

Seventy-third Season 2023–24

The Westchester Chamber Music Society



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

Sunday, December 3, 2023
Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester
2125 Westchester Avenue, Rye, New York

The Westchester Chamber Music Society

presents

FRISSON WINDS

Anna Urrey, *flute*
Thomas Gallant, *oboe*
Bixby Kennedy, *clarinet*
Rémy Taghavi, *bassoon*
Wilden Dannenberg, *horn*



Anton Reicha (1770 -1836)
Wind Quintet in A Minor,
Op. 100, No. 5
Lento—Allegro
Andante con variazione
Minuetto—Allegro vivo
Finale—Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 -1827)
Variations on “La ci
darem la mano,” WoO 28

Jean Françaix (1912 -1997)
Divertissement for Wind
Trio (1947)
Prelude
Allegretto assai
Elegie
Scherzo

Intermission

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Syrinx

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-
1959)
Bachianas Brasileiras,
No. 6
Aria
Fantasia

Paquito D’Rivera (1948 -)
Habanera

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
Le Tombeau de Couperin
Prelude. Vife
Forlane. Allegretto
Menuet. Allegro
moderato
Rigaudon. Assez vif—
Moins vif

Following the concert, there will be a
Question & Answer session with the quartet.

About the Performers

Frisson Winds performs a wide variety of music for winds of various combinations and features trios, quartets, and quintets by such composers as Beethoven, Mozart, Françaix, Poulenc, William Grant Still, Valerie Coleman, Gershwin, Paquito d’Rivera, and many more. Frisson features the best and brightest of classical music’s stars, and the group showcases emerging young artists as well as seasoned professionals. In just a few seasons the group has skyrocketed to become one of the leading classical music groups in the field. The members of Frisson have impressive biographies and many have performed at such prestigious venues as the Verbier Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Marlboro Festival, and Ravinia Festivals, as well as in New York City at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center’s David Geffen Hall.

The Members of Frisson are experienced educators and teaching artists, having a wide range of experience from Suzuki pedagogy through the college level. Individually, they have participated as New York Philharmonic Teaching Artists and as part of Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect program. The musicians enjoy exploring the mechanics of their instruments as well as creating listening experiences for audiences of all ages.

Anna Urrey, *flute*, is a solo and chamber music artist. She has performed with the New Jersey Symphony, the American Symphony Orchestra, and Symphony in C, among others. Internationally, Ms. Urrey has collaborated with Philippe Entremont at Les Concerts du Cloître in Nice, France, was an Artist-In-Residence at the Banff Music Center in Alberta, Canada, and performed in Muscat, Oman, with the Castleton Festival Orchestra under the direction of Lorin Maazel. Ms. Urrey is a New York Philharmonic Teaching Artist Apprentice and an adjunct flute teacher at the City College of New York.

Thomas Gallant, *oboe*, is a First Prize Winner of the Concert Artists Guild International New York Competition and one of very few musicians ever to win this competition as an oboe soloist. His solo and chamber music performances have taken him to numerous venues, including David Geffen Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and the Frick Collection in New York City; and the Library of Congress. He has appeared as guest soloist with Jean-Pierre Rampal; Cuarteto Casals; the Calder, Kronos, and Lark quartets, and Cuarteto Latinoamericano.

Bixby Kennedy, *clarinet*, is a teaching artist in New York City public schools. As a chamber musician, he has performed throughout the United States and Europe, appearing at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully, the Kennedy Center, and Caramoor, among others. Mr. Kennedy performs classical repertoire on period and replica instruments with Grand Harmonie Orchestra. He

is associate principal clarinet in the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and principal clarinet in Symphony in C.

Rémy Taghavi, *bassoon*, has performed, toured, and recorded with numerous groups across North America, South America, and Asia. He has held the position of principal bassoon with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra since 2018 and has performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Orchestra New England (ONE), and the Cape and Princeton Symphonies. As a chamber musician, Rémy has given performances at the Banff Centre, the White Mountains Chamber Music Festival, the Atlantic Music Festival, and other venues.

Wilden Dannenberg, *horn*, is committed to engaging listeners in a range of musical styles and experiences. With a firm foundation in the repertoire of early to contemporary works, he is regularly engaged as a hornist, conductor, arranger, and organist. Recent highlights include the Weill Hall premiere of a Carnegie Hall commission, by the composer TJ Cole, and multiple collaborations as a conductor and performer with the Pulitzer Prize winning composer Tania León. Mr. Dannenberg is on the faculty of Adelphi University, and is an artist-member of Bronx Arts Ensemble.



Program Notes by Joshua Berrett, Ph.D.

