

The Red Bank
Chamber Music Society

presents

Frisson

Suliman Tekalli, violin	Julian Schwarz, cello
Henry Wang, violin	Patrick Hopkins, cello
Jennifer Liu, violin	Chieh-fan Yiu, viola
Isabelle Durrenberger, violin	Laura Liu, viola
Tom Gallant, oboe	

Halvorsen/Handel • Ravel Strauss • Piazzolla
Bellini • Mendelssohn

Sunday Afternoon
September 17, 2023, • 4:30 PM
Trinity Church Auditorium
Red Bank, NJ

ADVANCE NOTES

PROGRAM

- Passacaglia (after Handel) for violin and cello (1894) Johan Halvorsen
- Sonata for violin and cello (1922) Maurice Ravel
- I. Allegro
 - II. Très vif
 - III. Lent
 - IV. Vif, avec entrain
- Sextet from Capriccio, Op. 85 (1941) Richard Strauss
- Oblivion (1982) Astor Piazzolla

INTERMISSION

- Concerto in E flat major for oboe and strings (1823) Vincenzo Bellini
- I. Risoluto allegro
 - II. Larghetto cantabile
 - III. Allegro polonese
- Octet for Strings in E-flat, Op. 20 (1825) Felix Mendelssohn
- I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
 - II. Andante
 - III. Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
 - IV. Presto

Program Notes

Johan Halvorsen (1864 - 1935)

Passacaglia (after Handel) for violin and cello (1894)

(~7 minutes)



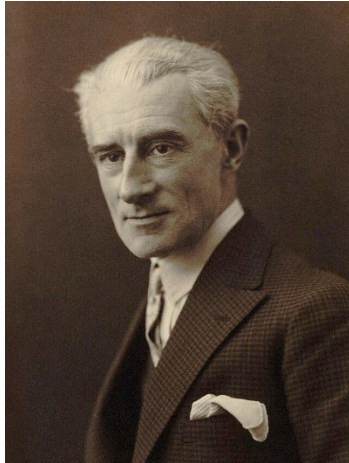
Johan Halvorsen was a Norwegian violinist, conductor and composer of numerous small and large scale works. Although few of his own compositions are heard today, he is rightly remembered for his set of variations on the finale passacaglia movement from the harpsichord suite in G minor (HWV 432) by George Frederic Handel, a German-born composer who lived in London for the better part of his life. Historically regarded as one of the greatest composers of the "high baroque" era, Handel was celebrated for his operas, anthems, concerti grossi, oratorios and organ concertos, the latter two of which were genres of his own creation.

The passacaglia is a musical form that became popular in early seventeenth-century Spain and is still used today by composers. The term "passacaglia" was adopted to designate a Spanish "street dance," although the earliest known example comes from an Italian source dated 1606. Usually of a serious character, a passacaglia is based on a short chord progression which is repeated and acts as a foundation over which improvisations or inventive variations unfold. Halvorsen built his passacaglia around a sequence of eight chords which comes directly from Handel's work. Notwithstanding the constraints of a string duet, the work offers a smorgasbord of harmonic and melodic features such as counterpoint, double-stops (two strings played at once), deft trading of the melody between the cello and violin, pizzicato and false harmonics.



Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)
Sonata for violin and cello (1922)

(~21 minutes)



After the death of Claude Debussy in 1918 Ravel was considered the leading French composer. His start in the Paris musical scene was quite difficult at first as he was not able to win any prizes as a student at the Paris Conservatory either as a composer or as a pianist. However, success would come later with the composition of such works as his String Quartet in F Major and the Jeux d'eau for piano.

Ravel started composing the sonata for violin and cello in 1920 and finished it 2 years later and he dedicated the work to Claude Debussy. After the death of Debussy, Ravel was asked to compose a tribute to the late composer along with tributes by a number of composers including Stravinsky, Satie, Manuel de Falla, and Bartók. The first movement of the work was originally issued under the title Duo in the collection Le Tombeau de Claude Debussy. Ravel later extended the movement into a much larger work that was premiered in April of 1922.

