

Westchester Chamber Soloists

Visit us at: www.WestchesterChamberSoloists.com

Westchester Chamber Soloists (WCS) is excited to present the fifth and final of our Winter/Spring 2023 scheduled programs here at Sarah Lawrence College. WCS welcomed 2023 with *New Year's Day/Week* performances of the cycle of J.S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and was onstage at SLC on March 5 and April 2 with performances of diverse Concerto, Chamber, and Symphonic works.

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 ensembles across strings, winds, brass, percussion and mixed instruments, including voice. 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. We also are excited to welcome selected veteran and promising up-and-coming conductors to our podium. 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 75 major chamber works and concertos, mostly in outdoor venues during the pandemic, including as the featured classical music component of *RiverArts'* annual Music Tour in the Hudson Valley. The ensemble looks forward to continuing 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 & Cello Soloist: Ovidiu Marinescu

Violin soloist: Lori Horowitz

Soprano: Yolanda F. Johnson

Piano soloist: Alan Murray

Violin

Lori Horowitz (co-concertmaster)

Laura Macbeth (co-concertmaster)

Francesca Abusamra

Kate Ashby

Joshua Daniels

Samuel Glazman

Elizabeth Tsung

Karl Watson

Viola

Elizabeth Nilsen-Baumwoll (principal)

Leif Mitchell

Anne-Marie Mott

Cello

Sachi Patitucci (principal)

Jacqueline Bergson

Seth Jacobs

Jonathan Kantor

Bernard Tamosaitis

Bass

Thomas ("TJ") Bastone

John Lang

Timpani & Percussion

Christopher Tyrrell

Harp

Alyssa Reit

Flute

Paul-Lucien Kulka

Teresa Wager

Oboe

Ellen Gruber

Justin Stewart

Clarinet

Christopher Peña

French Horn

Susan Davidson

Amanda Keil

Ian Vlahović

Marc Wager

Bassoon

Rosemary Dellinger

Mary Olsson

Trumpet

Russ Ebersole

Kelly Oram

John Reid

Trombone

Paul Geidel

Samuel Riss

Saxophone

Karl Watson

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Westchester Chamber Soloists

Sunday, June 4, 2023 (3:00pm)

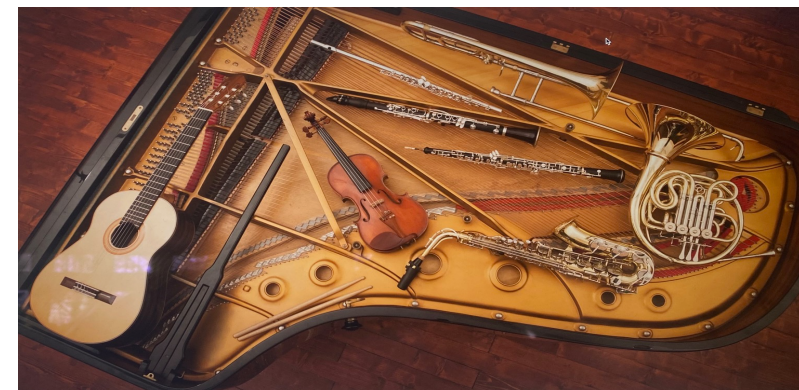
Sarah Lawrence College / Reisinger Auditorium



Masterpieces by Barber, Bizet, Dvořák, Fauré, Glazunov & Dimitrescu

with Ovidiu Marinescu (Guest Conductor)

Lori Horowitz (violin) / Yolanda F Johnson (soprano) / Alan Murray (piano)



WCS Website



Our Performers



Our Performances



Westchester Chamber Soloists

Today's concert has been underwritten by a generous contribution from Galápagos Books and owner-operator Amada Abad, and with additional generous support from Frank & Christine Cowan

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Ovidiu Marinescu, Guest Conductor & Cello Soloist

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Chant du Ménéstrel for Cello & Orchestra

A. Glazunov

Dans Taranesc for Cello & Orchestra

C. Dimitrescu

(arr. by O. Marinescu)

