

NICHOLAS ROERICH MUSEUM

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Sunday, October 8, 2017, at 5 p.m.

NoMa NYC Ensemble

Morrie Sherry, piano **Peggy McAdams, violin** **Brenda Vincent, violin**
Joel Rudin, viola **Elina Lang, cello**

Quartet in No.4 in C Major, K. 157

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro
Andante
Presto

Novelletta (1994)

Jeffrey Levine (b. 1942)

Intermission

Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro
Adagio
Andantino - Presto non assai, ma con sentimento
Con moto

Oblivion y Adios Nonino for Clarinet and Strings

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

Performers

Clarinetist **Morrie Sherry** has combined a career of performing and teaching in the New York metropolitan area. She is a founding member of the NoMa NYC Ensemble and a member of the St. Cecilia Chamber Ensemble where she also serves on its Board of Directors. In her twenty-four years as a festival artist at the Manchester Music Festival, she performed in numerous solo, chamber music and orchestral concerts including the premiere and recording of David Amram's "Starry Night" for solo clarinet and string orchestra. As a soloist, she was featured with the Baltimore Symphony, the Manchester Festival Orchestra, the International Jewish Arts Festival Orchestra, and the Hawthorne Symphony. She has presented solo recitals at Weill Recital Hall, St. Paul's Festival of the Arts, Arts at Trinity and has performed at the Southern Vermont Art Center, Virginia's Lyceum Theater, the Trinity Church Noonday Concert Series, the Klavierhaus, the Copland House and Merkin Concert Hall. The Arlington Journal noted her performance with the Vermilion String Quartet as "an artist of superb ability and flawless musicianship." Ms. Sherry served as principal clarinetist of the Metropolitan Soloists for eighteen seasons performing chamber music for winds. As an orchestral player, Ms. Sherry has performed with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, New York Grand Opera, Queens Philharmonic and on tours with Opera Northeast. Active as an educator, she teaches clarinet and coaches chamber music at the Kaufman Center in New York City and also maintains a private studio. Recent performances include chamber music with the Rangeley Friends of the Arts in Rangeley, Maine and with the NoMa NYC Ensemble in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. In February 2017 with the NoMa NYC Ensemble, she performed in a concert of music for clarinet and strings, "Cinema Sounds on Stage" at the Bruno Walter Auditorium in New York City. Ms. Sherry holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Philadelphia College of Performing Arts and a Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School. She studied with Ben Armato, Leon Russianoff, Ignatius Gennusa and David Glazer and won competitions from the Baltimore Symphony, ClariNetwork International, the Virginia Symphony, and Artists International. www.morriesherry.com

Peggy McAdams, Violinist/Violist

Ms. McAdams received a Bachelor of Music from Hartt College of Music, and a Master of Music from Manhattan School of Music where she studied with Raphael Bronstein and Arianna Bronne. She had additional violin studies with Itzhak Perlman. Ms. McAdams has performed throughout the East Coast as an ensemble member of the New York Five, Bar Harbor Festival Ensemble, Moments Musical, Seraphim Trio and Satin Dolls String Quartet and recorded on Cottage records. As a freelance musician Ms. McAdams has played with many orchestral ensembles including the Springfield Symphony, American Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Westchester Philharmonic, Long Island Philharmonic and Queens Symphony. She has performed in numerous Broadway shows and has toured with various ensembles to Europe, Asia and South America.

Brenda Vincent, Canadian born violinist, began violin study at age ten, receiving Honors for yearly performance exams with the Toronto Conservatory. In 1965, Ms. Vincent was granted a scholarship to attend The Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, followed by a scholarship to The Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree in Applied Violin. Since 1979, Ms. Vincent has resided in New York City as a freelance violinist performing Classical, Jazz, Latin American Music and Broadway Shows. Highlights include The New Jersey Symphony, Long Island Philharmonic, Joffrey Ballet and Dance Theater of Harlem, Opera Northeast and Connecticut Grand Opera, The Doansburg Chamber Ensemble as well as chamber music groups Quentre and Spirit. Brenda has played seventeen Broadway Shows, performing the solo violin chair in the revival of "1776." Highlights of Jazz, Latin American and New Music performances are The Max Roach Double Quartet/Uptown String Quartet, World Saxophone Quartet and David Murray Big Band, Charansalsa, The Manhattan New Music Ensemble and Blue Moon. Awards received are: The Israel Dorman Award for Outstanding Violinist from Peabody Conservatory of Music/John Hopkins; Grants from National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Special Projects (1985) and Jazz Fellowships (1988) to transcribe recorded works of American Jazz Violinist, Stuff Smith; Honorable Mention from The American Music Initiative

for use of American Music in teaching beginning violin students. Ms. Vincent maintains an active teaching schedule and is developing a beginning violin method that integrates the traditions of Western European Classical Music with improvisation practices of American Blues and Jazz. She teaches privately in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut and is currently on the faculty of Bronx Conservatory of Music. Teachers include: Eudice Shapiro, Berl Senofsky, Yong Ku Ahn, Gerald Beal, John Blake, Jr., and Valerie Capers. In July, 2015, Ms. Vincent was invited to join the faculty of Casa Romantica Music Academy, an all-scholarship, summer music program for children ages 8-12, in San Clemente, California.

