

Oberlin Chamber Music Festival kicks off on Tuesday, January 6

by Mike Telin



It appears that Northeast Ohio's classical music organizations are going to be wasting no time getting back into full swing after the holidays. A quick check of our Concert Listings page reveals that almost as soon as 2015 is upon us, audiences will have plenty of concerts to choose from. However, the prize for being first out of the blocks goes to the Oberlin Conservatory.

On Wednesday, January 6 at 8:00 in Kulas Recital Hall, the Wasmuth Quartet, Brendan Shea and Jonathan Ong, violins, Abigail Rojansky, viola, and Warren Hagerty, cello, will present the first concert of the Oberlin Chamber Music Festival. The program includes Joseph Haydn's *Quartet in C*, op. 74, no. 1, Anton Webern's *Langsamer Satz in E-flat* and Györgi Ligeti's *Quartet No. 1*, "Métamorphoses nocturnes."

Festival co-chairs George Sakakeeny, Peter Takács and Michael Strauss have invited colleagues from around the world to take part in performances as well as lectures, master classes and daily coachings with student ensembles. "We're incredibly excited to bring this diverse and stimulating roster of guest artists to Oberlin to work with our students and perform with our faculty," said associate professor Strauss. "These celebrated musicians are coming from within our alumni ranks and from acclaimed ensembles in our neighborhood and around the world." All events are free and open to the public. Click [here](#) for a complete schedule.

The Festival, which was inaugurated last January, is part of Oberlin College and Conservatory's annual Winter Term program. "Last year we held a string quartet intensive," Strauss pointed out, "but this year we thought we would open it up to the entire chamber music program. We're excited with the response because we have student ensembles ranging from a string quartet to ensembles of many mixed winds and string

combinations. We even have a piano duo. Even better is that participants range from first year to artist diploma students — and everything in between.”

A unique aspect of the Festival is the lectures, all of which will address topics that are important to the education of young musicians, but have general audience appeal as well. On Friday, January 9 at 1:00 pm, Adriana Contino and Sigrun Heinzelmann will present *Analyzing Chamber Music, A User’s Guide*. “It’s important for students to be able to take what they learn in theory class and use that information to figure out how to perform a piece of music,” Strauss said.

On Friday, January 16, violinist William Harvey will present *Making a Difference in the World with Chamber Music*. Harvey, taught violin for four years at the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, where he founded the Afghan Youth Orchestra. He conducted the ensemble eight times for President Karzai and led it on a tour of the USA.

“Another topic that comes up are social issues, which have certainly been at the forefront recently,” Strauss said. “There is a lot of talk about the fact that people are having a hard time figuring out how to meet on common ground, and how to communicate with one another. Perhaps music is a way to do that, and William is at the forefront in the world of using music for that purpose.”

Festival concerts continue on Wednesday, January 7 at 8:00 pm in Clonick Hall with a performance by the new music ensemble Chartreuse (Myra Hinrichs, violin, Carrie Frey, viola and Helen Newby, cello). The program includes Theophilus Chandler’s *Image: Deposition*, Joan Arnau Pamies’s *[IVflbclVlvc]*, Kurt Isaacson’s *as a family of civilian ghosts phase-shifts through the fog lights*, David Bird’s *pluck.divide.cut*, and Katherine Young’s *graveled crumbled strewn*. The ensemble will be joined by guest artists Hannah Hammel, flute, Zachary Good, clarinet and Ben Roidl-Ward, bassoon. The program will be repeated on Thursday, January 8 at 7:30 at the Bop-Stop on Cleveland’s West Side.

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