

The logo for the Midwest Chamber Ensemble (MCE) features the letters 'MCE' in a large, bold, black, italicized serif font.

Midwest Chamber Ensemble

## Beaufort Winds

Kathryn Hilger  
Artistic Director

November 19, 2023 • 4:00 p.m.  
Pre-Concert Talk 3:30 pm  
Prairie Baptist Church

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# PROGRAM

Miniatures for Woodwind Quintet, arr. Adam Lesnick

William Grant Still  
(1895–1978)

- I. I Ride an Old Paint (U.S.A.)
- II. Adolorido (Mexico)
- III. Jesus Is a Rock In the Weary Land (U.S.A.)
- IV. Yaravi (Peru)
- V. A Frog Went a-Courtin' (U.S.A.)

Sonata No. 2 , arr. Giampaolo Pretto

Claude Debussy  
(1862–1918)

- I. Pastorale. Lento, dolce rubato
- II. Interlude. Tempo di minuetto
- III. Final. Allegro moderato ma risoluto

## Intermission

Sextet in B-flat major, Op. 6

Gordon Jacob  
(1895–1984)

- I. Elegiac Prelude
- II. Scherzo
- III. Cortège
- IV. Minuet and Trio
- V. Rondo with Epilogue

Virginia Q. Backman, flute  
Shawn Nemati-Baghestani, oboe  
Jeffrey Anderson, clarinet  
Mark Adair, bassoon  
Steve Lewis, horn  
Kelly Hackleman, piano

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## PROGRAM NOTES

The woodwind quintet—flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon—became a standard chamber ensemble around the turn of the nineteenth century. It evolved from a group called a “Harmonie” that played at Joseph II’s court in Vienna, consisting of two oboes, two clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons. After Napoleon stormed across Europe, many aristocrats could no longer afford to employ eight musicians, and with improvements in instrument technology, adding a flute made sense. Anton Reicha (1770–1836), a contemporary of Beethoven, is the composer most associated with the standardization of the wind quintet, composing with each instrument’s individual voice in mind. Today, however, we’ll hear works from the early- and mid-twentieth century: two originally for smaller chamber ensembles and later arranged for wind quintet, and one for wind quintet and piano.

### **William Grant Still, arr. Adam Lesnick: Miniatures for Woodwind Quintet**

African American composer William Grant Still (1895–1978) was prolific, completing nearly two hundred works in a wide variety of genres during his lifetime. Raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Still was inspired by the international success of British-Sierra Leonean composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor to write operas and concert music. He studied at Wilberforce University and Oberlin College, then worked for influential blues composer W. C. Handy (1873–1958) for fifteen years. In 1931, the Rochester Philharmonic gave the premiere of Still’s Afro-American Symphony, the first symphony by a Black American to be performed by a major orchestra. He was also the first Black American to conduct a major orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, in 1936.

Still originally composed *Miniatures* in 1948 for a trio of flute, oboe, and piano; the chosen songs reflect a variety of folk styles from across the Americas. The set was later arranged for woodwind quintet by horn player Adam Lesnick. The first movement, “I Ride an Old Paint,” is an American cowboy song perhaps best known for Aaron Copland’s use of it in his ballet *Rodeo*. Still begins with an improvisatory oboe solo before settling into the tune in the flute with rhythmic accompaniment in the bassoon. “Adolorido” is from Mexico and opens with the flute and oboe in a sweet harmony that eventually passes through the other instruments with varying accompaniments. A decidedly bluesy clarinet solo opens the third movement, the spiritual “Jesus is a Rock in this Weary Land.” Generally, Still preferred blues to spirituals, as he felt the blues were more authentically African-American. “Yaravi” refers to a slow love song from Peru, and Still features different instruments in repetitions of the melody with subtly changing accompaniments. The last movement’s song, “A Frog Went A-Courtin,” may date from sixteenth-century Scotland, but was more recently popularized in a 1950s Tom and Jerry cartoon.

### **Claude Debussy, arr. Giampaolo Pretto: Sonata No. 2**

Born in the northwest suburbs of Paris, Claude Debussy (1862–1918) began studying piano and composition at the Paris Conservatoire at age ten. He won the prestigious Prix de Rome competition in 1884, but didn’t have much public success until 1902 with his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He is best known for the two books of piano preludes that he composed from 1909–1913, in which he explored unconventional harmonies and forms and created the now famous *Clair de lune*. Two of his most well-known orchestral pieces are *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* with its memorable opening flute solo, and the tone poem *La mer* (The Sea). Debussy did not compose much chamber music in his career; his first foray into the genre, his String Quartet from 1893, is a fascinating piece, directly inspired by the gamelan music of Indonesia that he heard at the Paris Exhibition of 1889.