Joel Rudin, Violist, a former member of the Laurentian String Quartet toured the United States, Canada, and Asia and can be heard on chamber recordings for the Musical Heritage Society, Soundspells Productions, Newport Classics, and Pierian Records. Mr. Rudin has played with the New York Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, and American Symphony as well as on Broadway. He is principal viola of the The Symphony of Westchester and the Delaware Valley Philharmonic, and has played principal viola with the Long Island Philharmonic, New Jersey Festival Orchestra, The St Cecilia Choir and Orchestra, New York Grand Opera, Arco Ensemble, and numerous other orchestras. Mr Rudin is a frequent guest artist with the Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre and director of its resident chamber ensemble, The Rudin Chamber Players. He was also a member of The New York Five, a mixed chamber ensemble featuring the music of the late George Quincy as heard on two albums: Choctaw Nights (Albany Records), and Journey of the Red Feather (Cottage Records).

Finnish-American cellist **Elina Snellman-Lang** is an active orchestral player, chamber musician and educator. She has appeared in some of the world's leading concert halls including Carnegie Hall, The Kimmel Center, Lincoln Center, Disney Hall, The Kennedy Center, Finlandia Hall, Tel-Aviv's Mann Auditorium and Suntory Hall in Japan. She has performed with the Israel Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, and Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra with conductors including Zubin Mehta, Kurt Masur, Daniel Barenboim, Paavo Berglund, Sergiu Comissiona, Yoel Levi, and Gary Bertini. She is a founding member of the Sebastian String Quartet and the Anjali Piano Trio and performs chamber music throughout the metropolitan area. She has participated at the Spoleto, OK Mozart and Bard Music Festivals as well as the Philly Pops, productions on Broadway, recordings for NFL Films and American and Israeli TV with various Pop Artists. Active as an educator, Ms Lang is currently the cello instructor for the Peddie School and the New Jersey Symphony Academy Orchestra. As an orchestral coach, she has worked with the New York and New Jersey Youth Symphonies, the Delaware Youth Orchestra, the Lohja Summer Music Festival in Finland and the InterHarmony International Music Festival in Italy. She has an active cello studio at home in New Jersey and has taught at the Ridgewood Conservatory, Sylvan Academy of Music and the Mill Pond Arts Studio. Ms. Lang received her Master of Music degree from Mannes College of Music following her studies at the Tel Aviv University Rubin Academy of Music. Her cello teachers include Seppo Laamanen, Marcel Bergman, Emanuel Gruber, Paul Tobias, Timothy Eddy, Aldo Parisot, Janos Starker, and Boris Pergamenschikov. She was a recipient of the Wihuri Award in Finland, the Mannes School of Music Scholarship and winner of the Herzliya Chamber Orchestra's soloist competition in Israel.

Program notes

String Quartet No. 4 in C Major, K.157

The early Milanese quartets, composed by a teenage Mozart in 1772-1773, largely conform to Italian traditions. The String Quartet No. 4, in particular, holds traits that reveal Mozart was simultaneously working on an opera, “Lucio Silla.” The first movement is full of parallel thirds and sixths in the violins, intervals common in vocal duets. The work is also Italianate in its three-movement structure, its expressive minor key middle movement, and extended contrapuntal passages. Then again, the young composer might be merely showing off for his Italian mentors, Padre Martini and Eugene Ligniville. Mozart, of course, always aimed to please – that the Milanese quartets sound so “Italian” stems from the fact that he frequently tailored his chamber music to local audiences.

While the bright, gentle tune that opens the Allegro might not sound overtly vocal, it does have a fair share of trills and a semblance of birdcalls in the first violin that suggest coloratura. It is the Andante, however, that really evokes an opera aria, thanks particularly to the first violin’s plaintive line. This proceeds over a gently rocking accompaniment – not too far from a barcarolle – with periods in which all four instruments take the theme in unison.

The third and final movement – remember, we’re in Italy, so there’s no minuet – is a brief Presto. It’s a rollicking sonata-rondo hybrid with lively syncopations wrapped up with a tiny but stimulating coda. The coda is unusual in that it consists of a crescendo, not yet a common technique, designed to bring Mozart’s surprised audiences to their feet. — *Steve Siegel*

Jeffrey Levine has been writing music professionally since his first commission in 1967 from the Fromm Foundation and Tanglewood. Besides many other commissions (including one from Ms. Sherry for the piece heard today) and requests for his compositions, he is the recipient of a Fulbright grant as well as a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. A widely experienced and eclectic musician, he has drawn upon his musical background of jazz, pop, symphonic and chamber music, and contemporary art- music, to write pieces that range widely from the most post-modern-abstract to easily accessible pieces for children. His music has been conducted and played by such eminent musicians as Pierre Boulez, Gunther Schuller, and Ursula Oppens, and in such diverse venues as the New York Philharmonic, in the northern reaches of Alaska, and in music festivals throughout Europe and America. In addition to his activities as a composer, Jeffrey Levine is an accomplished bass player and teacher. He was a founding member of Speculum Musicae, principal bass with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, American Ballet Theater, and other orchestras, and was an original member of the ground-breaking new music group, the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, directed by Arthur Weisberg, with whom he premiered and recorded many of the significant works of the late 20th century. He has played and recorded in jazz ensembles, big bands, orchestras and chamber music groups, as well as the pits on Broadway. For many years a teacher of composition and related subjects, as well as performance, Mr. Levine has been on the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley, Rutgers’s University, and Bennington College.

