

77TH SEASON OF

# CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | MARCH 3, 2019





Photo by Roy Cox

# PROGRAM

## **Noah Getz and Friends**

Anne Donaldson, violin

Noah Getz, alto and tenor saxophones

Natalia Kazaryan, piano

Evan Ross Solomon, clarinet

**March 3, 2019 | 3:30**

**West Building, West Garden Court**

*Absolute Art and Jazz between the Wars*

Anton Webern (1883–1945)

Quartet, op. 22

sehr massig

sehr schungvoll

Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942)

*Hot-Sonate*

♩ = 66

♩ = 112

♩ = 80

♩ = 132

Stefan Wolpe (1902–1972)

*Zwei Tänze für Klavier*

Blues

Tango

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

*Contrasts*

Verbunkos

Pihenő

Sebes

# THE MUSICIANS

## **Anne Donaldson**

Anne Donaldson received her bachelor of music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with David Updegraff. She received her master's degree from Northwestern University and was the teaching assistant of Blair Milton. Donaldson was a member of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra from 2008 to 2012 and cofounded and was the assistant director of the Suzuki Talent Education Program of Birmingham, Alabama, for six years. She has trained extensively in the Suzuki Method and teaches at Suzuki workshops and institutes across the country. Currently living in Washington, DC, Donaldson plays frequently with the Baltimore and National Symphony Orchestras, as well as with Sound Impact and Inscape Chamber Orchestra. During the summer season, she performs with the Grant Park Music Festival, the Eastern Music Festival, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. In her free time, she enjoys flying trapeze and playing traditional Irish music.

## **Noah Getz**

Hailed as “a highly skillful and an even more highly adventurous player” (*Washington City Paper*) with “virtuosity, sensitivity, and beauty of tone” (*Fanfare*), Noah Getz has performed and lectured worldwide, including at the Melbourne Recital Centre, Carnegie Hall, the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, the Polish Woodwind Festival, and the Teatro Degollado in Guadalajara, Mexico. Getz's premiere of *in every way I remember you* at the National Gallery of Art was praised as “spectacular and wonderfully provocative” (*Washington Post*). In 2016, Grammy-winning composer Stephen Hartke wrote *Willow Run*, a new concerto for saxophone that Getz premiered at the Oberlin Conservatory and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

An avid chamber musician, Getz is a member of the National Gallery New Music Ensemble, the Zohn Collective, and Interference/Intermedia. He has performed with the 21st Century Consort, the PostClassical Ensemble, the Empyrean Ensemble, and members of the International Contemporary Ensemble. He received a first-round Grammy nomination with the New Hudson Saxophone Quartet. He is a musician-in-residence at American University in Washington, DC.

## **Natalia Kazaryan**

Natalia Kazaryan has performed across Europe, in Salzburg's Schloss Mirabell, Monaco's Théâtre des Variétés, Madrid's Auditorio Sony, Florence's Palazzo Tornabuoni, and Paris's Musée Carnavalet and Salle Cortot. She has received top prizes from Eastman Young Artists International, Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin, and New York's piano competitions, as well as from the Concours FLAME and the Concours international de piano d'Île de France. She studied at the Juilliard School and the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofia and recently completed doctoral studies at the University of Michigan. A Fulbright grant recipient, she also received a Sobresaliente award for excellence and outstanding work from Queen Sofia of Spain. Kazaryan currently serves on the adjunct piano faculty of Howard University.

## **Evan Ross Solomon**

Evan Ross Solomon is widely known for his versatility, depth of tone, and technical brilliance on both clarinet and bass clarinet. Recognized for his compelling performances of works by Brahms, Mozart, and Messiaen, Solomon is equally at home in works of contemporary music. As principal clarinet of Inscape Chamber Orchestra, his performances have been praised by such publications as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *Gramophone Magazine*. Solomon appears prominently on all four of Inscape Chamber Orchestra's recordings, including the 2014 Grammy-nominated *Sprung Rhythm* and the 2016 recording of *Petrushka* for seventeen solo players.

Recently, Solomon has performed on both coasts of the United States in touring programs, as well as in Santiago and Frutillar, Chile. He appears frequently with the Delaware Symphony, the Mid-Atlantic Symphony, and many prominent, regional ensembles. He has performed at the Kennedy Center, Strathmore, and the National Gallery of Art. Since 2005, Solomon has served as executive director of Inscape. He also serves as the artistic director of the DC Youth Orchestra Program.



