

# AKROPOLIS REED QUINTET

Wednesday, November 9, 2016 • 8:00 p.m.

Gorell Recital Hall, John Sutton Hall

## Under the Influence

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

**Selections from Suite in E Minor "Le Rappel des Oiseaux" (1724)**

- arr. Raaf Hekkema 12'
- I. Le Rappel des Oiseaux
  - II. Gigue en Rondeau
  - III. La Villageoise
  - IV. Tambourin

Marc Mellits (1966)

**Splinter (2014) 18'**

1. Scarlet Oak
2. Sugar Maple
3. Linden
4. Black Ash
5. Cherry
6. River Birch
7. Weeping Willow
8. Red Pine

*Intermission*

David Biedenbender (1984)

**Refraction (2015) 10'**

1. Death Metal Chicken
2. Kyrie after Machaut and Part
3. Goat Rodeo

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

**An American in Paris (1928)**

arr. Raaf Hekkema 18'

*Program copy for this concert has been provided, unedited, by the artists.*



THE MOST LIVELY  
OF GIFTS

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for Details.

## Program Notes

In its continually evolving “Under the Influence” program, Akropolis directly compares sets of music from different generations. For this installment, they have chosen the music of Jean-Philippe Rameau, Marc Mellits, David Biedenbender, and George Gershwin to comprise a Baroque suite and modern miniature pairing, followed by two works separated by nearly a century, connected by popular sounds of their time. Through these compositional and aesthetic progressions, Akropolis also explores their own influences as a reed quintet, now performing in their 8th season, as they build their ensemble’s repertoire and re-visit their personal and collective inspirations by which they have forged their genre-bending identity.

Rameau composed this E minor suite, nicknamed “Le Rappel des Oiseaux”, both as a concert work and as a method book (“pour la mécanique des doigts”). The movements serve as development of proper ornamentation. They are both architected precisely and sewn through improvisation. In this arrangement, Akropolis draws out each ornament as a unique color, and enables Rameau’s counterpoint to shine. The more rhythmic nature of France’s Baroque style also plays nicely into the hands of five wind players of like-minded instruments, combining the full bodied sound of a Renaissance band with the harpsichord’s poignant articulation. As an ensemble, Akropolis has been increasingly drawn to Baroque music, noticing parallels between it and the more minimalist works of many prominent living composers. Indeed, Western Classical music’s foundations are present in works like Rameau’s, and composers like Marc Mellits constantly refer to these fundamentals.

The 8 movements of *Splinter*, in a manner much different than Rameau’s work, represent an ideal concept of space both vertically and horizontally in music. Mellits describes his music as containing “driving rhythms, soaring lyricism, and colorful orchestrations”, which might seem difficult to capture all at once. In the case of his first work for reed quintet—formed in short miniatures like

most of Mellits’ music--the listener experiences repetitious motives which, through subtle changes, create elongated phrases and broader musical structures. Even among the identical openings of movements 1 and 6 (as well as a few bars of directly transplanted content in movements 5 and 8), the listener gets broader sense of the greater architecture in the work, even as motives continue to drive, repeat, and subtly evolve.

The second set opens with David Biedenbender’s boisterous new work, *Refraction*. “Refraction” refers to the splitting of ideas as well as to the type of assembly the composer uses in this piece. Sounds are almost taped and glued together, and at times they seem to pour out from the central texture of the piece. The composition melds several genres, including death metal and Gregorian chant, but never fully boxes them in. “Death Metal Chicken” is inspired by a popular YouTube video of a howling rooster with death metal music being played in the background. The “Kyrie” shimmers with ancient qualities. The final movement, “Goat Rodeo”, refers directly to a chaotic situation that might come to a resolution, but not willingly so. Biedenbender not only re-purposes various genres and combines them with brilliant colorations; he creates a fully-formed, new object which could never be as brilliant without the tatters and shreds which seem to be falling from it.

In conclusion, Akropolis presents a work inspired not only by the popular music of the early 20th century, but marked by a special moment in music composition in which the concept of “acceptable” art music was beginning to rapidly evolve. In *An American in Paris*, Gershwin aimed to create one of his more serious works despite his natural affinity for frivolity. He consulted Ravel about this conundrum, who wisely instructed that if Gershwin was making more money than Ravel (which he was), he shouldn’t change how he writes his music. He sought advice from Nadia Boulanger, the great teacher of Aaron Copland and others. She also wisely suggested to Gershwin try to be no one but Gershwin. And so, using complex motiv-



ic development which is constantly modulating and changing form, Gershwin manages to create his most accessible, but simultaneously most complex piece of music. Among the challenges Dutch saxophonist Raaf Hekkema faced in arranging the work were how to convey these ideas with only 5 instruments. The listener might find Gershwin's ideas even easier to deduce in the chamber music format, and Hekkema brilliantly manages to maintain Gershwin's lush orchestrations by having all 5 members performing for nearly all of the arrangement. The continually repeating and evolving motives make for a challenging but thrilling performance which Akropolis is delighted to bring to the stage.

