



Saturday, March 21, 2020, 8pm  
Zellerbach Hall

**Mnozil Brass**  
*Cirque*

**The Musicians**

Thomas Gansch, *trumpet*

Robert Rother, *trumpet*

Roman Rindberger, *trumpet*

Leonhard Paul, *trombone & bass trumpet*

Gerhard Füssel, *trombone*

Zoltan Kiss, *trombone*

Wilfried Brandstötter, *tuba*

*This performance of Cirque will include one intermission.*

*Cal Performances' 2019–20 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*



**M**nozil Brass has established itself as one of the world's premier brass ensembles. With over 130 performances each year, these artists have sold out houses from the farthest reaches of Europe to Israel, China, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the United States, captivating audiences with their blend of musical virtuosity and theatrical wit. No wonder their videos have garnered millions of YouTube views and their fans have traveled countless miles to hear them play.

The group's recent returns to North America were hailed as "seriously funny" and "whimsically brazen." Their shows include *Yes! Yes! Yes!*, which blends original compositions with classical favorites, jazz standards, and popular hits; and *Cirque*, where the musicians combat the monkey business of daily life with music and humor, transforming the stage into something approaching a musical flea circus. As always, the repertoire is presented with the group's iconic humor and wit in scenes so clever that they would be worthy of Monty Python.

Mnozil Brass takes its name from the "Gasthaus Mnozil," a restaurant across the street from the Vienna Conservatory, where, in 1992, seven young brass musicians met and began playing at a monthly open-mic. Since then, the group has embraced repertoire for all ages and stages of life: from folk to classical to jazz to pop—all executed with the same fearlessness, immense technical skill, and typical Viennese "schmäh" (It is almost impossible to find an English translation for this word, but it is best rendered as a kind of sarcastic charm!).

During its time away from touring, Mnozil Brass has recorded eight albums and six DVDs. The musicians have collaborated on three operetta and opera productions and composed and recorded the music for the 2006 film *Freundschaft*. The group has been nominated for the Amadeus Austrian Music Award and it won the prestigious Salzburger Stier Cabaret Prize in 2006.

**Thomas Gansch** is one of the band's founding members. He was born in Melk an der Donau, and by the time he turned the tender age of 17, he was already playing at the Vienna State Opera. However, Gansch's love of jazz was stronger, which led to his becoming one of the most versatile trumpeters in Austria; an artist who can play jazz, classical, crossover, and everything in between. Gansch is a whirlwind on stage and can tell a good joke or two, as well. When he has time off, he composes music for Mnozil Brass.

**Robert Rother** also hails from Melk an der Donau. As children, both he and Thomas Gansch played in a brass band conducted by Thomas' very strict father. Polkas, waltzes, and marches were always on the program—a good learning experience, it seems! Now, Rother can create sounds on his instrument that possess so much longing and feeling that they are guaranteed to bring anyone to tears. Unlike Thomas, Robert hardly moves at all on stage; he lets the music speak for itself.

**Roman Rindberger** was born into a musical family and played folk music as a youngster with his father, Hans, and two brothers. His father, in turn, would meet up to play music with Gerhard Füll's father, Franz (the families lived near each other). Rindberger loves technical passages, and renders them with the precision of a Swiss clockmaker. And he even knows how his instruments work! If anyone wants to know more about brass music, he is the man for you. On stage, Rindberger's character is that of the Latin Lover.

**Leonhard Paul** was born in Mödling, near Vienna, and is the first musician his family has ever produced. (There *was* a grandfather who earned his money as a painter, and whose pictures hang in many of the houses in the better parts of Vienna!) Recently, the other members of the band have started to get a little concerned about Paul, as he seems to have taken an interest in portraying shady characters while on stage. Everyone wants to play the hero, but Paul likes roles that explore the darker side. No one knows exactly what's going on in his head!



**Gerhard Füssel**

Gerhard Füssel grew up near Roman Rindberger, and also had a father who taught him a lot about brass music. He is the most well-liked member of the group, probably because he looks after the financial matters. Everyone tries to keep on his good side, and no one wants to incur his wrath. For his part, he is usually friendly to everyone.

**Zoltan Kiss**

Austrian folk music was certainly not part of Zoltan Kiss' upbringing. He was born in Budapest, spent some time in Poland, and finally settled in Vienna, where he plays trombone in four languages (!). One of the group's favorite games is to put some really difficult music in front of him and see if he can play it (he usually can!). Kiss'

technical skills can take your breath away. Bets have been placed as to when and how something will be written that he cannot master, but, so far—high, low, slow, fast—he can play it all!

**Wilfried Brandstötter**

Wilfried Brandstötter began his career playing the recorder, subsequently joining a boys' choir. After that, he played the violin, followed by the trumpet, before he finally found himself at ease with the tuba. So, moving quickly is actually not really his strength. To Wilfried, life is a slow and wide river. Hence his ambition consists of caressing audiences with the pleasant vibrations and low tones produced by his tuba. He does not understand why people are thrilled by fast, high-pitched melodies.