

Westchester Chamber Soloists

Visit us at: www.WestchesterChamberSoloists.com

Westchester Chamber Soloists (WCS) is excited to present the fourth of its five Winter/Spring 2023 scheduled programs. WCS welcomed 2023 with *New Year's Day/Week* performances of the cycle of J.S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and was last onstage at SLC March 5 with performances of *Concerto* works for Piano and for Cello, in addition to Chamber Music masterpieces for Strings, for Winds and for Brass. Our final program for the season takes place here at SLC on Sunday, June 4.

WCS was established in January 2020 as Westchester County's premier chamber orchestra and chamber ensemble network, and performs as both an orchestra and an integrated array of smaller groups across strings, winds, brass, percussion and mixed instruments. The ensemble brings a diverse repertoire to the stage, including the *Concerto* literature for piano and for other solo instruments and vocalists, as well as symphonic and choral works.

WCS operates as a self-directed/governed enterprise, its musicians bringing their keen musical instincts and in-the-moment intra-group interpretive communication to guide performances. WCS' members appear as the ensemble's principal concerto soloists, enabling members to hone and share their talents as both solo performers and ensemble collaborators.

Since inception, WCS has performed over 50 major chamber works and concertos, mostly in outdoor venues during the pandemic, including as the featured classical music component of *RiverArts'* annual Music Tour. The ensemble looks forward to continue to bring a varied and invigorating repertoire to the stage - including innovative multi-disciplinary repertoire including dance, the visual arts and literary narrative - for the Fall'23-Spring'24 season.

Alan Murray, WCS Founder, Executive & Artistic Director

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(* Complementary tickets granted for higher-level donations within these ranges)

Corporate & Underwriting Sponsorship levels are available on request.

Westchester Chamber Soloists, Inc. is a New York State incorporated registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit. Contributions to WCS are tax-deductible under Federal and NY State law. Copies of WCS' IRS tax-exemption letter are available on request. WCS appreciates any and all contributions so that the organization can continue to enrich the cultural life of the Westchester County community. Email: WCSoloists@gmail.com

Westchester Chamber Soloists

Guest Conductor: Mina Kim

Clarinet soloist: Alan Schaffer

Violin

Lori Horowitz (concertmaster)
Karen Chow (principal second)
Joyce Balint
Joshua Daniels
Clare Detko
David Restivo

Viola

Monica Gerard (principal)
Lydia Leizman
Elizabeth Nilsen-Baumwoll

Cello

Sachi Patitucci (principal)
Seth Jacobs
Jonathan Kantor

Bass

Greg Hunter
Christopher Wygonik

Timpani

Chris Tyrrell

Flute

Amy Hersh
Marjorie Hone

Oboe

Susan DeCamp
Gina Serafin

Clarinet

Enid Blount Press
Lydia Schaffer
Cory Seelenfreund

Bassoon

Rosemary Dellinger
Jonathan Stark

French Horn

Thomas Jordan
Marc Wager

Trumpet

Kelly Oram
John Reid

Final Spring 2023 WCS Event at Sarah Lawrence College

Sunday, June 4, 2023 / Reisinger Auditorium

Ovidiu Marinescu, Guest Conductor & Cello soloist

Dvůřák: Romanze for Violin & Orchestra (Lori Horowitz, soloist)
Barber: Knoxville, Summer of 1915 (Yolanda F. Johnson, soprano)
Brazilian Works for Cello & Orchestra (Ovidiu Marinescu, soloist)
Fauré: Fantasia for Piano & Orchestra (Alan Murray, soloist)

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Susan F. Lindsay (March 5 Performance)
Galápagos Books/Amada Abad (June 4 Performance)

Benefactors (\$501-\$1,000)

Dr. Peter and Gila Acker (co-Underwriters, April 2)
Frank and Christine Cowan (co-Underwriters, April 2)
Lori Adel and Robert Horowitz
Amy Wierenga and Luis Felipe Perez-Costa

Sponsors (\$201-\$500)

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Kathleen Ha
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Westchester Chamber Soloists

Sunday, April 2, 2023 (3:00pm)

