

South Bay Chamber Music Society

September 21 & 23, 2018

Los Angeles Wind Octet

Jennifer Cullinan, oboe; Ted Sugata, oboe;
Sérgio Coelho, clarinet; Edgar David Lopez, clarinet;
Judith Farmer, bassoon; Elliot Moreau, bassoon;
Amy Jo Rhine, horn; Gregory Roosa, horn;
Steve Dress, contrabass

Program Notes by Boglárka Kiss, D.M.A



A wind band, circa 1753, with two players on each instrument.

Octets are one of the largest groupings of classical chamber music. Most commonly, octets are scored for the following formations: strings only (two string quartets, or eight cellos), winds only (usually two of each: oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon), or winds and strings of various combinations. The octet repertoire spans over 200 years, with works by the likes of Mozart, Beethoven, as well as by 20th century greats such as Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Varèse.

Wind octets likely originate in the German wind band tradition, cultivated by the aristocracy in the 18th century. Wind bands, called *Harmonie*, were often employed for outdoor social events or as background music. With the social and cultural changes of the 19th century, the role of wind instruments expanded dramatically, including music for the military, brass ensemble music, and school music. The 20th century witnessed further expansions into the concert hall and movies and television.

Cinq Pieces en Trio

Jacques Ibert (French, 1890-1962)



A Paris native, Ibert studied at the *Paris Conservatoire* before embarking on a successful career in music. His studies were interrupted by World War I, in which he served as a naval officer. In 1919, he won the top prize of the Conservatoire, the *Prix de Rome*, which gave him the opportunity to study music in Rome. He served as the director of the *Académie de France* at the Villa Medici in Rome until the outbreak of World War II, during which time he was forced into exile. He was restored to his former eminence in French musical life after the War, serving as the chief administrator to the Paris Opera and the Opéra-Comique.

Compositionally, Ibert's style has been described as "eclectic" because it does not adhere to any specific style. His output encompasses several operas, ballets, music for plays and films, as well as solo and chamber works for various instruments.

Ibert wrote *Cinq Pieces en Trio* in 1935. This brief work demonstrates Ibert's mastery of wind writing, exploring the entire tonal and expressive ranges of the oboe, clarinet and bassoon. The first movement is a fast march that gives way to a pensive *Andantino*. The third movement is brisk, with a cuckoo passage in the middle, followed by another slow movement. The last movement, likely labeled as a march jokingly, brings the work to a delightful close.

Please click the link to hear this work in live performance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewSZURjmWiM>

Serenade No. 12 in C Minor, KV 388

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Austrian, 1756-1791)

This *Serenade*, from 1782, is an exceptional example of *Harmoniemusik* – music written for a wind band, for the purposes of light entertainment. Mozart was no stranger to writing light music for winds, having composed several *divertimenti* before this more substantial work. We know nothing about why Mozart set out to write this *Serenade* or where it was premiered. What we do know however, is that the work is in stark contrast to other wind pieces written during this era: With its stubbornly dark, even tragic mood and a high level of technical sophistication, it stands out in the repertoire, and raises the possibility that it was intended for more than "background music." The fact that Mozart chose a minor key also suggests something very personal about the work.

The *Serenade* is set in four movements. The first movement follows the traditional sonata form, and features an explosive opening, and an angry mood throughout from which only the oboe offers some respite. Lyricism and peace pervade the song-like second movement. In the third, Mozart displays his skill in counterpoint, writing imitative lines for the instruments throughout. The last movement features eight variations on a theme, mostly in minor, only to conclude the work in a major key.



Please click here to hear a rendition of the *Serenade*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GzZqjET0Zc&start_radio=1&list=RD4GzZqjET0Zc

Space Available

Daniel Wood (English, b. 1974)



Born in England, composer and hornist Daniel Wood was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. He enjoys a varied career as a musician and entrepreneur. As a founding member of the *Quadre* horn quartet, he tours extensively, performs regularly with orchestras, and headlines his solo shows.

As a composer, he enjoys crafting music for small forces spinning a conversational narrative and creating works with subtle shadings. He has written pieces for brass, wind and string groups, steel drum ensembles, and jazz combos. *Space Available*, for two horns, was commissioned by musicians of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

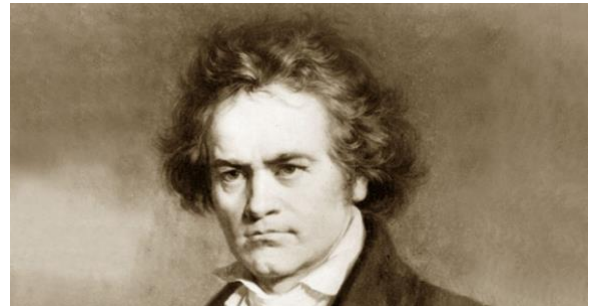
Wood studied at the University of California, Los Angeles with additional training in discipline-based arts education – a Getty Center curriculum. He teaches at the Community School of Music and Arts and the San Francisco Conservatory Preparatory Division where he is chair of musicianship and composition.

Octet in E Flat Major, Op. 103

Ludwig van Beethoven (German, 1770-1827)

Music for wind instruments does not feature prominently among Beethoven's later works. However, as a young composer, he wrote several pieces for different instrumental combinations, including this Octet, which dates from 1792 or 1793. The work was requested by his patron, Elector of Cologne Maximilian Franz (1756-1801), brother of Marie Antoinette and son of the Holy Roman Emperor, Francis I.

Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1793 to study with Joseph Haydn. He soon revised the Octet, publishing it in 1795 as his String Quintet, Op. 4. Beethoven's opus numbers generally follow his career's progression, but the Wind Octet is an exception: The original wind piece was published only after his death, and its high opus number, 103, falsely suggests that it came long after the String Quintet.



It is possible that the Wind Octet was intended for a festive occasion in the court of Maximilian Franz, who enjoyed hearing wind music during his meals. Although the work is light and written in a traditional four-movement structure, the music hints at Beethoven's future trademarks, such as mastery of abstract forms, brevity of motives, virtuosic passages, and sudden dynamic contrasts.

Please click here to listen to a rendition of this work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8w-JZMzWiQ>

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