

IMANI WINDS***Considered Modern 2.0****Wind quintets by masters of the 20th and 21st centuries*

Scherzo	Eugene Bozza (1905-1991)
Quintet for Winds	Elliott Carter (1908-2012)
i. Allegretto	
ii. Allegro giocoso	
Cinq Danses Profanes et Sacrees	Henri Tomasi (1901-1971)
i. Danse Agreste	
ii. Danse Profane	
iii. Danse Sacree	
iv. Danse Nuptiale	
v. Danse Guerriere	

INTERMISSION

Fractured Fossil	Ledah Finck (b.)
Six Pieces for Wind Quintet	Anders Hillborg (b. 1954)
i. eighth note = 152	
ii. quarter note = 152	
iii. Idyll	
iv. with fury	
v. very calm	
vi. dotted quarter = 76	

Quintette en Forme de Choros	Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)
------------------------------	--------------------------------

Eugene Bozza*Scherzo* (notes by Dr. Richard E. Rodda)

Eugene Bozza composed three operas, two ballets, two symphonies, two oratorios, four Masses, and a half-dozen concertos, but his most important contribution to 20th century French music was his myriad pieces for wind instruments. Bozza, born in Nice on April 4, 1905, to a French mother and an Italian father, took his professional training at the Paris Conservatoire, where he won *premiers prix* in violin (1924), conducting (1930), and composition (1934), as well as the *Prix de Rome* in 1934. He began his career as a violinist with the Padeloup Orchestra, but gave up performing in 1930 to devote himself to composition and conducting. From 1938 to 1948 he conducted at the Opera-Comique in Paris, and in 1951, he was appointed director of the Ecole Nationale de Musique in Valenciennes, a post he held until his retirement in 1975. He died in Valenciennes in 1991. In the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, British critic Paul Griffiths wrote of the “melodic fluency, elegance of structure and consistently sensitive concern for instrumental capabilities” of Bozza’s music, qualities abundantly apparent in the ingratiating but technically daunting *Scherzo* for Woodwind Quintet of 1945. *Scherzo* is a lyrical piece beginning with the main theme Allegro Vivo. Each instrument presents a variation of the theme, which ends in a rousing finale, Animando.

Elliott Carter*Quintet for Winds* (notes courtesy of Imani Winds)

Carter’s Quintet for Winds was written in 1948 just as Jean Francaix was composing his quintet, and although the pieces couldn’t be more different, in an odd way the similarities are apparent, because of the European influence on the American compositional community at this time. Carter was born in 1908 and came late to composition, even though one of his early mentors was American composer, Charles Ives, as Mr. Ives sold insurance to Carter’s parents. After studying English and math at Harvard, Carter would eventually journey to Paris to study with the compositional pedagogue juggernaut that was Nadia Boulanger. The Quintet is in fact dedicated to Mademoiselle Boulanger.

Upon his return to the States, Carter would begin to compose works such as the Quintet, combining elements of his “neo-classical style” with a more populist American voice. Indeed, the Quintet for Winds plays like a study in the field with its challenging harmonies, cohesive rhythmic patterns and a quick dabble in the then new formulating world of jazz. It is in two movements and the first explores the way the five instruments can sonorously stroll along coming to a relatively robust peak, just to end with the clarinet drifting off in its chalumeau range. The second, on the other hand, allows the players to tackle intricately woven rhythms that culminate in a Charleston-like frenzy. Although only 8 minutes in length the wind quintet as a genre is very fortunate to have this gem prominently placed in the standard repertoire.

Henri Tomasi

Cinq Danses Profanes et Sacrees (note courtesy musicroom.com)

French composer and conductor, Henri Tomasi published *Cinq Danses Profanes et Sacrees* for Wind Quintet in 1963. As with his other wind compositions, *Cinq Danses* was well-received by audiences.

