Dalton Wed@7:30pm: Live and Interactive!

2017–2018 Season
423rd Concert
Wednesday 28 February 2018
Dalton Center Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.
Pre-Concert talk with Dr. Robert White at 7 p.m.

IMANI WINDS
Julietta Curenton, Flute
Toyin Spellman-Diaz, Oboe
Mark Dover, Clarinet
Jeff Scott, Horn
Monica Ellis, Bassoon

“Old Made New”

Jeff Scott
b. 1967
Startin Sumthin

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
1844–1908
arr. Jonathan Russell
Scheherazade

Astor Piazzolla
1921–1992
arr. Jeff Scott
Contrabajissimo

György Ligeti
1923–2006
Sechs Bagatellen
I. Allegro con spirito
II. Rubato – Lamentoso
III. Allegro grazioso
IV. Presto ruvido
V. Adagio – Mesto
VI. Molto vivace – Capriccioso

Reena Esmail
b. 1983
The Light is the Same
commissioned by Lied Center of Kansas and premiered March 15, 2017 at the University of Kansas, Lawrence

Valerie Coleman
b. 1970
Tzigane
Since 1997 IMANI WINDS, the Grammy® nominated wind quintet, has taken a unique path carving out a distinct presence in the classical music world with its dynamic playing, culturally poignant programming, adventurous collaborations, and inspirational outreach programs. With two member composers and a deep commitment to commissioning new work, the group is enriching the traditional wind quintet repertoire while meaningfully bridging American, European, African and Latin American traditions. From Mendelssohn to Astor Piazzolla to Wayne Shorter and Stravinsky, Imani Winds seeks to engage new music and new voices into the modern classical idiom.

Starting in the fall of 2016 through 2018, Imani Winds has been appointed as the University of Chicago’s Don Michael Randel Ensemble-in-Residence. This multi-faceted residency includes in depth collaborations with wind students, the chamber music department, composition majors and the Hyde Park community and will also feature world premieres on the “UC Presents” Series, the presenting arm of the University.

Imani Winds’ touring schedule has taken them across the globe. At home, the group has performed in the nation’s major concert venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Disney Hall, to name a few. In recent seasons, the group has traveled extensively internationally, with tours in China, Singapore, Brazil, Australia and throughout Europe. Fall 2017 will include a tour of New Zealand.

The group continues its Legacy Commissioning Project, in which the ensemble commissions and premieres new works for wind quintet written by a variety of composers of diverse musical backgrounds. Recent commissions include works by Vijay Iyer, Simon Shaheen, Jason Moran, Mohammed Fairouz, and Frederic Rzewski. Recently, a concert-length new work by Imani Winds’ member, Jeff Scott, was written for the group, jazz trio and string quartet titled The Passion, which musically explores the idea of a fictitious meeting between J.S. Bach and John Coltrane. 2017–18 will include premieres by Valerie Coleman, Reena Esmail, Nkeiru Okoye, Courtney Bryan, and Pulitzer Prize winner Henry Threadgill.

In the summer of 2010, the ensemble launched its annual Chamber Music Festival. The program, set on the campus of Mannes School of Music, brings together young instrumentalists and composers from across North America and beyond, for an intense exploration and performance of traditional and new chamber music compositions. Now in it’s seventh year, the participants have gone on to successes around the world, ranging from winning positions in orchestras, expanding entrepreneurial endeavors, founding their own music educational programs and forming their own chamber music ensembles.

Imani Winds has five releases on E1 Music, including their 2006 Grammy® Award nominated recording titled The Classical Underground. They have also recorded for Naxos and Blue Note and released The Rite of Spring on Warner Classics which was on iTunes Best of 2013 list. Their eighth commercial recording was released in the fall of 2016.

PROGRAM NOTES

Startin Sumthin by Jeff Scott is a modern take on the genre of Ragtime music. With an emphasis on ragged! The defining characteristic of Ragtime music is a specific type of syncopation in which melodic accents occur between metrical beats. This results in a melody that seems to be avoiding some metrical beats of the accompaniment by emphasizing notes that either anticipate or follow the beat. The ultimate (and intended) effect on the listener is actually to accentuate the beat, thereby inducing the listener to move to the music. Scott Joplin, the composer/pianist known as the “King of Ragtime”, called the effect “weird and intoxicating.” – Jeff Scott

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov had a busy summer in 1888. He moved his family into a beautiful lake-house in Russia and completed the full scores to both Russian Easter Overture and the symphonic tone poem Scheherazade, two of his most popular works.

In his notes on Scheherazade, he described how he vacillated between naming the four movements conventional names – “prelude, ballade, adagio and finale” – and more descriptive names that reflected the specific themes of “Arabian Nights”, the story the work was based on. In the end he settled on the musical terms, believing that the piece would be more effective if the pictures evoked by the music were left to the imagination of the listener.

