

*Seventy-fourth Season 2024–25*

# The Westchester Chamber Music Society



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The Westchester Chamber Music Society (WCMS)  
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Sunday, November 10, 2024  
Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester  
2125 Westchester Avenue  
Rye, New York

## *The Westchester Chamber Music Society*

*presents*

### FRISSON

Suliman Tekalli, *violin*

Colin Brookes, *viola*

Madeline Fayette, *cello*

Milad Daniari, *bass*

Tom Gallant, *oboe*

Alec Manasse, *clarinet*

Rémy Taghavi, *bassoon*

Wilden Dannenberg, *horn*



### BLIND BROOK HIGH SCHOOL CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Rachel Horn, *flute*

Lianne Ferentz, *flute*

Jocelyn Zheng, *oboe*

Jacob Goldowsky, *clarinet*

Abigail Weintraub, *piano*

*Following the concert, there will be a Question & Answer session with the student and professional musicians.*



Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)  
*Danse des Mirlitons (Dance of the Reed Flutes)*  
from "The Nutcracker" (arr. by Wilhelm Popp)

**Pause**  
**Please remain seated**

Johan Halvorsen (1864-1935)  
Handel-Halvorsen: *Passacaglia for Violin*  
*and Viola in G Minor* (1893)  
*Largamente con agilit *  
*Andante molto energico*  
*Allegro con fuoco*

August Walter (1821-1896)  
*Octet in B-flat for Strings and Winds, Op. 7*  
*Allegro moderato*  
*Scherzo-Allegro*  
*Andante*  
*Finale-Vivace*

### Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)  
*Septet in E-flat, Op. 20*  
*Adagio-Allegro con brio*  
*Adagio cantabile*  
*Tempo di menuetto*  
*Tema con variazioni*  
*Scherzo: Allegro molto e vivace*  
*Andante con moto alla marcia*  
*Presto*



## About this Performance

**Frisson**, true to its name, injects a special feeling of excitement into their music-making as they blend tradition and innovation in their programming. Frisson features the best and brightest of classical music stars; and in just a few seasons, they have emerged as one of the most popular chamber-music groups in America. The group showcases emerging young artists as well as seasoned professionals, and many of the members have performed at the Marlboro, Verbier, Spoleto, and Mostly Mozart festivals, as well as at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Several of the members of Frisson have been chosen to be part of Carnegie Hall's prestigious Ensemble Connect program, and many have gone on to hold principal positions in such ensembles as the Cleveland Orchestra and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Frisson has been called "the classical group that does it all," and they perform engaging programs for winds, piano trios and piano quartets, octets, and nonets across the country and beyond.

**Thomas Gallant**, *oboe and artistic director*, is a first-prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild International New York Competition and one of very few musicians ever to win that competition as an oboe soloist. His solo and chamber-music performances have taken him to David Geffen Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and the Frick Collection in New York City; to Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia; to the Spoleto Festival in Italy; and to the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. He has appeared as a guest soloist with the Kronos Quartet at the Ravinia Festival and has collaborated with the flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal; with the Colorado, Calder, Tesla, and Lark Quartets; with Cuarteto Latinoamericano; and with the Adaskin String Trio. Notable performances include a concert of solo and chamber music works for the oboe at the Library of Congress and tours across the United States as soloist with Camerata Bariloche from Argentina and the String Orchestra of New York City, performing concertos by Bach and Vaughan-Williams.

Through its new **Youth Initiative**, the Westchester Chamber Music Society (WCMS) is continuing to partner with chamber music programs at schools and colleges across Westchester County. This initiative is part of an intergenerational focus that has been shaping our programming and outreach. WCMS is committed to supporting young performers and engaging more listeners from every age group. We are inviting young performers and listeners to become youthful ambassadors who can advocate

for chamber music in all its diversity. High-school students may also be able to use their participation to satisfy community service requirements. At this concert, we are delighted to welcome students from the Blind Brook High School Chamber Ensemble and their teacher, Brian J. Lotze.



