

WALTER ROSS

VARIATIONS

ON

‘AUPRES DE MA BLONDE’

Oboe, Oboe d’amore (Cor anglais) and Bass Oboe (Bassoon)



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AI EN 004

Walter Ross

(1936-)

Walter Ross was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA, in 1936. He began to study the French horn at the age of twelve and, by seventeen, was performing professionally with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra.

Although spending four years at the University of Nebraska studying mechanical engineering and astronomy, he continued playing with the orchestra. Ross decided to return to university to study music. After his master's degree, he went on to Cornell University for his doctorate. There, he was awarded an Organization of American States Fellowship to study composition privately under Alberto Ginastera at the Instituto Torcuato de Tella (Buenos Aires). He has been the recipient of significant grants and fellowships, numerous awards and prizes.

Ross began teaching composition and theory in the Music Department at the University of Virginia in 1967. He established the Charlottesville University and Community Orchestra, which he conducted for two years. Later, he formed a Baroque trio sonata ensemble in which he played flute and recorder.

During his tenure at the University of Virginia he served as Chairman of the Department of Music and was awarded a University Outstanding Teaching Award. He participated in regional, national, and international juries of composition and performance.

Walter Ross has composed over 150 works, which have been widely performed in over forty countries. Many of his compositions have been published, recorded and broadcast. He is, perhaps, best known for his compositions featuring brass and woodwinds. The influences of his own extensive performance background and diverse musical training (with composers who stressed bright orchestration and rhythmic excitement) can be detected in many of his works. Many of his recent pieces are representative of his current interest in neo-modal, pan-diatonic composition.

He has been a visiting composer at the Aspen Music Festival, a featured composer at several universities and forums, and a board member of the Capital Composers Alliance.

In 1997 he wrote a cantata featuring the poetry of Rita Dove, the American Poet Laureate. Recent choral works include 'Lux Aeterna' to honour the victims of 9/11, which has been performed upon a number of occasions.

Retired from full time teaching, Walter Ross currently performs on double bass in the Blue Ridge Chamber Orchestra. In addition to composing, he continues his interest in chess (in 1969 he won a trophy in the U.S. Open Chess Tournament), astronomy, and the History of Science.

Variations

on

'Auprès de ma blonde'

Oboe, Oboe d'amore (Cor anglais), and Bass Oboe (Bassoon)

A EN 004

This work, composed in 1997 and dedicated to Jennifer Paull, is a set of seven frolicking variations based upon the joyous version of the well-known French *chanson* of the same name. There is much comical imitation between the three instruments. Their lines are woven into a rich texture of oboe family *timbres*.

There existed two versions of the original song: the above (meaning 'Next to My Sweetheart') and a somewhat less amusing '*Le Prisonnier de Hollande*' ('The Prisoner of Holland'). Both became extremely popular towards the end of the XVIIIth century. They made their way into widespread custom at the conclusion of (or shortly after) the Franco-Dutch War, which took place during the early reign of Louis XIV. French soldiers, sailors and hostages were frequently held prisoner in the Netherlands; hence the alternative words and title. The composition is widely attributed to André Joubert without any formal proof, however. The music has evolved over centuries of repetition into the style we know today.

The lively tempo and melody made it eminently suitable for military marches for which it is still employed. '*Auprès de ma blonde*' gained widespread regard as both a nursery rhyme and drinking song shedding its more disconsolate variation along its well-sung swagger through time. It even made an apparition in two episodes of 'Star Trek: The Next Generation'!

Walter Ross
1997



Works by Walter Ross published by Amoris International.

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