Anton Reicha (1770-1836)

Wind Quintet in A Minor, Op. 100, No. 5

Anton Reicha was a contemporary of Beethoven. In fact, they shared the same birth year and were lifelong friends. They met as fourteen-year-olds in Bonn, Beethoven's birthplace, where they played in the court orchestra, the Hofkapelle. Reicha played violin and flute, Beethoven, the viola. They shared other early formative experiences as well. Not only did they study composition alongside each other with Christian Gottlob Neefe, they also matriculated together in 1789 as students on the faculty of philosophy at the University of Bonn.

The reason Reicha was in Bonn in the first place was that his adoptive uncle, Josef Reicha, a respected musician in his own right, had brought him there. At age ten, Anton had run away from his Prague home and a neglectful widowed mother and found refuge with his paternal uncle. But the young Reicha's days in Bonn were soon to be cut short in 1794, when

the French attacked. He fled to Hamburg, where he taught harmony and composition. Five years later he was in Paris, hoping to make his mark as an opera composer. But that was not to be. Relocating to Vienna in 1801, he began attracting attention with a body of semi-didactic keyboard works dealing with fugue and variation technique, only to have his life disrupted yet again by war. In 1808 he settled in Paris, became naturalized as a French citizen, changing Antonin to Antoine, and in 1818 was appointed professor at the Conservatoire, where he taught composition for the rest of his life. Among his pupils were Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt.

Reicha is mainly remembered today for the 24 wind quintets he wrote in Paris between about 1810 and 1820. These were foundational works that established the norm for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn. The Op. 100, No. 5 on this afternoon's program is part of a set of six published in 1824. It begins with a sonata-form first movement, absolutely exquisite in so many details. There is an airy freshness to the writing and its shifting textures, as each instrument engages in a give-and-take within a community of equals. This tone is set at the very opening of the introductory *Lento* as the bassoon solo gently outlines the tonic A-minor chord, to be answered by the oboe with harmonic support from clarinet and bassoon. The oboe theme opening the ensuing *Allegro* can be heard as an embellished version of this initial A-minor triad. It is the first of three essential themes playing out in this movement. Following an expansive development section, there comes an abridged recapitulation in A major.

The *Andante con variazione*, in D major, consists of six variations plus coda. Each instrument is given a solo turn: horn, bassoon, oboe—the only variation in the parallel minor—horn, clarinet, and flute. What follows is *Minuetto-Allegro vivo*, Reicha's version of a scherzo. The Trio provides contrast to the scherzo material and is repurposed in the coda. The *Finale* is a sonata form in duple time with a perky main theme in dotted rhythm. There are episodes with cantering triplets, a series of fermatas used to comical effect, delightful antiphonal effects contrasting horn and bassoon with upper instruments, virtuosic flute passages, and more. This is fun-filled music, the players ready to party.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Variations on "La ci darem la mano," WoO 28

Beethoven's *Variations on "La ci darem la mano,"* WoO 28, written around 1795, uses as its source material the duet of seduction sung by Don Giovanni and Zerlina from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. The composition is included in a catalog

of 228 miscellaneous works attributed to Beethoven, collectively known as “*Werke ohne Opuszahl*” (“Works without opus number”). It is written in the key of C and features a trio of two oboes and cor anglais (English horn). The work consists of the theme, eight variations, and coda.

Jean Françaix (1912-1997)
Divertissement for Wind Trio (1947)

Jean Françaix was phenomenally prolific throughout his life; before one piece was barely finished, he would begin another. His total output numbers some 200 works in a wide variety of styles. Naturally gifted, he received encouragement from his family at an early age. His father was Director of the Conservatoire of Le Mans, a city in northwestern France best known for its sports-car races; his mother was a teacher of singing. He began his formal studies at his father’s school before moving on to the Paris Conservatoire. Heavily influenced by Ravel, Françaix began composing at the age of six, and by age ten had published his first work.

Ravel himself was among his early champions. As he said to the boy’s parents: “Among the child’s gifts I observe above all the most fruitful an artist can possess, that of curiosity; you must not stifle those precious gifts now or ever, or risk letting this young sensibility wither.” Studies with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger soon followed. Considering him to be among the very best of her students, she strongly encouraged him in his career.

Françaix’s music exemplifies a lightness of style, a genial interplay between musical lines, an unmistakable elegance, urbanity, and élan. These are the qualities of his 1947 *Divertissement* for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. The opening *Prelude* has a clear A-B-A structure. In the outer portions, the bassoon suggests the voice of a genial grandfather telling a story, clarinet and oboe meanwhile adding their own conversational patter. The midsection has the quality of a polyrhythmic free-for-all. The *Allegretto assai* is a scurrying affair with the bassoon having to make some wide leaps. *Elegie* is another ternary form followed by a brief coda. The concluding *Scherzo* is an entertaining mélange of different rhythms punctuated by some dramatic pauses.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Syrinx

Debussy’s *Syrinx* is a piece for unaccompanied solo flute. The title alludes to Greek mythology and the nymph pursued by Pan, who then created panpipes from river reeds. Composed in 1912

as incidental music for a scene depicting the death of Pan, the piece is beloved by professional flutists for the way it taps into the rich expressive range of the instrument. The piece is dominated by a drooping, lamenting melodic pattern, and eventually ends with a descending whole-tone scale—a sigh of resignation.

