

**San Antonio 2015**

**New York Woodwind Quintet**

**Carol Wincenc, flute**  
**Stephen Taylor, oboe**  
**Charles Neidich, clarinet**  
**Marc Goldberg, bassoon**  
**William Purvis, horn**

**Quintet (1948)**

- I. Allegretto
- II. Allegro giocoso

**Elliott Carter**

**Quintet, Opus 52**

- I. Sehr frisch und feurig
- II. Romanze: Sehr ruhig und innig
- III. Leicht fließend, Auberst lebhaft
- IV, Finale: Sehr schwingvoll

**Theodor Blumer**

*intermission*

**Fantasia in f, KV608**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

transcribed by William Purvis

**String Quartet Opus 13, No. 2**

**Felix Mendelssohn**

transcribed by William Purvis

- I. Adagio; Allegro vivace
- II. Adagio non lento
- III. Intermezzo: Allegretto con moto; Allegro di molto
- IV. Presto; Adagio non lento

New York Woodwind Quintet appears by arrangement with Stanton Management, New York.

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Elliott Carter (1908 - 2012)  
Woodwind Quintet (1948)

Born in 1908 in New York, Elliott Carter graduated from Harvard with a B.A. in English, but with an intense interest in music. This devotion to the language of sounds rather than words took immediate hold of him, and he stayed on to do graduate work in music. He then studied for three years in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, to whom the Quintet is dedicated, and one of the finest European teachers of musical composition of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Boulanger's effect on American music was profound, and can be traced through her numerous students at the Fountainebleau School of Music including Aaron Copland, Walter Piston and Virgil Thompson.

Carter once described his approach to composition as follows: "I regard my scores as scenarios – auditory scenarios – for performers to act out with their instruments, dramatizing the players as individuals and as participants in the ensemble. To me the special teamwork of ensemble playing is very wonderful and moving, and this feeling is always an important consideration in my chamber music." This philosophy led him to evolve increasingly complex techniques for differentiating among musical/instrumental personalities, such as the placing of each instrument in a separate time world.

The Quintet is more related to the musical language of Copland than to the later Carter, but with an irrepressible rhythmic vitality and dramatic sense that one always associates with Carter. The first of the two short movements is more reflective, but with jazzy outbursts from the clarinet in particular, and ending with a question from the clarinet. The second movement is ebullient, witty and brilliant and ending with a sly offhand joke from the clarinet.

Theodor Blumer Quintet Op. 52

Theodor Blumer was born in Dresden in 1881, and continued his composition studies at the Dresden Conservatory with Felix Draesecke. Although he continued to compose throughout his life, he also served as Conductor of the Dresden beginning in 1931 followed by a position as conductor of the Middle German Radio Orchestra in Leipzig. Blumer composed a variety of works, from an opera to chamber music, including numerous works featuring winds. These include a Sextet for Piano and Wind Quintet, Op. 22 (written for himself as pianist and the wind soloists of the Dresden National Opera) and four quintets for winds, of which Op. 52 is the last.

His composition teacher, Felix Draesecke, was a relatively important figure in German composition in the late nineteenth into the twentieth century, having had works performed by distinguished conductors of the time, including [Hans von Bülow](#), [Arthur Nikisch](#), [Fritz Reiner](#), and [Karl Böhm](#). Early in his career he fell under the spell of Wagner, and although he seems to have been an influence in the development of the young Strauss, he attacked Elektra in a pamphlet, "Die Konfusion in der Musik." Later Draesecke's music was supported by the Nazi regime, which might have been part of the reason his music fell into disregard in the latter part of the twentieth century. (As a side note, during the 1930's when the Nazi Regime held a festival of decadent music, Strauss was quoted as suggesting sarcastically that he should have been included, since in Salome he had Jews singing atonal music.)

Blumer's Quintet Op. 52 owes much in expression and gesture to early Strauss; in particular, some of the heroic horn figures in the work could have been penned by Strauss himself.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro and Andante (Fantasie in f) für eine Orgelwalze KV 608

In his notebook Mozart gave to this passionately contrapuntal work the title *Ein Orgelstück für eine Uhr*, or an organ piece for a clock. Its companion piece, the Fantasie in f KV 594 was commissioned Joseph Count Deym von Stritez in 1790 (although under the name Müller, since he had recently been forced to leave Vienna after a duel in which he killed his opponent and had returned to Vienna under an assumed name) for use in his collection of mechanical clock-organs housed in his wax museum in Vienna. They were operated by means of a revolving barrel-and-pin cylinder powered by clockworks, and the music they would play was intended to provide atmosphere for a variety of exhibits including commemorative exhibitions honoring recently deceased notables. According to Sjoerd Schaper: "On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1791 the *Wiener Zeitung* announced that Mr. Müller had opened to the public at nr. 1355 Himmelpfortgasse his mausoleum dedicated to the memory of field-marshal Gideon von Laudon, conqueror of Belgrade, who had died in July 1790:

'Splendidly illuminated from eight in the morning till ten o'clock at night... the sight of it will not fail to surprise everyone who visits this mausoleum and thereby renews the memory of this great and meritorious man... Upon the stroke of each hour a funeral music will be heard, and every week it will be different. This week's composition is by *Herr Kapellmeister Mozart*.' "

Although the origin of KV 608 is not as clearly documented, it is believed to have been composed for the same sort of Müller tableau in the summer of 1791. In a letter Mozart described his frustration with these mechanical clock organ commissions, complaining that the pipes were too small and high-pitched, "too childish." Often Mozart showed his greatest invention and depth when challenged by limitations of circumstance, and these two works represent a case in point, for there is certainly nothing in the least childish or superficial about either. The autographs have not survived, and after the early 1800's the cylinders were lost as well. By that time, however, the works had appeared in print in a version for four-hand keyboard. To this day the works have mostly been known through piano or organ performances, but the intensely contrapuntal writing is particularly well suited to the diverse sound possibilities of the wind quintet.

