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Black Oak Ensemble and Eugenia Moliner

DESIRÉE RHUSTRAT, violin
AURÉLIEN FORT PEDERZOLI, viola
DAVID CUNLIFFE, cello
EUGENIA MOLINER, flute

2:30 PM, Sunday, November 14, 2021
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART FLUTE QUARTET NO. 1 IN D MAJOR, K.285 (1777)
(1756–1791) Allegro
Adagio
Rondeau

DICK KATTENBURG TRIO À CORDES (1939)
(1919–1944)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY SYRINX L.129 (c1913)
(1862–1918)

GIOACHINO ROSSINI QUARTET NO. 1 IN G MAJOR (c1804)
(1792–1868) Moderato
Andante
Rondo allegro

— INTERMISSION —

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS ASSOPIO A JATO ("JET WHISTLE"), W.493 (1950)
(1887–1959) Allegro non troppo
Adagio
Vivo

GIDEON KLEIN STRING TRIO (1944)
(1919–1945) Allegro
Lento
Molto vivace

HENRI TOMASI TRIO À CORDES (1938)
(1901–1971) Prélude
Nocturne
Scherzo
Final

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA LA CALLE 92 (1960)
(1921–1992)

PIAZZOLLA LIBERTANGO (1974)

The Black Oak Ensemble and Eugenia Moliner appear by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists
www.chambermuse.com ▪ blackoakensemble.com ▪ eugeniamoliner.com

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ARTIST PROFILE



The **Black Oak Ensemble** is one of the most innovative and exciting chamber ensembles on the international stage. They perform regularly in venues and festivals throughout the world, including Paris, Prague, Amsterdam, Geneva, Grenoble, Lyon, Athens and Corsica; many of these performances were for standing-room-only audiences. Other appearances include the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Cultural Center, Art Institute of Chicago, Latino Music Festival, the Jewish Film Festival of Paris, and the Festival of Everlasting Hope in Theresienstadt.

Black Oak presents exciting programs from Bach to the music of today. Passionate advocate of new works, they have commissioned and premiered string trios from such renowned composers as Conrad Tao and Michael Nyman.

The ensemble's critically-lauded début CD of Holocaust composers, "Silenced Voices," includes world premieres of works that the ensemble discovered in Europe.

Dedicated educators, Black Oak is Ensemble-in-Residence at the New Music School in Chicago. They've also put down roots in the south of France, creating a festival where they work with young artists and share their experiences and music with the community.

The ensemble takes its name from the beautiful tree native to the ensemble's home state of Illinois (one stands in the front yard of Desirée Rustrat and David Cunliffe's house).

Eugenia Moliner has been acclaimed by *Flute Talk Magazine* and by *Flute (The British Flute Society Magazine)* as "An artist of the highest caliber..." Her many recordings as well as her live performances have also received rave reviews. As a member of the "Cavatina Duo" with guitarist Denis Azabagic, she has performed in concert halls and festivals in more than 20 countries. As a soloist with orchestra, she has appeared with the Chicago Sinfonietta, Daejeon Philharmonic, Camerata Serbica, Sarajevo Philharmonic, Monterrey Symphony and Traverse Symphony. Ms. Moliner has also performed chamber music with Mathieu Dufour (Berlin Philharmonic), as well as with other musicians from the Chicago Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Toronto Symphony, the Chicago Chamber Musicians, and the Civitas Ensemble.

Mozart: *Flute Quartet in D Major*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart didn't play the flute, and once suggested in a letter¹ to his father he didn't even like it. But he went on to write music that makes the instrument sing in a very magical way.

The negative comments probably refer both to use of the instrument for solo or featured work and to the type of flute common to his childhood experience. At this time the flute was an imperfectly made, one-keyed instrument with a conical bore and six finger holes placed more for comfort than tuning. Of course, it could have been because he had only partially finished² a commission for the rich Dutch amateur flautist Ferdinand De Jean and had not been fully paid. He left some grouchy comments about the encounter, but you must remember that for the times he really wanted to be the equivalent of an 18th century rock star.

The flute quartet in D, K.285 is part of this commission. Mozart finished it on Christmas 1777, and it overflows with delightful melodies. The three movements are the superb, warm Allegro, the pizzicato accompanied, supremely melancholic Adagio, and a jolly Rondo finish.

