

Society for
C H A M B E R

Music

in
R O C H E S T E R

46th Season

***Beethoven Quintet for Piano
and Winds***

Sunday, Oct. 9, 2022 at 4:00 pm

**Performance Hall,
Hochstein School of Music and Dance**

PROGRAM

Pandora for Wind Quintet Heng Yang

[SCMR Composition Competition Winner]

Eastman-Hanson Chamber Players

Sean Marron *flute*

Peter Davies *oboe*

Alyssa Estrella *clarinet*

Gretchen Berendt *horn*

Megan Neuman *bassoon*

'Peace' for Clarinet and Piano (2020) Jessie Montgomery

(b. 1981)

Michael Wayne *clarinet*

Chiao-Wen Cheng *piano*

A Tour d'Anches, Op. 97 (1943) Florent Schmitt
(1870-1958)

A courre. Assez allègre
Sur un rythme prévu. Très animé
Nocturne-sarabande. Un peu lent
Quasimodo. Avec entrain

Erik Behr *oboe*
Michael Wayne *clarinet*
George Sakakeeny *bassoon*

Three Fugues on Themes of J.S. Bach (1845) Clara Schumann
(1819-1896)

Erik Behr *oboe*
Michael Wayne *clarinet*
W. Peter Kurau *horn*
George Sakakeeny *bassoon*

Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op. 16 (1796) Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1904)

Grave - Allegro ma non troppo
Andante cantabile
Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo

Erik Behr *oboe*
Michael Wayne *clarinet*
W. Peter Kurau *horn*
George Sakakeeny *bassoon*
Chiao-Wen Cheng *piano*

PROGRAM NOTES

Heng Yang: *Pandora*

Heng Yang is a New York-based Taiwanese composer who started her musical journey at 10. During her time in the US, she studied composition with Michael Gandolfi, John Mallia, and Richard Pearson Thomas, acquiring skills in writing music for solo, chamber, choir, and orchestra.

When pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Composition at New England Conservatory, Heng worked as a music theory teaching assistant and the president of the Taiwanese Student Association. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Composition from New England Conservatory and a Master's degree in Communication from Northwestern University, and is now pursuing her second Master's degree in Music and Music Education and Communication and Education at Columbia University and works as the president of the Taiwanese Student Association at Columbia.

Recent highlights include winning the 2022 SCMR Young Composer Competition and the second prize in the 2020 Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York's Emerging Composers Competition.

Heng Yang writes, "*Pandora* woodwind quintet was inspired by Pandora's box in Greek mythology. In the story, Pandora was a beautiful woman created by Zeus to marry Prometheus' brother Epimetheus as punishment for Prometheus, who stole fire from Zeus for humans. To take revenge, Zeus asked all the gods to give Pandora gifts, and he gave Pandora a small box but said she must never open it. Out of curiosity, Pandora opened the box and released horrible things such as sickness, death, poverty, and sadness into the world. Since Pandora closed the box immediately, she captured the only thing, hope, left in the box. This implied that although people in the world are experiencing difficulties, there is always hope that supports everyone."

"The first movement of the piece describes the process of Zeus and other gods giving gifts to Pandora before sending her to the wedding. The dissonant chords used in the music create a magical and exciting atmosphere, while the running notes throughout the movement convey the message of the hidden anxiety and danger under the blessing gathering."

"The second movement describes the curiosity and hesitation of Pandora before opening the box given by Zeus. The conversation-like melodies represent the inner voices of Pandora, making her struggle to open the box."

"The third movement describes the scenario when Pandora opened the box. The triplet rhythmic patterns used in the piece represent the horrible things that come out of the box, and the dotted note figures represent the warning of the serious outcome. The music ends up closing with a sense of surprise, indicating there is still one thing, hope, left in the box, giving people the strength to confront difficulties in the world."

Jessie Montgomery: *'Peace' for Clarinet and Piano*

Jessie Montgomery is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice, placing her as one of the most relevant interpreters of 21st century American sound and experience.

Jessie was born and raised in Manhattan's Lower East Side in the 1980s when the neighborhood was becoming a hotbed of artistic experimentation and community development. Her parents - her father a musician, her mother a theater artist and storyteller - were engaged in the activities of the neighborhood and regularly involved Jessie in rallies, performances, and parties where neighbors, activists, and artists gathered to celebrate and support the movements of the time. From this unique experience Jessie has created a life that merges composing, performance, education, and advocacy.