Program Note by Tom Gallant



Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)
Sextet from Capriccio, Op. 85 (1941)

(~12 minutes)



Richard Strauss was a German composer and conductor best known for his tone poems and operas. Considered a leading composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras, he has been described as a successor of Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt. Along with Gustav Mahler, he represents the lateflowering of German Romanticism, in which pioneering subtleties of orchestration are combined with an advanced harmonic style.

Strauss's last opera, Capriccio, addresses the question: "Which is the greater art, poetry or music?" The work opens with two

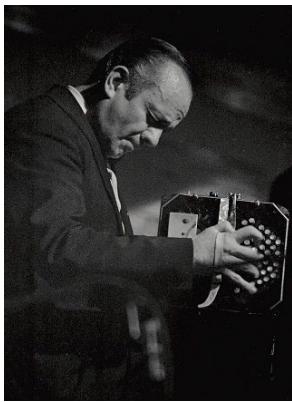
suitors—a poet and a composer—vying for the heart of Countess Madeleine. As the string sextet is performed in the Countess's chateau, it is revealed that the composer suitor has written it as a kind of love letter to Countess Madeleine. The sextet is a testament to the composer's ardor, woven together with soaring melodies and lush harmonies. Strauss displays his mastery of colorful textures in this homage to the elegant style of Rococo chamber music.



Astor Piazzolla (1921 - 1992)

Oblivion (1982)

(~4 minutes)



Astor Piazzolla, an Argentine composer and arranger who was also celebrated for his skill at the bandoneon, has been described as the world's foremost composer of tango music. His revolutionary works transformed the traditional tango into a new style termed nuevo tango, incorporating elements from jazz and classical music.

Piazzolla's early years were spent playing the bandoneon and arranging music for various ensembles in Buenos Aires, as well as studying orchestration and composition under fellow Argentinian, Alberto Ginastera. It was following this instruction that Piazzolla learned to play piano and began writing original music. By 1946 he had formed his first orchestra and begun to compose music reflecting his own approach to the orchestration and musical content of the tango.

Composed in 1982 as a chamber piece, "Oblivion" has become one of Piazzolla's most popular works. This piece has since been re-arranged for and recorded by many different configurations of musicians including cello/piano duet, klezmer clarinet, saxophone quartet, and oboe and orchestra. The term "tango" encompasses a variety of styles from many cultures within and beyond Argentina, all of which involve either open or close embrace. The listener can decide on which category best suits this quietly radiant miniature.

Vincenzo Bellini (1801 - 1835)
Concerto in E flat major for oboe and strings (1823)

(~8 minutes)



Bellini is most well known as a composer of operas such as *La Sonambula*, *Norma* and *I Puritani*. He wrote very few instrumental works and most are from his younger years before opera developed into his main focus. Bellini left behind some symphonies which are rarely heard and only one surviving concerto which is the Oboe Concerto in F Major that you will hear today.

Bellini wrote the work while he was a student at the Conservatoria di San Sebastian in Naples in 1823 and the concerto has three sections – *Risoluto allegro*, *Larghetto cantabile*, and *Allegro polonese*. The music is very operatic and in this case the oboist takes on the role of the singer with a variety of lush melodies and some typical Bellini pyrotechnics towards the end. The work can be done in a version with strings and winds or a chamber version with strings only which is how it will be performed today.

Program Note by Tom Gallant



Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)
Octet for Strings in E-flat, Op. 20 (1825)

(~32 minutes)



Felix Mendelssohn grew up in a household teeming with intellect, both familial and social. His parents Abraham and Lea hosted a "salon" at their home in Berlin which welcomed an ongoing assortment of luminaries, be they mathematician, philosopher or scientist, to engage in lively discussion. And while they were happy to also host Sunday morning musical gatherings featuring the finest musicians of the day, they were reluctant to allow him to pursue a career in music until his passion and talent were so obvious that no argument remained. He grew up as and remained a member of the German bourgeoisie, leading a life characterized by propriety, hard work and conservatism.