Kattenburg: *Trio à Cordes*

Dick Kattenburg, a Dutch Jewish composer, was born in Amsterdam on November 11, 1919. Were he not murdered at Auschwitz at the age of 24, he would obviously have enjoyed a flourishing career as a violinist. Today, his appealing music directly moves the spirit. A large part of his legacy was created during his period in hiding from the Nazis, and thanks to his romance with a young flutist, many of his manuscripts were preserved. A daily newspaper of December 19, 1938, published a review of Kattenburg's trio at its first performance and according to the critic it was: "A fairly compact piece showing remarkable mastery and a very personal style; looking forward with great interest to his further development." The manuscript, which survived the war, is embellished by a remarkable ink and watercolor drawing on the cover page. Dated 1938, it depicts the

three musicians (including Kattenburg) at the premier. The piece shows immense vigor, fascinating innovation, and strong promise. It is a totally enjoyable yet serious few minutes that we clearly can imagine progressing into something far more substantial had the composer survived.

Debussy: *Syrinx*

For solo flute, there was an interval of over 150 years between C.P.E. Bach's Sonata in A minor and *Syrinx*, the first significant piece written for the modern (1847) Böhm flute. *Syrinx* was written as part of incidental music to the play *Psyché* by Gabriel Mourey and was originally called "Flûte de Pan". Its name refers to and depicts the myth of the amorous pursuit of the nymph Syrinx by the god Pan, with whom he has fallen in love. Pan has goat's feet and a horned head that pleased the gods, but shocked mortals. Nymphs weren't too happy with his looks either: as much as Pan loved them, they almost never loved him back. Syrinx chose to be transformed into reeds, making use of this metamorphosis to conceal herself from Pan's advances. Unsurprisingly (after all, it is a Greek myth), Pan cut the reeds and joined them side by side in decreasing size, thus at once creating the very first set of panpipes and murdering his love.

Rossini: *Quartet No. 1 in G Major*

Let's review for a moment those works so often upheld as examples of surpassing early maturity. Mendelssohn reached fourteen before he completed the agreeable twelve String Symphonies, and it was not until well into adolescence that he completed the Octet and *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture. Mozart is said to have written his first composition and played the piano at age five. But Rossini composed and copied out the six sonata a quattro in three days. Today, musicologists are ready to point out shortcomings and limitations in the original works, while concurrently losing sight of two remarkable facts: he was only 12 and had no musical training. Few would dispute that, as a twelve-year-old, Mozart produced nothing of greater stature.

These charming confections are his earliest surviving works and they have been in the repertoire ever since he wrote them. In 1954, the original manuscript was discovered in the Library of Congress, showing that Rossini initially created the sonatas to include two violins, cello and his host's instrument, the double bass. First published in an arrangement for string quartet, a version for wind quartet followed in 1828/9, then other versions for various instruments.

Like its five mates, today's G major Sonata contains startlingly little that is derived. It absolutely does not sound like a composer who was not yet a teenager and who had paid too much attention to the scores of Mozart and Haydn. The young Rossini writes supple, gracefully fluid lines in the opening movement, matching the laid-back essence of the 18th century divertimento rather than that of the more sober string quartet. He allows the higher voices to vie for notice, while the lower voices add resonance to the overall sonority. The second movement gradually develops from musical ideas introduced in its initial measures. A quick half tone step upwards from the slow movement advances into a lighthearted ending. Here, the two upper voices again spar with each other, allowing the viola a token tune, and a similar moment of focus for the cello. This is light, unfailingly melodious, and lovingly constructed music.

Villa-Lobos: *Assobio a Jato*

Heitor Villa-Lobos' goal was to be a national musical voice, and he was part of a generation of Latin-American composers who delved deeply into their country's histories and folklores to find it. However, when touring Europe with his music he said, "I don't use folklore, I am the folklore."

Villa-Lobos was a self-educated composer raised in a musical family. He learned to play cello and clarinet from his father, an amateur musician, and taught

¹ If you expect your letters/emails/texts to be believed implicitly, be careful what you write!

² "Partially finished" in this case comprises transcribing his oboe concerto as one of the works.

himself guitar. As a composer, Villa-Lobos would claim that his teacher was the streets of Rio de Janeiro where he played guitar in street bands and cello in a theater orchestra. At eighteen, he was said to have ventured into the "dark interior" of the Amazon to encounter the many rich folk music traditions.

Villa-Lobos studied musical trends of Europe, especially when important musicians travelled through Brazil. His relationships with pianist Arthur Rubinstein and the French composer, Darius Milhaud, had a significant impact. He began to incorporate Brazilian indigenous and street music styles into his language in the late 1910s, producing the exotic fusion for which he is known. Villa-Lobos traveled to France in the 1920s, where he had the opportunity to have his music performed while weaving tall tales of the Amazon. He said, "I have not come to learn, I have come to show what I have done up to now."

