



76TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

NOVEMBER 5, 2017 / NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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Cover Winslow Homer, *Autumn* (detail), 1877, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

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Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Photo by Matt Dine

Program

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra

Laura Frautschi, violin

Eric Wyrick, violin

Alan Kay, clarinet

Frank Morelli, bassoon

Julie Landsman, French horn

NOVEMBER 5, 2017 / 3:30

WEST BUILDING, WEST GARDEN COURT

Jean Françaix (1912–1997)

Octet for Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, and Strings “A huit”

Moderato; Allegressimo

Scherzo

Andante; Adagio

Mouvement de valse

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Octet in F Major, D. 803

Adagio; Allegro; Più allegro

Adagio

Allegro vivace; Trio; Allegro vivace

Andante; Variations; Un poco più mosso; Più lento

Menuetto; Allegretto; Trio; Menuetto; Coda

Andante molto; Allegro; Andante molto; Allegro molto

The Musicians

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra creates extraordinary musical experiences that enrich lives and empower individuals through collaboration, innovation, and a passion for artistic excellence. Orpheus strives to be the world's premier chamber orchestra by performing music at the highest level, challenging artistic boundaries, inspiring the public to think and work with new perspectives, and building a broad and active audience in New York City and around the world. A standard-bearer of innovation and artistic excellence, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is one of the world's foremost chamber orchestras. It was founded in 1972 by a group of like-minded young musicians determined to combine the intimacy and warmth of a chamber ensemble with the richness of an orchestra. With seventy-one albums, including the Grammy Award-winning *Shadow Dances: Stravinsky Miniatures*, and forty-five commissioned and premiered original works, Orpheus rotates musical leadership roles for each work and strives to perform diverse repertoire through collaboration and open dialogue.

Performing without a conductor, Orpheus presents an annual series at Carnegie Hall and tours extensively to major national and international venues. The ensemble's 2017–2018 series features pianist André Watts; Norwegian cellist Truls Mørk in his first appearance with Orpheus; classical trumpet soloist Tine Thing Helseth; and violinist Lisa Batiashvili, also in her first appearance with Orpheus. As part of Orpheus's ongoing commissioning initiative, American Notes, two new pieces by Indian-American jazz pianist and composer Vijay Iyer and award-winning Chinese composer Shuying Li also debut this season.

Program Notes

OCTET FOR CLARINET, HORN, BASSOON, AND STRINGS "A HUIT"

Jean Françaix was born in 1912 in Le Mans, France, to a prominent musical family. His father was a composer, pianist, historian, and director of the local conservatory, and his mother was a voice instructor. Françaix started composing early and quickly came under the tutelage of Nadia Boulanger, one of the twentieth century's most important pedagogues in composition, with such notable students as Aaron Copland, Quincy Jones, Elliott Carter, Philip Glass, and Astor Piazzolla.

Françaix was a prolific composer and mastered many musical genres. He composed solo piano works, chamber music, concertos, symphonies, operas, and film scores. In response to some critics' treatment of him as a "lightweight composer," he said in the 1970s: "I am always told that my works are easy. Whoever says that has probably not played them.... I don't have the impression my oratorio *L'Apocalypse selon Saint Jean* is closely related to [Offenbach's] *Orphée aux Enfers*. My works are not considered as contemporary music, but I am not yet dead." Françaix composed until his death in 1997.

Françaix's octet begins with a slow introduction that leads into a frisky theme passed back and forth among the winds. It becomes faster with pizzicato strings, gaining an almost cartoonish character. The scherzo of the second movement begins with a sparse texture and the listener is eventually led to the theme introduced by the clarinet, with a new theme handed over to the horn. The clarinet and horn develop these themes with plenty of lively counterpoint, and the movement ends with a slower coda, marked "reminiscenza." The Andante movement, in the spirit of a lullaby, is quintessentially Françaix, and shows his innate gift for a memorably simple tune with a slight suggestion of uncertainty. The finale begins with a call to attention before sliding into a waltz. The octet, following a set of discords and some more cartoonish scurrying, concludes with a compressed version of the call to attention which opened this final movement.

OCTET IN F MAJOR, D. 803

Schubert's Octet in F Major was commissioned by Count Ferdinand von Troyer, chief steward to Emperor Leopold II's youngest brother, Archduke Rudolph, who was Beethoven's pupil. A keen and presumably highly skilled amateur clarinetist, Troyer wanted a score related to Beethoven's Septet for Winds and Strings, op. 20, which had retained its popularity in its original version and in transcriptions throughout the nineteenth century. Schubert satisfied the count's commission in a number of ways while also maintaining his own artistic voice. The instrumentation conformed largely to Beethoven's model—clarinet, horn, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, and double bass, with Schubert adding a second violin. Also in keeping with Beethoven's septet, it maintained the six-movement structure, which was based on the form of eighteenth-century serenades. Mirroring Beethoven's septet further are the slow introductions of both the first and last movements and the juxtaposition of a nostalgic minuet and a scherzo, with a set of theme and variations in between.

Dotted rhythms play a major role in animating this work and are most prominently employed in the opening movement's Adagio. The Adagio of the second movement was written with Count Troyer in mind. The horn, pushed to the maximum in the opening movement, is then silent for the first forty bars; however, toward the end it joins in a chamber miniature—a trio with clarinet and bassoon—within the larger chamber structure.

The third movement's Allegro vivace takes us outdoors with a scherzo that relies heavily on a repeating motif in the style of hunting calls, and then in the following movement, comes back inside to a Viennese café with a theme and variations—the clarinet again center stage. The main theme of the concluding Allegro is preceded by a few measures of unexpected seriousness, a bit of shock treatment amid all the joviality, whereupon Schubert launches into a rhythmically tricky allegro. Before the very end, the introductory call to attention is heard one final time, which undoubtedly provided a bit of inspiration for Francaix in his octet.

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

Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place in the West Building, West Garden Court.

—
The Crossing
With members of ICE
Music by Ted Hearne, David Lang,
and Caroline Shaw
November 12, 3:30

—
Mantra Percussion
Michael Gordon, *Timber*
Celebrating Jackson Pollock's *Mural*
November 19, 3:30

—
LACE (Living Art Collective Ensemble)
Salon-style concerts with music by
Boccherini, Brillon, and Mozart
Celebrating *Fragonard: The Fantasy Figures*
November 24–25, 2:00 & 4:00

—
New York Opera Society
The Three Lives of Rosina Almagiva
Celebrating *Fragonard: The Fantasy Figures*
November 26, 3:30

—
Inna Faliks and Daniel Schlosberg
Gustav Mahler, Symphony no. 6,
arranged for piano, four-hands,
by Alexander von Zemlinsky
December 3, 3:30

—
Caroling in the Rotunda
December 9, 10, 16 & 17, 1:30 & 2:30

The Swiss-American Musical Society
Igor Stravinsky, *The Soldier's Tale*
Christophe Sturzenegger,
The Snow Queen
Christophe Sturzenegger, conductor
Robert Baker, narrator
December 10, 3:30

—
Turtle Island Quartet
With special guest Liz Carroll
Winter's Eve
December 17, 4:00

—
Eclipse Chamber Orchestra
Traditional Viennese
New Year Concert
January 5, 2018, 3:00
East Building Auditorium

—
Harlem Symphony Orchestra
Amadi Azikiwe, conductor
January 7, 3:30

—
Juho Pohjonen, piano
January 14, 3:30

—
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band
Celebrating *Vermeer and the Masters of*
Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry
January 21, 3:30

—
Sybarites
Outliers
Celebrating *Outliers and American*
Vanguard Art
January 28, 3:30