**AKROPOLIS REED QUINTET**

Hailed for their “imagination, infallible musicality, and huge vitality” (*Fanfare Magazine*), the Akropolis Reed Quintet takes listeners on extraordinary musical adventures. Founded in 2009 at the University of Mich-

igan, Akropolis has won six national chamber music prizes since 2011, including the 2014 Fischhoff Gold Medal. Deeply committed to nurturing music appreciation among young audiences, Akropolis is also winner of the 2015 Fischhoff Educator Award. Akropolis is an alumnus of APAP's prestigious Young Performer's Career Advancement Program (YPCA) and also received a 2016 Chamber Music America Residency Partnership Grant for a “Corporate to Corner” tour in January, 2017, injecting chamber music into Detroit's workplaces and encouraging its workforce to experience Detroit's greater cultural revival.

Akropolis' impressive list of series and festival appearances include 16/17 stops at Caramoor, Chamber Music Northwest, and the Chautauqua Music Festival. Akropolis has been selected as a juried showcase participant at APAP, Chamber Music America, Performing Arts Exchange, and the Mid-Atlantic

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Performing Arts Market. With three studio releases (including a Fall 2016 release, *The Space Between Us*), Akropolis has recorded 17 original reed quintet works, and by the end of the 16/17 season will have performed, recorded, or published the work of 21 American composers.

Prolific collaborators, Akropolis premiered the first work for reed quintet and string quartet by David Schiff with the Dover Quartet in 2015, and has performed with artists like the Miró Quartet and renowned clarinetist David Shifrin. In 2015 Akropolis gave an interactive, fully choreographed performance of *Four-Letter-Word* with BodyVox Dance in Portland, OR, and has constructed multi-disciplinary performances with university dance students, theater students, and even HarperCollins published author and scientist, Vic Strecher. During its 16/17 season Akropolis will perform with youth wind ensembles in Abu Dhabi.

A self-identified entrepreneurial enterprise, Akropolis recognizes the need for rising artists to carve out space for their careers in today's marketplace. Establishing Akropolis WORKS in January 2016, Akropolis taught a 7-week mini-course at the University of Michigan, and has delivered WORKS lectures to college-level musicians around the United States on marketing, financial planning, brand identity, and more. Equally committed to students K-12, Akropolis toured Illinois and Indiana on the Fischhoff Educators Tour in 2015, collaborating with local school reading programs to musically re-enact a children's book – "The Best Story" by Eileen Spinelli. In 2013 Akropolis conducted its Fall Education Tour, funded by over \$5,000 raised by a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign. The tour visited 10 schools in Michigan serving underprivileged youth or underfunded arts programs.

Deeply invested in establishing the reed quintet as a cornerstone chamber music ensemble, Akropolis has commissioned more than 25 works from composers in 7 countries. Akropolis produces a YouTube Web

Premiere Series, showcasing new works, arrangements, and composer interviews for a live Internet audience. In 2012 Akropolis created Akropolis Collection and has now sold nearly 100 original and arranged sheet music works to more than 30 new and established reed quintets. Akropolis is also an annual judge for the Calefax Composers Competition, reviewing 40+ new reed quintet works and committing performances and recordings to their winning selections.

Placing emphasis on audience development for new and traditional classical music and the arts on the whole, Akropolis regularly appears in unconventional settings, including 7 pop-up concerts in 3 days in Marquette, MI in March, 2015. Akropolis has reached general education students at universities nation-wide through campus-wide performances and jam sessions. Akropolis will even perform in office spaces in Detroit as part of its Chamber Music America Residency Partnership. In May, 2016 Akropolis conducted a live recording session featuring audience participation for John Steinmetz's *Sorrow and Celebration for reed quintet and audience*, which Akropolis commissioned in 2014, and will include the audience on its 3rd album, *The Space Between Us*, which explores the spaces between musicians, audiences, and all our worlds.

Akropolis delivers passionate, energized, and unforgettable performances on a variety of series both traditional and adventurous in nature. All Akropolis events include informative musical introductions and a chance to greet the artists. Originating at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Akropolis remains Tim Gocklin (oboe), Kari Dion (clarinet), Matt Landry (saxophone), Andrew Koepp (bass clarinet), and Ryan Reynolds (bassoon). Akropolis is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission is to make a difference in the classical music landscape "through engaging performances, new music advocacy, and enriching educational experiences."