Precocity was not in short supply in the Mendelssohn household. Both Felix and his elder sister Fanny demonstrated astonishing facility with both performance and composition. So it was that by the age of sixteen, having already composed several other chamber works and string symphonies, he composed the Octet for Strings which remains a pinnacle of chamber music to this day. The Octet straddles the line between string quartet and concerto and is easily the most significant work to come from the hand of such a young composer. It was first performed in the family's salon and was instantly recognized as the work of a genius. The composer himself later described it as "my favorite of all my compositions," adding that "I had a most wonderful time in the writing of it."

Although it is not the first work to feature the combined forces of two string quartets (Luis Spohr had composed his first "double quartet" two years previously), Mendelssohn's Octet was the first of its kind to seamlessly merge all eight string instruments into a single, symphonic entity while remaining firmly rooted in the framework of chamber music. The composer's instruction to performers was that the work be played "in symphonic style by all the instruments: the pianos and fortes must be very precisely differentiated and be more strongly emphasized than is usual in compositions of this type." Having composed numerous symphonies for strings between the ages of 12 and 14, Mendelssohn was already a master of orchestration, and the Octet features just about every imaginable combination of voices provided by the eight string players.

The first movement, a sprawling sonata complete with contrasting themes, development, recapitulation and a fiery coda, is more than double the length of any of the following movements. From the very opening bars, the composer establishes a rich palette of tone colors which approximates an orchestra in range and variety, with powerful demands placed on the first violin. A melancholy Andante in the minor mode follows, characterized less by any strongly defined melody than by complex polyphonic interweaving of shifting tone colors. The third movement, a scherzo, is probably the most famous portion of the work. Mendelssohn's older sister Fanny offered this description: "The entire piece is to be played staccato and pianissimo with shivering tremolos and lightning flashes of trills. All is new, strange, and yet so familiar and pleasing - one feels so close the world of spirits, lightly carried up into the air. Indeed one might take a broomstick to follow the airy procession. At the end the first violin soars feather-light aloft - and all is blown away." This last remark was a reference to the Walpurgisnacht scene from Goethe's Faust, which was an inspiration to young Felix as he composed his Octet. The finale opens with a jarring statement in the lowest registers of the cello which ascends and

is traded off among the instruments, rising to its climax which announces the second theme, a series of thundering, unison notes. This emphatic statement periodically reappears throughout the movement to serve as a pause in the urgent musical progression. A close listen reveals that Mendelssohn has incorporated elements of the scherzo into the fabric of the finale, which culminates in a slow buildup of the primary theme leading to a fittingly energetic conclusion to this joyous work.

Program Notes by Christopher Hewitt except as noted.



Artists

Frisson features the best and brightest of classical music's stars! The group showcases emerging young artists as well as seasoned professionals and has skyrocketed to become one of the leading musical groups. Frisson performs engaging programs for winds, piano trio and piano quartet programs, as well as popular programs featuring music by such composers as Gershwin and Piazzolla. The ensemble performs in over 25 cities annually including appearances in such diverse venues as the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City, for the Da Camera Society in Los Angeles and at the Bermuda Festival.



Violinist **Suliman Tekalli** has established his unique voice as an exciting and versatile soloist and chamber musician. As the top prize winner of the 2015 Seoul International Music Competition and prize winner in the Sendai, Lipizer, and Szeryng International Violin Competition, he has performed as a soloist with orchestras throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, and Asia in numerous halls including the Seoul Arts Center, Kumho Art Hall, Wigmore Hall, and the Millennial Hall at the Kennedy Center among others. His performances have been broadcasted on live TV and radio from KBS TV in Korea, Montreal Canada's CBC Radio 3, and NPR. As a chamber musician, Mr. Tekalli has performed at numerous festivals including Music@Menlo, Yellow Barn, and the Banff Centre. He has performed with eminent musicians such as Gil Shaham, Cho-Liang Lin, Donald Weilerstein, Paul Watkins, Wu Han, and David Shifrin. He has also served as concertmaster for various chamber orchestras such as the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, New York Classical Players, Sphinx Virtuosi, and the International

Sejong Soloists. He also concertizes as part of the Tekalli Duo with his sibling, pianist Jamila Tekalli.



