

78TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | MARCH 1, 2020



PROGRAM

McGill/McHale Trio

Demarre McGill, flute

Anthony McGill, clarinet

Michael McHale, piano

March 1, 2020 | 3:30 p.m.

West Building, West Garden Court

Chris Rogerson (b. 1988)

A Fish Will Rise (2014/2016)

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

Sonata for Flute and Piano (1957)

Allegretto malinconico

Cantilena: Assez lent

Presto giocoso

Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

Portraits of Langston (2007)

Prelude: Helen Keller

Danse Africaine

Le Grand Duc Mambo

Silver Rain

Jazz Band in a Parisian Cabaret

Harlem's Summer Night

Intermission

Guillaume Connesson (b. 1970)

Techno-Parade (2002)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Estampes (1903)

La soirée dans Grenade (Evening in Granada)

Jardins sous la pluie (Gardens in the Rain)

Francis Poulenc

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962)

Allegro tristamente

Romanza (Très calme)

Allegro con fuoco (Très animé)

Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano (1994)

Charleston

Hunter's Rag

Jig

THE MUSICIANS

Demarre McGill, flute

Demarre McGill has gained international recognition as a solo, recital, chamber, and orchestral musician. Winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, he has appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Seattle, Pittsburgh, Dallas, Grant Park, San Diego, and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras, and at age fifteen, with the Chicago Symphony. Now principal flute of the Seattle Symphony, he previously served as principal flute of the Dallas Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Florida Orchestra, and Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, and as acting principal flute of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

As an educator, McGill has performed, coached, and presented master classes in South Africa, Korea, Japan, Canada, and throughout the United States. With his brother clarinetist Anthony McGill, he was a speaker and performer at the 2018 League of American Orchestras Conference. He has also served on the faculties of the National Youth Orchestra of the United States, the National Orchestral Institute at the University of Maryland, and Canada's Orford Music Festival. In 2019, he was named associate professor of flute at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and is a faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival and School.

A founding member of The Myriad Trio and a former member of Chamber Music Society Two, McGill has participated in the Santa Fe, Marlboro, Seattle, and Stellenbosch chamber music festivals, to name a few. He is cofounder of The Art of Élan and, along with clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Michael McHale, founded the McGill/McHale Trio in 2014. Their first CD, *Portraits*, released in 2017, has received rave reviews, as has *Winged Creatures*, his recording with Anthony McGill and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. Last December, the McGill/McHale Trio performed at New York City's 92nd Street Y, and this month performs in Danville, Kentucky, Ames, Iowa, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, in addition to the National Gallery of Art.

Anthony McGill, clarinet

Clarinetist Anthony McGill is one of classical music's most recognizable and brilliantly multifaceted figures. As the principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic—that orchestra's first African-American principal player, he maintains a dynamic international solo and chamber music career. Hailed for his “trademark brilliance, penetrating sound and rich character” (*New York Times*), as well as for his “exquisite combination of technical refinement and expressive radiance” (*Baltimore Sun*), McGill is an ardent advocate for helping music education reach underserved communities and for addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in classical music. He performed during the inauguration of President Barack Obama, along with violinist Itzhak Perlman, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and pianist Gabriela Montero in a premiere of a piece written for the occasion by John Williams.

This season, McGill premieres a new work by Tyshawn Sorey at the 92nd Street Y; collaborates with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato at Carnegie Hall; appears as a featured soloist at the Kennedy Center, playing the Copland Clarinet Concerto at the SHIFT Festival of American Orchestras with the Jacksonville Symphony; and performs concertos by Copland, Mozart, and Danielpour with the Richmond, Delaware, Alabama, Reno, and San Antonio Symphonies. Additional collaborations include programs with Gloria Chien, his brother Demarre McGill, Michael McHale, Anna Polonsky, Arnaud Sussmann, and the Pacifica Quartet.

McGill recorded the Nielsen Clarinet Concerto in 2015 with Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic (DaCapo), an album in 2017 with Demarre McGill, principal flute of the Seattle Symphony, and pianist Michael McHale, and also another recording with the Pacifica Quartet, performing the Mozart and Brahms Clarinet Quintets (both on Cedille Records).

