

PEACE CHAMBER CONCERT SERIES
**BERLIN PHILHARMONIC
WIND QUINTET**



FEBRUARY 13

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BERLIN PHILHARMONIC WIND QUINTET

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019 • 7 PM
GUNTER THEATRE

Michael Hasel, flute
Andreas Wittmann, oboe
Walter Seyfarth, clarinet

Fergus McWilliam, horn
Marion Reinhard, bassoon

Three Fantasies for Mechanical Organ

Fantasia F minor, KV 594 for "ein Orgelwerk in einer Uhr"

Adagio - Allegro - Adagio

Andante F major, KV 616 for "eine Orgelwalze"

Fantasia F minor, KV 608 for "eine Orgelwalze"

Allegro - Andante - Allegro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)

(Arranged for wind quintet

by Michael Hasel)

Quintet, op.10 (1929)

Preludio

Preghiera

Ballo eccentrico

Epilogo

Pavel Haas

(1899-1944)

Intermission

Six Bagatelles (1953)

Allegro con spirito - Rubato, lamentoso

Allegro grazioso - Presto ruvido

Adagio, Mesto (Béla Bartók in memoriam)

Molto vivace, capriccioso

György Ligeti

(1923-2006)

Quintet op. 43 (1922)

Allegro ben moderato

Menuet

Praeludium, Tema con variazioni – Allegretto

Carl Nielsen

(1865-1931)

Program subject to change

ABOUT THE BERLIN PHILHARMONIC WIND QUINTET

The Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet (Philharmonisches Bläserquintett Berlin) was founded in 1988, during the era of Herbert von Karajan, as the first permanently established wind quintet in the famous orchestra's rich tradition of chamber music.

With four original members (Marion Reinhard succeeded founding bassoonist Henning Trog in 2009), they are living musical witnesses to the hugely productive and influential musical partnerships of the Berlin Philharmonic not only with Karajan, but also with its two most recent Musical Directors: Claudio Abbado and Sir Simon Rattle. Naturally, as members of the Berlin Philharmonic, they have also enjoyed important collaborations with every other major conductor of their times, whether Leonard Bernstein, Carlos Kleiber, Sir John Barbirolli, Günter Wand, Carlo Maria Giulini, Bernard Haitink, Riccardo Muti, James Levine, or Daniel Barenboim, to name a few.

The Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet has astonished audiences worldwide with their range of expression, their tonal spectrum and their conceptual unity. Indeed many listeners and critics agree that the ensemble has succeeded in virtually redefining the sound of the classic wind quintet. Their repertoire covers not only the entire spectrum of the wind quintet literature but also includes works for enlarged ensemble, i.e. the sextets of Janáček and Reinicke or the septets of Hindemith and Koechlin. In addition, collaboration with pianists such as Lars Vogt, Stephen Hough, Jon Nakamatsu, and Lilya Zilberstein have intensified in recent years.

The ensemble's commitment to the wind quintet repertoire is passionate. In 1991, they found the perfect partner for their recording plans, the Swedish company BIS Records, already well known in its own right for uncompromising standards. The results of this long and exclusive collaboration have received critical accolades worldwide - indeed many of these recordings are already widely held to be "definitive" or "reference" performances.

In addition to their concert appearances throughout Europe, North and South America, Israel, Australia, and the Far East, the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet are also popular guests at international festivals such as the Berliner Festwochen, the Edinburgh Festival, the London Proms, the Quintette-Biennale Marseille, the Rheingau Festival, and the Salzburg Festival. Their television productions and radio broadcasts are seen and heard throughout Europe, Asia, and North America.

In recent years the members of the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet have intensified their teaching and coaching roles with youth; they give chamber music workshops and instrumental instruction in many countries, with a particular commitment, for example, to the youth orchestra program of Venezuela. 2019 will mark their final tour of North America, as several members of the ensemble will soon be retiring from the orchestra. The Quintet will continue to give occasional performances in Europe.

BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Hasel (flute)

Michael Hasel was born in Hofheim near Frankfurt and began conducting, piano, and organ studies, intending to graduate as a church musician. His first flute teachers were Herbert Grimm and Willy Schmidt and he went on to study piano and conducting with Prof. Francis Travis and flute with Aurèle Nicolet at the Freiburg Musikhochschule. He completed his conducting studies with Prof. Michael Gielen. Hasel's first orchestral appointment as flutist was from 1982 to 1984 with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, after which he became a member of the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan. For several years he performed as principal flute with the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra under conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, and James Levine. In 1994 he was appointed Professor of Wind Ensemble and Chamber Music at the Heidelberg-Mannheim Musikhochschule. Both as conductor and soloist Hasel has appeared in Europe, Japan, and South America with renowned ensembles such as Ensemble Modern, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, the Gustav Mahler Chamber Orchester, Orchestra Simon Bolivar, and the Berliner Philharmoniker.

