

## Black Squirrels return to Music From The Western Reserve

by Mike Telin



Although black squirrels can be spotted around Northeast Ohio, they are prolific in the city of Kent. “At our first rehearsal we talked about choosing a name for the group, so we threw out some ideas,” bassoonist Mark DeMio recalled during a recent telephone conversation. “Our horn player said that since there were so many black squirrels in the area he always liked the idea of playing in a group called the

black squirrel — something. And that’s how we became the Black Squirrel Winds.”

On Sunday, April 11 at 5:00 pm, Music From The Western Reserve will present the ensemble that bears the name of Kent State University’s unofficial mascot. The pre-recorded online program is free. Click [here](#) at start time.

Formed in 2011, the Black Squirrel Winds — Diane McCloskey (flute), Danna Sundet (oboe), Amitai Vardi (clarinet), Mark DeMio (bassoon), and Kent Larmee (horn) — is a faculty ensemble at Kent State’s Hugh A. Glauser School of Music.

In addition to performing on the University’s main and satellite campus, as faculty the Black Squirrels spend a good deal of their time coaching students. DeMio said that although they enjoy playing challenging pieces such as the quintets of John Harbison, Jennifer Higdon, and Jean Francaix, “we’re always looking for repertoire that we want to play and is good for teaching to younger players. And most of the music that is on this concert has that element to it.”

The program includes Adrien Barthe’s *Passacaille*, John Baptiste Lully’s *Gavotte in Rondeau*, Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Three German Dances*, Scott Joplin’s *Easy Winners*, Johann Georg Lickl’s *Menuetto*, August Klughardt’s *Andante Grazioso*, Anatoly Liadov’s

*Eight Russian Folk Dances*, and selections from Ludwig Thuille's *Sextet* with pianist Elizabeth DeMio. "These are all short pieces, and we've already taped our conversation with Zsolt Bognár, so I think this is a very nice program for a Sunday afternoon."

Like many ensembles, the pandemic has greatly curtailed the indoor activities of the Black Squirrel Winds. "Last fall we had eight outdoor rehearsals and an outdoor concert for Tuesday Musical, but that was the last time we were together," DeMio said. "So When Zsolt asked about pieces that have already been recorded, we were all just happy that we could pull everything together."

Click [here](#) for the quintet's performance of Joplin's *Easy Winners*.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com April 7, 2021.*

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