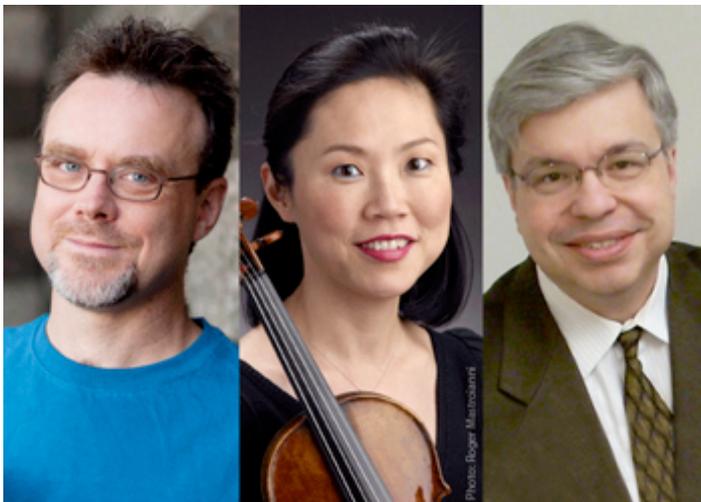


Arts Renaissance Tremont: a conversation with hornist Richard King

by Jeremy Reynolds



“Honestly, bad chamber music makes you feel like you’d rather be at the dentist. But there’s nothing better than playing good chamber music with people that you like,” according to Richard King, principal horn of The Cleveland Orchestra and a member of the City Center Brass Quintet. On Sunday, April 19 at 3:00 pm, King will perform on the next installment of the [Arts Renaissance Tremont](#) concert series with pianist Randall Fusco and violinist Chul-In Park

at Pilgrim Congregational Church.

The program, comprising music by [Lennox Berkeley](#), [York Bowen](#) and [Paul Leary](#), begins with a work originally written for the viola de gamba, J.S. Bach’s *Gamba Sonata No. 1 in G*, BWV 1027. King said “I heard somebody play one of those sonatas on horn about 25 years ago and it always stuck in my head. I decided that if I ever got permission I would want to try that too. Besides, Schumann’s *Adagio and Allegro* for horn is often played on cello, so I thought we’d get back at them by stealing one of their pieces.”

British composer Sir Lennox Berkeley’s *Trio for horn, violin and piano, op. 44*, was commissioned by the pianist Colin Horsley. Horsley was a regular collaborator with [Dennis Brain](#), the famous British horn player who revolutionized 20th century perceptions of the horn as a solo instrument. “I recently re-read a biography of Dennis Brain,” said King. “He has been an inspiration for every horn player who followed after him. He was the first to really stand up and be a soloist.”

Johannes Brahms wrote a well-known [trio](#) for the same ensemble which is beloved by chamber music fans everywhere. “There are other pieces modeled after the Brahms, but Berkeley’s is one we haven’t played before. It was written in the 50s. It sounds a little bit like Hindemith. It’s got some pretty moments, but otherwise its fairly angular.

“Chul-In Park and I have been playing chamber music for 20 years,’ King said. “She’s a wonderful violinist and a really fun lady. Randall Fusco is the go-to pianist for so many people,” said King. “He doesn’t specialize in new music, but he’s extremely good at it. He’s played some absolutely impossible stuff and made it sound easy.

“Paul Leary’s *Horn Sonata* was written for a student of mine at CIM about 11 years ago,” said King. “I have played it a number of times. It’s based on three Renaissance themes, and it’s *really* beautiful. It uses a little bit of prepared piano (we used to call this ‘bug music’) but not in a crazy way. Its very tonal, and I’ve always enjoyed playing that piece.”

The program will end with another British work, York Bowen’s *Horn Sonata in E-flat, op. 101*. “This piece was written for Denis Brain’s father, Aubrey Brain, who was the best horn player in Britain until his son came along,” King said. “When his father died, Dennis got together with the composer and they played it for the memorial concert.” King noted that Dennis Brain was both a professional inspiration and the thread that winds through the program. “He single-handedly made the horn into more of a solo instrument. He just made it sound so bloody easy.”

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