Rimsky-Korsakov was a member of a group of Russian nationalist composers who called themselves “The Five” (or “The Mighty Handful”). Other members of The Five were Mily Balakirev, Cesar Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Alexander Borodin. These men believed in using the themes, sounds, and traditions of their folklore in their music. Scheherazade is a perfect example of the nationalistic style.

Scheherazade is a character from “Arabian Nights”, a collection of Middle Eastern, West Asian and South Asian folk tales. She was the 1,000th wife of a Persian king who beheaded each new wife the day after he married her. Scheherazade actually volunteered to spend the night with this king and, as she was a master story teller, kept him enraptured with her tale for an entire evening. The king kept her alive for another day to hear more of her tales, and did this again and again for 1,000 nights. By the end of that time the king had
Genuinely fallen in love with Scheherazade and married her, and they lived out the rest of their days together.

This ambitious and virtuosic arrangement was done in 2013 by Jonathan Russell, especially for Imani Winds. Mr. Russell is an arranger, composer, conductor, and clarinetist. – Jonathan Russell

**Contrabassissimo** was written by *Astor Piazzolla* as a feature for Hector Console, the bassist in his final quintet. This expansive work showcases Piazzolla’s ability to weave western classical and Tango music seamlessly. It was a work he considered to be one of his finest and for this reason was the only music performed at his funeral. In this arrangement the bassoon takes center stage with demanding solos and delicate duets with the flute and oboe. – Jeff Scott

**Six Bagatelles** (notes by David Wright)

*György Ligeti* received his training in Budapest but left Hungary in 1956 as the revolution was being crushed. As a composer in a strict communist regime, particularly during the repressive Stalin years, Ligeti had been bound by artistic restraints that limited the development of his work. With his flight to the West, Ligeti began to forge the individual style that has made him one of the leading composers of the avant-garde and an artist who has had a profound influence on music over the last three decades. His music sometimes obliterates traditional concepts of harmony and rhythm, and he has written for unusual groups of instruments, including his *Poème symphonique* for 100 metronomes, each set at a different speed. American audiences are probably most familiar with the Kyrie from his *Requiem* (written 1963–65), for this complex five-part fugue for choir was used as part of the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick’s film 2001.

The *Sechs Bagatellen* for woodwind quintet date from 1953, while Ligeti was still in Budapest. These brief pieces are arrangements of movements from Ligeti’s *Musica Ricercata*, a collection of eleven piano pieces, written over the previous two years. Bagatelle is the French word for trifle; in music, it refers to a short instrumental piece—Beethoven’s *Für Elise* is one of his bagatelles for piano. Ligeti’s *Sechs Bagatellen* last a total of just over ten minutes. The pieces themselves require little comment; the harmonic language remains tonal, and the writing for winds is deft and idiomatic. Particularly noteworthy is the fifth, titled *Bela Bartok: In Memoriam*. This brief piece, written in the manner of Bartok’s “night-music,” is Ligeti’s homage to his countryman and fellow composer.

**Six Bagatelles** (notes by Eric Bromberger)

*György Ligeti* was born in Dicsoszentmaron (now Tirnaveni), Transylvania, in 1923, and died in Vienna. He composed a set of 11 piano pieces titled *Musica ricercata* in 1951–53, and in 1953 arranged six of them as Bagatelles for Wind Quintet.

Just about every moviegoer knows one piece by the Hungarian composer György Ligeti: the choral work *Lux aeterna*, whose unearthly chromatic strains accompany appearances of the enigmatic alien monolith in Stanley Kubrick’s classic film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In his last film, *Eyes Wide Shut*, Kubrick turned back to Ligeti for a spooky-sounding passage from his piano suite *Musica ricercata*. The novelty of those musical sounds was what got the filmmaker’s attention; similarly, the creativity, and the ability to imagine everything afresh are what make all of Ligeti’s music so stimulating to fans of new music.

The term *ricercar*, as used by Renaissance composers, denoted a piece of learned counterpoint, a “study.” It has the same root as the English word “research.” Ligeti’s *musica ricercata*, composed in 1951–53—six of whose 11 movements he immediately arranged as bagatelles (i.e., short pieces, or trifles) for wind quintet—was a piece of fundamental research indeed, as he explained in a 1968 article:

“In 1951, I started to experiment with simple structures of rhythm and sound in order, in a manner of speaking, to build up a new music from nothing. My method was Cartesian to the extent that I considered all the music which I already knew and loved as not binding on me—even as invalid. I asked myself: What can I do with a single note? What can I do with its octave? What with one interval? What with two intervals? What with definite rhythmic relationships which could form the foundation of a whole based on rhythm and interval? In this way several small pieces were composed, chiefly for piano. From these questions and the attempt to solve them, certain characteristics appeared which were not wholly unconnected with serial ideas [i.e., the 12-tone methods of Schoenberg and Webern]. This seems to me remarkable since I arrived at them from a completely different starting point and via a completely different path…”

“The isolation in which I was forced to work condemned me, however, in spite of my imagined release from myself, to failure, since the Bartokian idiom with which I was intimate still showed through as a stylistic characteristic, in spite of the fact that it had not previously been predominant in my music.”

