

## Richard Hawkins & Friends at the Rocky River Chamber Music Society

by Mike Telin



When the Oberlin Conservatory's Richard Hawkins was asked to curate a concert for the Rocky River Chamber Music Society, he knew right away that it was an opportunity to program works that would include his Oberlin Conservatory faculty friends. "It's always nice to present chamber music for winds and strings that people might not know," the clarinetist said during a telephone conversation.

On Monday, February 28 at 7:30 pm at West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, Hawkins will be joined by Sibbi Bernhardsson (violist), Kirsten Docter (viola), James Howsmon (piano), Dmitry Kouzov (cello), Drew Pattison (bassoon), and Jeff

Scott (horn) in a forgotten quintet from the turn of the 20th century, a light-hearted trio from the early 1980s, and a masterpiece sextet from 1935. The performance is free and face masks are required. The event will be live streamed on the RRCMS Facebook [page](#).

The program will open with Austrian composer Franz Schreker's *Der Wind* for clarinet, horn, violin, cello, and piano. "It was written in 1909 and it's a beautiful, eleven-minute piece that nobody knows," Hawkins said. "I wanted to program music that's enjoyable to listen to and I think this piece really is."

Schreker, who lived from 1878 until 1934, studied violin and composition at the Vienna Conservatory. He was the founder of the Vienna Philharmonic Chorus which premiered works including Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* in 1913. During his lifetime, Schreker was the most-performed opera composer after Richard Strauss. Still, after poor receptions of two of his operas, he went into a decline.

"He kind of disappeared after those reviews," Hawkins said. "Little by little he has begun to regain some notoriety, especially in Austria. More orchestras are playing his

music, and last year the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble played his Chamber Symphony.

How did Hawkins come across Schreker's *Der Wind*? "I have a clarinetist acquaintance who lives in Germany. When I first arrived at Oberlin he contacted me and said he would be home — his mother lives in Avon — and asked if he could come and play for me. He brought the music and told me that he had recently heard it in a concert in Germany. He said it was a beautiful piece and he gave me the parts. This was long before anybody here even knew who Schreker was." The clarinetist described the work as a nice, beautiful piece. "I've had it in my back pocket for some time, and when Jeff Scott arrived I thought that I'd really like to play it with him."

American composer Michael Kibbe has written over 240 concert works including fourteen wind quintets. For seventeen years he was oboist with the California-based North Wind Quintet.

"There are a lot of pieces where the clarinet, bassoon, and horn are part of string pieces like the Schubert *Octet* and Beethoven *Septet*, but I've been searching for a piece that Jeff, Drew, and I could do together," Hawkins said. After considering the Bernhard Crusell *Trio* and a couple of modern pieces, he ran across Kibbe's *Trio*, Op. 65.

"I knew the name Kibbe because he's also in the band world, and this is an interesting piece with some really lovely chords. It's quite listenable and short, and it fits nicely into the middle of the program."

The evening will conclude with Ernő Dohnányi's *Sextet in C* for piano, violin, viola, cello, clarinet, and horn. While the first movement hints at the symphonies of Mahler, the third alludes to the classical style of Mendelssohn. And the final movement clearly references jazz — opening with a ragtime theme for the clarinet and piano.

"I never get tired of this piece," Hawkins said. "It's chamber music, but symphonic in scale. It's going to be a lot of fun to play."

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