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)
Bachianas Brasileiras, No. 6

Heitor Villa-Lobos is arguably the single most significant creative figure in 20th-century Brazilian music. Known for his restlessness and flamboyance, he had an instinctive approach to composition—he had little formal training—leaving behind a huge body of music. There is no definitive number to Villa-Lobos's total output, numbers ranging between one to two thousand works. But there can be no doubt about his deep immersion in his country's folkloric elements—a mix of ingredients Portuguese, African, and Indian. As he once said: "I am folklore; my melodies are just as authentic as those which originate from the souls of the people." A native of Rio de Janeiro, Villa-Lobos joined a band of *chorões* (serenaders) in his early teens, learning to improvise on sentimental melodies incorporating Afro-Brazilian rhythms. Around that time, his father started him on the cello, which he later studied seriously at the Instituto Nacional de Música. This remained his principal instrument together with the guitar.

To a large extent, Villa-Lobos's fame rests on the nine works entitled "Bachianas Brasileiras" that he wrote between 1930 and 1945; each of them varies in form and instrumentation. He referred to them as "a genre of composition in homage to Johann Sebastian Bach." More than that, for him Bach was "the intermediary between all cultures." At the same time, his approach to Baroque counterpoint can perhaps be best described as a free adaptation.

Bachianas Brasileiras, No. 6 is a 1938 duet for flute and bassoon, written in two movements, *Aria* (choro) and *Fantasia*. *Aria* has an improvisatory quality reminiscent of Villa-Lobos's teenage years as a serenader. The second movement is marked by syncopations inspired by a range of popular ethnic idioms and some rhythmically complex counterpoint.

Paquito D'Rivera (1948 -)
Habanera

Paquito D'Rivera is a towering presence on the Cuban-American music scene. Born in Havana, he was exposed to Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman early on. He began attending the Havana Conservatory of Music in 1960, learning alto saxophone and

clarinet. In the course of the next twenty years he developed his own special mix of jazz, rock, and classical music, while at the same time gradually running afoul of the communist regime. A meeting with Che Guevara finally prompted him to take action, and in early 1980, while touring Spain, he sought asylum with the American Embassy. Soon after that, his career began to soar in the U.S. and abroad.

Over the years, D’Rivera has garnered nine Grammy Awards, and he was the first to receive a Grammy in both Latin and jazz categories. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Kennedy Center’s Living Jazz Legend Award, and the National Medal of Arts. D’Rivera’s *Habanera* is a valentine to the city of his birth. Composed in 2014, it is a very short piece for two clarinets and bass clarinet with a wistful main idea.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Perhaps more than any other composer, Ravel delighted in paradox and irony. Behind an elegant façade, there was often lurking something darker and more personal. *Le Tombeau de Couperin* is a vivid case in point. In the summer of 1917, after his release from army service, Ravel set to work on a project that he had only sketched out some time before. The result was a six-movement suite called *Le Tombeau de Couperin*—an epitaph to comrades lost in World War I. As Ravel once put it, “In reality the homage is not so much to Couperin himself as to French music of the 18th century.”

Ironically, like many other works of Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was originally conceived as a work for solo piano only to be subsequently orchestrated with such consummate skill as to sound like the true original. This afternoon’s version for wind quintet follows the pattern set by Ravel’s orchestral version in that two of the movements in the six-movement original piano version, *Fugue* and *Toccata*, are omitted. *Prelude* is like a bubbly sixteenth-note bath intermixed with drops of harmonic ambiguity. *Forlane* evokes the spirit of an 18th-century French jig; it combines elegance with some wide leaps and darker, inscrutable harmonies. *Menuet* is a miniature masterpiece melding elegance with touches of melancholy, while the concluding energetic *Rigaudon* harks back to a lively 17th-century type of dance.

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Coming Up



March 10, 2024

The American Brass Quintet

Kevin Cobb, *trumpet*

Brandon Ridenour, *trumpet*

Eric Reed, *horn*

Hillary Simms, *trombone*

John D. Rojak, *bass trombone*

Program to be announced.



April 21, 2024

The Momenta Quartet

Emilie-Anne Gendron, *violin*

Alex Shiozaki, *violin*

Stephanie Griffin, *viola*

Michael Hass, *cello*

The Momenta plans to perform

Brown

Just Visible in the Distance

Haydn

String Quartet in F Minor,

No. 5, Op. 20

Schubert

Quartet No. 13 in A Minor,

Op. 29/D 804 ("Rosamunde")