## Program Notes by Joshua Berrett, Ph.D.

Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)  
*Danse des Mirlitons (Dance of the Reed Flutes)*  
from “*The Nutcracker*” (arr. by Wilhelm Popp)

This perennially fresh dance comes from the ballet’s Act II Divertissement, together with such numbers as the Spanish, Arabian, Chinese, and Russian Dances. In this arrangement, Wilhelm Popp has shifted the original primary melodic material of three closely voiced flutes to a quartet of two flutes, an oboe, and a clarinet. The piano takes the role of the strings, providing the essential rhythmic underpinning.

Johan Halvorsen (1864-1935)  
Handel-Halvorsen: *Passacaglia for Violin  
and Viola in G Minor*

Johan Halvorsen was a Norwegian violinist, conductor, and composer whose career overlapped with that of his more famous compatriot, Edvard Grieg, to whom he was related by marriage. Born 21 years after Grieg, he composed for the most part in the national romantic style that his relative exemplified. Quite different, however, is the work on our program. The 1897 *Passacaglia* can be performed with violin and viola, but is more often played by violin and cello. It was written after the finale of Handel’s *Suite No. 7 in G minor* for harpsichord.

Following Handel’s lead, Halvorsen uses the opening four measures as his material. With their bass line and strong progression of chords centered around G minor, these measures remained firmly fixed in the background as we are treated to a series of quicksilver variations—versions that are marked by changes in rhythm, texture, and tempo. The music builds in

energy, reaching a fiery conclusion and bidding farewell with a bold assertion in the key of G major.

August Walter (1821-1896)  
*Octet in B-flat, Op. 7*

The violinist-composer August Walter has been consigned to the margins of music history for far too long, and this afternoon's Frisson performance of his *Octet* should come as a revelation. This composition is perhaps his most significant surviving chamber work. Originally composed in 1849, it is heard today in the revised 1863 version. It is scored for an octet consisting of violin, viola, cello, and double bass together with oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn. The result is a rich symphonic texture within a chamber format.

Walter's tutelage under Bernhard Molique, a prominent violinist and composer, was a crucial aspect of his education. Based at that time in Walter's hometown of Stuttgart, Molique, who was known for his virtuosic violin compositions and performances, provided Walter with a rigorous technical foundation. His deep understanding of the classical forms and Romantic expression undoubtedly influenced Walter's chamber-music writing, as Molique was a dedicated advocate for chamber music during a time when large-scale symphonic works often took center stage.

In addition to Molique, Walter studied with Simon Sechter in Vienna. Sechter was a figure primarily known for his theoretical expertise and his role as a counterpoint teacher. Sechter's influence seems evident in Walter's command of form and structure, particularly in his use of contrapuntal techniques and formal clarity, which characterized much of the academic music training of the era. Sechter's teaching was highly respected, and he counted Franz Schubert among his pupils, placing Walter within a lineage of composers who deeply valued compositional rigor.

The work follows a four-movement structure typical of classical and early Romantic chamber music. A lively *Allegro moderato* opens the work. It is introduced by a melodic turn built on a B-flat major chord announced by viola, cello, and bass playing in octaves—something that becomes a unifying motif in this sonata-form movement. Incidentally, it is remarkably similar to the very beginning of Mozart's *Bassoon Concerto*, also in B-flat.

The body of the movement is notable for the energetic exchanges between the instruments and a sense of lyrical interplay that highlights Walter's command of melodic development. His background in counterpoint is apparent in the tight-knit

dialogues among the instruments, with themes introduced and developed in a compelling way.

The *Scherzo* is light and playful, displaying Walter's ability to create rhythmic vitality; he provides vivid contrast with two Trios. The Adagio movement, reflective and lyrical, offers an opportunity for Walter to explore deeper emotional territory largely within the key areas of E-flat major and the relative key of C minor. Here, we see the influence of Romanticism at play, with a rich harmonic language and expressive depth. Molique's influence may be detected in the violin writing, which is both idiomatic and technically demanding.

