

the PROGRAM28
JUNE

Saturday

8 PM

BOSTON SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS

Malcolm Lowe, *violin*Haldan Martinson, *violin*Steven Ansell, *viola*Edwin Barker, *double bass*Elizabeth Rowe, *flute*John Ferrillo, *oboe*William Hudgins, *clarinet*Richard Svoboda, *bassoon*James Sommerville, *horn*

WITH

Jessica Zhou, *harp*Sato Knudsen, *cello**Pre-concert talk with Dr. William Matthews, 7 PM*

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY EVE AND PHIL CUTTER

INTO THE EVENING AIR (2013)**Yehudi Wyner (b. 1929)***Commissioned for the 50th Anniversary of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players*

SONATA FOR FLUTE, VIOLA AND HARP (1915)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Pastorale: Lento, dolce rubato

Interlude: Tempo di minuetto

Finale: Allegro moderato ma risoluto

:: INTERMISSION ::

OCTET IN F MAJOR FOR WINDS AND STRINGS, D. 803 (1824)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Adagio—Allegro—Più allegro

Adagio

Allegro vivace—Trio—Allegro vivace

Andante—Variations. Un poco più mosso—Più lento

Menuetto: Allegretto—Trio—Menuetto—Coda

Andante molto—Allegro—Andante molto—Allegro molto

Notes
ON THE
PROGRAM
BY
Sandra Hyslop

INTO THE EVENING AIR

Yehudi Wyner (b. Calgary, Canada, June 1, 1929)

Composed 2013; 6 minutes

The admiration and respect that the esteemed American composer Yehudi Wyner and his music have generated in the Boston area led naturally to a commission from the Boston Symphony Chamber Players (BSCP) for music to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ensemble's founding. Celebrating this singular occasion, the ensemble chose to mark its anniversary with music by prominent composers who have a close connection to Boston and its orchestra.

The new wind quintet is Wyner's second commissioned work for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. In 1990 he wrote *Trapunto Junction*, a piece for the ensemble's brass and percussion players. More recently the Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned Wyner's Piano Concerto, *Chiavi in mano*, written for the BSO and the pianist Robert Levin. It was awarded the 2006 Pulitzer Prize. The Bridge CD of the Piano Concerto, recorded in 2005 by the BSO, Levin and the conductor Robert Spano, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2009.

**FINAL SOLILOQUY OF THE INTERIOR
PARAMOUR**

Light the first light of evening, as in a room
In which we rest and, for small reason, think
The world imagined is the ultimate good.

This is, therefore, the intensest rendezvous.
It is in that thought that we collect ourselves,
Out of all the indifferences, into one thing:
Within a single thing, a single shawl
Wrapped tightly around us, since we are poor,
a warmth,
A light, a power, the miraculous influence.

Here, now, we forget each other and
ourselves.
We feel the obscurity of an order, a whole,
A knowledge, that which arranged the
rendezvous.

With its vital boundary, in the mind.
We say God and the imagination are one...
How high that highest candle lights the dark.

Out of this same light, out of the central
mind,
We make a dwelling in the evening air,
In which being there together is enough.

—Wallace Stevens

This past year, the Boston Symphony once again approached Wyner for a work on a more intimate scale. He responded by composing this wind quintet, *Into the Evening Air*, which was premiered on February 9, 2014, as part of the BSCP's 50th Anniversary Celebration at Jordan Hall. The performers were the BSCP wind quintet members who bring the work to Rockport for this evening's concert.

In January 2014 Wyner wrote this introduction to his new quintet:

The title, *Into the Evening Air*, was evoked by an elegiac late poem by Wallace Stevens, an expression of tentative directness and elusive simplicity. Yet despite the elements of abstraction that infiltrate the poem, the overall atmosphere is loving and profoundly consoling. The final lines project a feeling of fulfilled resolution, as a sense of ultimate tranquility.

I wrote this little wind quintet with no knowledge of the poem. I labored to find an apt title. All manner of references to '5' were explored and rejected. And then for reasons unknown, my wife, Susan Davenny Wyner, suggested this poem of Wallace Stevens, fashioned in the twilight of his life. Something essential in the progression of the poem resonated with the trajectory of the quintet, especially as it seeks a conclusion of quiet affirmation rather than a resigned sense of loss.

The poem, entitled "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour," begins with the phrase "Light the first light of evening..." and ends with these words: "Out of this same light, out of the central mind, We make a dwelling in the evening air, In which being there together is enough."

SONATA FOR FLUTE, VIOLA AND HARP

Claude Debussy (b. Saint-Germain-en-Raye, France, August 22, 1862;
d. Paris, March 25, 1918)

Composed 1915; 19 minutes

In 1915, sick of heart and body, the composer Claude Debussy nevertheless planned an ambitious new project—he determined to write six sonatas for various instruments. He had already been diagnosed with rectal cancer and had undergone a devastating surgery. The war that had erupted in 1914 in his homeland also caused profound suffering. Leaving Paris in the summer of 1915, he removed to the little seaside town of Pourville on the English Channel. There he summoned extraordinary strength and wrote the first of his planned sonatas, the First Sonata for Cello and Piano, completing it in August.