Ovidiu Marinescu, soloist

Romanze for Violin & Orchestra, Op. 11

A. Dvořák

Lori Horowitz, soloist

Knoxville: Summer of 1915, Op. 24

S. Barber

Yolanda F. Johnson, soprano

~ *Intermission* ~

Fantasia for Piano & Orchestra, Op. 111

G. Fauré

Alan Murray, soloist

Suite l'Arlésienne No. 2

G. Bizet

Pastorale
Intermezzo
Minuet
Farandole

Notes on Today's Program

Alexander Glazunov: *Chant du Ménéstrel* A delightful miniature for cello and orchestra, Chant du Ménéstrel was composed by Alexander Glazunov in 1901. The work allows the cello soloist to display the wonderful qualities of the instrument, in a lyrical, melancholic, romantic song without words. The cello sings in dialogue with various instruments of the orchestra, such as the oboe, the clarinet, and the flute. Glazunov was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and eventually became the director of the important conservatory in his native city. While he was spared the persecution of Bolshevik revolution, eventually, in 1929, he emigrated to France.

Constantin Dimitrescu: *Dans Taranesc* Born in 1847, Romanian cellist and composer Constantin Dimitrescu studied in Vienna, and later in Paris, with, among others, famous cellist Augusta Francomme. Later he returned to Romania where he became principal cellist of the Bucharest Philharmonic and professor at the Conservatory. He composed seven string quartets, two cello concertos, operas, and several miniatures, many in the style of 19th century salon music. Dans Taranesc is a virtuosic composition originally for cello and piano orchestrated by Ovidiu Marinescu.

Antonin Dvorak: *Romanze in F minor* Dvořák's love of the Czech countryside in which he grew up never deserted him and seems ever present in his music, which however urbane, is never far from the Slavonic folk tradition. The Romance F minor takes much of its material from the second movement of Dvořák's string quartet in F minor Op.12, which was composed in 1873 but never publicly performed in the composer's lifetime. Dvořák recognized that he had written a great piece the work is built out of two linked ideas. The first is a song like melody, heard high on the violins at the outset, and then freely elaborated by the soloist who weaves intricate melodic patterns around the other orchestral players. The second idea is again a romantic melody, less elaborate than the first with the soloist soaring high above a running orchestral accompaniment. The middle section reveals heightened drama, with virtuoso figures in the solo part punctuated by dramatic outbursts from the orchestra. But this is short-lived, and tranquility is restored with the return of the first idea. The piece moves into the tonic major when the second idea returns and a brief coda draws it to a close. The Romanze is a highly characteristic work of Dvořák, combining his deep understanding of classical form and romantic harmony with beautiful flowing Slavonic melody. The reworking of the piece from the string quartet movement into a romance was done at a time of great tragedy in his life. In 1877 he lost three of his children, one pre-natal, one through an accident and the third to smallpox. Perhaps these events contributed to the emotional intensity of the work, the rending harmonies and the lyrical beauty of the violin writing.

Samuel Barber: *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* Barber's masterpiece for voice and orchestra was composed in 1947 with text from a 1938 short prose piece of the same title by James Agee. *Knoxville* is a lush, richly textured single-movement work – a "lyric rhapsody" – in which Barber paints an idyllic, nostalgic picture of Agee's native Knoxville, Tennessee. The preamble is a simple, dreamlike depiction of an evening in the American South, narrated by a child who seems, at times, to transform into an adult. It is difficult to tell at times the identity of the speaker, enhancing the dreamlike quality of the work.

Barber's choice to compose in a relatively free large-scale form parallels Agee's own choice in developing his work; both represent the fruits of a spontaneous improvisation, fueled by a moving nostalgia: 1915 was a significant year for James Agee. He was six, and it was the last year his family was intact; his father died in an automobile accident in 1916, and the remaining family members left Knoxville, never to return. According to Agee, it was the point around which his life began to evolve. After Barber and Agee met, Barber noted that the two had much in common: "We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee in the time that I lived there, so successfully disguised to myself as a child. Barber chose only excerpts of "Knoxville" for his composition, but his *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, in many ways, parallels Agee's text. Agee was touched by the death of his father in his childhood, while Barber was, during the time of composition, enduring his father's deteriorating health. In a 1949 radio interview, Barber said, "My musical response that summer of 1947 was immediate and intense. I think I must have composed Knoxville within a few days... You see, it expresses a child's feelings of loneliness, wonder and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep."