Sarah Lawrence College / Reisinger Auditorium



Masterpieces by Mendelssohn, Mozart, Beethoven & Poulenc
with Mina Kim (Guest Conductor) / Alan Schaffer (Clarinet soloist)



WCS Website



Our Performers



Our Performances





Today's concert has been underwritten by generous contributions from Dr. Peter and Gila Acker and from Frank and Christine Cowan

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Mina Kim, Guest Conductor

The Hebrides Overture ('Fingal's Cave'), Op. 26 F. Mendelssohn

Clarinet Concerto in A major, K. 622

W. A. Mozart

Allegro
Adagio
Rondo: Allegro

Alan Schaffer, soloist

~ Intermission ~

Sextet for Piano & Winds, FP 100

F. Poulenc

Allegro vivace
Divertissement: Andantino
Finale: Prestissimo

Amy Hersh (flute) / Gina Serafin (oboe) / Alan Schaffer (clarinet)
Marc Wager (French horn) / Rosemary Dellinger (bassoon)
Alan Murray (piano)

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21

L. van Beethoven

Adagio molto - allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace - Trio
Finale: Adagio - Allegro molto e vivace

Notes on Today's Program

Felix Mendelssohn: The Hebrides Overture ('Fingal's Cave')

The Hebrides is a concert overture composed in 1830, revised in 1832, and published the next year as Mendelssohn's Op. 26. Some consider it an early tone poem. It was inspired by one of Mendelssohn's trips to the British Isles, specifically an 1829 excursion to the Scottish island of Staffa, with its basalt sea cave known as Fingal's Cave. It was reported that the composer immediately jotted down the opening theme for his composition after seeing the island, and in a note to his sister Fanny, he wrote: "In order to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, I send you the following, which came into my head there.", in reference to his inclusion of the opening phrase of the Overture. He at first titled the work The Lonely Island, but later revised the score and renamed it The Hebrides. Further adding to confusion, in 1834, the year after the first publication, Breitkopf & Härtel issued an edition with the name Fingal's Cave, and this title stuck. Being a concert overture, The Hebrides does not precede a play or opera but is instead a standalone composition in a form common for the Romantic period. As an indication of the esteem in which it is held by Mendelssohn's peers, Johannes Brahms once remarked "I would gladly give all I have written, to have composed something like the Hebrides Overture".

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Concerto for Clarinet & Orchestra in A major

Mozart's Clarinet Concerto was completed in October 1791, just a few weeks before the composer's death, and has been described as his swansong and final great completed work. It was written to be played on the basset clarinet, which can play lower notes than the modern clarinet, but after the death of Mozart it was published with changes to the solo part to allow performance on conventional instruments. A certain chamber-music quality reigns over the entire Concerto, in part thanks to the close integration of soloist and orchestra. The trumpets and timpani of Mozart's most brilliant piano concertos are not found here, and even oboes, the most penetrating of the woodwinds, are banished.

The opening Allegro conceals a subtle subtext of dramatic interplay. The principal theme is elegantly balanced, and in the solo exposition Mozart provides music that underscores the clarinet's unusual ability to meld legato lyricism with warbling passagework, fleet arpeggios, and wide leaps of register. The Adagio is gentle and reflective. A hushed, prayerful opening sets the tone. As elsewhere in the concerto, wide leaps and contrasts of coloration ornament but never disrupt the overriding lyricism. This movement ends with the sort of quiet, seemingly inconsequential coda that was a Mozart specialty: in only six lightly scored measures, it seems to sum up all that has come before. Profound loneliness resides in this languorous elegy. The theme of the concluding Rondo could be characterized as perfectly merry and carefree, and that is how it would doubtless come across in a concerto for piano or violin. But on the clarinet it has a way of sounding bittersweet, smiling on the surface but melancholy at heart. By the final run-through of the refrain the clarinet has been put through its paces with an impressive array of acrobatic leaps, brilliant arpeggios, and effervescent scales.