Andreas Wittmann (oboe)

Andreas Wittmann was born in Munich. He studied oboe at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich with Prof. Manfred Clement and later at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin with Hansjörg Schellenberger. In Munich he studied conducting with Prof. Hermann Michael and participated in conducting masterclasses with Sergiu Celibidache. Wittmann spent only one year as a scholarship student at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy before being appointed to the Berlin Philharmonic itself in 1986. He is an internationally active soloist, chamber musician, and teacher, whose career has also included performing as Principal Oboe with the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic. He taught at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy for several years before becoming its General Manager in 2013. Wittmann is currently Permanent Guest Conductor of Brazil's Orquestra Sinfônica Salvador de Bahia. He regularly conducts the Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin, as well as the Sibelius-Orchester of Berlin.

Walter Seyfarth (clarinet)

Walter Seyfarth is a native of Düsseldorf and was a first prize winner at the age of 6 in the Deutscher Tonkünstlerverband competition. Following his studies at the Freiburg Musikhochschule with Peter Rieckhoff and with Karl Leister at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy, he was appointed to the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra. In 1985, he joined the Berlin Philharmonic as Solo Eb-Clarinetist. It was Seyfarth who was the driving force behind the founding of the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet in 1988. He is also a member of the larger ensemble "The Winds of the Berlin Philharmonic." Among his teaching and mentoring responsibilities are the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy, the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra, and the Venezuelan Youth Orchestras Programme, El Sistema.

Fergus McWilliam (horn)

Fergus McWilliam was born on the shores of Scotland's Loch Ness and studied initially in Canada (John Simonelli, Frederick Rizner, and at the University of Toronto with Eugene Rittich), having made his début as a soloist with the Toronto Symphony under Seiji Ozawa at the age of 15. Further studies were undertaken in Amsterdam (Adriaan van Woudenberg) and Stockholm (Wilhelm Lanzky-Otto). From 1972 through 1979 McWilliam was a member of several Canadian orchestras and chamber music ensembles before joining the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. From 1982 to 1985 he was a member of the Bavarian Radio Symphony and in 1985 he was appointed to the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan. He is not only active internationally as a soloist and chamber musician but teaches at a number of internationally renowned music schools, including the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy. He has worked with the Venezuelan youth music program El Sistema for a decade and now is a Board Director of Sistema Scotland. McWilliam served on Berliner Philharmoniker committees for 23 years and is the author of the acclaimed book *Blow Your OWN Horn*.

Marion Reinhard (bassoon)

Marion Reinhard was born in Nuremberg (Nürnberg) and from 1991 to 1995 studied at the Meistersinger Conservatory with Walter Urbach and Karsten Nagel. While still only a student, she began performing with the Nuremberg Philharmonic Orchestra as Contra Bassoonist. In 1995 she won a scholarship to study at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy with Stefan Schweigert and Daniele Damiano. Further studies with Georg Kluetsch in Weimar rounded out her musical training and in 1999 Reinhard was appointed to the Berlin Philharmonic, where she became a direct colleague of Henning Trog. From 1996 until her appointment to the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet, she was a founding member of the Orsolino Wind Quintet, an ensemble which was mentored by Michael Hasel. They won many international prizes, including the Munich A.R.D. Competition, and also made numerous recordings.

PROGRAM NOTES

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - KV 594, 608, 616

Recorded by the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet: BIS CD 1132

As neither I (the page-turning flautist of our ensemble) nor our audiences wished to deny ourselves further contact with Mozart's music, the use of transcriptions was an obvious step to take. Since we formed the ensemble in 1988, we have steadfastly refused to play arrangements (with the exception of a few display pieces and encores). However, we make an exception for Mozart, because his oeuvre includes certain works that cry out for a quintet arrangement if the transcription is carried out with due stylistic sensitivity. Moreover, as the mechanical organ and glass harmonica are not readily available for concert performances, I hope that my arrangements will make some of Mozart's masterpieces more easily accessible for a larger audience.