The remarkable *Assobio a Játo* (Jet Whistle) for flute and cello is a treasure. The witty (and improbable) scoring for flute and cello provided Villa-Lobos with a broad choice of contrasts. Listen in the *Allegro non troppo* as the two instruments switch roles as soloist and accompanist emphasizing the autonomy and interaction of the two. It launches with a graceful and sprawling melody in the cello taunted by the dainty call of the flute. The flute takes the lead with a soaring and flamboyant variation of the main melody, and again, each instrument takes its turn with the material. The flute has the melody in the composed and introspective *Adagio*. The driven *Vivo* unleashes an angular flute melody and spry cello accompaniment. The drive subsides, and a legato cello accompanies the pyrotechnical runs in the flute. The crazy runs in the flute revisit the climax of the piece, where the flautist blows directly and forcefully into the flute with his or her mouth almost covering the mouthpiece. Combined with a glissando, the resulting whistle produces the "jet whistle" effect of the title.

Klein: *String Trio*

Gideon Klein was born in 1919 in Prerov, Czechoslovakia, a Moravian Jew. The Nuremberg Laws forced a discontinuance of his studies in 1940, since compositions and

performances by Jewish musicians were banned. Although his own works could not be played, he continued in his career as concert pianist and assumed several pseudonyms.

Theresienstadt differed from other Nazi death factories in that its function was to deceive the international community and the International Red Cross into believing that this camp was a typical concentration camp. Klein was sent to Theresienstadt a month after it opened in 1941.

He was very active in all aspects of the musical life in the camp. He formed chamber ensembles, organized solo concerts, and performed the works of Bach, Mozart, Brahms, and his countryman, Janáček, as well as his own compositions and those of other composers living in the camp. The other function of Theresienstadt was as a way station to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Prisoners were routinely shipped off at a moment's notice as was Klein.

The *String Trio* was Gideon Klein's final composition, completed October 1944, nine days before he was shipped to Auschwitz. The first and third movements are filled with allusions to the folk music of his native region, and the second movement is a set of variations on a Moravian folk song.

Tomasi: *Trio à Cordes*

Born in Provence of Corsican parentage, a distinctive feature of both man and work, a poor childhood imbued in Henri Tomasi an inalienable sense of justice. Married in 1928 to painter Odette Camp, they had a son which ended his temptation to enter the Dominican Order.

Tomasi was part of the group of "Contemporary Music" from Triton with Milhaud, Poulenc, Honegger, and Prokofiev among others. He shared his musical livelihood between composing and conducting, concentrating his creative work for the theatre and the orchestra. His compositions are vibrant, highly rhythmic, and direct in emotion, reflecting his pantheism, spirituality, and visionary nature. Non-classical musical forms such as jazz and the folk music of various international cultures as well as Gregorian, Oriental recitative, and twelve-tone are incorporated into his musical language.

Composing concertos was a specialty, a practice that gained him immense gratefulness from soloists worldwide. His interest extended far beyond the most familiar solo instruments. His 16 concertos showcase not only the expected piano and violin, but also flute, saxophone, viola, horn, clarinet, trombone, bassoon, oboe, cello, harp, double bass, and guitar.

Henri Tomasi was a kaleidoscopic musician who developed a compositional language inextricable from Mediterranean culture. Listen for a sound that is sensory, multi-colored, a fabric of chiaroscuro, vibrant with melodic warmth.

Black Oak Ensemble made the world premier recording of this trio in France.

Piazzolla: *La Calle 92 & Libertango*

Roughly equivalent to that of Duke Ellington in jazz, Astor Piazzolla is the single most important figure in the history of tango, a lofty titan whose shadow emerges large over everything that preceded and followed him. Piazzolla is the genius composer who took an unpretentious, erotic, even scandalous genre and elevated it into a sophisticated form of high art. But even more than Ellington, Piazzolla was also a virtuosic performer with a near-unparalleled mastery of his chosen instrument, the bandoneon, a large button accordion noted for its unwieldy size and difficult fingering system.

In Piazzolla created a whole new harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary made for the concert hall more than the ballroom dubbed "nuevo tango." *La Calle 92* translates as 92nd Street; one of Piazzolla's addresses in New York City. Piazzolla wrote that "Libertango stands for the freedom which I allow for my musicians. Their limits are defined solely by the extent of their own capabilities and not through any exterior pressure." He wrote *Libertango* for his *Octeto Nuevo de Buenos Aires* which he formed after returning from Paris "determined more than ever before to treat the tango as music."

— notes © Dr. Michael Spencer

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American String Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, October 24, 2021

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2:30 PM Sunday, November 14, 2021

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