



CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Capitol Hill
Washington, DC
SSgt Bridget Piccirilli, coordinator

Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

Samuel Barber (1916–81)

Summer Music, Opus 31 (1956)

SSgt Christina Hughes, flute

GySgt Trevor Mowry, oboe

GySgt Jacob Moyer, clarinet

GySgt Stephen Rudman, bassoon

GySgt Timothy Huizenga, horn

William Grant Still (1895–1978)

Vignettes for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano (1962)

Winnebago Moccasin Game

Carmela

Inca Melody

Clinch Mountain

Héla grand-père

Gardé piti mulet là

MSgt Tessa Gross, oboe

SSgt Bridget Piccirilli, bassoon

MGySgt Russell Wilson, piano

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

Fantasia III (2021)

Promenade

Lunaire

Flamagra

MSgt Amy McCabe and MSgt Robert Singer, trumpet

GySgt Brigitte Knox, horn

GySgt Russell Sharp, trombone

GySgt Simon Wildman, tuba

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INTERMISSION

François Devienne (1759–1803)

Bassoon Quartet in C, Opus 73, No. 1

Allegro spiritoso

Adagio cantabile

Rondo: Allegro moderato

SSgt Bridget Piccirilli, bassoon

MGySgt Erika Sato, violin

SSgt Rachel Halvorson, viola

GySgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

George Gershwin (1898–1937)
arranged by Raaf Hekkema

An American in Paris

GySgt Trevor Mowry, oboe

GySgt Lewis Gilmore, clarinet

GySgt Shannon Kiewitt, bass clarinet

GySgt Stephen Rudman, bassoon

MGySgt Steven Temme, saxophone

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PROGRAM NOTES

Summer Music, Opus 31 (1956)

Samuel Barber (1910–81)

Summer Music has been a prominent standard in the woodwind quintet repertoire for nearly seventy-five years, however, the origin of the piece was unusual and unplanned. By the mid-twentieth century, American composer Samuel Barber was in high demand, and for good reason. Barber was a child prodigy who began his musical studies at age fourteen as a singer, pianist, and composer at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. His ever-famous Adagio for Strings, an arrangement of a movement from his String Quartet, Opus 11, was complete by age twenty-three. By the 1950s, he achieved fame and notoriety as both a baritone and a composer.

His fame led the Chamber Music Society of Detroit to offer him a commission in 1953. Originally, this commission was for a septet made up of an uncommon combination of string and wind instruments. Barber spent most of his energy writing his opera *Vanessa* and had made little headway on the chamber music project by the middle of 1954. Luckily, inspiration struck when the New York Wind Quintet came to perform in Blue Hill, Maine, where Barber was spending the summer. Barber, who was intrigued by their combination of tone colors and instrumental idiosyncrasies, was invited to listen to the group's rehearsals. In these rehearsals, he observed the quintet's exploration of complex sonorities through their ensemble exercises. This exposure ultimately led him to compose *Summer Music*. As he composed, he kept the New York Wind Quintet in his ear, highlighting the unique sounds he experienced. Although not fulfilling the original parameters of the commission, the Chamber Music Society of Detroit gladly accepted the work and gave its première performance in 1956.

According to Barber, *Summer Music* is “supposed to be evocative of summer – summer meaning languid, not killing mosquitos.” It is a single movement work that cycles through different melodies, timbres, and tempi multiple times throughout the work. The quintet starts slowly in a mood that evokes sweltering heat and humidity, leading to a relaxed, aimless melody in the oboe. A short time later, the sound abruptly changes in a spark of activity, with sharper articulation and faster rhythms. The listener is continuously thrown between sections of thick stillness and agile activity with the opportunity to feel each in the same way that the sensations of summer have to offer.

Vignettes for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano (1962)

William Grant Still (1895–1978)

William Grant Still is considered the “Dean of African-American Classical Composers” and a musical pioneer. Along with many other notable achievements, he was the first African-American to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra in the US and the first to conduct a major symphony orchestra. His *Vignettes for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano* consists of six short movements inspired by folk tunes of the Americas.

The first movement, “Winnebago Moccasin Game,” depicts a game of chance played by the Winnebago tribe, whose historic territory includes parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. This song would have been sung to distract the opposing team. The second movement, “Carmela,” is a hauntingly nostalgic song from the Colonial Spanish era in California. The third movement is an ancient Incan melody which originated in Peru and depicts the Spanish conquest. It includes content from dances of the native peoples of Peruvian Amazonia and the Qulla people of Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. The fourth movement, “Clinch Mountain,” is an Appalachian folk song. It is believed to have been preserved from Great British colonists. The fifth movement is based upon Rada, a family of Iwa spirits in the Haitian *Vodou* religion. The final movement of this folk suite is a Creole song from Louisiana, which combines African, French, and Spanish influence. This jovial final movement pokes fun at the town dandy who has aroused envy due to his looks and talent on the banjo.