Debussy then set to work on the Second Sonata, imagining a trio of flute, oboe and harp. The voices that ultimately convinced him were those of the flute, the viola and the harp—the flute and harp, whose timbres suggested ancient instruments, and the viola, whose mellow string voice would create an acoustical bridge between the other two. He completed the Second Sonata for flute, viola and harp in early fall 1915, by which time his condition had deteriorated even further, forcing a return to Paris for surgery to attach a colostomy.

The first performance of the Second Sonata took place more than a year later, on November 7, 1916, in a private affair at the Longy Club in Boston. Another private performance introduced the work in France on December 1916, at the home of Debussy's publisher, Jacques Durand. The violist on that occasion was the 24-year-old composer Darius Milhaud, who wrote a touching description of his experience in preparing for that performance. "This was the first and only opportunity I ever had of meeting the master...his face was deathly pale and his hands affected by a slight tremor. He sat down at the piano and played me his sonata twice."

Despite his condition, Debussy attended that performance at Durand's home and wrote about it in a letter the following day. "It's not for me to say anything about the music...Although I could do so without blushing, because it's by a Debussy *I no longer know*...It is terribly melancholy. I don't know whether one should weep or laugh on hearing it. Perhaps both, at the same time?"

The Trio Sonata is a brilliant evocation of the Pastorale mood that not only introduces the work, but also threads through all three movements. The suggestions of ancient instruments, and the atmosphere of a time long past, are immediately established in the opening sounds—the gentle strum of the harp and the soft Pan-pipe voice that feeds seamlessly to the muted viola. Wisps of ethereal harmonies and suggestions of melodies contribute to the haze that spreads over this Pastorale.

Debussy frequently chose the minuet as his preferred form for dance movements in his piano works. He often connected in this way with dance suites of earlier centuries, of Rameau and Couperin. This Minuet, however, seems like something out of time—not to be danced, but to evoke memories of what it was like to have danced.

The rondo-like Finale adds a sparkling sensuality to the Pastorale mood. The textures are spiced by pentatonic harmonies from the Far East, and by flute sounds that hint of the Javanese gamelan that Debussy so admired.



Photo of Claude Debussy

Notes
ON THE
PROGRAM

BY
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An image of Schubert and his friends captures their social life—an evening in Vienna, where Schubert leads the singing. Schubert's wide circle of friends contributed to his good cheer and sustained him as the effects of his illness began to weaken his body and spirit. The Octet reflects his pleasure in life.

Throughout his life Debussy always strove to compose French music, free of Germanic influences. In 1917 he was able to complete the Third Sonata for Violin and Piano, before he succumbed to his illness the following year. The three sonatas were published with his signature, "Claude Debussy, *musicien français*."

OCTET IN F MAJOR FOR WINDS AND STRINGS, D. 803

Franz Schubert (b. Himmelpfortgrund, Vienna, January 31, 1797;
d. Vienna, November 19, 1828)

Composed 1824; 60 minutes

The amateur clarinetist Count Ferdinand Troyer (1780–1851) approached Franz Schubert in early 1824 with a commission to write a companion piece for the hugely popular Beethoven Septet. Although an amateur, Troyer was known for his fluency and fine tone, and he maintained high standards for the repertoire that he and his colleagues, a mix of professional and amateur musicians, performed in his Viennese home.

Schubert finished the Octet on March 1, 1824. Shortly thereafter, Troyer was able to introduce it at one of his private soirées, where the ensemble of instrumentalists included Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the prominent Viennese musician, entrepreneur and quartet leader who, for many years, had been the principal violinist at the introduction of so many of Beethoven's works, including the Septet. Schuppanzigh was once again the principal violinist of the august ensemble that gave Schubert's Octet its first public performance, on April 16, 1827, in a concert under the auspices of the Vienna Musikverein. This concert, which took place fewer than three weeks after Beethoven's death, featured several significant Beethoven compositions in addition to the new work by Schubert.

Schubert had complied closely with Troyer's request that the new work should be similar to Beethoven's Septet. He used the same instrumentation, adding one violin to Beethoven's complement of violin, viola, cello, double bass, clarinet, bassoon and horn. Schubert followed Beethoven's example in arranging the work along the same general format, alternating fast and slow tempi in the six movements. Both works open with an introductory Adagio (of identical length) and Allegro, both feature an Andante and Variations in fourth place, and both surround the variations movement with two dance movements—Minuet and Trio, and Scherzo and Trio (his Octet, however, reversed Beethoven's order of the two dance movements).

With all due respect to Beethoven (whom Schubert revered) and acknowledging the great popularity of his Septet, we can still give Schubert his due. His mastery of the materials—dance forms, theme and variations, elegant lyrical passages, idiomatic sonata form and lively rhythmic patterns—have given the Octet a more favored place in the repertoire.

As a critic wrote after the premiere performance of the Octet, "[It is] commensurate with the author's talent, luminous, agreeable and interesting...If the themes do not fail to recall familiar ideas by some distant resemblances [*referring, no doubt, to the Septet*], they are nevertheless worked out with individual originality, and Herr Schubert has proved himself a gallant and felicitous composer."