Tomasi was born in Marseille, but his father and mother were originally from La Casinca in Corsica. Despite being pressured into musical studies by his parents, Tomasi dreamed of becoming a sailor, and during the summer, he stayed with his grandmother in Corsica where he learnt traditional Corsican songs. However, in 1921, he began his studies at the Paris Conservatoire and went on to become a high profile composer and conductor. Tomasi did not forget his Corsican roots, often incorporating themes of the songs he had learned during the summers with his grandmother in to his compositions. *Cinq Danses* is a reduction arrangement of his work of the same name for Chamber Orchestra.

Anders Hillborg

Six Pieces for Wind Quintet (note by Anders Hillborg)

The opening piece of my *Six Pieces for Wind Quintet* is written in a quasi-tonal style, remotely reminiscent of Stravinsky; it starts out with an eruptive gesture of upward scales, followed by soft, long-spun melodic lines accompanied by a gentle walking bass in the bassoon.

This scheme is repeated once, but when the opening gesture appears a third time, instead of continuing as before, the music blazes into the second movement, a ferocious flow where the instruments imitate and echo each other in a furious tempo.

This is followed by a calm movement where the bassoon again provides a steady walking bass through an idyllic landscape featuring the flute in a repetitive perpetuum mobile pattern.

The fourth piece, in contrast, is a wild and heavy orgy with strong focus on pulse and aggressive syncopations, mainly based on octotonic scales (= regular alternation of major and minor seconds).

The fifth piece also uses octotonic scales as basic material, but contrasts to all the other ones in being extremely calm and slow in character.

The last piece starts with wide, sustained chords suggesting vast, open landscapes, and ends with a crazed funky race on the verge of the playable.

Six Pieces for Wind Quintet, was written for and commissioned by The Royal Stockholm

Opera Wind Soloists in 2007.

Heitor Villa-Lobos***Quintette en Forme de Choros*** (notes author unknown)

Heitor Villa-Lobos is perhaps the most celebrated Brazilian composer of all time. His work not only richly typifies the diverse and kaleidoscopic Brazilian scene but also, in its abundance, originality, and vitality, provided the key which unlocked Brazilian art music once and for all from the shackles of European late-Romanticism.

After the death of his father in 1899, Villa-Lobos, determined to escape the medical career planned for him by his mother, spent time playing (probably cello and guitar) in the ad hoc musical groups which performed and improvised in Rio de Janeiro's cafes, on street corners, and at parties and weddings. He then traveled in Brazil, absorbing musical influences from his country's three main ethnic strands-Portuguese, African and Amerindian. This all resulted in the realization that the glorious aural amalgam which so impressed his soul was indeed the means by which concert music in Brazil would be revitalized and given a voice of its own.

After some success and much controversy as a composer in Brazil, Villa-Lobos made his way in 1923 to Paris, at that time the cultural center of Europe, where every aspiring musician, artist and writer felt it obligatory at least to put in an appearance. The artistic ambience of Paris during the 1920s was particularly suitable for the acceptance and promotion of Villa-Lobos during his subsequent periods of residence there, until a final departure in 1930. Indeed, even before his own arrival several of his works were heard and applauded in the French capital, played by his compatriots or by European artists who had met the composer in Brazil. African music and jazz were particularly in vogue and the strange sounds of the music of the East so beloved by Debussy and Ravel still echoed loudly. The clear-cut, quixotic melodies of Milhaud and Poulenc were favored, while Stravinsky's rhythmic vitality affected everyone. Villa-Lobos's highly colored, strangely conceived, and rhythmically assured music thus found an ideal home in Paris during the 1920s.

Villa-Lobos wrote *Quintette en Forme de Choros* while living in Paris. It is based on the Brazilian improvisatory dance form called *choros* that only narrowly preceded jazz in the U.S. Villa-Lobos returned to the *choros* many times during his career, raising the form to a concert level never before heard. A typical *choros* starts out slowly and gradually builds to a dramatic climax. This piece is a tour-de-force for the entire ensemble. The players usually demonstrate an embellished introduction before a rhythmic section with unpredictable harmonic changes.

Technically, the Quintette was originally intended for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and English horn, but is usually performed now with French horn.