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Debussy wrote this Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp in 1915 as part of a planned collection of six sonatas for various instruments; Italian flutist and conductor Giampaolo Pretto arranged it for wind quintet in 2019. Although Debussy titled the work a “sonata,” the first movement is not in traditional sonata form; instead, it features several themes with freely composed variations. From the very opening, the harmonies are unstable, unusual, and instantly recognizable as Debussy. Pretto leaves the opening flute solo intact, with the clarinet, horn, and bassoon taking over the harp arpeggios until the clarinet switches to the viola melody. As the title “Pastorale” suggests, the movement sounds a bit like we are sitting in a meadow with birds and other animals wandering through. Debussy labels second movement, “Interlude,” as a “Tempo di Minuetto,” but it is not a minuet in the traditional sense. The original version of the third movement opens with folk-like droning fifths in the harp; Pretto assigns those notes to the clarinet and bassoon while the oboe and horn take over melodies originally in the flute and viola, respectively. Energetic motor rhythms persist throughout the movement, passing through different voices while melodies from the first movement reappear in new guises. It’s difficult to describe this remarkable piece and it was a challenge for Debussy, too. He wrote to fellow composer Igor Stravinsky about it: “I can’t say whether one should laugh or cry. Perhaps both at the same time?”

### **Gordon Jacob: Sextet in B-flat major, Op. 6**

English composer, teacher, and writer Gordon Jacob (1895–1984) was a mainstay at the Royal College of Music for over forty years after studying with renowned composers Charles V. Stanford and Ralph Vaughan Williams. His textbooks on orchestration and score reading reflect his finely tuned technique and awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the instruments for which he composed. Because of his more conservative idiom, his music fell out of favor with the rise of the avant garde in the 1960s, so he shifted to composing more music for wind band and student and community orchestras. In a documentary about his career filmed just a few years after the completion of the sextet, Jacob said, “I personally feel that the day that melody is discarded, you may as well pack up music altogether.”

Jacob composed this sextet for woodwind quintet and piano in 1956 for the Dennis Brain Ensemble and pianist George Malcolm. Dennis Brain (1921–1957) was one of the most famous horn players in history, and he commissioned the work in memory his father, Aubrey, also a horn player and teacher. Almost unbelievably, the sextet was one of the last pieces Dennis Brain played before his untimely death in an automobile accident, so Jacob changed the dedication to memorialize both men. The notes A-B-E-B-A, taken from “Aubrey Brain,” form the thematic basis for this cyclic piece. They can be heard clearly in, of course, the horn part in the first minute of the appropriately titled opening movement. The second movement is a quick triple-meter dance, as expected, and Jacob maintains the shape of the main theme while adjusting pitch content slightly. Jacob’s title for the middle movement, “Cortège,” refers to a solemn, funerary procession, which is reflected in the slow, steady, almost ever-present quarter notes that emerge after an improvisatory clarinet solo. Jacob sets the fourth-movement minuet at a slower tempo than many instrumental minuets, which is accurate for the original, ceremonial nature of the seventeenth-century couples’ dance. It is common for multi-movement instrumental works to end with a rondo, which usually indicates a form with a theme that recurs between contrasting episodes. Jacob’s rondo theme is at times quick and virtuosic, but the movement comes to a quiet close appropriate for this memorial piece, referring back to the A-B-E-B-A theme once more.

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### **Sara McClure**

Sara has served as both the Music Director at Prairie Baptist Church in Prairie Village, KS, and the Artistic Director of Midwest Chamber Ensemble’s annual ChoralFest for over a decade. She is a PhD candidate in musicology at the University of Kansas and the Musicologist-in-Residence for MCE.



## **Virginia Q. Backman**

Virginia Q. Backman, flute, is originally from Oak Harbor, Washington, and is a flutist and educator in the Kansas City area. Passionate about both performance and music education, Backman has taught in public schools as well as at the university level, is sought after as a clinician, adjudicator, and teacher, and performs frequently as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral flutist. An active performer of new music, Backman has appeared as a guest artist at the National

Conference of the Society for Composers, the University of Central Missouri New Music Festival, the Society of Composers, Inc. Region V and VI Conferences, and the Missouri Western State University Electronic Music Mini-Festival. She was also a featured artist in the opening night concert of the 2013 Black Lab New Music Festival in Kansas City.

Backman is currently principal flutist of the Midwest Chamber Ensemble and plays regularly with the St. Joseph Symphony and the Kinnor Philharmonic. She has also performed with the Kansas City Symphony, the Skagit (WA) Symphony, and the Kansas City Civic Orchestra.

