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Rufus Olivier is the principal bassoonist with the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Ballet. At 21 years of age he became a bassoonist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra before moving to his current positions with the Opera and Ballet.

Mr. Olivier has been guest soloist with numerous orchestras throughout the United States, Japan, and France, premiered new works for the bassoon and was featured in live radio recitals in Los Angeles. He is a founding member of the Anchor Chamber Players, the Midsummer Mozart Orchestra, and the Stanford Wind Quintet. He has recorded many movie, video, CD and TV soundtracks including Disney’s Never Cry Wolf; San Francisco Opera’s Grammy nominated CD Orphee et Eurydice and won a Grammy for the soundtrack Elmo in Grouch land. In 2016 the ballet orchestra won 2 Grammys and has a CD at number one on Billboards classical chart.

Prior to arriving in the Bay Area, Mr. Olivier performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra under Neville Marriner, and the Goldofsky Opera Tours. He studied with David Briedenthal of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and is on the music faculties of Stanford University, Azusa Pacific University and Mills College. In February 1993 Mayor Frank M. Jordon Awarded Mr. Olivier The Seal of The City and County of San Francisco, in recognition of his “Exemplary Accomplishment On The Occasion of Black History Month.” In February 2005 Rufus was the featured subject of the cover story in the International Musician, a publication that reaches musicians in the United States and Canada as well as Europe. In 2005 Mr. Olivier received the Award of Merit from the United States Postal Service.

San Francisco Chronicle

Neglected bassoon puts on show of beauty, ebullience
Joshua Kosman, Chronicle Music Critic
Tuesday, July 24, 2007

Mozart's is the only bassoon concerto that shows up in concert with any regularity, and even that one doesn't get done particularly often. It certainly doesn't get many performances as brilliant and beautiful as Sunday's rendition by the Midsummer Mozart Festival in Berkeley's First Congregational Church.
The soloist was Rufus Olivier, the longtime principal bassoonist for the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet, and one of the Bay Area's great undersung musical heroes. For his all-too-rare moment in the spotlight, he took hold of Mozart's youthful score and transformed it into an opportunity for full-strength display.

Not that Mozart didn't help things along, of course. His Bassoon Concerto, written at 18 for one of the players in the Salzburg court orchestra, is an ebullient little masterpiece whose elegance and wit go far beyond what the occasion must have demanded.

But it was left to Olivier and Music Director George Cleve to bring the piece's charms to full fruition. In the outer movements, Olivier tossed off the solo passagework with an air of amiable directness, as though the intent were to beguile as well as to dazzle, and he delivered the cadenzas with flawless timing.

Best of all was the slow movement, a lyrical solo based on a characteristic Mozartean melodic gesture that recurs in various spots, most notably the aria "Porgi amor" from "The Marriage of Figaro." Olivier invested the music with songful, soulful allure.