



ensemble

ASTERA

1st Prize of the Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition 2023



The Ensemble Astera is the winner of the 1st prize and the special prize for the best interpretation of the commissioned work at the Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition in Copenhagen in April 2023. It was founded in 2019 by five young musicians, all graduates of the Haute Ecole de Musique de Lausanne.

Since the end of their studies, united by their friendship, they have not hesitated to come together from the four corners of Europe to share their common passion for chamber music. They form a cosmopolitan ensemble, bringing together four European nationalities, and their different experiences with major international orchestras enrich their cohesion, their particular sound and their musical affinity around the wind quintet. They are eager to share their core vision as chamber musicians: the blending of the sounds and timbres of five wind instruments in search of unity and a greater artistic dimension.

In addition to numerous arrangements, their repertoire is rich and varied, full of musical gems by great composers as well as lesser-known ones, and the musicians will make you discover or rediscover pieces from all genres, showcasing all the sound possibilities of the woodwind quintet and offering you a moving and unforgettable concert experience.

The Ensemble Astera performs at various festivals and concert seasons across Europe, as well as on France Musique, Radio Télévision Suisse and Danish Radio. As orchestral musicians, its members are part of or have performed with, orchestras such as the Orchestre National de Lille, the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, the Tonhalle Orchester Zurich, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Since 2023, the Ensemble Astera is Artist in residence at the Fondation Singer-Polignac in Paris.

1<sup>st</sup> Prize & Prize for Best interpretation of the creation at the Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition 2023



“ Refined sound treatment and precision, this ensemble plays with well balanced energy, playing convincingly as a group and individually, with reflection and depth of expression for the composer”

**Andreas Sundén,**

chairman of the jury and principal clarinet of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra

# Coline Richard

FLUTE

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Coline Richard graduated from the Haute Ecole de Musique de Lausanne in 2017 with a Master of Arts, where she studied with José-Daniel Castellon, Julien Beudiment, Magali Mosnier and Loïc Schneider. She then perfected her skills in the class of Pierre Dumail, principal piccolo at the Paris Opera.

Passionate about orchestra and chamber music, she benefited from the equally valuable teaching of the musicians of the MET in New York during the Verbier Festival Orchestra from 2017 to 2019 under the guidance of great conductors such as V. Gergiev, E-P. Salonen, or Sir S.Rattle.

She is regularly invited to play in French and Swiss orchestras such as the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.



# Yann Thenet

## OBOE

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Originally from Lyon, Yann Thenet studied for his bachelor's and master's degrees in Lausanne in the class of Jean-Louis Capezzali. Passionate about orchestral playing, he was appointed principal oboe of the Orchestre des Pays de Savoie in 2018, and then assistant-principal of the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne in 2019 with whom he has performed regularly as a soloist.

He was also principal oboe of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester from 2018 to 2021, and has been invited to perform with ensembles such as the Orchestre National de Lyon, the Luzerner Symphonieorchester, the Orchestre National de France and the Opéra de Lyon.

With these different ensembles, he has had the opportunity to perform in the most prestigious European halls, alongside conductors such as Herbert Blomstedt, David Zinman, Jonathan Nott, Klaus Mäkelä, Daniel Harding, Daniele Gatti and Vladimir Jurowski.



# Moritz Roelcke

## CLARINET

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Moritz Roelcke graduated with a soloist diploma from with Pascal Moraguès in 2019 after completing his studies at the HEMU Lausanne. In the 20/21 season he worked as principal clarinet in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Moritz is a member of the Isabelle Faust & Friends and the Chaarts Ensemble Boswil. His chamber music partners include pianist Teo Gheorghiu, cellists Chiara Enderle-Samatanga, Thomas Demenga and Maximilian Hornung, and violist Nils Mönkemeyer. He previously studied with Fabio Di Casola, Jörg Widmann and François Benda. Moritz is a member of the Klezmer group Cheibe Balagan from Zurich.

He regularly works with the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, the Musikkollegium Winterthur and the Orchestre de Paris, among others.



# Gabriel Potier

## HORN

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Gabriel Potier obtained his Bachelor's degree from the Haute Ecole de Musique de Lausanne in 2018 in the class of Philip Myers, principal horn at the New York Philharmonic. He also had the the chance to work with several internationally renowned horn players, including Marie-Luise Neunecker, André Cazalet, Radovan Vlatkovitch and Szablocs Zempleni... Following his studies, he won the position of 2nd/3rd horn in the Orchestre National de Lille.

His orchestral experience has enabled him to perform with prestigious orchestras in France and abroad, including the Orchestre National de France, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, La Monnaie de Bruxelles, the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, among others, as well as in Europe's most prestigious concert halls, including the Berlin Philharmonie and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw.

Chamber music also plays an important role in Gabriel's career - he performs in a variety of groups, such as the horn quartets, the violin/piano trios, and ensembles of varying sizes.



