

68th Concert Series 2021-22



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

**An Ensemble from the
Chamber Music
Society of
Lincoln Center**

Saturday, October 16, 2021. 8:00 pm
Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York

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Who We Are

Friends of Music Concerts, Inc. is an award-winning, non-profit, volunteer organization now celebrating its 68th season of showcasing, right here in Westchester, artists chosen from among the finest in today's diverse world of chamber music. Additionally, our Partners in Education program in the public schools and free student admission to our concerts give young people enhanced exposure to and appreciation of classical music.

In order to help sustain what one of our artists called this “legendary series,” we would welcome people who can join the volunteers listed above, either as Board members or equally valued off-Board committee members. Specifics we are looking for include, but are not limited to, people with networking, writing/publishing production, and/or fund development skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the range together.

Acknowledgments

We are proud to be a grantee of ArtsWestchester with funding made possible by Westchester County government with the support of County Executive George Latimer, as well as of the Rea Foundation and the Bergen Foundation. Additional support has been received from many friends of Friends of Music, including subscribers and other ticket holders listed in this program.* If you, too, can contribute in this way, please send your gifts to Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546.

Program

Chacony in G minor

(arr. Benjamin Britten, 1948, rev. 1963)

Henry Purcell

(1659-1695)

Octet for Winds and Strings, Op. 4 (1933)

Moderato

Allegro scherzoso

Andantino

Allegro feroce

Howard Ferguson

(1908-1999)

Intermission

Octet in F Major for Winds and Strings, Op. 166, D. 803 (1824)

Adagio – Allegro

Adagio

Allegro vivace

Andante con variazioni

Menuetto: Allegretto

Andante molto - Allegro

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

Next concert

Sunday, November 7, 2021, 4:00 pm at Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

Megan Moore, mezzo-soprano; Francesco Barfoed, piano.

Program: songs by Gioachino Rossini, Franz Schubert, Arnold Schoenberg, Undine Smith Moore, Rued Langgaard, Gaetano Donizetti, Marc Blitzstein, and from LYNX'S Amplify Series.

Program notes

Chacony in G minor for String Quartet (arr. Britten)

Henry Purcell

Henry Purcell, one of the most renowned composers in England's history, was the organist at the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, where he is buried. He wrote for the church, for the theater, and for every kind of private performance. Like Mozart and Mendelssohn, he had a productive career that was condensed into a lifetime of only thirty-six years. Between 1690 and 1695 alone, Purcell composed music for almost fifty plays; the music was so extensive that in some cases the plays were virtually converted into operas. His instrumental music includes eight suites and many short pieces for harpsichord, two sets of trio sonatas published in 1683, and a collection of Fantasias written around 1680. He is the only composer before J.S. Bach whose work is included in the repertory of the symphony orchestra.

A chacony (Fr. *chaconne*, It. *ciaccona*) consists of a series of variations over a repeating bass line known as ostinato. Purcell composed this **Chacony** for an ensemble of viols, bowed stringed instruments with frets that typically are held vertically like cellos or basses. He became the last major figure to explore this particular format, creating his music at the transformative moment when the older viol family of instruments was beginning to yield to the more brilliant timbre of violins.

Benjamin Britten admired Purcell's music and adapted his expressive **Chacony in G minor** into a work for string quartet in 1948, in part to familiarize players and audiences with his distinguished predecessor's music. In the Purcell/Britten Chacony, an eight-measure bass statement, introduced by the lower strings, serves as the foundation for eighteen variations, in some of which the bass figure appears in the higher-voiced instruments. Britten chose not to alter Purcell's original order of notes, but devised a "credible dynamic structure and consistency of dotted rhythms and distribution of parts," according to English composer/musicologist Philip Lane. Britten wrote: "The theme, first of all in the [cello and viola], moves in a stately fashion from a high to a low G. It is repeated many times in the lower instruments with varying textures above.... There is a quaver (eighth notes) version with heavy chords above it, which provides material for several repetitions. There are some free and modulating versions of it; a connecting passage leads to a forceful and rhythmic statement in G minor." The work concludes, said Britten, with "a pathetic variation, with dropping semi-quavers (sixteenth notes), and repeated 'soft' passages – Purcell's own instruction."

- notes provided by Susan Halpern

Octet for Winds and Strings, Op. 4

Howard Ferguson

Born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1908, Howard Ferguson was heard playing in the Belfast Musical Competition by Harold Samuel, who convinced his parents to allow the young boy to go to London to study with him. He went on to study at the Royal College of Music where he studied with Malcolm Sargent while continuing his piano studies with Samuel. After finishing at the Royal College of Music, he spent his time playing chamber music and composing. During World War II he and Myra Hess organized daily chamber concerts at London's National Gallery. From 1948 to 1963 he taught composition at the Royal Academy of Music. By the early 1960's he stopped composing and instead devoted himself to musicology, producing scholarly editions of early keyboard music and the complete piano works of Franz Schubert.

