



ensemble

astera



The woodwind quintet Ensemble Astera, is the first prize winner of the Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition of 2023.

Since the founding of the ensemble in 2019, the musicians of the Ensemble Astera have been united by friendship and a common passion for chamber music. They are keen to communicate their shared musical vision, namely the blending of the diverse sounds and timbres of their five wind instruments in search for unity and the broadest artistic dimension.



The ensemble members' experiences with major international orchestras have enhanced their cohesion, distinctive sound, and musical affinity with the wind quintet. This Franco-Swiss ensemble offers a refreshing perspective on the classical music scene. The musicians are driven by an insatiable enthusiasm, investing their energy towards thoughtful and committed performances, whilst making the most of their ensemble's many sound possibilities.



True to the spirit of openness evoked by its name, Ensemble Astera is always ready to expand its formation by incorporating piano or other musicians, in order to explore the full richness and variety of chamber music with winds. Thus the Ensemble shared the stage with pianists Angela Hewitt, Josefa Schmidt and Guillaume Bellom, the Aviv Quartet or the baritone Benjamin Appl.

As evidenced by their award for best performance of the commissioned work at the Nielsen Competition, the ensemble's artistic dynamism is also characterised by its approach to the contemporary repertoire and its strong desire to bring innovation to concert halls. Reflecting this commitment, the Ensemble has recorded Fazıl Say's quintet *Alevi dedeler raki masasında* (2011) and will premiere Kevin Juillerat's new quintet *Whirls*, written for the Ensemble, in August 2025.



The Ensemble Astera regularly performs at various festivals and music seasons across Europe, including Lavaux Classic, Festival de Pâques d'Aix-en-Provence, Trasimeno Music Festival, Davos Festival, Baselbieter Konzerte, Radio France festival, Les Rencontres Musicales d'Evian and the Murten Classics Festival.

The ensemble has also been heard on France Musique, Radio Télévision Suisse, Radio Classique and Danish Radio.

Since 2023, the Ensemble Astera is Artist in residence at the Fondation Singer-Polignac in Paris. They performed alongside Guillaume Bellom as part of the Singer-Polignac Festival 2026 in a program for winds and piano including works by Mozart, Caplet and Poulenc.



Thanks to its collaboration with sound engineer Michael Seberich, and a residency offered by St Columba's Drimnin Trust in Scotland, Ensemble Astera recorded its debut album featuring works by Debussy, Nielsen, Say & Barber, released in 2025 on the Swiss label Claves.



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ENSEMBLE ASTERA



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Yann Thenet - Oboe



Coline Richard - Flute



Moritz Roelcke - Clarinet



Gabriel Potier - Horn

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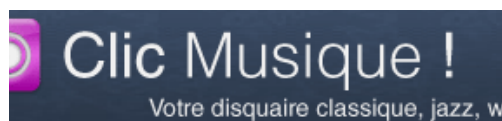
Jeremy Bager - Bassoon



das Orchester
Magazin für Musiker und Management

“A selection of works which the five musicians [...] perform with remarkable conviction. Right from Debussy’s piece, a warm tone and perfect balance are immediately apparent. In Nielsen’s Quintet, the solo parts are mastered with exemplary virtuosity by each wind player, whilst the cohesion and tonal balance of the tutti passages are captivating. Nothing is overdone; every detail of the composition is fully developed and, where necessary, the performance is expressive.”

[Full Article](#)



“The highlight of this album seems to us to be Fazil Say’s ‘Turquerie’, in which the instruments play — or re-enact — a dialogue between five wise men who talk about this and that, perhaps even remaking the world, whilst drinking raki. It is full of ingenious touches and humour, and one cannot help but smile at this rich instrumental dialogue, which is so human and warm-hearted.”

[Full article](#)



“Finding the right path (or at least the most compelling one) through the vast repertoire (from classical to contemporary) for wind quintet is far from easy, but for this ensemble, no obstacle seems to stand in the way of their exceptional dedication and, moreover, their unrivalled technical mastery. The phenomenal interplay of timbres comes into its own, thanks in no small part to an equally brilliant recording.”

