

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Sponsor: **Louisville Chamber Music Society**

Concert Date: **February 5, 2017**

Artist: **Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet**

Michael Hasel, flute
Andreas Wittmann, oboe
Walter Seyfarth, clarinet
Fergus McWilliam, horn
Marion Reinhard, bassoon

Program credits:

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The Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet (www.windquintet.com) records exclusively for BIS Records (www.bis.se)

PROGRAM

Franz Danzi (1763-1826) Wind Quintet in F Major, Op. 56, No. 3
Andante sostenuto - Allegro
Andante
Menuetto
Allegretto

Anton Reicha (1770-1836) Andante arioso for English Horn and Wind Quintet (1817-1819)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) Kleine Kammermusik op. 24,2

Lustig. Mässig schnelle Viertel
Walzer. Durchweg sehr leise
Ruhig und einfach
Schnelle Viertel
Sehr Lebhaft

-intermission-

György Ligeti (1923-2006) Six Bagatelles (1953)

Allegro con spirito - Rubato, lamentoso
Allegro grazioso - Presto ruvido
Adagio, Mesto (Béla Bartók in memoriam)
Molto vivace, capriccioso

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) Quintet op.43 (1922)

Allegro ben moderato
Menuet
Praeludium, Tema con variazioni – Allegretto

BERLIN PHILHARMONIC WIND QUINTET

Michael Hasel, flute
Andreas Wittmann, oboe
Walter Seyfarth, clarinet
Fergus McWilliam, horn
Marion Reinhard, bassoon

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

With four original members since inception (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 only a few.

The Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet continues to astonish 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 and in 1991 they found the perfect partner for their recording plans, the Swedish company BIS Records, already well known in its own right for its 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.

2016-17 – *please discard any previous material*

Individual 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. Michael 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 Michael 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 Orquesta Sinfónica Salvador de Bahia. He regularly conducts the Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin, as well as the Sibelius-Orchester of Berlin.

Walter Seyfarth (Clarinet) is a native of Düsseldorf and was a first prize winner at the age of sixteen 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) 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 fifteen. 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 programme 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) 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 Marion 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.

Notes on the program

[Note to presenter: we do not have a specific program note for the Danzi Wind Quintet in F Major, Op. 56, No. 3. Below is a general note on Danzi's music for wind quintet in case it is useful.]

Franz Ignaz Danzi (June 15, 1763 – April 13, 1826)

If we recognize Haydn as the father of the string quartet it would be fair to see Antonín Reicha (1770-1836), a fellow student and friend of Ludwig van Beethoven, as father of the wind quintet. Reicha was both a successful theory teacher and composer in Paris from 1818 on, where he wrote no less than 24 wind quintets in which he developed a string-oriented style for an ensemble comprising flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. In an era before the existence either of radio or of records the musical press was of an importance barely imaginable today. It is therefore possible that Franz Danzi, a conductor working in Karlsruhe, first learned of the existence of Reicha's wind quintets from the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*.

Danzi was one of the first composers outside Paris to embrace Reicha's concept of the wind quintet. He composed nine quintets of his own, probably between 1820 and 1824, and they appeared in groups of three, each bearing a different opus number. Opus 56, dedicated to Antonín Reicha, appeared simultaneously in Paris and Berlin in 1821, while Op. 67 and Op. 68 appeared in Offenbach in 1824. The quintets display an astonishing unity of form. All of them follow the then-popular four-movement pattern: sonata form first movements, song form second movements, minuet third movements – which sometimes approach a scherzo character – and rondo finales. Danzi also composed three quintets for piano with winds.

Danzi's Italian father Innocenzo was a cellist in Johann Stamitz's orchestra in Mannheim, where his son Franz was born in 1763, chronologically half-way between Mozart and Beethoven. The boy received a comprehensive musical training; cello studies with his father (leading him to join the same Mannheim orchestra at only fifteen) and composition with the renowned Abbé Georg Joseph Vogler. Danzi's contemporaries held him in high regard as a composer of successful operas, instrumental concertos and sacred works. He travelled to Italy, Bohemia and throughout Germany before settling in Munich in 1798. In 1807 he moved to Stuttgart and in 1812 to Karlsruhe where he remained until his death in 1826. In these fourteen years as conductor of the Karlsruhe court theatre, he improved standards to an astonishing degree, not least by means of performances of works by his friend Carl Maria von Weber. Danzi fell into oblivion soon after his death and as late as the middle of the twentieth century very few music lovers were aware of his existence. The proliferation of recordings of his music in recent years is principally due to his wind quintets.

REICHA - Andante arioso for English Horn and Wind Quintet

Anton Reicha, theorist and composer, was born in Prague and lived in Bonn, Hamburg, Vienna and Paris, where he became a teacher of composition at the Conservatoire. His pupils included Hector Berlioz, César Franck, Charles Gounod and Franz Liszt and he was a friend of Beethoven's.

Reicha's autograph scores of two Andantes and Adagio for the rare combination of cor anglais solo, with flute, clarinet, horn and bassoon, are to be found in the Paris Conservatoire library. These works were written in Paris, the first Andante (on our program) in 1817, the second Andante and Adagio in 1819, that is, during the same period as a number of his 24 wind quintets, with which they share a delight in experimentation. It is certain that these compositions were written for the old curved cor anglais, not the more modern instrument improved by Triebert and Brod, which only appeared some years later (between 1820 and 1830).

Paul Hindemith – Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24 No.2 (1922)

The *Kleine Kammermusik*, Op.24 No.2 (1922) dates from Paul Hindemith's early period as a '*musical enfant terrible*'.

In contrast to its big sister from the same period, the *Kammermusik No.1*, Op.24 No.1, which shocks us with its dissonant trumpet calls, wild xylophone runs and howling sirens, or indeed the *Sonata for Solo Viola*, Op. 25, in which one movement is tellingly labelled: 'rasendes Zeitmaß – wild – Tonschönheit ist Nebensache' ('lunatic tempo – wild – beauty of tone is incidental'), the *Kleine Kammermusik* is quite a relaxed work. With its humorous and parodist nature and its exploitation of the virtuoso and tonal possibilities of the five instruments, it remains a highlight of the twentieth-century wind quintet repertoire.

Hindemith, who was at that time leader of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, wrote the piece for his colleagues in the Frankfurt Wind Chamber Music Society (Frankfurter-Bläser-Kammermusikvereinigung), an ensemble made up of the solo wind players of the opera orchestra, who gave the first performance of the work at the second Rhine Chamber Music Festival in Cologne on 12th June 1922.

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 9th that year, naturally using the Copenhagen Wind Quintet: Paul Hagemann (flute), Svend Christian Felumb (oboe), Aage Oxenvad (clarinet), Hans Sørensen (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. Carl 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 Carl 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."