Jessie began her violin studies at the Third Street Music School Settlement where her interests in improvisation and composition were kindled. Continuing at the Juilliard School, she received a B.A. in violin performance and gained confidence that composition would be part of her career path. A firm belief in the social mission of music led to community outreach and music instruction at Community Music Works, Providence, R.I., where improvisation, so successful in student engagement, became part of her compositional style. She then pursued a Master's degree in composition and film scoring from New York University. An eclectic taste in music and an experimental nature led to forming PUBLIQuartet to help develop improvisational and live collaborative composition which led to collaboration with the Catalist Quartet.

Since 1999, Jessie has been affiliated with The Sphinx Organization, which supports young African-American and Latinx string players, and has served as composer-in-residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the organization's flagship professional touring ensemble. A two-time laureate of the annual Sphinx Competition, she was awarded a generous MPower grant to assist in the development of her debut album, *Strum: Music for Strings*. She has received additional grants and awards from the ASCAP Foundation, Chamber Music America, American Composers Orchestra, the Joyce Foundation, and the Sorel Organization. She continues to maintain an active performance career as a violinist, appearing regularly with Silkroad, Sphinx Virtuosi, and her own ensembles,

Jessie Montgomery writes, "Written just a month after the Great Sadness of the first quarantine orders due to COVID-19, facing the shock felt by the whole globe as well as a personal crisis, I find myself struggling to define what actually brings me joy. I was going to call this 'Melancholy' instead of 'Peace', but I'm at a stage of making peace with sadness as it comes and goes like any other emotion. I'm learning to observe sadness for the first time not as a negative emotion, but as a necessary dynamic to the human experience.

Florent Schmitt: *A Tour d'Anches*

In his later career, the French composer Florent Schmitt devoted more of his energies to composing works for chamber wind ensemble. Among those works are his quartets for saxophones, for flutes, for trombones and tuba, and a sextet for clarinets. Schmitt also composed two highly engaging chamber pieces for diverse winds: *A Tour d'Anches*, Op. 97 dating from 1939-43, and *Chants alizés*, Op. 125, composed in the early 1950s.

In focusing on chamber wind groups, Schmitt was following the same path as several other French composers — Jacques Ibert, Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc, and Jean Françaix among them — who saw the potential for writing scores that exploited the interesting and contrasting sonorities of various wind instruments. *A Tour d'Anches* (translated into English means "Reeds in Turn") is scored for oboe, clarinet, bassoon and piano.

The French music critic Pierre Barbier contends that the piece is a tribute to the 18th century spirit of Rameau, brought forward into the 20th century in the same manner as Maurice Ravel did with his *Le Tombeau de Couperin*.

Within the span of around 15 minutes, the composer serves up a variety of contrasting moods. The piece begins with a short first movement, where the instruments are all lithe and quicksilver. Indeed, they're described by the musicologist Caroline Wright as "chasing each other through the texture until disappearing into the distance."

The second movement is in a waltz tempo. But this is no ordinary waltz, as it's punctuated by unpredictable rhythms. Begun by the clarinet declaiming a sentimental melody reminiscent of Chabrier or Satie or Ibert (*Divertissement*), the other instruments soon join in. The discourse becomes ever more animated, leading to an abrupt finish.

The third movement is the centerpiece of the suite — a fervent nocturne and sarabande reminiscent not only of Claude Debussy but also of Schmitt's mentor, Gabriel Fauré. The movement opens with an oboe solo that then becomes interwoven with the other wind instruments. Florid piano writing helps bring the movement to a powerful climax before subsiding into quietude. The emotional arc of this movement, which is as lengthy as the entire rest of the suite, is powerfully effective.

The finale returns to the spirit and humor of the first two movements. In this case, it's a musical portrait of Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre-Dame. One can clearly picture Victor Hugo's character as he moves purposefully among the bells in the cathedral's tower. It's all over in under two minutes.

A Tour d'Anches was composed by Schmitt over a four year-period from 1939 to 1943. The score was dedicated to the French bassoonist, teacher and conductor Fernand Oubradous, who was among the players who premiered the piece in Paris in 1947. In 1954 the composer produced an alternative version of the piece scored for strings and piano.

Clara Schumann: *Three Fugues on Themes of J.S. Bach*

In 1840, Robert Schumann was finally able to marry his love, Clara Wieck, despite great opposition from her father. She was the leading pianist of her generation, much better known than Robert at the time. Their mutual love and musicality led them to share the development of each other's creative qualities. From the very beginning, they established a marriage diary, which was to become a central forum for their musical and personal dialogue.