# PROGRAM NOTES

## Quartet, op. 22

Completed in September 1930, Anton Webern's Quartet, op. 22 for violin, clarinet, tenor saxophone, and piano, was written at the height of Webern's compositional powers. While it was not well received by critics, fellow composers Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg considered it a masterpiece. Berg wrote, "This Quartet is a miracle. What amazes me above all is its originality. One can assert with confidence that there is nothing in the entire world of music production that attains even approximately such a degree of originality, i.e., a full hundred percent."

The pitches selected by Webern in the first movement, *sehr massig* (very moderate), are strictly dictated by a tone row with a central pitch F-sharp, which is stated first as two articulated unaccompanied notes by the clarinet. All of the instruments selected for this ensemble have a wide dynamic and tonal palette, which the composer emphasizes by using large intervals. Three of the four instruments perform a rhythmic canon with one overlapping note. This small overlap creates the inchoate suggestion of fundamental elements of chamber music, including blend, balance, and intonation. The fourth instrument, first performed by the tenor saxophone, presents rhythmic contrast suggesting a soloist role.

Berg considered the second movement, *sehr schwungvoll* (with much momentum), an "exact analogy" to Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 14, which is in rondo form. In contrast with the first movement and with other works by Webern, this second movement is remarkably flexible in its composition. Considered to be one of his most unrestrained and unconventional movements, it contains unexpected tempo changes, alterations in the canonic form, and the use of classical compositional structures as inspiration.

## Hot-Sonate

Erwin Schulhoff was perhaps the most ardent advocate for the inclusion of jazz in his works. Like many veterans of World War I, Schulhoff was disillusioned by the horrors of war and became interested in artistic movements that protested the bourgeois conventions he felt had led to the conflict. Jazz, with its sexual and racial overtones, embodied the expression of this anti-authoritarian stance for Europeans who were just being introduced to this music. The saxophone—said by the composer to be "of the strongest necessity with regard to sexual ethos"—was the musical and cultural icon for this subversive music. However, by the time Schulhoff wrote *Hot-Sonate* in 1930, his perception of the saxophone allowed him to see more possibilities for the instrument. By then, a conservatory class for the saxophone had been established in Berlin, which led to renewed interest in the instrument's use in classical music.

Schulhoff's choice of the name *Hot-Sonate* for this work derives from the use of the term "hot" by jazz musicians to distinguish authentic jazz from bands that performed light jazz and traditional arrangements for broader appeal. Playing "hot" often included emotionally charged technical lines that were highly syncopated and anticipated the beat, like those in Louis Armstrong's "Hot Fives" and Jelly Roll Morton's "Red Hot Peppers." In the *Hot-Sonate*, four movements feature rhythmic and stylistic elements of jazz in the 1920s, but the form and phrasing are more closely aligned with classical music.

This is one of the few works in the saxophone repertoire that is written in a large-scale sonata form. The first movement explores classical and jazz styles through melodic ideas derived from the impressionistic-sounding whole tone scale and syncopated "hot" rhythms. The second movement contains a syncopated melody in cut time reminiscent of songs like George Gershwin's "Fascinating Rhythm." The third movement approximates the vocal quality of the blues by indicating scoops in the saxophone part with the performance indication of *lamentuoso ma molto grottesco*. The final movement combines the rhythmic sensibility of the second movement with a recapitulation of material from the first movement.

## Zwei Tänze für Klavier

Stefan Wolpe's musical and artistic interests spanned the modernist trends of Europe between the wars. His compositional excellence along with his willingness to adapt to an ever-changing world allowed him to compose significant works in a number of styles. Wolpe's early association with Dadaists and the Novembergruppen, a radical left-wing group of writers and painters, led to his desire to be a "socially committed" modernist. Attendance at Bauhaus lectures, led by famous artists including Klee and Kandinsky, would also have a lasting impact by defining modernist ideas like "total art" and color movement through space. Wolpe's performances at this time emphasized music that was "formally experimental in nature," but his political inclinations led him towards popular music and writing music for the general population.