# Jeremy Bager

## BASSOON

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Jeremy Bager is a bassoonist of Swiss and English decent, who studied with Carlo Colombo in Lausanne and Giorgio Mondolesi in Zurich. He was a member of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester and the Schleswig Holstein Festival Orchestra, and an academist with the Gewandhausorchester in Leipzig.

Jeremy is a regular guest solo bassoonist with i.a. the Cologne Gürzenich Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest in The Hague and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, as well as the opera houses in Frankfurt and Palermo. From Singapore to Boston, he has performed in many countries under the baton of renowned conductors, including Andris Nelsons, Daniel Harding, Vladimir Jurowski, François-Xavier Roth and Herbert Blomstedt.

An avid chamber musician, he participates in various international festivals, including the British Isles, Verbier and Davos (Young Artist 2022). He regularly performs in recital with his brother, pianist Frederic Bager, and as a soloist with various Swiss orchestras.

Jeremy has been generously supported by the Migros Kulturprozent from 2020 to 2022.





# Towards New Worlds

DREAMS, IMAGINATION AND THE DISCOVERY OF UNKNOWN LANDS

M. Ravel, arr. J. Linckelmann | *Ma mère l'Oye* (1910)

S. Barber | *Summer music op.31* (1956)

A. Dvořák, arr. D. Walter | *Quarter n°12 op.96 'American'* (1893)

This lively programme of works by three great composers, from the most classical European to the most recent American, offers a moment of escape from time.

For Maurice Ravel, imagination is often a source of inspiration. *Ma mère l'Oye*, based on the tales of Charles Perrault, is a good example. Some of the texts from the stories are given in the score to help the performer find the right tone. *Sleeping Beauty*, *Hop o' My Thumb*, *The Empress of the Pagodas* and *Beauty and the Beast* are set to music with humour, picturesque wit and nostalgia. The melodies, rhythms, harmonies and specific instrumental colours convey all the emotions felt when listening to the stories.

*Summer Music* by Samuel Barber, the American composer best known for his famous *Adagio*, immerses us in a summer atmosphere that encourages sleepiness and dreamy escapism. A single-movement work with varied tempos and atmospheres, like a waking dream. Barber received musical advice from members of the New York Wind Quintet and the work was premiered in 1956 at the Detroit Institute of the Arts by soloists from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Finally, let's stay on the other side of the Atlantic with Dvorak, who crossed the ocean and left old Europe behind for the New York Conservatory. He thoroughly enjoyed mixing with the diverse and very different atmospheres of that city to those of his native Bohemia. Antonin Dvorak drew inspiration from Native American and African American music for two of his major works, his 9th Symphony, "New World", and his "American Quartet", here transcribed for wind quintet.

From the fairy tales of Charles Perrault, revisited by Maurice Ravel, to Dvorak's *American Quartet* or *Summer Music* by the American Samuel Barber, inspiration is a powerful driving force for creation!



# Nordic Immersion

A MUSICAL WIND BLOWS ACROSS SCANDINAVIA

E. Grieg, arr. David Walter | Four norwegian dances op.35 (1881)

Kalevi Aho | Woodwind quintet n°1 (2006)

A. Kotronia | Grönare Än (2023)

C. Nielsen | Woodwind quintet op.43 (1922)

The vast expanses of wilderness in the Nordic regions are home to impressive Norwegian fjords, peaceful Finnish lakeshores, vast Swedish forests and verdant Danish plains. These landscapes are a celebration of sight as well as sound, with the twittering of birds, the rustle of wind in the trees, the murmur of rivers and the crunch of snow underfoot. So many natural sounds that have influenced musical creation, from folk music to so-called “classical” music. This programme explores these regions and shows how nature has inspired such distinctive melodies and rhythms over the centuries.

Edvard Grieg drew on an authentic collection of folk melodies to create his Norwegian Dances, infused with a touch of folklore. In a more academic but equally subtle approach, Carl Nielsen turned to wind quintet composition, creating a piece for his Danish friends by incorporating a Cor Anglais into the oboe part, adding further instrumental colour. The result is a lively, dynamic atmosphere in which ideas overlap to create a vibrant, energetic dialogue.

The programme is enriched by two contemporary pieces that add an innovative and modern dimension: the Wind Quintet by Kalevi Aho, the great Finnish symphonist whose writing oscillates between tradition and modernity, and Grönare Än by the young Swedish composer Athanasia Kotronia, born in 2000, who has offered Ensemble Astera the Swiss premiere of her Wind Quintet.

These four pieces bear witness to music’s ability to transcend landscapes and traditions, capturing the essence of each era and reflecting the artistic singularity of their composer.



# L'Authentique

## EXPLORING THE SOUNDS OF WIND QUINTET

F. Danzi | Quintet op.56 n°2 (1800)

G. Ligeti | Six bagatelles (1953)

A. Klughardt | Woodwind quintet op.79 (1898)

In chamber music, the wind quintet can be considered the wind equivalent of the string quartet. It offers a harmonious combination of the soft sound of the flute, the more pronounced sound of the clarinet (a single-reed instrument), the more incisive sound of the double-reed oboe and bassoon, and finally the round, warm tones of the horn, a member of the brass family. Advances in instrument making enabled this chamber music group to play an increasingly important role during the nineteenth century. Many composers have appreciated this repertoire and expressed the desire to compose specifically for the wind quintet.