A native of St. Louis, Grammy Award winning violinist **Henry William Wang** has been described by the Washington Post as an artist "that makes the audience cheer lustily". He has won several engagements as soloist with orchestras including the University of Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Alton Symphony Orchestra, the University City Symphony, the Belleville Philharmonic, and the Saint Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. Venues of solo performances have included The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Powell Symphony Hall. Currently residing in New York, Henry performs with various ensembles including the New York Classical Players, Metropolis Ensemble, Trinity Wall Street NOVUS ensemble, Quodlibet Ensemble, the Manhattan Chamber Players and is a substitute violinist of the New York Philharmonic. His solos can be heard on the Grammy Award Winning Album "The Prison" on the Chandos Label.



Passionate young violinist **Jennifer Liu** has performed extensively throughout the United States as a soloist and chamber musician, including at Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Born in Los Angeles, California, Jennifer moved to New York at age 15 to study with Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho at the Juilliard School. Currently, Ms. Liu is a proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Sylvia Rosenberg and Donald Weilerstein. A prize winner at the Alice and Eleanore Schoenfeld Competition, Jennifer has received scholarships and awards from the Starling Foundation, the Young Musicians Foundation, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and has soloed with the Young Musicians Foundation under Maestro Case Scaglione and the New West Symphony under Boris Brott.



American violinist **Isabelle Ai Durrenberger** delivers striking performances of communicative strength and sincere artistry. Currently based in New York City, Isabelle was chosen as a 2023-25 fellow of Carnegie Hall's renowned Ensemble Connect program. An avid chamber musician, Isabelle is recognized nationally for her unique collaborative instincts. Her 2023-24 season features multiple return invitations, including performances with the Boston Chamber Music Society, Jupiter

Chamber Players (NYC), Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in Carnegie Hall (NYC), and the Grammy-nominated conductorless chamber orchestra, A Far Cry (Boston). In 2022, she completed her graduate studies at the New England Conservatory in Boston with Soovin Kim and Don Weilerstein. Isabelle spent the summer of 2023 making chamber music at the Marlboro Music Festival, Lake Champlain, and Four Seasons Spring Workshop.



Julian Schwarz was born to a multigenerational musical family in 1991. Heralded from a young age as a cellist destined to rank among the greatest of the 21st century, Julian's powerful tone, effortless virtuosity, and extraordinarily large color palette are hallmarks of his style. As a chamber musician, Mr. Schwarz performs extensively in recital with pianist Marika Bournaki. In 2016 the Schwarz-Bournaki duo was awarded first prize at the inaugural Boulder International String Competition's "The Art of Duo", and subsequently embarked on an extensive 10-recital tour of China in March 2017. Mr. Schwarz is a founding member of the New York based Frisson Ensemble (a mixed nonet of winds and strings), and the Mile-End Trio with violinist Jeff Multer and Ms. Bournaki. He performs frequently at Bargemusic in Brooklyn with violinist Mark Peskanov, on the Frankly Music Series in Milwaukee with violinist Frank Almond, as a member of the Palladium Chamber Players in St Petersburg FL, and has appeared at the Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, and the Seattle Chamber Music Festival. In addition, he is the co-coordinator of chamber music at Eastern Music Festival, running programming for the Tuesday evening chamber music series.