Ferguson's personal style throughout his early work may be categorized as 20th century romantic. Since he wrote slowly, he completed fairly few compositions, yet the level of his inspiration and success is consistently high and, as a result, his music's elegance and technical mastery attracted many outstanding artists.

This marvelous early **Octet**, composed in 1933 and premiered that November 21 in London's Grotrian Hall by the Stratton String Quartet, is the largest of his chamber works. It began as a clarinet quintet and was expanded into an octet at the suggestion of his composition teacher at the Royal College of Music, R.O. Morris, to whom the work is dedicated. Written for two violins, viola, cello, clarinet, horn, bassoon,

and double bass, this delightful work is accessible and appealing. The work's success contributed to the young composer's reputation, and helped him secure a publisher.

The four-movement work embraces classical structures in form and harmony. Its initial movement, *Moderato*, is relaxed in feeling. The clarinet introduces the main theme, which serves as a motto for the work as a whole. The horn introduces a contrasting second theme, and a peaceful coda completes the movement. The second movement, *Allegro scherzoso*, in rondo form, is playful, with a memorable duet for clarinet and bassoon. The horn also is featured in this somewhat Irish sounding movement.

The third movement, a passionately intense *Andantino*, begins with the viola and cello playing a lyrical, wistful theme. In the movement's more spirited mid-section, the clarinet has a subject that sounds derived from the motto theme heard in the first movement. The music builds to a climax with some agitation before the cello returns to the opening mood; the movement concludes peacefully.

In the final movement, *Allegro feroce*, the mood changes forcefully. Rhythm rather than melody predominates. The viola and cello later introduce a mournful melody against the winds' rocking accompaniment. The presence of the motto theme becomes more and more evident as the movement progresses; in the coda the original idea introduced in the first movement becomes triumphant.

- notes provided by Susan Halpern

Octet in F Major for Winds and Strings, D. 803, Op. 166

Franz Schubert

In December of 1800 Ludwig van Beethoven wrote a cheeky letter to his friend Franz Anton Hoffmeister, who had just opened a publishing house that would come to be part of Edition Peters. The composer enclosed a number of scores for Hoffmeister's perusal, including a particularly innovative creation: "A Septet per il violin, viola, violoncello, contrabasso, clarinet, corno, fagotto – tutti obbligati... This septet has been very popular. For its more frequent use the three wind-instruments, namely..." It was written in an outdoor serenade-like format with six movements, but featuring an intimate mixture of solo clarinet, bassoon, and horn with a selection of strings.

Given the septet's enduring concert life, it is unsurprising that when the amateur clarinetist Count Ferdinand Troyer commissioned Franz Schubert to write a new chamber work in 1824, he requested that it be based on Beethoven's model. Schubert, who admired Beethoven greatly, was more than willing; he rounded out the ensemble with an additional violin and produced one of his own most enduringly popular pieces of chamber music, the **Octet in F Major**.

Schubert clearly borrows the six-movement structure of Beethoven's septet. The first is a large-scale sonata form. A slow introduction features a few moments of tension, but the ensuing allegro establishes the sunny mood that will occupy most of the piece. A lyrical second theme introduced by the winds provides opportunities for almost every member of the large band to take turns. In the development, Schubert takes the lyrical second tune and makes it a bit more somber, before cuing the recapitulation. A coda leads to what should be a final cadence. But the horn has the last word, with a soaring call that pulls everything back, as if to say "there's still a lot of music to go."

In the opening of the second movement, a clarinet aria turns into a poignant duet with the violin. Schubert transforms his boisterous band of instruments into a vocal chorus, sometimes allowing one voice to sing out as a soloist and sometimes bringing smaller groups together for touching chorales. The next movement, a scherzo built on the bounding dotted rhythms often associated with Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, brings back some of the orchestral energy of the first movement. The contrasting trio has strings and winds play simple soaring lines above the cello, who holds down a perpetual-motion continuo line.

The fourth movement combines some of the lyricism of the second movement with the democratic turn-taking of the first. It is a set of seven variations on a simple song from Schubert's singspiel. The violin dominates the first variation, with short interjections from the other instruments. In the second,

the viola betrays the other strings and teams up with the three winds. The horn takes the solo part in the third variation, with a bit of support from the clarinet and bassoon. The fourth belongs to the cello, and in the fifth instruments pair off to present a tense rendition of the theme in a minor key. The penultimate, highly contrapuntal variation modulates to heavenly A-flat Major, necessitating a passionate bridge section to get back to a final version of the theme. The virtuosic last variation speeds by, but in a sudden slow coda reminiscent of the ending of the first movement, all of the instruments in the group pass around an arresting, pulsing pattern while we hear nostalgic snippets of the theme.