The text of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* does not tell a story. It is a poetic evocation of life as seen from the perspective of a small boy. It is full of alliteration ("people in pairs", "parents on porches", "sleep, soft smiling", "low on the length of lawns"). The point is that *nothing* is happening; the adults sit on the porch and talk "of nothing in particular, of nothing at all". Their voices are "gentle and meaningless, like the voices of sleeping birds". A horse and a buggy go by, a loud auto, a quiet auto, a noisy streetcar. The boy includes philosophical commentary: "By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night". He is "taken in and put to bed", and is received by sleep. Yet the one thing he can never learn in that house, that no one will ever tell him, is "who I am". With this sense of lack, the piece ends.

Gabriel Fauré: *Fantasia* The idea of a concertante work for piano and orchestra came indirectly from Debussy, who had written to his publisher Jacques Durand that he was thinking of a series of *Concerts* for piano and various instrumental groups. After Debussy's death in 1918, Durand suggested the idea to Fauré, and by September of that year, Fauré was almost done with the piece. The *Fantasia* was dedicated to Alfred Cortot, who had asked Fauré as far back as 1902 to write a concertante work for him. And the eminent Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha made it a signature work of her. The *Fantasia's* opening melody seems to evoke a 'stroll in the park', with a brief motif stated by the solo that gently swells and quickly fades like a momentary thought, only to be taken up by winds and subsequently by strings in different keys. This very late work partakes of at least some aspects common in the much more modern, younger composers who were on the Paris musical scene: It is spare in texture, unusually muscular and passionate. It is in a single movement, divided into three parts. While it is still recognizably a work of Romanticism, this is the refined, French version of that predominant style of the 19th century. It has been remarked upon that the style of keyboard writing is more like that usually found in chamber music writing rather than in solo works with orchestra. Fauré's too-seldom refreshing and inspired masterpiece is replete with a philosophical aspiration that blends perfectly with a Parnassian sense of beauty.

Georges Bizet: *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2* *L'Arlésienne* is incidental music composed for Alphonse Daudet's drama of the same name, usually translated as *The Girl from Arles*. Bizet's original incidental music consists of 27 numbers for chorus and small orchestra, ranging from pieces of background music (mélodrames) only a few measures long, to entr'actes. The score achieves powerful dramatic ends with the most economical of means. Though seldom performed now in its original form, key pieces of the incidental music, most often heard in the form of two suites for full orchestra, are now among Bizet's most popular compositions. In July 1872, Léon Carvalho, the new director of the Vaudeville Theater, commissioned Bizet to write music for his new venture, a production of Daudet's play. The drama is set on the Rhône, in Camarque, south of Arles, in southwestern Provence. Bizet was assured that the best numbers from the incidental music, arranged for a full symphony orchestra, would be successful in the concert hall, and his *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1* became so popular that the publisher Choudens commissioned a second set, *L'Arlésienne, 2^{me} Suite d'Orchestre*, in 1879, four years after Bizet's untimely death. His friend Ernest Guiraud is claimed to have arranged the other three large scale movements and, adding an extraneous number (the Minuet), assembled a second four movement suite. Although the arrangements in *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2* are assumed to be Guiraud's work (his name is not mentioned in any scores), it contains a large proportion of inspired Bizet material, and is therefore generally credited to Bizet.

The score makes novel use of the saxophone which, at the time of composition, was just being introduced after its invention in the 1840's. The saxophone is often supposed by some to represent the character Vivette in the *Intermezzo*. The specific drum to use in the percussion section is an issue of some controversy. Both Bizet's incidental music manuscript of 1872 and the score of *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 2*, arranged by Guiraud in 1879, specify a "tambourin", which is not to be confused with the tambourine. The *tambourin provençal* is a low-pitched tenor drum, the length of which is typically twice its diameter.

Notes: Portbello Orchestra (Dvořák), Wikipedia (Barber, Fauré, Bizet), O. Marinescu (Glazunov, Dimitrescu)