Cellist **Patrick Hopkins** is an active soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player having performed in venues such as Alice Tully Hall, Avery Fischer Hall, Carnegie hall, The Kennedy Center, Merkin Hall, The New World Center, and Symphony Space. He made his Lincoln Center debut in 2008 performing Haydn's D Major Concerto with the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra and has appeared three times as soloist with the Fairbanks Symphony. In July 2015 he was soloist/principal cellist with the National Repertory Orchestra performing Schumann's Cello Concerto. In 2011, Mr. Hopkins was the Grand Prize winner of the Music Teachers National Association Young Artist Competition. Mr. Hopkins was the recipient of the 2010 Young Alaskan Artist Award that led to his Anchorage recital debut. He is also a Yamaha Young Performing Artist.



Triple-prized winner of the 2013 Lionel Tertis Competition, including Yuri Bashmet's President Of The Jury Prize, Taiwanese-born Canadian **Chieh-Fan Yiu** has established himself as one of the most exciting young violists on the international stage today. As a recipient of the coveted Jerome L. Greene Fellowship, Dr. Yiu completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Juilliard, followed by Doctorate degree from Stony Brook University, having studied under Toby Appel, Heidi Castleman, Hsin-Yun Huang, as well as the great Emerson Quartet. He has also studied closely with Karen Dreyfus, Kim Kashkashian, Masao Kawasaki, Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot, and Robert Vernon. On top of winning the Stony Brook Concerto Competition, Aspen Music Festival Concerto Competition, and UBC Concerto Competition, Mr. Yiu has also won top prizes from Lionel Tertis Competition, Hellam Young Artist Competition, Lima Symphony Competition, as well as receiving the Best Viola Performance Award in Kingsville International Competition.

Violist **Laura Liu**, a native of Miami, Florida, studies with Cynthia Phelps and Misha Amory at the Juilliard School. This season, Liu competed as a semifinalist in the Third Oskar Nedbal International Viola Competition, where she received an Honorary Mention and the Pirastro Award for outstanding young talent. She will travel again to Prague to compete in the 74th Prague Spring International Music Competition. Previously, Liu competed as a finalist in the Juilliard School Viola Competition and was named a contestant in the Fifth Tokyo International Viola Competition. As an active chamber musician, Liu is a member of the Juilliard Honors Chamber Music program, and last month, her quartet Quatuor Caël made their Alice Tully Hall and Peter Jay Sharp debuts. She is a proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship at the Juilliard School. In previous summers, Liu attended Taos School of Music, Kneisel Hall, Music Academy of the West, and the Heifetz International Music Institute. This season, she returns to both Taos as a member of Taos on Tour and Heifetz as a member of their Heifetz Ensemble-in-Residence (HEIR) program. Liu spent her first summer at Music@Menlo as a Young Performer in 2017 and is thrilled to return as an International Program artist this season.



Oboist and Frisson Artistic Director **Tom Gallant** is a First Prize Winner of the Concert Artists Guild International New York Competition and one of very few musicians ever to win this competition as an oboe soloist. His solo and chamber music performances have taken him to David Geffen Hall, Weill Recital Hall and

the Frick Collection in New York City, to Washington, DC, Los Angeles, Chicago, to the Spoleto Festival in Italy, and to the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. He has appeared as guest soloist with the Kronos Quartet at the Ravinia Festival and has collaborated with flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, with Cuarteto Casals from Spain, the Calder, Tesla and Lark Quartets, Cuarteto Latinoamericano from Mexico and with the Adaskin String Trio. Notable performances include a concert of solo and chamber music works for the oboe at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and tours across the United States as soloist with Camerata Bariloche from Argentina and the String Orchestra of New York City performing concerti by Bach and Vaughan-Williams.



Video Recording Schedule

The recording of the Frissons concert is scheduled to be broadcast on the Brookdale Community College cable channel on November 12, 2023, at 4:30 PM.

Subsequent Broadcasts:

- November 13, 2023, 2:00 and 7:30 PM
- November 17, 2023, 7:30
- November 18, 7:30

The recording will premiere on YouTube starting Sunday, November 12, 2023, at 4:30. You can access the YouTube recording at www.rbcms.org