From their diary, 26-September-1840:

"Today it is already 14 days that we have been married! How beautifully and happily we've spent these days! Our studies of Bach's fugues are continuing; every time we play one it becomes more interesting for me. Such great art with such a natural flow; one can say this about almost every one of the fugues." - Clara

From their diary, 3-October-1840 (third week):

"My Clara has been very diligent; yes, she burns for music. I heard her study new and old études by Chopin, also by Henselt, diverse things by Bach, my *Fantasie* and *Kreisleriana*, and the *F-minor Sonata* by Beethoven. We are pursuing our daily studies of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*." - Robert

These excerpts reveal to us that these two great musicians spiritually consummated their marriage by studying Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. For him, this was a chance to share and renew his devotion to the composer he revered above all others, for her it was a period of revelation, a profound enrichment of her musical education. She had always composed music and improvised daily at the piano - concert pianists routinely improvised cadenzas and played their own works to display their virtuosity - but now she went beyond the notes to discover the compositional principles Bach used to create his fugues through the eyes of Robert Schumann the composer. Robert and Clara's "honeymoon" studies of Bach continued to be a source of creative insight.

From their diary, January 1845:

"Today we began contrapuntal studies that gave me much pleasure, despite all the trouble, because I soon saw what I had not believed possible - I wrote a fugue, and then several more, since we are continuing the studies on a daily basis. I cannot thank Robert enough for his patience with me and am doubly happy when something is successful since he can view it as his work as well, he himself is in the midst of a fugue passion." - Clara

These endeavors developed into the three four-part fugues based on themes from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* in the space of a few days in February. Clara's Bach-based fugues, featured in this program, were followed by three fugues based on themes that Robert thought up for her. He was so proud of Clara's musical development that he arranged for their publication. "I would like to surprise my wife with the *Preludes and Fugues* for her birthday on September 13th" he wrote to his

publisher Breitkopf & Hartel and added that Clara may be the first woman to compose in “this difficult genre.” Published as her Opus 16, they include preludes written before each fugue.

Clara’s compositional insight was of extreme importance to both her husband and to Johannes Brahms who sent almost every piece he wrote to her for evaluation, greatly respecting her judgement. She and Brahms would also edit editions of Robert Schumann’s works after his death.

Beethoven: *Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op. 16 (1796)*

Beethoven composed his one and only quintet for piano and winds four years after moving from Bonn to Vienna to pursue his career as a pianist and composer. The 26-year-old had published piano trios and sonatas by this time, but his fame had come primarily from his dazzling displays of improvisational skill and keyboard virtuosity. He was still exploring instrumental sonorities before setting out on his voyage of symphonic composition. While Beethoven’s Quintet owes a debt to Mozart in general and Mozart’s 1784 Quintet for Piano and Winds in particular, Beethoven’s voice and methods are his own. Beethoven follows Mozart’s plan of opening with a majestic slow introduction, though with more emphatic rhetoric. But while Mozart had subtly interwoven the piano and wind quartet, Beethoven, working on a more expansive scale, sets them in opposition with a much more prominent role for the piano, so that the outer movements at times resemble a chamber concerto for piano and winds.

The appeal of the Opus 16 Quintet lies in its freshness and affability. The first movement charms with its genial themes, its engaging dialogue between piano and winds, a briefly stormy development section that ends playfully with a return in a classically incorrect key, and then a graceful coda.

The *Andante cantabile* is striking for the beautiful melody with which the piano opens the movement, and for increasingly elaborate embellishments and rich instrumental textures as the movement progresses. High spirits reign in the good-natured last movement, a rondo in which, as in the other movements, the piano glitters.

An impish Beethoven enlivened the premiere of the Quintet. As in a piano concerto, Beethoven leaves room for a solo cadenza in the first half of the finale. According to Ferdinand Ries “Beethoven suddenly started improvising, taking the Rondo subject as his theme and entertaining himself and those listening for quite some time. This was not the case with the accompanists, however; they were very annoyed. . . It did indeed look very droll to see these gentlemen, expecting to begin at any moment, raising their instruments to their mouths incessantly and then quietly putting them down again.”

When the Quintet was published in 1801, Beethoven included a Quartet arrangement for Piano and Strings, also designated Opus 16, probably in an effort to appeal to as wide an audience as possible and exploit the expanding sheet music market. In the Quartet version, Beethoven added a number of string passages to sound with the piano in a change from the original strict alternation between the piano and the winds.