*Kunstjazz*, or art jazz, was compatible with Wolpe's musical interests by combining the rigor of contemporary musical and artistic concepts with popular music. Newly available recordings of jazz along with arranging books for dance bands, such as those written by American Arthur Lange, led to a flowering of music that combined these elements. *Zwei Tänze für Klavier* is a two-movement work that was written in 1926 during this transition in Wolpe's compositional life. In the first movement, entitled Blues, Wolpe deconstructs the tension between the major and minor third at the essence of this musical form with the repeated use of a grace note and descending chromatic figure. The rhythmic interplay between the left and right hands echoes common piano writing in ragtime, blues, and stride styles. Tango, the second move-

ment, emphasizes the sharp lines that punctuate this sensual dance with several bass figures that clarify the composer's musical intentions. Using similar musical styles including the blues, tango, and the Charleston, Wolpe wrote one of his most significant early works, the zeitoper *Zues and Elida*, two years later.

After being displaced by World War II, Wolpe moved to the United States where he became an important teacher. He influenced modern compositional style in the United States by teaching such composers as Milton Babbitt, Morton Feldman, and Charles Wourinen. He also taught European serialist composers through his lectures at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses in New Music (known as the Darmstadt School), in Darmstadt, Germany. Wolpe also maintained a connection to jazz by teaching composers who arranged and wrote tunes for some of Miles Davis's most important recordings.

### **Contrasts**

By the beginning of World War I, Hungarian composer Belá Bartók had already assimilated his extensive ethnomusicological studies of Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovakian folk music into his own unique musical style. He spoke frequently about the importance of assimilating folk music and described his compositions as "impregnated with this spirit." His one-act opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* had been completed in 1911, and he had been appointed a teacher of piano at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest in 1907. He would hold this post for more than thirty years.

In the years leading up to World War II, Bartók was at the height of his creative powers, but also faced some of the most challenging years of his life due to the political climate. He refused to perform in Hungary between 1930 and 1934 because of the poor reception he received resulting from his refusal to conform to the country's nationalist tendencies between the wars. In the past, Germany had provided consistent opportunities for performances of Bartók's music. However, with the rise of the Nazi party, Bartók was asked to provide proof that he was not Jewish before further performances were permitted. Bartók refused this request and a series of delays and leaked private letters exacerbated the situation. Bartók ultimately decided to emigrate to the United States when he was offered a research position at Columbia University.

It was in this atmosphere that Bartók received a letter from violinist Joseph Szigeti, a friend of the composer, to write a piece for him and the American jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman, with piano accompaniment. Szigeti requested that the work be two movements of six or seven minutes that could be performed independently to showcase each instrument. The first movement, *Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)*, contains a virtuosic clarinet cadenza, and the second movement, *Sebes (Fast Dance)*, contains a violin cadenza. This two-movement version, entitled *Rhapsody (Two Dances)*, was premiered by Szigeti and Goodman with pianist Endre Petri at Carnegie Hall in 1939. Bartók later added a slow, middle movement, *Pihenő (Relaxation)*, and the resulting three-movement work was given the title *Contrasts*. Bartók was somewhat apologetic about presenting a piece that was much larger in scope than the original request, but the addition of the slower movement elevated the work from a concert piece to a chamber work with better musical balance.

*Program notes by Noah Getz*





Claude Flight, *Street Singers*, 1925, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth Cole Kainen

## Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Seventh Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

### Peter Vinograde, piano

J.S. Bach's *Seven Keyboard Toccatas*  
March 10, 3:30

### Parthenia

with Ryland Angel, countertenor

Celebrating *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* and *Venetian Prints in the Time of Tintoretto*  
*Tomb Sonnets*

Featuring works by Martin Kennedy, Luca Marenzio, Philippe Verdelot, Jacques Arcadelt, Cipriano de Rore, Girolamo Frescobaldi, and Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli

March 17, 3:30

### Eya

Sound Sketches

Location will be posted the day of the concert.

March 22, 3:30

### Natalie Clein, cello

Dina Vainshtein, piano

Clein's debut United States tour, with works by Nadia Boulanger, Frank Bridge, Rebecca Clarke, and Elisabeth Lutyens

March 24, 3:30

### Fauré Quartett

Works by Fauré, Mahler, and Frank Bridge

March 31, 3:30

## General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or [circle@nga.gov](mailto:circle@nga.gov) for more information.

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