Mr. Ligeti doesn’t give himself enough credit here. True, the last two Bagatelles are quite Barok-like—in fact, the Adagio is subtitled “Bela
Bartok in memoriam” – but the earlier pieces, owing to each one’s fixation on a single idea, sound like “minimalism” a quarter century before that term was invented.

Sechs Bagatellen (excerpts from notes by unknown author)

György Ligeti summarizes his creative philosophy: “Of course, I have no liking for anything expressly illustrative or programmatic, but that does not mean I defend myself against music that suggest associations. On the contrary, sounds and musical contexts continually bring to my mind the feeling of color, consistency, and visible or even testable form. And on the other hand, color, form, material quality, and even abstract ideas involuntarily arouse in me musical conceptions. That explains the presence of so many ‘extra-musical’ features in my compositions. Sounding planes and masses, which may succeed, penetrate, or mingle with one another-floating networks that get torn up or entangled-wet, sticky, gelatinous, fibrous, dry, brittle, granular, and compact materials, shreds, curlicues, splinters, and traces of every sort-imaginary buildings, labyrinths, inscriptions, texts, dialogues, insects-states, events, processes, blendings, transformations, catastrophes, disintegrations, disappearances—all these are elements of this no-purist music.”

…When the Bagatelles were premiered in Budapest (1956), the Hungarian government forbade the performance of the last movement because of its “dense chromaticism and frenzied expression” (in the score, Ligeti marked the final climax “as though insane”).

The Light is the Same by Reena Esmail

Religions are many
But God is one
The lamps may be different
But the Light is the same

Like many people, I’ve spent the last few months trying to make sense of what is happening in our country and in our world. In my search for texts for a vocal piece I have been writing concurrently, I came across these wise words from the 13th century Sufi mystic poet, Rumi. He states so beautifully that, even if our methods for searching for meaning and happiness look very different, the things we seek are so similar.

This piece uses two Hindustani raags: Vachaspati and Yaman. Thebhav, the aesthetic of these raags are so different: Vachaspati is dark, brooding, complex and dense. Yaman is light and innocent. And yet, practically speaking, only one note is different between them. The melodies they generate and the way they move makes them feel worlds apart, and yet their notes are almost exactly the same. The piece begins in Vachaspati, in desolate, spare melodic lines. Slowly, as Yaman peeks through the dense harmonies, the two raags begin to weave together into a seamless composite.

Tzigane (not to be confused with Ravel’s famous violin work of the same name) is a new work for wind quintet by Valerie Coleman, that celebrates the virtuosity of each member within the ensemble. Written in the fall of 2011, Coleman was inspired by two occurrences: Imani Winds’ collaboration with Palestinian oud player Simon Shaheen, and her recent completion of ROMA, a work for wind ensemble celebrating the culture of the Romani people (commonly referred to as ‘gypsies’). The work itself represents the third installment within a series inspired by the combination of Romani and middle eastern styles, the first two being a nonet for wind quintet and strings, and the previously mentioned wind ensemble.

Throughout the work, the bassoonist is scored to play a ‘low A’, which is typically not within the range of the bassoon, but is made possible with the insertion of a tube into the bell of the instrument, thereby extending the range. The work, however, is not about the unusual techniques, but rather stylized playing as Tzigane brings the same intensity and virtuosity found in gypsy violin to winds. This means that a certain level of freedom and passion is required to bring each solo alive, while a constant undercurrent of rhythm would provide a source of drive. The result is a colorful, highly-charged journey within one substantial movement. – Valerie Coleman

This concert is a Bullock Performance Institute (BPI) presentation. BPI events are made possible through the cooperation and support of several community fine arts units: the Donald P. Bullock Music Performance Institute; the Western Michigan University College of Fine Arts and School of Music; and WMU’s chapters of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Sigma Alpha Iota music fraternities.

Building emergencies will be indicated by flashing lights and spoken announcement within the seating area. If the notification is for fire, please exit the building immediately. The tornado safe area in Dalton Center is along the lockers in the brick hallway to your left as you exit to the lobby behind you. In any emergency, walk—do not run—to the nearest exit. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance. Because of legal issues, any video or audio recording of this performance is forbidden without prior consent from the School of Music. Thank you for your cooperation.