Notes compiled by Eric Zeise from text by Heng Yang, Jesse Montgomery, Philip Nones, Michelle Rasmussen’s “Robert and Clara Schumann and their Teacher, J.S. Bach,” Dennis Bade, Willard Hertz and Barbara Leish

Biographical Notes

Eastman - Hanson Chamber Players: Funded by the Howard Hanson Institute for American Music at the Eastman School of Music, the Eastman-Hanson Chamber Players perform the winning compositions from our Composition Competition. The players are drawn from the Eastman School to form ensembles suiting the needs of the composition. SCMR's Young Composer Competitions attract entries statewide from high school and college students. Winners receive a cash prize and their chamber work is performed in a series concert.

Founded in 1964, with the late American composer and Eastman School Director, Howard Hanson, as its first director, the Hanson Institute for American Music was created to promote the commissioning, recording, performance, study, and preservation of works of American composers. The Hanson Institute Board and Director annually determine program priorities that benefit American composers and music composition.

Principal Oboe of the RPO since 2007, **Erik Behr** has also made numerous concerto appearances, including the world premiere (2018) of Allen Shawn's oboe concerto, commissioned for Behr and the RPO. In 2017 he performed the world premiere of Guggenheim Fellow Adam Roberts' oboe quartet, commissioned for Behr and SCMR. Other works written for him include Jeff Tyzik's *Dance Suite* for oboe and orchestra (2020) and Jim Willey's *Oboe Quartet* (2021). Currently Adjunct Professor at Roberts Wesleyan College, Behr has also been a guest oboe teacher at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Rice University, the National Orchestral Institute, and Carnegie Hall's NYO-USA. He received a B.M. (cum laude) at Arizona State University, M.M. from Temple University, and D.M.A. from Rice University.

Taiwanese pianist **Chiao-Wen Cheng** has performed as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician in major venues throughout the United States and Asia, and has won numerous piano competitions and awards. A dedicated chamber musician, Cheng has become a sought-after collaborative partner through her sensitive playing, vibrant sound colors, and detailed voicing. Since 2019, Cheng has been an Artist-Faculty Piano Collaborator at the Perlman Music Program. Cheng began piano lessons with her aunt at age four. She completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music as a student of Frank Weinstock, where she received a Van Cliburn Scholarship. She completed her master's degree at Peabody Institute, as a student of Benjamin Pasternack, where she received a full scholarship. Cheng holds a doctoral degree from the Eastman School, where she was a student and teaching assistant of Barry Snyder, and received a graduate assistantship as a collaborative pianist and large ensemble pianist. Cheng is an Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano at the Eastman School, and in 2022 she joined the RPO as Principal Keyboardist.

W. Peter Kurau, Professor of Horn, Director of the Eastman Horn Choir, and hornist with Eastman Brass, was appointed in 1995 to the full-time faculty at the Eastman School, succeeding Verne Reynolds. He previously served on the faculties of the University of Missouri-Columbia, SUNY-Geneseo, Roberts Wesleyan College, Houghton College, and Nazareth College. He has served as Principal Horn of the RPO since 2004. He served as an Artistic Ambassador for the United States Information Agency, presenting recitals and master classes in Serbia-Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, and Syria during September 1997. Active as a soloist, chamber musician, and clinician, he has performed across the U.S. and abroad. He

has been active in the International Horn Society, and in commissioning and premiering many new works for horn.

George Sakakeeny is professor of bassoon at the Eastman School, and principal bassoonist of the Eastern Music Festival. In the past he has held the principal bassoon positions of the New Japan Philharmonic, The Handel & Haydn Society, the Opera Company of Boston, Promusica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus, and CityMusic Cleveland. Three major works for bassoon and orchestra have been composed for him: Libby Larsen's *full moon in the city* (2013), Peter Schickele's *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra* (1998), and Alexander Blechinger's *Fagottkonzert* (1997). For seven years he served as guest bassoon professor for El Sistema. Sakakeeny has made numerous recordings and he is the author of the iBook *Making Reeds Start to Finish with George Sakakeeny*.

Clarinetist **Michael Wayne** joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music in 2019. Previously Mr. Wayne was a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops. He has held faculty positions at the New England Conservatory of Music and the Tanglewood Music Center, and a visiting professorship at the Oberlin Conservatory. Mr. Wayne made his Carnegie Hall solo debut with the world premiere of Michael Daugherty's clarinet concerto, *Brooklyn Bridge*. Mr. Wayne has been the recipient of the Paul Boylan Award (University of Michigan), Whitaker Advanced Study Grant (Music Academy of the West), Earl V. Moore Award (University of Michigan), and a Fine Arts Award (Interlochen). Mr. Wayne holds degrees from the Interlochen Arts Academy and the University of Michigan, where his principal teachers were Richard Hawkins and Fred Ormand.

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-- Mission Statement --