

The New London Chamber Ensemble (NLCE)

The New London Chamber Ensemble is a wind quintet with a difference. For over a decade the **NLCE** has challenged traditional ideas of chamber music with their innovative programmes combining classic repertoire with semi-staged works incorporating drama, speech and action.

Concert appearances have taken the **NLCE** all over the world. Highlights have included performances in northern Sweden, for Courthouse Music, the Banff Festival in Canada, collaborating with pianist Angela Hewitt at the Trasimeno Festival (Perugia) and Wigmore Hall, the Two Moors Festival performing Walton's *Façade* with Prunella Scales and Timothy West, collaborating with the Dante Quartet at the Swaledale Festival and Wigmore Hall, The Forge in London with pianist Michael Dussek, Saint-Saëns *Carnival of the Animals* at the Leeds International Concert Season, King's Place, with composer/pianist Martin Butler, and premieres at the Cheltenham Festival in 2011 and 2014.

The NLCE is also committed to musical outreach and education. They are 'Ensemble in Residence' to the *National Youth Chamber Orchestra*, and give masterclasses and coaching for music colleges, schools and youth music groups. They have performed with students from the Purcell School of Music, the *National Youth Chamber*

Orchestra, the Royal Academy of Music (Cheltenham Festival, July 2014), Trinity College of Music, and most recently with students at the junior departments of the Royal College and Royal Academy of Music.

Next Concert: The Odora Piano Trio
Saturday 29th January 2021

This concert is sponsored by
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Programme Notes compiled by John Walker and kindly sponsored by Avril Philips



Programme Notes
27th November 2021

The New London Chamber Ensemble

Robert Manasse (Flute) Peter Facer (Oboe) Neyire Ashworth (Clarinet)
Stephen Stirling (Horn) Dominic Tyler (Bassoon)

Darius Milaud (1892-1974)

La Cheminée du Roi René Op.205

La Cheminée du Roi René is one of Milhaud's best known works and is one of the most popular pieces of chamber music in the twentieth-century repertoire for wind quintet. The seven movements of the suite, written for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, have the following titles:

1. *Cortège (procession)*
2. *Aubade (dawnsong)*
3. *Jongleurs (jugglers)*
4. *La mausinglade (sarabande)*
5. *Joutes sur l'Arc (jousting on the River Arc)*
6. *Chasse à Valabre (hunting at Valabre)*
7. *Madrigal nocturne (nocturnal madrigal)*

All the movements are very short, with an alternation between "nonchalant" and very rapid tempi: a collection of medieval miniatures. The shortest movement is less than a minute in length, while the longest is only three minutes long. This gives the impression of a single piece, in just one breath, even more so because the musical atmosphere changes so little between different movements.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Adagio and Allegro in F minor K594

This piece was commissioned by Field Marshall Count Joseph Deym von Stritzetz as his own funeral march, originally to be played on a mechanical organ clock. The Piece has three movements:

I - Adagio: The first movement lasts only two minutes and serves as an introduction. It is composed of a main theme, a bridge and a recapitulation of the main theme. This and the closing adagio are stately elegies, the music is “weeping” with predominantly descending chromatic lines.

II - Allegro: The main movement of the piece, lasts eight minutes. It has a lighter mood, with a faster tempo. Framed by the opening and closing adagios, this middle section depicts the military career of the Field Marshall. The last bars capture the uncertainties of a military career, where Mozart breaks away from an augmented sixth chord and leaves it hanging in the air, unresolved, for almost four full beats.

III - Adagio: The final movement lasts roughly two minutes and returns to the darker mood of the first movement, recapitulating its main theme.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Summer Music Op. 31

Samuel Barber received a commission in 1953 from the Chamber Music Society of Detroit to write a piece of music for string and woodwind instruments. Barber drew from some of his previous work, including the unpublished orchestral piece *Horizon* (1945), as material for *Summer Music*. Originally meant to be a septet for three woodwinds, three strings, and piano, *Summer Music* evolved into a quintet as Barber experimented with some tuning études written by hornist John Barrows for himself and his colleagues in the New York Woodwind Quintet. *Summer Music* showcases each instrument of the wind quintet for which it was composed, namely flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet and horn. The piece is in a single movement, and has been described as ranging from lyrical and lazy to energetic and contrapuntal. This was Barber’s only chamber composition for wind instruments, and has become a staple of the wind-quintet repertory.

*** Interval ***

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Andante für eine Orgelwalze K616 arr. Vester

Mozart did not compose any large original works for organ, but he did write three remarkable pieces for musical clock, a mechanical musical instrument with organ pipes which was extremely popular in his day. These unusual works in this genre are the Fantasias K. 594 and K. 608. With these important compositions we are dealing with true masterpieces of a “solemn” character and densely-worked musical structure – just as if Mozart had a real organ in mind from the very beginning. A completely different, cheerful-playful charm radiates from the third of these compositions, the Andante K. 616. The piece is arranged for wind quintet in this edition, retaining the original musical text as far as possible.

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)

Wind Quintet Op.43

According to his biographer Torben Meyer, Carl Nielsen started composing the wind quintet in the autumn of 1921 after hearing four members of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet rehearsing the Sinfonia Concertante by Mozart with the pianist Christian Christiansen, whom Nielsen was having a telephone conversation with while the winds rehearsed. It was these musicians he specifically had in mind when he wrote the piece.

British composer and biographer Robert Simpson writes, “Nielsen’s fondness of wind instruments is closely related to his love of nature, his fascination for living, breathing things. He was also intensely interested in human character, and in the Wind Quintet composed deliberately for five friends, each part is cunningly made to suit the individuality of each player.”

In a programme note, Nielsen himself provided a descrip-

tion of the work: “The quintet for winds is one of the composer’s latest works, in which he has attempted to render the characters of the various instruments. At one moment they are all talking at once, at another they are quite alone. The work consists of three movements: a) Allegro, b) Minuet and c) Prelude–Theme with Variations. The theme for these variations is the melody for one of Carl Nielsen’s spiritual songs, which has here been made the basis of a set of variations, now merry and quirky, now elegiac and serious, ending with the theme in all its simplicity and very quietly expressed.”

Overall, the piece combines aspects of neo-classicism and modernism.