

B I R M I N G H A M

Chamber Music Society

and BURR & FORMAN

present

Borealis Wind Quintet

with Leon Bates



Brock Recital Hall • Samford University
October 22, 2013

This concert is dedicated to Anthony and Barbara B. Barnard in recognition of their leadership and service to the Birmingham Chamber Music Society

Program

JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU (1683-1763)

Gavotte With Six Doubles

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Jeux d'eau

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

Sextet for Piano and Winds

Allegro vivace

Divertissement

Finale

❧ *Intermission* ❧

ALBERT ROUSSEL (1869-1937)

Divertissement

LUDWIG THUILLE (1861-1907)

Sextet for Piano and Winds, Op. 6

Allegro moderato

Larghetto: Piu lento

Gavotte: Andante, quasi Allegretto

Finale: Vivace

Program Notes

This evening's musical journey takes us to France, and we remain there until a final stopover in Germany where we hear a composition by the Austro-Hungarian Ludwig Thuille. And, speaking of journeys, many of our composers travelled far in their lifetimes, at least in terms of style or genre – Rameau from the harpsichord to opera, Poulenc from the music halls of Paris to a religious conversion which altered his focus, Roussel from a Romantic flirtation with exoticism to a more rigorous Neo-Classicism.

We embark with a dance from the French Baroque era by Jean-Philippe Rameau, composer of harpsichord music, an opera and author of the seminal theoretical treatise, *Traité de l'Harmonie* (1726). The *Gavotte with Six Variations*, originally found in the second volume of Rameau's *Pièces de Clavecin* has been transcribed in tonight's version for wind quintet by bassoonist Ryohei Nakagawa. A gavotte is a dance form prevalent in France and spreading abroad from its origins in the Pays de Gap, where the inhabitants were called Gavots. It was popular until the time of the French Revolution and was in the meter of two or four, and usually, but not always, began with an upbeat rhythm.

Ensuite, we skip a couple of centuries to hear a solo piano work by one of the great exponents of French Impressionism, Maurice Ravel. One of Ravel's loveliest and most performed works for piano the *Jeux d'eau* appeared early (1901) in the composer's life. It is harmonically daring, but has antecedents in Franz Liszt (*Jeu d'eau à la Ville d'Este* and *Au bord d'une source*). Dedicated to Ravel's teacher Gabriel Fauré, it underscores Walter Gieseking's remark that Ravel's body of work for piano is "the most pianistic ever written, marking the most perfect and universal uses of the resources of the piano."

With Francis Poulenc's *Sextet for Winds and Piano*, we land squarely in the twentieth century. Poulenc seemed to have an affinity for wind instruments; among his final compositions are sonatas for flute and clarinet, dedicated to the memories of Prokofiev and Honegger, respectively.

One of Poulenc's friends described his personality as "moitié moine, moitié voyou" ("half monk, half guttersnipe"). Some of this dichotomy may be present in the Sextet, which is alternately insouciant and serious. Written and revised over a period from 1930 to 1935, it remains one of the composer's most popular works.

Albert Roussel, like Poulenc, served in the military during the First World War. During that period and before it, he was stationed, as a naval officer, in exotic posts. These travels influenced his early compositions, but he eventually turned to a Neo-Classical style. He studied at the Schola Cantorum of Paris with Eugene Gigout and Vincent d'Indy and was hired there as a teacher of counterpoint, where one of his pupils was Eric Satie. The *Divertissement* is a short but appealing early work for winds and piano, appearing in 1906.

Ludwig Thuille, born in the Tyrol region of Austria, was orphaned at an early age, and eventually studied in Innsbruck and in Munich with the rather conservative Josef Rheinberger. Like so many of our composers tonight, he taught theory and composition. In his relatively short lifetime, he produced three operas, a symphony, chamber works, and co-authored a text on harmony. The *Sextet, Op. 6* is an ingratiating work written in the 1880s. And we arrive full circle as the *Gavotte* makes another appearance in the third movement.

Bon voyage!

Notes by Dr. Patricia Fitzsimmons

Borealis Wind Quintet

Katherine Fink, flute • Tamar Beach Wells, oboe
Kathryn Taylor, clarinet • Wayne Hileman, bassoon
Dan Culpepper, horn

The Borealis Wind Quintet has received accolades for their finesse and style. Their remarkable ensemble playing is a result of a long musical collaboration focused not only on detail and precision, but also on carefully conceived musical interpretations. Their goal is to blend sparkling virtuosity with musical integrity in programs that are appealing and richly rewarding to the audience.

The Borealis has won numerous awards and prizes, including grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and Chamber Music America. They have toured and performed in prestigious series throughout the U.S. Their well-received performances have resulted in numerous re-engagements across the country.

The Borealis Wind Quintet is dedicated to presenting educational programs in conjunction with their performances. They have been in residence at the Newport Music Festival, Bucknell and in Ellsworth, Maine and have ongoing programs for the Connecticut public school system. They have presented workshops and masterclasses at preschools through universities and have provided community educational programs in conjunction with concert performances. During the Quintet's stay in Birmingham, students at Greenwood Elementary School in Bessemer will be treated to a mini-class by the group as well as a special performance.

Borealis has recorded four CD's. These works include major classical pieces, contemporary pieces commissioned by them, and instrumental adaptations of operas arias. One recording received a 2006 Grammy nomination.