The starting point for my arrangements was the text of the Neue Mozart Ausgabe (published by Bärenreiter), which has been carried over unaltered except for certain octave and chord doublings that had to be changed for

technical reasons, especially in KV 608, where chords of up to twelve notes occur. The instruments (except for the horn) are used in accordance with the customs and technical capabilities of Mozart's era. I have used the horn according to modern performance technique, not least in order to achieve a greater range of colour in the instrumentation, a point that Mozart evidently also considered important (see KV 452). To have restricted myself to the valve-less horn would have resulted in very sparing use of the instrument, especially in KV 594 and KV 608 with their wide harmonic range.

Mozart's three surviving works for mechanical organ all come from the last year of his life. They were written in response to a commission from Count Josef von Deym's Müllersche Kunstgalerie in Vienna. This art gallery contained a curious mixture of exhibits: plaster replicas of ancient statues, wax reliefs, paintings, copper engravings, and mechanical musical instruments. In March 1791 the Count mounted a memorial exhibition for Field Marshal Baron Gideon von Laudon, an Austrian national hero, at which funeral music was to be played hourly. For this purpose Mozart wrote KV 594 (the last entry in his catalogue of works for December 1790) and KV 608 (dated 3rd March 1791). KV 616, dated 4th May 1791, was intended for performance elsewhere in the collection; furthermore, we can conclude from Mozart's letters and fragments that he wrote additional pieces for mechanical organ, works which have regrettably not survived.

Clockwork organ or organ cylinder are terms referring to a flute-playing musical clock, in other words a mechanical organ that is coupled to a clock mechanism in order to reproduce music at a given point in time. These flute-playing musical clocks, for which such composers as Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven also composed a number of pieces, were then very popular instruments in high society art galleries and other curiosity chambers. They existed in a wide range of types and with differing ranges, as can well be seen from Mozart's scores. For the four-part texture of KV 616, for example, a high-pitched instrument with small pipes was sufficient, whilst KV 608 requires chords of up to twelve notes and a considerably larger range.

Mozart's music for organ cylinder were soon arranged for other instruments in order to make them accessible to a wider audience. The adaptations range from piano transcriptions to versions for orchestra. Several arrangements exist for wind quintet; the older ones (Meyer, Pillney) often take considerable liberties with the text, whilst the newer ones (Schottstädt, Schäfer) reproduce Mozart's music with much greater precision. In particular KV 608, an outstanding piece with fine contrapuntal passages, a fugue and a double fugue (a late flowering of Mozart's preoccupation with the music of Bach), rapidly became well-known. Beethoven made a copy of it for study purposes (he also possessed a copy of KV 594). Schubert's F minor Fantasy for piano four hands clearly shows its influence, and the Adagio from Franz Lachner's Wind Octet has obvious links with the Andante from Mozart's piece.

Finally, we can only marvel at the way Mozart's inspiration attained such elevated heights when tackling a task of which, as we know from his letters, he was not especially fond.

As W. Hildesheimer points out in his biography of Mozart, "Music of significance for a musical box, an almost tragic-comical combination, at any rate a triumph of the spirit over the material."

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Pavel Haas - Quintet op. 10

Pavel Haas was born in Czechoslovakia in 1899 and died in Auschwitz in 1944 after a two year incarceration at Terezin or Theresienstadt concentration camp. At Terezin, Haas joined a number of other doomed composers, musicians, playwrights, actors and other artists, many of whom were eventually transferred to Auschwitz.

Haas' style resembles both his teachers' (Janáček and Stravinsky) and is informed by a strong and colourful palette of Moravian folk songs and synagogue music along with the more modern European compositional technique of polyrhythms.

His wind quintet was composed in 1929 and published in 1934, but very few copies survived the war. The first movement, *Preludio*, is a lovely soulful melody. The second, *Preghiera*, is a dark and haunting prayer. The third, *Ballo Eccentrico*, leads the players through an increasingly frenzied folk dance. The final movement, *Epilogo*, is a powerful chorale bringing the work to a broad and expansive close.

The work is of high quality and ought to be considered among a seminal group of woodwind works written in Europe beginning in the 1920s - including works by Paul Hindemith, Arnold Schoenberg, Carl Nielsen and Leoš Janáček.

© Michael Hasel

György Ligeti - Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet

György Ligeti (1923 - 2006) taught composition at the Budapest College of Music (1950-56); he hated the ideology-bound cultural world of the dictatorship. It is therefore unsurprising that he could not have his piano cycle *Musica ricercata* performed: the work is influenced by the style of late Bartók and Stravinsky and was therefore regarded as highly experimental. An arrangement of six pieces from this cycle for wind quintet also remained unperformed until the eve of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 - even though it was thought too risky to offer the public the dissonant final piece.