The minuet that follows is calm, thoughtful – an intentional contrast to the wild energy of the scherzo third movement. The central trio sounds like a tune from one of Schubert's comedic songs, with the main melody presented by a duet of the bassoon and the violin. The slow introduction of the last movement continues this almost operatic character, with dramatic tremolos in the lower strings and ominous cries and scales in the instruments above. But as in the first movement, the seriousness of the introduction begins to give way before the allegro begins. The allegro itself features a good deal of play with the lengths of the phrases. Throughout, Schubert leaves us wondering where a melody is going to end and where the next one will start. The sirens of the slow opening pop up once more at the close of the piece, but quickly give way to a cheerful coda, a well-deserved celebration after something of a chamber music odyssey.

---notes by cellist Nicky Swett, Gates Scholar at the University of Cambridge

About the Artists

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center is one of eleven constituents of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Under the artistic direction of pianist Wu Han and cellist David Finckel, and through its performances, education, and recording/broadcast activities, it draws more people to chamber music than any other organization of its kind. Its artists comprise an evolving and unparalleled roster of performers. Here are the ones who are with us this evening.

American violinist Stella Chen garnered worldwide attention with her first prize win at the 2019 Queen Elisabeth International Violin Competition. Her debuts this past summer with the Chicago Symphony and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe are being followed by an auspicious 2021-22 season that will include her recital debut at Carnegie Hall and appearances throughout Europe, Asia, and North and South America. She is the youngest ever prize winner of the Menuhin Competition.

Bassoonist Mark Goldberg is a member of the New York Woodwind Quartet and St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble as well as principal bassoonist of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, American Ballet Theater, New York City Opera, and others. He has appeared regularly at Ravinia, Tanglewood, Bard, and other summer festivals. He is on the faculty of The Juilliard School Pre-College Division, Mannes College, New England Conservatory, The Hartt School, Bard Conservatory, Columbia University, and NYU.

Cellist Sihao He first came into international prominence as a 14-year-old, winning first prize at the International Antonio Janigro Cello Competition in Croatia. Later that same year he won the National Cello Competition in his native China. As a soloist he has performed with many leading orchestras in Europe and Latin America. In the U.S he has performed at the Metropolitan Museum, the U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society, and the Myra Hess Concert Series in Chicago. As a chamber musician he has appeared in Shanghai, in the U.S., and in Europe. His string quartet, Simply Quartet, won first prize at the Haydn Invitational Chamber Music Competition in Shanghai.

About the Artists *(continued)*

Clarinetist Bixby Kennedy has performed concertos with the Minnesota Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and New Haven Symphony Orchestras. As a chamber musician he has performed throughout the U.S. and Europe; he is the clarinetist for the “explosive” NYC-based chamber ensemble Frisson. He currently is Associate Principal Clarinetist of the New Haven Symphony, Associate Principal in the Albany Symphony, and Principal Clarinetist of Symphony in C. He performs classical repertoire on original and replica period instruments throughout the U.S.

Violinist Cho-Liang Lin, whose concert career has spanned the globe for more than 30 years, is equally at home in recital, playing chamber music, and in the teaching studio. An advocate of contemporary music, he has premiered works by Tan Dun, Joel Hoffman, John Harbison, Bright Sheng, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Joan Tower, among others. From 2001 to 2018 he was music director La Jolla Music Society’s SummerFest, transforming it into a multidisciplinary festival. He also serves as artistic director of the Hong Kong International Chamber Music Festival. In 2000 Musical America named him its instrumentalist of the year. He plays the 1715 “Titian” Stradivarius.

American violist Matthew Lipman has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Minnesota Orchestra, and Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, among others. *The Strad* praised his “most impressive” 2019 Cedille Records debut album *Ascent*; his recording of Mozart’s *Sinfonia Concertante* with violinist Rachel Barton Pine and Sir Neville Marriner topped the Billboard Classical Charts. A former artist-in-residence for the American Viola Society, he was featured on WFMT Chicago’s list “30 Under 30” of the world’s top classical musicians. He is on the faculty at Stony Brook University and performs on a 1700 Matteo Goffriller viola on generous loan from the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation.

Bassist Anthony Manzo is a regular guest with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Smithsonian Chamber Society, and the Baltimore Symphony, all near his home in Washington, DC. But he also has performed throughout the country and in Europe; he serves as solo bassist of San Francisco’s New Century Chamber Orchestra and formerly was solo bassist of the Munich Chamber Orchestra in Germany. He is an active performer on period instruments, with groups including The Handel & Haydn Society of Boston, Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco, and Opera Lafayette in Washington. He is on the double bass and chamber music faculty of the University of Maryland. He performs on a double bass made around 1890 by Jerome Thibouville Lamy in Paris (which now has a removable neck for travel!).

Dan Wions, Principal Horn of the New York City Ballet, performs repertoire ranging from orchestral, concert band, chamber music, and solo to pop, rock, show tunes, and jazz. He works as a substitute musician with the Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, and a handful of Broadway shows, while also serving as Principal Horn of the Philadelphia Ballet and Glimmerglass Opera in upstate New York. He has toured extensively as a founding member of Universal Brass Ensemble. He began studies on piano at the age of two, composition at age five, and finally the horn at age nine. He holds a bachelor’s degree in horn performance, with outside studies in piano and composition, from Indiana University.



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