In demand as a chamber musician and recitalist, **Katherine Fink** enjoys a multifaceted career encompassing orchestral, chamber music and solo performances. She is principal flute with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the New York Pops and the EOS Orchestra and has been a featured soloist with these ensembles as well as others. Fink performs regularly with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Broadway productions, toured with Andrea Bocelli, and serves on the faculty of the New Jersey City University. She currently serves on the board of directors for the New York Flute Club. Ms. Fink can be heard on numerous recordings with the New York Pops, the EOS Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic and Philharmonia Virtuosi. She is featured on the CD "Reel Life" (music by film composers) and has recorded all of the solo flute works of Robert Baksa. Additionally, Ms. Fink is active in the commercial music field (films, television and radio commercials).

Tamar Beach Wells is a versatile soloist and orchestral musician. She is principal oboist with the Greater Bridgeport Symphony and plays regularly with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, including their inner city school outreach program. She performs with the American Composers Orchestra, the Berkshire Bach Ensemble and the Westchester Symphony. She has toured nationally with Andrea Bocelli and has been a member of the Springfield Symphony and the Goodspeed Opera. In addition to the oboe, she plays the English horn, oboe d'amore and bass oboe and frequently collaborates with vocalists, choruses and other artists in diverse settings ranging from traditional solo performances to recording sessions

with pop singers. She holds degrees summa cum laude in performance and education from the Hartt School of Music and Performing Arts and a Masters degree from the Juilliard School of Music. Wells has been on the faculty of the Hartt School and the University of Connecticut and maintains a private studio in her Litchfield County home.

Kathryn Taylor is a member of the Connecticut Grand Opera, Stamford Chamber Orchestra, and Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Taylor performs regularly with the New Haven, Hartford and Stamford Symphonies. She has performed at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina and the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. Ms. Taylor has been a featured artist at several chamber music festivals including the Newport Music Festival and the Windham, NY Festival. She is an active teacher and clinician and gives master classes throughout the country at high schools, colleges and universities. An alumna of the Juilliard School, Taylor was principal clarinetist in the American Sinfonietta 2001 European tour and is in the orchestra production of *Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway.

Wayne Hileman, bassoon, has performed with many orchestras including the New Haven, Stamford, American and Westchester Symphonies, and appeared as a chamber player, soloist, or as continuo at many venues, including the Pro-Arte, Windham, Alliance Artist, and New England Bach Festivals. In addition, he is an audio engineer, restoring historic recordings for major labels, producing live concerts for NPR, editing and mastering new releases for many classical artists, and is a voting member of the Recording Academy (the Grammys). Hileman holds degrees from Potsdam College and Yale University.

Dan Culpepper is a very active freelance horn player in New York City with a both diverse and eclectic career and. He performs with the New York City Ballet, New York Pops, Little Orchestra Society and at Radio City Music Hall. He has performed or recorded with Frank Sinatra, Elton John, James Taylor, Pavarotti, Sting and Yo-Yo Ma, among others. His movie credits include *Pocohontas* and *Ransom*. Culpepper recorded numerous television and radio commercials. He is currently principal horn of *Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway.

Leon Bates, pianist

As one of America's leading pianists, Leon Bates has earned a place on the international concert circuit. Whether in recital or as a soloist with orchestra, Bates is a major artist and one of America's best. Critics find his musical spirit to possess all the elements of greatness, and audiences are so enamored that he is consistently re-engaged year after year.

A versatile and exciting artist, Bates enjoys collaborating with string quartets, wind quintets, singers and dance companies. In 2007, he received a life time achievement award from the NANM (National Association of Negro Musicians) for his brilliant musicianship and untiring work with young people. Bates has performed in major concert halls on five continents including North America and Europe. Additionally, he has introduced a new recital program called "American Originals" featuring the great American composers of our time.

Leon Bates's work with young people is extraordinary. He is a master teacher and often is called upon to give master classes to promising young musicians. In

one season alone he often performs over fifty residency programs in conjunction with orchestra engagements and recitals to inspire, motivate and delight America's youth as he opens their hearts and minds to the love of music. Bates is also a favorite on college campuses because of his broad interests beyond the world of classical music.

A Renaissance man, Leon Bates enjoys all the arts, including architecture, dance, theater and music. He is a sports enthusiast and a disciplined body builder, which he feels aids his concentration and maintains his strength for the rigors of a performance career. Lately he has begun composing and finds great satisfaction in this creative aspect of music. One venture is composing for beginning students employing a new, progressive teaching method. He has written pieces in, collaboration with Janet Vogt, for a method book entitled *Piano Discoveries* (Heritage Music Press).

A native of Philadelphia, Leon Bates began his formal study of music at the age of six on both piano and violin. While still young, he was recognized for his musical genius and groomed for a concert career. While still in Philadelphia, he the Philadelphia Orchestra Senior Auditions as a student. Among his awards are the Collegiate Artist Award from the Music Teachers National Association, the National Association of Negro Musicians Competition, the Symphony of the New World Competition and the National Endowment for the Arts Solo Recitalists Fellowship Grant. His importance to the music world was recognized with an honorary Doctorate from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Mr. Bates received the Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award from the Greater New York Wallenberg Committee for his extensive work with children.

Some highlights of his career include a performance with Lorin Maazel and the Orchestra of France; participating in the Steinway Foundation's Gala Celebration commemorating the building of their 500,000th piano at Carnegie Hall.

Remaining Concerts for 2014

February 18

The King's Singers

(In collaboration with the Davis Architects Series)

March 24

Emerson String Quartet

(In collaboration with the Davis Architects Series)

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To see this season's remaining concert schedule, programs from past performances, artists' websites, slide shows of outreach events, concert reviews, and BCMS news coverage or order tickets, visit www.birminghamchambermusicsociety.org

