder that light always returns, and that even the smallest moments can hold extraordinary beauty.