A dedicated champion of new music, in 2014, McGill premiered a piece written for him by Richard Danielpour titled *From the Mountaintop*, commissioned by the New Jersey Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, and Orchestra 2001. McGill served as the 2015–2016 artist-in-residence for WQXR, and appeared on *Performance Today*, MPR's *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, and *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*. In 2013, he was featured on NBC's *Nightly News* and MSNBC, in stories highlighting the McGill brothers' inspirational story.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, McGill previously served as the principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera and associate principal clarinet of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. In demand as a teacher, he serves on the faculty of the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, and Bard College's Conservatory of Music.

Michael McHale, piano

Belfast-born Michael McHale has established himself as one of Ireland's leading pianists and has developed a busy international career as a solo recitalist, concerto soloist, and chamber musician. He has performed as a soloist with the Minnesota, Hallé, Moscow, and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras, the City of London Sinfonia, the London Mozart Players, and all five of the major Irish orchestras. He has performed at the Tanglewood Music Center and the Tokyo spring festival, as well as at leading world venues, such as London's Wigmore Hall, Berlin's Konzerthaus, New York City's Lincoln Center, Boston's Symphony Hall, and Budapest's Pesti Vigadó.

McHale's debut solo album *The Irish Piano* was released in 2012 by RTÉ lyric fm (Irish classical radio) and selected as "CD of the Week" by critic Norman Lebrecht. More recent solo releases include *Schubert: Four Impromptus* (on Ergodos), and recordings as soloist with the London, BBC, and RTÉ Symphony Orchestras. His discography of more than twenty albums includes releases on Delos, Nimbus Alliance, and Champs Hill, and eight duo recital albums on Chandos with Michael Collins. The debut album of the McGill/McHale Trio, *Portraits* on Cedille in 2017, features special narrations by Oscar-winner Mahershala Ali. Upcoming releases include a recording of Richard Rodney Bennett's Piano Concerto with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and conductor John Wilson for Chandos.

Winner of the Terence Judd/Hallé Award in 2009, McHale was also presented with the Brennan and Field Prizes at the 2006 AXA Dublin International Piano Competition, the 2005 Camerata Ireland/Accenture Award, and in 2016, a Major Individual Award from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. He studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Cambridge University, and the Royal Academy of Music; his teachers and mentors include John O'Connor, Réamonn Keary, Christopher Elton, Ronan O'Hora, and Barry Douglas.

In 2017, McHale was invited to become a Patron of the Ulster Youth Orchestra, and in 2018, he was appointed as a part-time professor of piano for undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Cork School of Music in Ireland.

PROGRAM NOTES

A Fish Will Rise

Chris Rogerson originally scored *A Fish Will Rise* for piano trio as the first movement of his *River Songs* (2014). Anthony McGill, who premiered Rogerson's 2016 clarinet concerto *Four Autumn Landscapes*, asked the composer to reorchestrate the movement for flute, clarinet, and piano to feature the McGill/McHale Trio.

The work's title comes from Norman Maclean's memoir *A River Runs Through It*. From the beginning of the movement, Rogerson's fluid piano ostinato draws us into a sonic virtual reality of rippling water and light. The spontaneity and dynamism of nature are conjured up as the clarinet glides into the piano's pitch stream and the energy of the flute's exclamations increases rhythmic momentum. The three instruments are seamlessly intertwined, frequently changing roles of ostinato, main melody, and rhythmic interpolation. The opening section is the "source" (recalling the original French word's meaning, "well-spring") for the elements and structure of the piece. Recurring cycles of tranquility and surging energy alternate before ending in the contemplative mood of the beginning. In the most energetic sections, there are echoes of the open sonorities and motor rhythms often applied by America's master depicter of nature through music, Aaron Copland.

Rogerson effectively conveys the invocation of *A River Runs Through It* that there is "no clear line between religion and fly fishing." This music strengthens the connections between nature, music, and spirituality, invoking the optimistic perspective that (paraphrasing the final thoughts of the memoir) like a fish, hope will rise. *Program note by Dr. Elinor Olin, provided by Cedille Records*

Sonata for Flute and Piano

Now one of Poulenc's best-known works, the Sonata for Flute and Piano was completed in 1957 and dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, a great American patron of chamber music, including funding the construction of the Library of Congress's 500-seat Coolidge Auditorium, where the American premiere of this work happened on February 14, 1958. Jean-Pierre Rampal and the composer gave the world premiere at the Strasbourg Festival in France on June 18, 1957. Written in three movements, the sonata is among the most frequently programmed works for flute and piano. The first movement, Allegretto malincolico, is preoccupied with a descending chromatic motif, preceded by an arpeggiated flourish. The flute part has frequent trills and tonguing, a prime place for the flute player to show off. In the quiet Cantilena, Poulenc explores the flute's vocal qualities. In the final movement, the Presto giocoso, Poulenc comes around to a more lighthearted, semi rondo-like form, with a strong rhythmic foundation. *Program note provided by performers*

