Yale School of Music
José García-León, Dean

YSM Ensembles

Yale Clarinet Celebration

David Shifrin, director

December 2, 2023 | 4:30 p.m. | Sudler Recital Hall in William L. Harkness Hall

Thomas C. Duffy
b. 1955

Fanfare for Clarinet Choir
World premiere

Thomas C. Duffy, conductor

Johann Sebastian Bach
1685–1750

“Little” Fugue in G minor, BWV 578
Nicole Martin, Thomas Masse, Eli Gilbert, Ben Swinchoski,
David Shifrin, Jonathan López, Diana Yang, Nickolas
Hamblin, Pavel Vinnitsky, Vincent Oneppo, clarinet
Tianyi Shen, Nikki Pet, Amer Hasan, bass clarinet
Thomas C. Duffy, conductor

J. S. Bach

Contrapunctus VII, from The Art of the Fugue, BWV 1080
Nicole Martin, Thomas Masse, Eli Gilbert, Ben Swinchoski,
David Shifrin, Jonathan López, Diana Yang, clarinet
Nickolas Hamblin, Tianyi Shen, basset horn
Pavel Vinnitsky, Amer Hasan, Nikki Pet,
Vincent Oneppo, bass clarinet
Thomas C. Duffy, conductor

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
1756–1791

Adagio in B-flat major, K. 411
Nicole Martin, Jonathan López, clarinet
Nickolas Hamblin, Tianyi Shen, Nikki Pet, basset horn
Kinan Azmeh  
b. 1976

Amer Hasan, clarinet

Anna Vinnitsky  
b. 1983

Secluded Artist
World premiere
Pavel Vinnitsky, clarinet

A. Vinnitsky

Selections from The Klezmer Duets
Bessarabia
Der Rebbe Elimelech
Pavel Vinnitsky, David Shifrin, clarinet

George Gershwin  
1898–1937
arr. Art Marshall

“Summertime” from Porgy and Bess (1934)
Vincent Oneppo, Thomas Masse, David Shifrin, clarinet
Pavel Vinnitsky, bass clarinet

Maurice Ravel  
1875–1937
arr. Vincent Oneppo

Selections from Le Tombeau de Couperin, M. 68
I. Prélude
V. Menuet
IV. Rigaudon
Nickolas Hamblin, E-flat clarinet
David Shifrin, Jonathan López, Nicole Martin, clarinet
Nikki Pet, Tianyi Shen, bass clarinet

Donald Fagen (b. 1948)  
& Walter Becker  
(1950–2017)
arr. Peter Gruenbaum & Vincent Oneppo

Josie (1977)
Vincent Oneppo, Thomas Masse, David Shifrin, clarinet
Pavel Vinnitsky, Nikki Pet, bass clarinet

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.
Artist Roster

Thomas C. Duffy ^
Eli Gilbert '24BS
Nickolas Hamblin '25MM
Amer Hasan '24MM
Jonathan López '24MM
Nicole Martin '25MM
Thomas Masse '91MM '92AD †
Vincent Oneppo '73MM †
Nikki Pet '23MM '29DMA
Tianyi Shen '23MM '24MMA
David Shifrin ^
Ben Swinchoski '25BS
Pavel Vinnitsky '05MM †
Diana Yang '26BA

† YSM Alumni
^ YSM Faculty

Artist Profiles

David Shifrin, director

David Shifrin is the Samuel S. Sanford Professor in the Practice of Clarinet at Yale and artistic director of the Oneppo Chamber Music Society and Yale in New York. He has received both the Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Avery Fisher Prize, Yale’s Cultural Leadership Citation, and three Grammy nominations. An active orchestral soloist, recitalist, and recording artist, Shifrin has been performing with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since 1982, serving as Artistic Director from 1992 to 2004. He held the same position at Chamber Music Northwest from 1981 through 2020 and currently directs the Phoenix Chamber Music Festival.

In 2018 Shifrin was awarded Chamber Music America’s National Service Award and in 2019 he was awarded the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Award for Extraordinary Service to Chamber Music.

Thomas C. Duffy, conductor

Composer and conductor Thomas Duffy’s interests and research range from non-tonal analysis to jazz, from wind-band history to creativity and the brain. He has served as president, publicity chair, and committee chair for major band and music-education associations, created multiple projects combining science and music in collaboration with the Yale School of Medicine and Yale School of Nursing, and conducted ensembles all over the world. At Yale, Duffy directs the undergraduate Yale Concert Band, Marching Band, and Yale Jazz Ensemble, and teaches graduate-level elective classes. Duffy has also served as Associate, Deputy, and acting Dean of the School of Music.