What better way to discover this repertoire than through original works?

Franz Danzi, a contemporary of Beethoven, pursued a career as a conductor and composer, but also as a teacher at the Stuttgart Conservatoire, where he was in charge of the wind instrument classes. It was therefore only natural that his repertoire included several wind quintets. His operatic compositions give him an expressiveness that we find in his quintets. His Op. 56 No. 2 enchants with the freshness of its inspiration and the charm and expressiveness of its “cantabile” passages. Almost a century later, in a post-Romantic style, August Klughardt wrote his Wind Quintet. This work shows a great balance between contrasts, timbral variety and expressiveness, with humour never far away. The composer, who was also a conductor and the author of numerous symphonies, was familiar with this repertoire. Finally, Ligeti’s Six Bagatelles, written in the mid-twentieth century, take us into a dizzying whirlwind of changing tempos, rhythms and contrasting atmospheres. Although there are hints of Hungarian folklore and even a touch of jazz, the writing is resolutely “classical”. Accessible and far removed from contemporary compositions from across the border, it can be listened to but also observed, so surprising is the playing of the instrumentalists.

This colourful programme gives a unique place to the repertoire of the wind quintet.



# Tour de France

## THE MUSICAL FLAVOURS OF FRANCE

C. Debussy, arr. G. Davies | Petite Suite (1889)

P. Taffanel | Woodwind quintet (1876)

M. Ravel, arr. M. Jones | Le tombeau de Couperin (1919)

A lively, picturesque programme of a wide variety of pieces that perfectly reflect the French spirit of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Debussy's famous Petite Suite, offers the refined sonorities so typical of the period. Written in the form of a "suite", this composition evokes the old style of writing and links together a series of short pieces with contrasting characters. Originally written for the piano, these pieces reveal a rich palette of colours thanks to the wind instruments. Debussy "modestly seeks only to please", as he himself wrote about his music, and offers the simple pleasure of listening. Another great master of French music, Maurice Ravel, also explored the old suite form with Le tombeau de Couperin. This piece is a lively tribute to 18th century French music, with Couperin's music quoted in the introductory prelude. Alongside these famous works of French music, Paul Taffanel's Wind Quintet doesn't take a back seat. The writing is clear, the spirit sparkling, the virtuosity transmitted from instrument to instrument with great ease. In addition to conducting some of the greatest orchestras of his time and composing, this artist was also a great flutist and the founder of the "Société française de musique de chambre pour instruments à vent". With this quintet, he brings this piece to the forefront of the repertoire, creating an authentic masterpiece of wind music.

The French spirit is in the limelight!

# ensemble **astera**

We'll be happy to work with you to create a tailor-made programme!

Here is a non-exhaustive list of works in our repertoire:

- J. Haydn, arr. H. Perry | Divertimento n°1 (1782)  
A. Reicha | Quintet op.88 n°2 (1800)  
F. Danzi | Quintet op.56 n°2 (1800)  
G.M. Cambini | Quintet n°3 (1802)  
G. Onslow | Woodwind quintet p.81 (1850)  
P. Taffanel | Woodwind quintet (1876)  
E. Grieg, arr. D. Walter | Quatre danses norvégiennes op.35 (1881)  
H. Chrétien | Quintet (1887)  
C. Debussy, arr. G. Davies | Petite Suite (1889)  
A. Dvořák, arr. D. Walter | Quartet n°12 op.96 'American' (1893)  
A. Klughardt | Woodwind quintet op.79 (1898)  
J. Ibert | Trois pièces brèves (1930)  
D. Milhaud | La Cheminée du Roi René op.205 (1941)  
E. Bozza | Scherzo op.48 (1944)  
M. Ravel, arr. J. Linckelmann | Ma Mère l'Oye (1910)  
M. Ravel, arr. M. Jones | Le tombeau de Couperin (1919)  
P. Hindemith | Kleine Kammermusik op.24 n°2 (1922)  
C. Nielsen | Woodwind quintet op.43 (1922)  
J. Ibert | Trois pièces brèves (1930)  
D. Milhaud | La Cheminée du Roi René op.205 (1941)  
E. Bozza | Scherzo op.48 (1944)  
J. Jersild | Sérénade At spille i skoven (1946)  
G. Ligeti | Six Bagatelles (1953)  
E. Szervansky | Quintet n°1 (1953)  
S. Barber | Summer Music op.31 (1956)  
L. Berstein, arr. D. Stewart | Candide Ouverture (1956)  
F. Farkas | Early Hungarian Dances from the 17th century (1959)  
J. Françaix | Woodwind quintet n°2 (1987)  
K. Aho | Woodwind quintet n°1 (2006)  
F. Say | Wind Quintet op.35, Alevi dedeler raki masasinda (2011)  
A. Kotronia | Grönare Än (2023)
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