The Fantasie KV 608 opens with a harmonically dramatic Allegro in f minor in the style of an Italian Overture leading to a sophisticated fugue. After an intervening Andante in A flat Major, a sublime aria (but also contrapuntally virtuosic), there is a return of the opening Allegro, this time with a furious running sixteenth note second subject for the fugue, building the work to a fiery close.

Note by William Purvis

Felix Mendelssohn String Quartet in a minor, Op. 13 #2 transcribed by William Purvis

Felix Mendelssohn, born in 1809, was raised in an intensely intellectual family environment. His grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn, was a towering philosophical thinker of his time, and already at age twelve his father introduced the precocious Felix to the elderly Goethe, with whom he then spent 2 weeks. He also immersed himself in the works of Shakespeare, and subsequently composed his Overture to *Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1825 at the age of 16. This was followed soon after by the exuberant Octet in Eb Major for double string quartet, notable not only for the remarkable maturity of the work composed at that young age, but also because it was the first important work for this ensemble. Of course, these are only highlights; by the time he composed the String Quartet in A Minor in 1827 at the age of eighteen, he had already completed well over 100 compositions.

Another manifestation of Mendelssohn's precocity was his fascination with and appreciation for the final string quartets of Beethoven when he first encountered them in the period immediately following Beethoven's death. This was unlike the prevailing view, concisely expressed by Ludwig Spohr, that the works were indecipherable. The String Quartet in a minor Op. 13 #2, Mendelssohn's first string quartet, shows a remarkable assimilation of the language and techniques of the final quartets of Beethoven in numerous ways.

Throughout much of the Quartet there is intensely contrapuntal writing, Mendelssohn incorporating what he learned from Bach, but also from Beethoven looking back to Bach. Several members of Mendelssohn's family appreciated the works of Bach, and an important moment in Mendelssohn's development came when he was given a score to the St. Matthew Passion in 1924.

## New York Woodwind Quintet Biography

Approaching its seventieth anniversary season, the New York Woodwind Quintet continues to maintain an active concert presence around the world while also teaching and mentoring the next generation of woodwind performers.

One of the oldest continuously active chamber ensembles in the US, the Quintet has commissioned, premiered and worked with composers to create numerous new works for wind quintet, some of which have become classics of the woodwind repertoire. They include Samuel Barber's *Summer Music*, and quintets by Gunther Schuller, Ezra Laderman, William Bergsma, Alec Wilder, William Sydeman, Wallingford Riegger, Jon Deak, Yehudi Wyner and Elliott Carter's final work for winds, *Nine by Five*. The Quintet has also featured many of these works in recordings for such labels as Boston Skyline, Bridge, New World and Nonesuch.

The Quintet continues to honor the legacy of departed members through performing transcriptions of the late Samuel Baron such as Brahms *String Quartet in a minor* and *Piano Quartet in G minor*, Faure *Piano Quartet in c minor*, Dvorak *Piano Quartet in A Major* and Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, and also compositions by the late Ronald Roseman, including his *Wind Quintet No. 2* and *Sextet for Piano and Winds* which was dedicated to the New York Woodwind Quintet and completed shortly before his death. Hornist

William Purvis and clarinetist Charles Neidich continue the Quintet's tradition of transcribing and composing, Mr. Purvis with arrangements of works by Mozart, Gesualdo, Machaut, Monteverdi and Mendelssohn, and Mr. Neidich with three wind quintets, all premiered by the NYWQ.

In 2013 Southern Music initiated a NYWQ publication series of transcribed and original works from NYWQ members. To date these include Dvorak *String Quartet in F Major, Op 96* ("American"), transcribed by Georges Barrere and Samuel Baron, edited by Charles Neidich, Mozart *String Quartet in G Major, KV 387*, Mozart *Fantasies in F minor KV 594 and KV 608* transcribed by William Purvis. Southern Music continues the series with new publications appearing annually.

Unique among all woodwind quintets touring today, the New York Woodwind Quintet is comprised of artists dedicated to chamber music yet who are individually known as soloists with far-ranging careers. Current NYWQ members are flutist Carol Wincenc, clarinetist Charles Neidich, oboist Stephen Taylor, bassoonist Marc Goldberg, and french hornist William Purvis.

The NYWQ was an Ensemble-in-Residence of The Juilliard School for a quarter century (1989-2014) where most members have taught individually along with coaching and administering woodwind chamber music. The NYWQ now offers mini-residencies based upon their teaching, seminars, and wind chamber music coaching at The Juilliard School.

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(Please note: the quintet does not wish individual biographies from the website to appear in programs – "the ensemble's the thing." If your standard is to include individual bios, please contact Stanton Management for brief updated individual bio copy. Please do not use individual bio copy appearing on the website as of December 2014.)

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