[Full article](#)



“Remarkable cohesion and rhythmic precision, together with a consistent sound, characterise this selection of essential pieces in this repertoire. The unpretentious playing of the musicians of the Ensemble Astera gives us hope that we may discover further interpretations with the same technical finesse, sense of nuance and infectious enthusiasm.”

[Full article](#)

L'AMOUR DU CLASSIQUE, LA PASSION DE L'EXCELLENCE
DÍAPASON

“In the transcription of Debussy’s Petite Suite, the sound captivates with its homogeneity, its impeccable accuracy, and its finely crafted and well-balanced individual parts. [...]. The Astera Ensemble impresses with its rhythmic precision in Barber’s Summer Music, as well as with its articulation and balance.”

MusicWeb
INTERNATIONAL

“It is a wonderful piece, and these highly talented players do it full justice. They have obviously worked very hard to achieve a sound world in which all five can play with character and flexibility, and yet no one player dominates the texture. [...]. Again, it is brilliantly conveyed by this quite outstanding young ensemble. I love their playing, and cannot wait for their next recording.”

[Full article](#)

Les Echos

“The young Astera wind quintet thus performed a most polished Poulenc programme: their instrumental mastery, refined style and individual musical imagination, supported by Guillaume Bellom’s richly nuanced piano accompaniment, captured both the roguish spirit and the quiet melancholy [...] of the sextet for winds and piano.”

[Full article](#)

LaProvence.

“The Astera Ensemble, with its unassuming yet precise approach, works wonders — not only in what was a discovery of a work that is rarely performed, but throughout a recital that succeeds in bringing together very disparate pieces, forming a cohesive whole and telling a story of emotions in which dialogue reigns supreme.”

[Full article](#)



“It wasn’t just a musical interlude [...] but a genuine revelation. Their performance captivated us from the very start, and meeting them backstage only confirmed what was already clear: this opportunity to see them was not to be missed! Beyond their undeniable talent, their likeability and their unique sound, it was their openness to the contemporary repertoire and their sincere commitment that won us over.”

[Full article](#)

Towards new worlds

L. **Bernstein**, arr. D. Stewart | Candide Overture (1910)

S. **Barber** | Summer music op. 31 (1956)
[Album](#)

J. **Medaglia** | Belle-Epoque in Sud-America (1997)

A. **Dvořák**, arr. D. Walter | Quartet n°12 op. 96 'American' (1893) [Video](#)

On a journey

W.A. **Mozart**, arr. G. Weigelt | Adagio in B-flat Major K.411 (1784)

F. **Say** | Alevi dedeler rakı masasında (2011)
[Album](#)

G. **Ligeti** | Six bagatelles (1953) [Video](#)

M. **Ravel**, arr. J. Linckelmann | Ma Mère l'Oye (1910) [Video](#)

Tour de France

M. **Ravel**, arr. M. Jones | Le tombeau de Couperin (1919) [Video 1](#) & [Video 2](#)

J. **Ibert** | Trois pièces brèves (1930)

C. **Debussy**, arr. G. Davies | Petite Suite (1889) [Album](#)

G. **Onslow** | Woodwind quintet (1850)

Our programmes

The Authentic

P. **Taffanel** | Woodwind quintet (1876)

L. **Berio** | Ricorrenze (1985)

C. **Nielsen** | Woodwind quintet (1922) [Album](#)

Bohemian Rhapsody

G. **Ligeti** | Six bagatelles (1953) [Video](#)

E. **Szervánszky** | Woodwind quintet n°1 (1953)

F. **Farkas** | Early Hungarian Dances from the 17th century (1959)

A. **Reicha** | Woodwind quintet op.88 n°2 (1800)

Winds & Piano

W.A. **Mozart** | Quintett for piano and winds (1784)

A. **Caplet** | Quintett for piano and winds (1899)

F. **Poulenc** | Sextett (1932)

[Live concert with Guillaume Bellom](#)



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