No less than sixteen years after their completion (Ligeti had meanwhile emigrated to the West and was already regarded as a prominent composer), the Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet were first performed by the Stockholm Wind Quintet, and since then they have remained a highlight of the repertoire of all ambitious wind quintets, attesting to the cycle's brilliant originality.

Wherein lies the attraction of these spirited bagatelles? Each movement inhabits its own world in terms of structure and hidden associations. The first movement can be seen as a parody of the above-mentioned divertimento style. First of

all the composer plays with the major third, then the minor third, then both together before an ending in C major – all this in a time span of barely a minute! The second movement pays homage to the Hungarian folk-song in a manner learned from Bartók – with emotional, elegiac character. Bartók's expressive slow movements also serve as a role model for the fifth movement (*Bely Bartók in memoriam*). The quick bagatelles Nos. 3, 4 and 6 are flavoured by various asymmetrical rhythms including the 'Bulgarian rhythm' cultivated by Bartók.

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Carl Nielsen - Wind Quintet

One evening in the autumn of 1921 the Danish pianist Christian Christiansen was rehearsing with four of the five woodwind players of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet, when the telephone rang. It was Nielsen, who also belonged to Christiansen's circle of friends, asking if he could come over and listen to them play, since he had heard that they were playing music by Mozart, his favourite composer.

The evening was long but worthwhile, for it became the initial inspiration for Nielsen's Wind Quintet, written for the five Copenhagen musicians. The Wind Quintet was first performed at a private musical evening on April 30, 1922 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The first public performance was in Copenhagen on October 9 that year, naturally using the Copenhagen Wind Quintet: Paul Hagemann (flute), Svend Christian Felumb (oboe), Aage Oxenvad (clarinet), Hans S rensen (horn) and Knud Lassen (bassoon), seen in rehearsal with Nielsen in a drawing by P. E. Johannessen. Hagemann was later replaced by Gilbert Jespersen for whom the Flute Concerto was composed.

All the players became his personal friends and the work is written with an intimate understanding of their personalities.

Childhood

"On June 9, 1865 my mother had a difficult but very happy day. My mother was home alone with some of the younger children when she went into labour. The pains were very bad and she went outside, wrapped her arms around a tree and banged her head against the trunk. So I feel certain that she must have been very happy and relieved when I finally came into the world."

This is how the composer Carl Nielsen begins the account of his childhood on what is perhaps the loveliest island of all in Denmark - Funen. The island is also the birthplace of 19th century fairy tale author Hans Christian Andersen. Nielsen was one of twelve children, and he grew up in a poor but presumably stable environment. His father was a painter and decorator, but so engrossed in his second job as a fiddler that it didn't take long before young Nielsen became involved in it too:

"By the time I was eight or nine, I had received violin lessons from my father and a local teacher called Petersen. At a party where I stood in for my father until he was able to come, I played a polka I had written myself.

It was just as my father was coming into the dance hall that this masterpiece was played for the very first time. I could see from the look on his face that he didn't care much for it. Anyway, he played along with me for a bit. When the dance was over he said: 'You should leave this sort of things alone; no one can dance to them'."

Conservatory - Further Studies

In Odense other people had begun to take notice of his musical talent, and without his parents' knowledge, in May 1883, private funds were collected to finance a trip for Nielsen to the Danish capital, Copenhagen. There he was introduced to the leading Danish composer of the period, Niels W. Gade (1817-90), who at that time was famous all over Europe. Gade looked at the string quartet which Nielsen had brought with him, and recommended that the young man do exactly what he had so longed to do: study at the Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen. Nielsen passed the audition in December of that year.

"The last fortnight of December, including Christmas 1883, I spent at home with my parents and some of my brothers and sisters. The two pear-trees in the garden stood stiff with frost, denying that Albert and I had ever knocked ripe fruit from their branches. Across the road the rectory field lay fallow under a chalky layer of snow... But what is all this? I shall be coming back, and then I shall greet everything again and tell Mother and all my friends about Copenhagen and play double stops and trills for them till they laugh and clap their hands. There is nothing the matter and I may well remain calm, even when Mother begins to sing one of her touching little songs as I close my bag. And so it's off! On one of the first days of January I travelled to Copenhagen and my Funen youth and childhood were at an end."

© Michael Hasel

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