Anna Vinnitsky, composer

Dr. Anna Vinnitsky is a pianist and composer known for her diverse career as a soloist, collaborative artist, educator, and composer, and has gained recognition for her talent and unwavering dedication. Currently, Dr. Vinnitsky is preparing for the premieres of her solo piano and solo clarinet compositions, showcasing her passion for exploring new musical expressions. She has been commissioned by organizations such as the Stamford Symphony Orchestra and the University
of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music to create a captivating clarinet concerto, set to debut in March 2024. Dr. Vinnitsky holds a D.M.A. degree in piano performance from Stony Brook University and a master’s degree from DePaul University.

Vincent Oneppo, clarinet and arranger

A 1973 graduate of YSM, where he studied with Keith Wilson, Vincent Oneppo had a Yale career that spanned five decades, with positions in administration at the School of Music, in human resources, and in graphic design. He performed often as saxophonist with the Yale Philharmonia, and was clarinet soloist in concerts of music from the Benny Goodman Archives presented by the Duke Ellington Fellowship, the Chamber Music Society at Yale, the Yale Band, the Norfolk Festival, and Orchestra New England.

Pavel Vinnitsky, clarinet

Pavel Vinnitsky holds the position of Associate Professor of Clarinet at CCM, University of Cincinnati. He has served as an acting clarinet section member with the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Vinnitsky appeared with the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Orpheus, as well as Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He is featured on Grammy Award–winning recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, and Decca Gold, and can be heard on major motion picture soundtracks. Vinnitsky graduated from Yale in 2005.

Thomas Masse, clarinet

Thomas Gilmore Masse has enjoyed a career as an artist, teacher, and administrator, and has performed throughout the world. For fifteen years, he served in a variety of positions at Yale, including as Deputy Dean of the School of Music and as Associate Provost for the Arts. He is the former Dean of the School of Music and current Professor of Music at Stetson University. He is a graduate of Yale School of Music, where he was a student of David Shifrin and a winner of the Woolsey Hall Competition, and received his D.M.A. at the University of Michigan as a student of Fred Ormand.
Introduction
David Shifrin and Graeme Steele Johnson

Our annual Clarinet Celebration concerts display the dedication, camaraderie, artistry, and virtuosity of generations of Yale clarinetists. Our roster today includes graduate students from the Yale School of Music, Yale College undergraduates, YSM faculty, and YSM alumni from the 1970s through the 2000s.

Our program is designed to explore the range, myriad expressive qualities, and chameleon array of colors of our beloved instrument and celebrate its allure for so many master composers. According to Mozart, the clarinet was the instrument that most closely resembled the human voice. With his miraculous and operatic Clarinet Concerto K. 622 and numerous chamber works, Mozart was the first to display the instrument's lyrical, cantabile potential as well as its agility and range. Our program includes Mozart's little-known jewel for two clarinets and three basset horns (a basset horn is akin to an alto clarinet). Mozart's Adagio K. 411 is an extended aria revealing an ethereal and organ-like sound world.

The uniquely vocal qualities of the clarinet found resonance in a succession of great composers, including Schubert, Beethoven, Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms in the 19th century, and early 20th-century composers Debussy, Ravel, Bartók, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Hindemith, and Copland, to name only a few. Many, many great living composers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries continue to make invaluable contributions to our repertoire.

Nowhere is the presence of multiple clarinets more prominent than in the world of the concert band. We are extremely fortunate to welcome conductor/composer and Yale's Director of Bands, Professor Thomas C. Duffy, to lead the opening of our concert with the premiere of his original Fanfare for Clarinet Choir.

Clarinetists often lament the fact that clarinets were not available during J. S. Bach's lifetime, but the glorious sound of Mozart's Adagio serves as inspiration to adapt some of Bach's music for clarinet ensemble. Hearing the famous “Little” Fugue in G minor and Contrapunctus VII from The Art of the Fugue played by a clarinet choir in this setting is almost like hearing a magnificent pipe organ come to life with human breath!