Back in the home key, the *Vivace* finale is spirited and joyful. The overall effect is enhanced by Walter's delightful shifts in tempo, not to mention his exaggerated pauses.

### Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) *Septet in E-flat, Op. 20*

Beethoven created a hit with his *Septet, Op. 20*. Written between 1799 and early 1800, it received its first public performance on April 2 at a benefit concert for Beethoven at Vienna's Royal Imperial Theater. The score includes a dedication to the Empress Maria Theresa. By all accounts, from the very start the *Septet* struck a chord with audiences. Within a year, it was being performed throughout Europe. Yet its continuing popularity over the years came to irk Beethoven so much that he at one point blurted out: "That damn work! I wish it were burned!" He came to resent the fact that the public was lavishing all this attention on his *Septet* to the detriment of later works that he considered of much greater merit. Yet, he had recognized the work's commercial value early on, and encouraged his publisher to issue it not only in its original instrumentation—clarinet, horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and double bass—but in other arrangements as well. Among his suggestions: that the winds be replaced by a second violin, second viola, and second cello; that it be arranged as a work for flute "perhaps as a quintet." "This," he explained, "would help the amateur flautists, who have already approached me on the subject, and they would swarm around and feed on it like hungry insects." Then there is also a trio arrangement he made for his personal physician for piano, violin, and clarinet. And returning to the work's commercial value, it is so telling that at an auction held after Beethoven's death, the *Septet* fetched almost three times the amount of money as his monumental *Missa Solemnis*.



The appeal of the *Septet* lies in its accessible style with elements harking back to the 18th century divertimento. Organized in six movements, it can at times sound like a chamber concerto. Elsewhere, there are memorable instances of antiphonal writing between strings and winds. These qualities abound in the opening movement. After a dignified introductory *Adagio*, there comes an *Allegro con brio*, a sonata form. The second theme is where Beethoven seems to be savoring the timbral nuances of his wind instruments, while the horn, in particular, comes into its own in the development and coda.

The second movement, *Adagio cantabile*, marks a change to A-flat major. It is a movement of pastoral calm in a gently undulating rhythm. Clarinet, bassoon, and cello come into their own. There is a return to E-flat major with the chipper third movement, marked *Tempo di Menuetto*. Beethoven here repurposes material from his *Piano Sonata Op. 49, No. 2*. The Trio, in part, suggests a mischievous tiptoeing punctuated by plunging triplet arpeggiation by the horn, not to mention other interjections by the winds. The fourth movement is a theme with five variations and a coda. Violin and viola introduce the theme, which is based on a Rhenish folksong, “*Ach Schiffer, lieber Schiffer*” (“Oh Skipper, dear Skipper”). Strings dominate the theme and the first two variations. The winds become prominent in the remaining variations and coda. Among the wind sounds to listen for are a bassoon-clarinet duet and a passage for the horn supported by violin triplets and double-bass pizzicatos.

The fifth movement, the *Scherzo*, is in jaunty duple rhythm and is driven by a plunging line on the horn. Contrast comes with the Trio, which features a long cello solo. The finale is introduced by a slow funereal march in E-flat minor. By contrast, the ensuing *Presto*, a sonata form, reverts to the major key with a vigorous, zesty theme played on the violin’s G string. There is a violin cadenza to usher in a restatement of the main theme as the movement moves to its rousing conclusion.

*The Westchester Chamber Music Society  
thanks the following for their generous support*

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# Coming Up



## **The Lysander Piano Trio**

December 8, 2024

Itamar Zorman, *violin*

Liza Stepanova, *piano*

Michael Katz, *cello*

Beethoven:

*Piano Trio No. 1 in D Major, Op. 70, "Ghost"*

Clarke:

*Piano Trio (1921)*

Schumann:

*Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 63*

## **Tesla Quartet**

March 16, 2025

*Program includes*

*Mozart, Bacewicz, and Dvořák*

## **The Callisto Quartet**

May 4, 2025

*Program includes*

*Haydn, Esmail, and Dvořák*



