

Melina Merkouri Hall, Hydra

21st August, 2025, 9 p.m.

Divertissement for Bassoon and String Quintet (1942)

Jean Françaix

- (i) *Vivace*
- (ii) *Lento*
- (iii) *Vivo assai*
- (iv) *Allegro*

Valeria Curti, bassoon; Katharine Gowers & Bogdan Božović, violins; Francis Kefford, viola; Julian Arp, cello; Harald Edin, double bass

Games for Piano, Strings and Wind

Kostis Kritsotakis

- (i) *Prelude*
- (ii) *Tarantella*
- (v) *Hide-and-seek*
- (iii) *Little Statues and Finale*

Kristoffer Hyldig, piano; Bogdan Božović & Jannis Agraniotis, violins; Francis Kefford, viola; Julian Arp, cello; Harald Edin, double bass; Oleg Shebeta-Dragan, clarinet; Valeria Curti, bassoon; Tomás Figueiredo, French horn

~ Intermission ~

String Quintet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 77

Antonín Dvořák

- (i) *Allegro con fuoco*
- (ii) *Scherzo. Allegro vivace*
- (iii) *Poco andante*
- (iv) *Finale. Allegro assai*

Katharine Gowers & Jannis Agraniotis, violins; Francis Kefford, viola; Julian Arp, cello; Harald Edin, double bass

PROGRAMME NOTES

Divertissement for Bassoon and String Quintet (1942)

Jean Françaix

A decade younger than the famous group of belle epoch French composers known as "Les Six", Jean Françaix shared with them a love of humour and a charming lightness of touch. He once remarked that music should "give pleasure" - a sentiment that permeates this Divertissement. It is a showcase for the bassoon, and remains a favourite with performers and audiences for its sparkling grace and energy. A playful, light-hearted Introduction is followed by a dance-like Allegretto with nimble, syncopated rhythms and a mischievous spirit. The Andante slow movement brings lyrical calmness before the jazzy and virtuosic Finale.

Games for Piano, Strings and Wind

Kostis Kritsotakis

'Games' is a suite for small ensemble derived from the ballet 'Harin Pedias', which was first performed in Athens in 2004. The ballet is about bizarre events that occur when five ladies meet for afternoon tea. Their social games remind us of some old, classic games that children play. In the same way, the movements of the suite correspond to different, traditional children's games: a prelude is followed by a dance, a tarantella; the third movement is titled 'Hide-and-seek', while the Finale begins with the game little-statues.

String Quintet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 77

Antonín Dvořák

The works of Czech composer, Anton Dvořák, have featured at most of the Saronic Chamber Music Festivals. The mastery of his ensemble writing for strings and piano, the richness of his melodic invention and the vibrancy of his Bohemian and Moravian folk rhythms have made his chamber music an enduring favourite with performers and audiences at this festival and internationally.

Written when he was 32, this is one of Dvořák's earliest chamber works. It lay unknown for a decade until he decided to revise and publish it. Dvořák chose to add a double bass to the traditional string quartet lineup for this quintet, rather than the more usual second viola. It adds substantially to the sonority of the sound textures and leaves the cello liberated from the bass line to explore more melodic voicing.

The opening Allegro con fuoco (with fire) opens with the composer's characteristic vitality and rhythmic drive. The Scherzo is a lively Czech dance full of humour and verve. The slow movement (Poco andante) provides lyrical contrast, and the Finale (Allegro assai) brims with exuberance and thematic invention, bringing the work to a thunderous close.

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