Portraits of Langston

Portraits of Langston is a six-movement suite by Valerie Coleman that calls for virtuosic dexterity, ensemble subtleties, and an extraordinary range of expression. Each movement contemplates a selected poem by Langston Hughes. As explained in her notes to the score, Coleman drew inspiration from Hughes's eyewitness experience of the legendary artists and places of the Harlem Renaissance and Parisian cabarets of the 1920s.

The opening Prelude: Helen Keller begins with a solo clarinet melody that finds light within darkness, as expressed in the poem's opening lines, and ends with the flute and clarinet in unison rhythms, moving from the lowest registers to highest tessituras to *forte* declaration. The mysterious opening of *Danse Africaine* unfolds and intensifies as layers of complex rhythms are stacked into an intricate textural web—the essence of African polyrhythms. The movement evolves with abrupt interchanges between agitation and exhaustion. The third movement, *Le Grand Duc Mambo*, is depicted as “a jazz cabaret club in the red-light district of Montmartre where Langston Hughes worked as a busboy for 25 cents a night.” A high-spirited duet paints “a terrific fight in the Grand Duc” and showcases brilliant flute and clarinet technique.

The fourth movement begins as a chorale, with stately blocks of harmony in the piano. Hughes's poem “In Time of Silver Rain” was dedicated to Lorraine Hansberry during her struggle with cancer. Beginning quietly, the music features a continuously flowing line between flute and clarinet over dignified piano chords. Improvisatory solos follow, building an insistent sense of optimism. For *Jazz Band in a Parisian Cabaret*, performers are told to play “with a brisk stride piano feel.” The syncopated piano introduction is followed first by a playful clarinet melody, then by the impish sound of a piccolo, leading to a combined woodwind romp in parallel lines. After a short *cantabile* pause, the trio tears it up, in response to Hughes's command, “Play that thing, jazz band!”

The final movement, *Harlem's Summer Night*, begins with a wistful flute melody accompanied by atmospheric piano chords, gratifying the images of loneliness and “aching emptiness” in Hughes's poetry. The music grows to full, rich textures as flute, clarinet, and piano each pursues its own separate, but coordinated melodic and harmonic identity. *Program note by Dr. Elinor Olin, provided by Cedille Records*

Techno-Parade

Techno-Parade opens with driving repetitions and virtuosic riffs conveying the relentless excitement of techno music. Yet this is an ironic take on the electronic music genre. Unpredictably shifting meters, occasionally settling into an uneven if temporarily constant feeling of 7/4, are in alternation with passages lacking the comfort of any obvious downbeat. In the middle of the piece there is a percussion break, where the pianist uses a wire brush and places sheets of paper directly on top of the piano strings.

The composer Guillaume Connesson explains that *Techno-Parade* “was written with a continuous pulsation, from start to finish. There are two decisive motives, swirling and colliding together, giving the piece its character, festive and disquieting at the same time. The wailing of the clarinet and the obsessive patterns of the piano seek to recapture the fierce energy of techno music.... The three instruments seem drawn into a rhythmic trance that carries the piece to its conclusion in a frenetic tempo.”

Extended techniques and extreme ranges for the winds create a changing constellation of colors and textures, compelling the listener toward increasing levels of participation. Maybe you can't dance to it, but one thing is sure: this music *moves*. *Program note by Dr. Elinor Olin, provided by Cedille Records*

Estampes

Claude Debussy's music is often associated with the contemporary impressionist movement in painting, and his approach shares some characteristics of this style. “The primary aim of French music,” Debussy wrote in 1904, “is to give pleasure.” Debussy was most interested in the sensuous quality of music. Even as a student, he let his concept of sound override many of the rules he was so assiduously taught by his teachers (much to their consternation). He developed a style that was wholly his own, but that also owed much to a wide variety of disparate influences. He was a passionate champion of a purely French style, and he proudly referred to himself as “Claude Debussy, musicien français.”

Debussy's middle years, during which *Estampes* was written, saw him become more popular throughout Europe. He wrote primarily for the piano during this period, and many of his most evocative pieces were composed during this time. He traveled widely, teaching piano and conducting, and enjoyed a reputation as a worldly, influential music critic.