In his Clarinet Concerto, Mozart left one of music's most authentic utterances, a testament to happiness and sadness, to hope and resignation, to the realization that often in life such states represent not distinct polarities, but concurrent aspects of a deeper truth.

Francis Poulenc: Sextet for Piano & Winds

Though rejected by the director of the Paris Conservatoire for the tendency of his compositional style to be overly progressive, Poulenc was the most prolific member of the group of 20th-century French composers known as Les Six, whose music is often seen as a neoclassic reaction against the musical styles of Richard Wagner and of the impressionists Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. In

his Sextet (composed in or around 1932 and revised in 1939) there are obvious influences of the incidental music heard during the group's weekend visits to the circus as well as their general adherence to the melodic precedents set forth by Satie. Poulenc composed the piece around the same time as his cantata Le Bal Masqué and the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra.

The opening movement begins with ascending scales by all instruments before transferring into an energetic beginning section with complex rhythms, jazz undertones, and an underlying line from the piano. The middle of the movement features a magically mysterious slower section initiated by a bassoon melody which is then repeated by the other instruments. The original tempo returns at the end of the movement as new themes barrel headlong toward the crashing finish. The Divertissement appears to be influenced by the divertimentos of the Classical period while at the same time serving as a parody of Mozart's slower movements, providing a form of musical, comedic relief. The piece employs a variety of textures in the winds with the piano serving in more of a secondary role. The Finale unleashes an Offenbach-like gallop and is in rondo form. It has jazz and ragtime influences (again a product of Les Six's outings to weekend shows), and has been interpreted as a satirical depiction of the neoclassical movement. It also creates a sense of cohesion by repeating themes from the previous two movements, and it ends with a lyrical and solemn coda with influences from one of the composer's idols, Maurice Ravel.

The piece was not well-received by traditionalists in the music community, but a positive review came from André George of Les Nouvelles litteraires, who wrote that "with Poulenc, all of France comes out of the windows he opens."

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 1 in C major

Ludwig van Beethoven wrote his First Symphony in the final years of the eighteenth century and premiered and published it in the opening years of the nineteenth. This timing during the shift from the Classical to Romantic eras is entirely fitting; the work bears unmistakable signs of symphonic traditions established by Beethoven's most influential immediate predecessors: Mozart and Haydn. However, whereas Mozart and Haydn together transformed the symphony from a relatively light and simple form of entertainment to something weightier and more musically complex, Beethoven's frequent (and perhaps jarring?) use of sforzandi, his sudden shifts in tonal centers that were uncommon for traditional symphonic form (particularly in the 3rd movement), and his prominent use of wind instruments signaled a bold new direction; apologies be damned.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 premiered alongside works by Mozart and Haydn on April 2, 1800, at a benefit concert that served to announce the young composer and his music to Vienna. Compared with his revolutionary later symphonies, the First is often heard with modern ears as surprisingly cautious, conservative, and reserved. But context is key: with the benefit of some two hundred intervening years, we can now hear the symphony as the remarkable combination of tradition and innovation it is.

The First Symphony begins with a slow, searching introduction that evades the home key of C major until the very end. It then launches directly into the energetic first theme of the Allegro proper, emphasizing the point by driving the tonic C home over and over. The lyrical second theme features the woodwinds in striking contrast to the strings of the first theme. An adventurous, almost aggressive coda closes the movement. The slow second movement provides some respite from the force of the first. Its mood is both pleasant and elegant, though the conspicuous timpani and trumpet sonorities are quite unusual for a classical slow movement. The third movement is labeled a minuet, but its swift tempo stamps it as the first of Beethoven's symphonic scherzos. Wit, energy, and a driving momentum propel the movement forward into the finale. This closing movement starts off with another slow introduction made up of snippets of scales that go on to build the main motivic material. Playfulness and spirited energy tempered with strict adherence to classical form shows Beethoven's indebtedness to Mozart's and Haydn's influences, but the victorious conclusion boldly asserts his own character and foreshadows his innovations to come.

Notes credits: Mendelssohn, Poulenc: Wikipedia / Mozart: James M. Keller, New York Philharmonic / Beethoven: Lincoln Symphony Orchestra