She has performed in master classes of Jeanne Baxtresser, Walfrid Kujala, Zart Dombourian-Eby, Tim Munro, John Barcellona, William Bennett, Lorna McGhee, Sarah Jackson, and Catherine Payne, and also studied with Kim Breilien.

Backman earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree (2020) and a Master of Music degree (2009) in flute performance from the UMKC Conservatory, where she studied with Dr. Mary Posses. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree (2006) in Instrumental Music Education and Flute Performance from Central Washington University, where her teacher was Dr. Hal Ott.

Backman currently lives with her husband and daughter in Lenexa, Kansas, where she has a thriving flute studio. In addition to her performing career, she is an avid runner and rock climber.



## **Shawn Nemati-Baghestani**

Shawn Nemati-Baghestani, oboe, graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia summa cum laude in 2013 with a Bachelor of Music in oboe performance. At Mizzou, he held principal chairs in both the Wind Ensemble and University Philharmonic.

Shawn studied oboe with Dan Willett and Edward Dolbashian and performed in master classes with Daniel Stolper, Phil Ross and Andrew Parker. He also spent time with Eugene Izotov, Alex Klein, and Frank Rosenwein. As a member of Trio Nouveau, Shawn was a semi-finalist in the 2010 Plowman Chamber Music Competition and was featured on the Odyssey Chamber Music Series.

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In 2013, Shawn won the concerto competition at Mizzou and performed the Mozart Oboe Concerto with the University Philharmonic the following year. Since graduating, he has maintained an active performance and teaching schedule in Kansas City and will soon become an associate of the Society of Actuaries.



### **Jeffrey Anderson**

Jeffrey is a clarinetist and pedagogue based in Southeast Kansas. Jeffrey has been a music instructor at Allen Community College in Iola, KS for five years, where he wears many hats teaching music classes, giving applied lessons, and directing ensembles. Allen presents an annual musical in which Jeffrey serves as music director. He conducted the Iola Area Symphony Orchestra for the 2020-2021 season.

Jeffrey received his DMA in clarinet performance with a cognate in piano performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He received his master's in clarinet performance from Bowling Green State University and his bachelor's in music education from Michigan State University. Equally at home playing both traditional and modern style works, he has performed concertos by Mozart, Weber, and Farberman with full orchestra. He spends his summers in Wooster, Ohio playing in the pit for The Ohio Light Opera company.

[jeffreycandersonmusic.com](http://jeffreycandersonmusic.com)



### **Mark Adair**

Mark Adair, is a bassoonist and pedagogue from Wichita, KS, he completed his Master of Music degree in Bassoon Performance from the Jacobs Schools of Music at Indiana University, studying under William Ludwig, as well as his Bachelor of Music and Music Education at the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory studying with Marita Abner.

While in Kansas City, Mark was a sought-after musician and teacher, working as a guest clinician, private teacher, and district teacher for schools in both Kansas and Missouri. Additionally, he has performed with the Jefferson City Southside Philharmonic, Northland Symphony, Lee's Summit Symphony, Midwest Chamber Ensemble, Washburn University, and Baker University. In 2019, he won First Prize in the Collegiate Division of the Midwest Double Reed Society Annual Young Artists Competition.

During the summer of 2022, Mark served as a contrabassoon fellow for the Aspen Music Festival. As an advocate of new music, he can be heard in recordings of UMKC's Wind Symphony, the Midwest Chamber Ensemble, and IU's New Music Ensemble.

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His educational outreach work with the Kansas City Symphony has brought performance experiences to thousands of children across the KC metro area. In 2017, Mark was awarded the Presser Foundation Undergraduate Scholar Award for his musical and educational achievements at UMKC. In 2021, he was named a recipient of the Koch Cultural Trust to further advance his musical endeavors. During his time at Indiana University, Mark taught contrabassoon and assisted in designing and implementing studio coursework. While maintaining an active private studio, he also teaches double reeds in multiple districts across the KC Metro and is the acting bassoon instructor for MidAmerica Nazarene University.



### **Steve Lewis**

Steve Lewis, French horn, has enjoyed a diverse musical career as both a conductor and French hornist. Steve is the Music Director of the Medical Arts Symphony of Kansas City and former the Midwest Chamber Ensemble. Under his direction the Midwest Chamber Ensemble won third place in the American Prize. Lewis has collaborated with such guest artists as pianists Charl Louw, Mary Rose Norell, and Keith Kirchoff, violinist Zsolt Eder, cellist Eman Chalhotori, French

hornist Brett Hodge, soprano Sarah Tannehill Anderson and countertenor Jay Carter. He has conducted the Kansas City Metro Opera, the Missouri Symphony, OvreArts (PA), the Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City, the Wilson Symphony (NC), the University of Central Missouri Orchestra, the Emporia State University Chamber Orchestra, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra As a French hornist Steve has performed at the Stamford International Music Festival (UK) and the Brevard Music Center (NC), as well as concerts with the Mahlerfest Orchestra (CO) and the Missouri Symphony.