Fantasia III (2021)

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

Kevin Day is a composer, conductor, and jazz pianist from Arlington, Texas. His father was a prominent hip-hop producer in the late 1980s. His mother was an in-demand gospel singer who sang alongside singers like Mel Tormé and Kirk Franklin. This diverse musical background informs Day’s compositional style which intersects the worlds of jazz, minimalism, Latin music, fusion, and other contemporary classical idioms. Day’s first major compositional success was his Concerto for Euphonium which was written in 2018. Day is a winner of the BMI Student Composer Award and a three-time finalist for the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. His opera, *Lalovavi: An Afrofuturist Opera*, was commissioned by the Cincinnati Opera and will receive its premiere performance in 2026. Day’s work has been performed by the United States Marine Band, including performances of the Concerto for Euphonium in 2023 and the Concerto for Wind Ensemble in 2024. He currently works as artist teacher in residence of composition at the Keys Conservatory at Pinecrest Academy Sloan Campus in Henderson, Nevada.

Fantasia III was commissioned by a consortium of ensembles, including the United States Navy Band, American Brass Quintet, and the New York Philharmonic. The work was given its premiere performance in June 2021 by the Axiom Brass Quintet. Day’s music has been described by Robert Kirzinger of the Boston Symphony Orchestra as being “characterized by propulsive, syncopated rhythms, colorful orchestration, and instrumental virtuosity.” These musical elements are heard throughout this piece. Day combines classical brass quintet sounds with the calisthenics-esque musical skills of a jazz improviser. This creates excitement and anticipation in both the fanfare-like first movement, “Promenade,” and the fervor of the last movement, “Flamagra.” The second movement, “Lunaire,” is a calming break from the first and third movements. Magnificent brass harmonies and chorales evoke dreamlike images, slowly settling into a bluesy final chord. In anticipation of the 2021 premiere, Kevin Day wrote: “This multi-movement work highlights the breadth, depth, and virtuosity of the brass quintet, bringing in the influences of my personal brass playing experience.”

Bassoon Quartet in C, Op. 73, No. 1

François Devienne (1759–1803)

François Devienne was a Classical French composer and professor of flute at the Paris Conservatory. Although he was known as the “Mozart of the Flute,” Devienne was also quite an accomplished bassoonist. He even played bassoon at the Paris Opera during his career. A prolific composer, Devienne composed approximately 300 works mostly for wind instruments. This output includes eleven works for solo bassoon and a dozen for solo flute.

The Bassoon Quartet in C Major was likely performed by Devienne on the bassoon, alongside a violin, viola, and cello. The work comes in three quintessentially Classical movements, including pleasing melodies, logical harmonic structures, and sensible orchestration. The first movement, *Allegro spiritoso*, displays virtuosic lines for the bassoonist throughout, though each instrumentalist has their own soloistic moments as well. The movement is in sonata form. The first charming and light-hearted theme is presented immediately. A second, darker theme is introduced part way through the movement. In the second movement, *Adagio cantabile*, centers a simplistic and beautiful melody. The bassoon expands on this melody in a melismatic and virtuosic way, until the movement eventually closes in the simplistic way that it began. The final movement of the work is a Classical rondo, where the opening melody returns repeatedly and is interspersed with other episodic material. The virtuosity of the entire group is displayed throughout this movement, with an exciting and busy final few bars.

An American in Paris

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

arranged by Raaf Hekkema

The creation of *An American in Paris* reflects its title: the blending of American sensibilities with the *joie de vivre* of the twentieth century French musical style. Fascinatingly, its creation begins because of its highly successful composer’s discomfort with his musical training. Gershwin’s success in concert music began with *Rhapsody in Blue* which was an instant success at its 1924 première performance with Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. That première concert, “An Experiment in Modern Music,” featured music that blended elements from both the classical and jazz traditions. One of the members of that audience was Walter Damrosch, the music director of the New York Symphony Orchestra which was one of the orchestras that was a precursor to today’s New York Philharmonic. Damrosch immediately commissioned another work from the young composer, the Concerto in F for piano. After writing the concerto, and with his early achievements on Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and the concert stage, Gershwin still felt compelled to obtain formal composition lessons. He traveled to London and Paris and sought lessons with Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, and a few of the French composers known as *Les Six*, but to no avail. They would not instruct him. In fact, Ravel famously stated, “Why would you want to risk being a second-rate Ravel when you are already a first-rate Gershwin?” One product of his European travels in the mid-1920s was *An American in Paris*, completed in 1928. Gershwin provided the following information about the work in an interview with *Musical America*:

This new piece, really a rhapsodic ballet, is written very freely and is the most modern music I’ve yet attempted. The opening part will be developed in typical French style, in

the manner of Debussy and the Six, though all the themes are original. My purpose is to portray the impression of an American visitor in Paris, as he strolls about the city and listens to various street noises and absorbs the French atmosphere. As in my other orchestral compositions, I've not endeavored to represent any definite scenes in this music. The rhapsody is programmatic only in a general impressionistic way. . . The opening gay section is followed by a rich blues with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American friend, perhaps after strolling into a café and having a couple of drinks, has succumbed to a spasm of homesickness. The harmony here is both more intense and simpler than in the preceding pages. This blues rises to a climax, followed by a coda in which the spirit of the music returns to the vivacity and bubbling exuberance of the opening part with its impression of Paris. Apparently the homesick American, having left the café and reached the open air, has disowned his spell of the blues and once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life. At the conclusion, the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant.

This abridged version of the work was arranged for reed quintet, an ensemble composed of instruments favored by the twentieth-century French composers Gershwin approached to study. This combination of instruments is an ideal medium for a chamber music adaptation of a perennial favorite: an ideal exploration of Franco-American musical dialogue.