Estampes, written in 1903 and composed of three movements, was inspired by Debussy's visit to the 1889 World's Fair in Paris. The work's second movement, *La soirée dans Grenade*, uses the Arabic scale and mimics guitar strumming to evoke images of Granada, Spain. At the time of its writing, Debussy's only personal experience with the country was a few hours spent in San Sebastián. Despite this, the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla said of *Soirée*, "There is not even one measure of this music borrowed from the Spanish folklore, and yet the entire composition in its most minute details conveys admirably Spain." The third movement, *Jardins sous la pluie*, describes a garden in Debussy's native France during an increasingly violent rainstorm. It makes use of the French folk melodies "Nous n'irons plus aux bois" (We'll Not Return to the Woods) and "Dodo, l'enfant do" (Sleep, Child, Sleep). *Program note provided by MKI Artists*

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

One of the last pieces Francis Poulenc composed, the *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*, is dedicated to the memory of Poulenc's friend, Swiss composer Arthur Honegger, who had died in 1955. Poulenc and Honegger were members of a composers' group called "Les Six," along with Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, Louis Durey, and Germaine Tailleferre.

The *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* was commissioned by Benny Goodman who, with pianist Leonard Bernstein, gave the world premiere on April 10, 1963, in Carnegie Hall. Poulenc was supposed to accompany Goodman in the premiere but died suddenly of a heart attack on January 30, 1963, before the sonata was published. An editor was employed to ascertain the identity of some notes and to provide missing dynamics and articulations. Like the *Flute Sonata*, the *Clarinet Sonata* is written in three movements and has become standard repertoire for the clarinet. *Program note provided by performers*

Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano

Paul Schoenfield began his musical career as both pianist and composer, writing his first work at the age of seven. Following studies with Rudolf Serkin and Robert Muczynski (piano and composition, respectively), Schoenfield has held several teaching posts and worked as a freelance performer and composer in the United States and Israel. Schoenfield's experience as a piano soloist and chamber musician has unmistakably informed the immediacy of his compositional styles. He writes the kind of music that combines intriguing complexity with a deceptive ease of accessibility. His works draw the listener in, stimulating our attention in a friendly rather than a demanding manner. Drawing on popular and folk traditions, in combination with the "serious" techniques of Western art music, the energy of Schoenfield's music conveys both the excitement and the meditative focus of the performer's experience—all in a single work.

Schoenfield has remarked that his "is not the kind of music to relax to, but the kind that makes people sweat; not only performer, but audience." *Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano* is a fine example of this perspective. Titles for the three movements refer somewhat deceptively to types of dances. The slow opening to the *Charleston* movement is evocative and moody, with uneven metrical changes that discourage foot-tapping or other dance moves. The music builds toward the lilting rhythms of the *Charleston* dance, but not without a good measure of irony (the score is occasionally marked "Puckish"), setting character and attitude for the balance of the work. Fluctuating between swinging, syncopated rhythms and an intentional destabilization of metrical regularity, in combination with lyrical and sustained melodic lines, the second and third movements, *Hunter Rag* and *Jig*, respectively, continue to undermine the listener's anticipation of dance moves implied by the movements' titles. Each of the instrumentalists is "made to sweat" with a virtuosic array of notes, unexpected harmonic patterns, and overlapping layers of considerable rhythmic intricacy. Changing tempos, deconstruction of dance patterns, and abrupt registral shifts in quick succession all contribute to the subversion of expectations in a work that is both high-spirited and thought provoking. *Program note by Dr. Elinor Olin, provided by Cedille Records*

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano

A New Country

Program features American works, including Paul Moravec's *A New Country*.
March 8, 3:30 p.m.

Sound Impact

Agora Dance

New York Opera Society

Degas's Musical World

A contemporary approach to Degas and his relationship to the Paris Opéra. Celebrating *Degas at the Opéra*
March 15, 3:30 p.m.

Curtis on Tour

Vera Quartet and Meng-Chieh Liu, piano

Works by Beethoven, César Franck, and David Hertzberg.
March 22, 3:30 p.m.

Sound Sketch

Elliot Wu, piano

Travel Log: Visual and Aural Imaginings of Distant Places

Works by Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert.
March 27, 12:10 p.m.
West Building, East Garden Court

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.

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cover Edgar Degas, *The Orchestra of the Opéra* (detail), 1870, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, © RMN-Grand Palais/photo: Hervé Lewandowski/Art Resource, New York