Steve attended high school at the North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied French horn with David Jolley. Steve holds degrees from East Carolina University (BM, Theory/Composition) where he studied French horn with Mary Burroughs and the University of Missouri- Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance (MM, Orchestral Conducting) where he studied conducting with Robert Olson and French horn with Ellen Campbell and Martin Hackleman. He was twice awarded the EAMA/Florence Gould Foundation Michael Iovenko Fellowship to study conducting in Paris as part of the European American Musical Alliance at the historic Schola Cantorum. While there Lewis received special mention in both solfege and counterpoint. Steve has attended the South Carolina Conductors Institute and the International Conductors Institute workshops in Round Rock Texas and New York. He has received career and continuing education grants from the ELCA Central States Synod, Anna Sosenko Trust, and the Koch Cultural Trust. His many arrangements for French horn and other ensembles are published by Cimarron Music.



## **Kelly Ker Hackleman**

Dr. Kelly Ker Hackleman earned the degrees of B.M., M.M. and D.M.A., all in Piano Performance, from the Cincinnati Conservatory, New England Conservatory, and the University of Memphis, respectively. She has served on the faculties of George Mason University, Shepherd University, the University of Memphis, and Rhodes College. Dr. Hackleman presently serves as Adjunct Associate Professor of Music at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance, and as horn studio accompanist.

As an orchestral pianist, Kelly has played keyboard for the Montréal Symphony Orchestra, the McGill Chamber Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, the Washington Concert Ballet, the Washington Choral Society, Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra, Fairfax Symphony, and the Kansas City Symphony. She served as principal pianist with the Alexandria Symphony for 12 years and held the same position with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra for 6 years.

Kelly's recordings include "Solitary Hotel," a duo CD with her husband, Martin Hackleman, and as pianist for the Washington Symphonic Brass - "Voices of Brass," "The Edge," and "Classic Rock for Brass."

An avid ambassador for music, Dr. Hackleman has been asked to present lectures for the Faculty Arts Board of George Mason University, the Friends of Music for George Mason University, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Springfield (VA) Music Club. She also served as resident lecturer for the McLean Orchestra's "Classical Insights with Kelly: A Pre-concert Lecture Series." In 2012 she developed and launched the first online course for the George Mason University School of Music, "Intro to Classical Music," which she continues to teach at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance.

## **Who we are . . .**

The Midwest Chamber Ensemble is a Kansas City – based 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to the performance of Chamber Orchestra and Chamber Ensemble music of the classical tradition. The ensemble's personnel is selected on the basis of artistic merit and comprises young professional musicians and exceptional music students. The Midwest Chamber Ensemble prepares its members for future career opportunities by creating a professional environment and providing its audiences quality concerts.

All donations are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to Midwest Chamber Ensemble. Checks can be mailed to MCE c/o Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, 9100 Mission Road, Prairie Village, Kansas 66206.

[www.midwestchamberensemble.org](http://www.midwestchamberensemble.org)



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# 23|24 Season

## **Franck & Farrenc — PBC**

**September 24**

Franck: Piano Quintet

Farrenc: Nonet, Op. 38

## **Piano Tour de Force — LCR**

**October 22**

Fauré : Piano Trio

Dohnányi: Piano Quintet No. 2

Coleridge-Taylor: Five Negro Melodies for Piano Trio

## **Beaufort Winds — PBC**

**November 19**

Still: Miniatures for Woodwind Quintet

Debussy: Sonate No. 2

Jacob: Sextet

## **Brahms, Milhaud & Morris — LCR**

**February 4**

Brahms: Clarinet Trio

Milhaud: Quartet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Piano

Morris: Brushstrokes

## **Dumbarton Meets Tower — LCR**

**March 17**

Stravinsky: Dumbarton Oaks

Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 1

Tower: Dumbarton Quintet

Glinka: Trio Pathétique

## **Season Finale — LCR**

**May 5**

Schumann: Piano Concerto

*with pianist Charl Louw*

Mealor: Stabat Mater

*in collaboration with John Stafford and the Kansas City Kansas Community College Choirs*

**All concerts begin at 4:00 pm**

**Pre-Concert talks take place at 3:30 pm**

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### **PBC**

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Single tickets \$20**

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