Musicians outside the classical canon have also embraced the clarinet for its vocal potential. The clarinet is virtually inseparable from the aesthetic identity of Jewish Klezmer music, which uses it as a melodic instrument for its ability to imitate human laughs and sobs. Composer Anna Vinnitsky writes compellingly in this idiom for her husband Pavel Vinnitsky (YSM ’05) and in settings of traditional Klezmer songs for two clarinets. The clarinet also serves as a compelling voice in Arabic music as exemplified by Syrian clarinetist/composer Kinan Azmeh in his touching and heartfelt Prayer, Tribute to Edward Said. The works of these inspired composers offer a testament to the power of music to transcend worldly and political events and concerns.

Clarinetist/arranger Vincent Oneppo is a legend at the Yale School of Music. Since graduating as a clarinet major at YSM in 1973, he has enjoyed a diverse career as performer, bandleader, and visionary administrator. Now that he has retired from his administrative duties at Yale, we are delighted to welcome Vinny as a jazz and classical clarinetist and skilled arranger. Ravel extracted music of the French Baroque composer François Couperin for his Tombeau. The result was unmistakably Ravel, both in the piano and orchestral version. Oneppo's new transcription of three of the best-known movements from Ravel's masterpiece shows both the enduring quality of Ravel's genius and the versatility and variety of sounds a group of clarinets can make! An all-clarinet arrangement of Gershwin's “Summertime” from Porgy and Bess gives Oneppo a chance to display his elegant jazz style and recognize Ravel and Gershwin's great mutual admiration. It's worth noting that Gershwin was a guest at Ravel's 53rd birthday party on March 7, 1928, and entertained Ravel and the other guests with an impromptu performance of Rhapsody in Blue and a selection of songs. Gershwin, who was always looking to learn, asked Ravel to give him composition lessons. Ravel considered the request but decided that “it would probably cause him to write ‘bad Ravel’ and compromise his great gift of melody and spontaneity.”

To close this clarinet celebration, we offer a masterpiece from a different genre: Oneppo's special all-clarinet arrangement of Steely Dan's 1977 hit song “Josie.”
**Program Notes**

*Nnotes by the composers*

Prayer, Tribute to Edward Said  
Kinan Azmeh  
*Composed and premiered in Damascus, Syria, 2003*

I started working on this piece in the summer of 2003 and only completed it in October of that same year just a few days after the passing of the incredibly articulate, outspoken, and courageous Edward Said. This work is an homage to a humanist’s cry for justice in Palestine and is inspired by the incredible legacy he left behind.

Secluded Artist  
Anna Vinnitsky

*Secluded Artist* is a composition for solo clarinet. It invites the listener to reflect on the power of solitude and introspection in the creative process. It celebrates the artist’s ability to find inspiration and meaning in their own company, and serves as a reminder of the profound beauty that can be found within the depths of one’s own mind.

The beginning portrays the artist’s initial inspiration and the excitement that comes with discovering their artistic voice. The music is vibrant and energetic, reflecting the artist’s newfound passion and determination.

The development section delves into the challenges and self-doubt that often accompany the artistic journey. The clarinet’s melodies become more fragmented and dissonant, reflecting the artist’s internal conflicts and moments of frustration.

The ending represents the artist’s reflection on their journey and the growth they have experienced along the way. The music becomes more introspective and contemplative, with moments of nostalgia and introspection. The clarinet’s melodies intertwine with moments of silence, allowing the listener to reflect on their own artistic journey.

*Secluded Artist* is a deeply personal and introspective composition that aims to resonate with both artists and audiences alike. It invites listeners to reflect on their own creative journeys and the transformative power of art.

Klezmer Duets  
Anna Vinnitsky

*The Klezmer Duets*, composed for David Shifrin and Pavel Vinnitsky, is a captivating cycle of six duets for two clarinets. Inspired by traditional Klezmer folk tunes, these compositions were born out of the challenges of the pandemic.

To bring this unique musical experience to life, the first three duets were recorded separately by Pavel and David, allowing them to explore the nuances and intricacies of each composition. The result is a collection of performances that showcase their individual artistry and deep understanding of the Klezmer tradition.

The premiere of the first three duets took place at Yale in December 2022. It marked a significant milestone in this project, showcasing the virtuosity and musicality of both musicians. Today’s performance features the enchanting melodies of “Bessarabia” and “Rabbi Elimelech,” transporting the audience to the vibrant world of Klezmer music.