Novelletta

Imagine opening a slender volume on whose pages one finds only adverbs and adjectives irregularly arrayed ... “affettuoso,” “sereno,” “espressivo,” “appassionato,” “dolce,” etc. Imagine, too, that the spaces between these printed words are filled with musical sound. And imagine that every time one reads this short novel, it reveals a unique and unpredictable fiction.

In the piece, *Novelletta*, the fundamental ingredients from which the motives (characters? locations? events?) are constructed are the musical intervals of the seventh and, by inversion, the second. I propose the following non-immutable analogies: the seventh descending – an invitation; the seventh ascending – a proposal, a postulate, an offer; the second ascending – anticipation, optimism; the second descending – accommodation, resolution.

Novelletta was generously and unconditionally commissioned by Morrie Sherry for her Weill Hall debut. Written during the winter of 1994, it is dedicated to her, with gratitude and admiration. — *Jeffrey Levine*

Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115

By March 1891 Brahms’ creative impetus appeared to have faded away. He had composed nothing for more than a year and had completed his will. But then, visiting Meiningen, the conductor of the court orchestra drew Brahms’ attention to the playing of their erstwhile violinist, now principal clarinetist, Richard Mühlfeld (1856-1907), who performed privately for Brahms. As Anton Stadler had previously inspired Mozart, so now Mühlfeld inspired Brahms. There rapidly followed four wonderful chamber pieces: a Trio for piano, clarinet and cello Op 114, today’s Quintet Op 115, and two clarinet and piano Sonatas Op 120.

The opening B minor theme on the two violins provides much of the basic material for the work. The clarinet then enters with a rising arpeggio just as in Mozart's quintet, and leads us to a contrasting staccato motif with rapid accompanying triplets that are tossed between the instruments. The Adagio in B major has a slow melody in the clarinet accompanied by a Brahms trademark complex rhythm superimposing triplets with syncopated duplets in the strings. The two illustrated themes are then combined in the turbulent B minor central section of the movement with gymnastic flourishes from the clarinet. The third movement opens with a calm Andantino leading to the Presto scherzo and a contrasting Trio section with pizzicato strings. The last movement is a theme and five variations, with the theme related to many of those in the previous movements. The cello leads the first variation, the first violin and clarinet the second, the more embellished third and the fourth, which moves into B major. The viola then returns us to B minor with a restatement of the theme but in the rhythm of the first movement. In the final coda the first violin returns to the very opening of the first movement, the clarinet adds a major version of the viola's restatement and the work ends in peaceful agreement. — *Chris Darwin*

Oblivion y Adios Nonino

Astor Piazzolla, an Argentine musician, a virtuoso on the bandoneón (a square-built button accordion) left traditional Latin American tango bands in 1955 to create a new tango that blended elements of jazz and classical music. He was a major Latin American composer of the 20th century.

In 1925 Piazzolla moved with his parents to New York, where the family lived until 1936. He received his first bandoneón at age eight and learned to play both that instrument and the piano as a child. When the family returned to Mar del Plata in 1936, Piazzolla began playing with a variety of tango orchestras. At age 17 he moved to Buenos Aires. He formed his own orchestra in 1946, composing new works and experimenting with the sound and structure of the tango. About the same time he began to compose music for film. In 1949 he disbanded the orchestra, unsatisfied with his own efforts and still interested in classical composition. Having won a composing contest with his symphonic piece Buenos Aires (1951), he went to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. She urged him to remain true to himself and to continue his experiments with the tango. Henceforth he combined his two musical passions, despite much criticism from tango traditionalists. He returned to Argentina in 1955 but moved once again to the United States, where he lived from 1958 to 1960. When he returned again to Argentina, he formed the influential Quinteto Nuevo Tango (1960), featuring a violin, electric guitar, piano, double bass, and bandoneón. Though many of his 750 compositions were written for that quintet, he also composed pieces for orchestra, big band, bandoneón, and cello. His innovations, including counterpoint and new rhythms and harmonies, were initially not well received in his country, but they were greatly admired in the United States and Europe. He moved to Paris in 1974 but returned to Argentina in 1985. In Argentina Piazzolla's new tango gradually gained acceptance, and his music influenced a new generation of tango composers and was featured during the 1970s and '80s in film scores, television programs, and commercials. His later compositions included a concerto for bandoneón and orchestra (1979) and, commissioned by Kronos Quartet, Five Tango Sensations for bandoneón and string quartet (1989).

— *Encyclopedia Britannica*.