## Upcoming Events

- Nov. 11, 8:00 p.m.; Concert: Opera/  
Music Theater Workshop  
Performance; Gorell Recital Hall,  
Second Floor Sutton Hall\*
- Nov. 12, 6:00 p.m.; Opening Reception:  
Holiday Wheels and Thrills: A  
Model Train Display; University  
Museum, Sutton Hall\*
- Nov. 12-Dec. 10; Exhibit: Holiday  
Wheels and Thrills: A Model Train  
Display; University Museum,  
Sutton Hall\*
- Nov. 13, 2:00 p.m.; Concert: IUP Bands  
in Review; Fisher Auditorium, IUP  
Performing Arts Center\*
- Nov. 17, 5:00 p.m.; Artist Talk: /kyoob/;  
Sprowls Hall, Rm 118A\*
- Dec. 1, 7:00 p.m.; Recital: Trombone  
Studio Recital; DiCicco Hall,  
Cogswell Hall, Room 121\*
- Dec. 2-4, 7:00 p.m.; Music Theater/  
TBTG: *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat);  
Fisher Auditorium, IUP Performing  
Arts Center
- Dec. 4, 8:00 p.m.; Concert: Concert: IUP  
Clarinet Choir; Gorell Recital Hall,  
Second Floor Sutton Hall\*
- Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m.; Concert: Concert: IUP  
Horn Choir; DiCicco Hall, Cogswell  
Hall, Room 121\*
- Dec. 6, 8:00 p.m.; Concert: IUP  
Symphony Orchestra, Fall; Gorell  
Recital Hall, Second Floor Sutton  
Hall
- Dec. 7, 8:00 p.m.; Concert: IUP Jazz  
Band and Vocal Ensembles; DiCicco  
Hall, Cogswell Hall, Room 121\*
- Dec. 9, 8:00 p.m.; Ovations!: Diane  
Schuur; Fisher Auditorium, IUP  
Performing Arts Center
- Dec. 10, 10:30 a.m.; Concert: IUP String  
Project Student Recital; Gorell  
Recital Hall, Second Floor Sutton  
Hall\*

- Dec. 10, 8:00 p.m.; Concert: IUP  
Bands Holiday Concert; Fisher  
Auditorium, IUP Performing Arts  
Center
- Dec. 11, 3:00 p.m.; Concert: IUP Choirs  
Holiday Concert; Gorell Recital Hall,  
Second Floor Sutton Hall
- Dec. 11, 6:00 p.m.; Concert: Indiana  
Community Choir Concert; DiCicco  
Hall, Cogswell Hall, Room 121
- Dec. 14, 7:00 p.m.; Concert: PA Merry  
Tuba Christmas; Indiana Mall,  
Indiana\*
- Feb. 4, 6:00 p.m.; Opening Reception:  
Frank Mason: A Passion for  
Painting; University Museum,  
Sutton Hall\*
- Feb. 4-Mar. 11; Exhibit: Frank Mason:  
A Passion for Painting; University  
Museum, Sutton Hall\*
- Feb. 9, 5:00 p.m.; Artist Talk: Here Is  
for Dreaming: Vanessa German;  
Sprowls Hall, Rm 118A\*
- Feb. 9-Mar. 9; Exhibit: Here Is for  
Dreaming: Vanessa German; Kipp  
Gallery, Sprowls Hall\*
- Feb. 14, 8:00 p.m.; Ovations!: Taj  
Express: The Bollywood Musical  
Revue; Fisher Auditorium, IUP  
Performing Arts Center
- Feb. 17, 8:00 p.m.; Concert: Concert:  
Intensity; DiCicco Hall, Cogswell  
Hall, Room 121\*
- Feb. 21-26, 8:00 p.m.; Theater-by-the-  
Grove: The Electriad; Waller Hall  
Mainstage, IUP Performing Arts  
Center
- Feb. 21, 8:00 p.m.; Ovations!: The  
Harlem Quartet; Gorell Recital Hall,  
Second Floor Sutton Hall
- Feb. 24-Mar. 22; Exhibit: High School  
Art Invitational; Annex Gallery,  
Sprowls Hall\*

*Subject to change*

*\*Free admission*


**On the Cover:** *Daloy Dance Company, Manilla.*

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## OVATIONS!

DIANE SCHUUR • Jazz Legend   
Friday, December 9; 8:00 p.m.

TAJ EXPRESS • The Bollywood Musical Revue   
Tuesday, February 14; 8:00 p.m.

HARLEM QUARTET • String Quartet  
Tuesday, February 21; 8:00 p.m.

CALADH NUA • From Ireland   
Sunday, March 5; 7:00 p.m.

42ND STREET • From Broadway  
Thursday, March 30; 8:00 p.m.

SHANA TUCKER • Chamber Soul  
Thursday, April 13; 8:00 p.m.

HMS PINAFORE • NY Gilbert & Sullivan   
Wednesday, May 3; 8:00 p.m.

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