

CLARINET CLASSICS AT RIVERSDALE



ROBERT DiLUTIS
clarinet

MELLIFERA QUARTET



DE 3561



CLARINET CLASSICS AT RIVERSDALE

ROBERT DiLUTIS, clarinet
MELLIFERA QUARTET



WEBER: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 34

ROZSA: Sonatina for Clarinet, Op. 27

GLAZUNOV: Reverie for Clarinet and String Quartet, Op. 24

KOCH: Monolog 3 for Solo Clarinet

BAERMANN: Adagio for Clarinet and Strings

OSBORNE: Rhapsody for Clarinet

Total Playing Time: 60:22

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CARL MARIA VON WEBER: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B-flat Major, Op. 34 (28:32)

1. Allegro (10:58)
2. Fantasia (5:41)
3. Menuetto, capriccio presto (5:36)
4. Rondo, allegro giocoso (6:17)

MIKLÓS RÓZSA: Sonatina for Clarinet, Op. 27 (9:49)

5. Tema con variazioni (6:24)
6. Vivo e giocoso (3:25)

7. **ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV:** Rêverie orientale (6:44)

ERLAND VON KOCH: Monolog 3 for Solo Clarinet (5:49)

8. Andante sostenuto (2:46)
9. Allegro molto vivace (3:03)

10. **HEINRICH JOSEPH BAERMANN:** Adagio for Clarinet and Strings (5:01)

11. **WILLSON OSBORNE:** Rhapsody for Clarinet (4:27)

Total playing time: 60:22

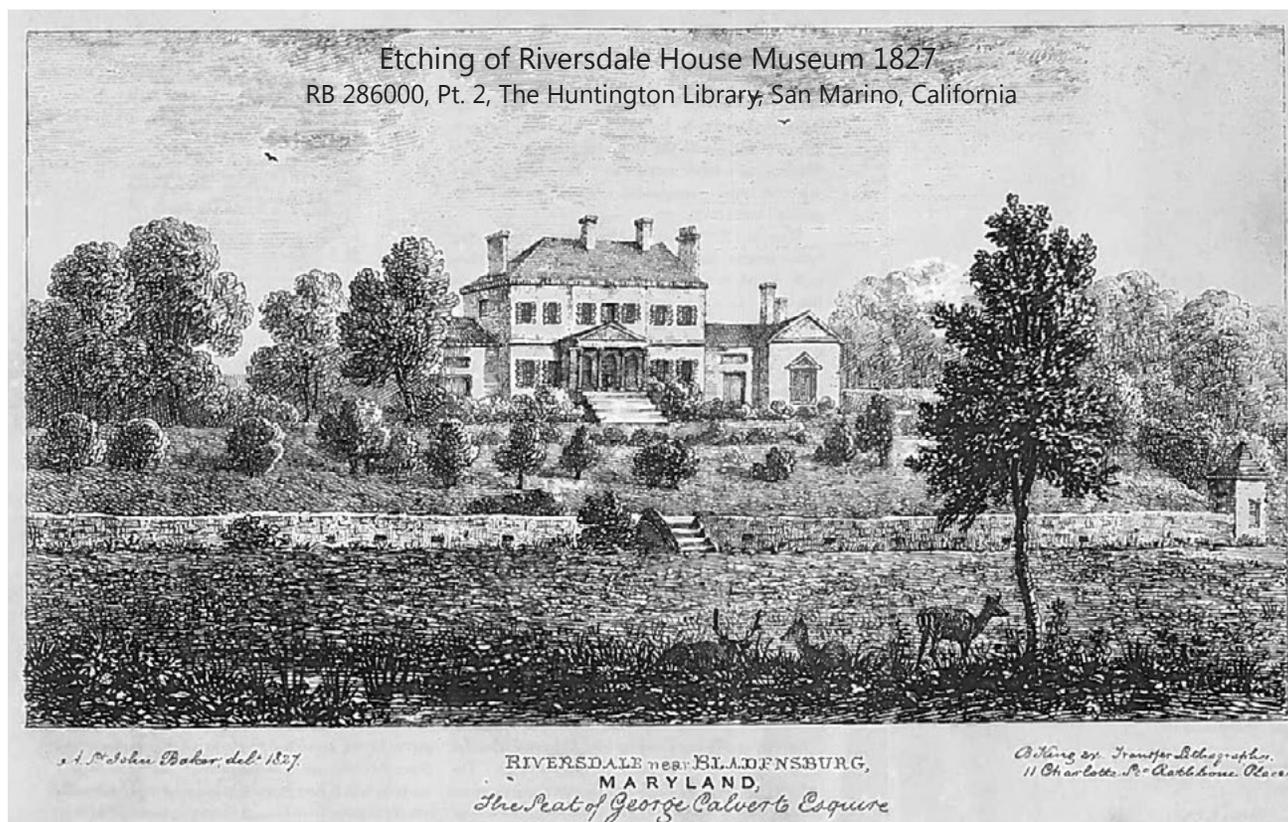
Robert DiLutis, clarinet

Mellifera Quartet: Catherine Gerhiser and Christina Wensel, violins;
Nicholas Hodges, viola; Benjamin Wensel, cello

Preface

When I first moved to Riverdale, Maryland, in 2012, I was immediately enchanted by the beauty of the Riversdale House Museum. This wonderful house, built in 1806, seemed like the perfect location for a concert series. Within days I approached the director of the mansion about creating a performance series and I was delighted to find that there was interest.

Fast forward six years: In 2018 the Riversdale Chamber Music Society celebrated its sixth season at the mansion and we are now releasing this recording, our first-ever produced in this historic space. We have presented many remarkable concerts featuring military band and orchestra members, University of Maryland School of Music students and local musicians. This recording features the Mellifera String Quartet, an extremely flexible, dynamic and highly skilled group that has



performed throughout the United States. It was a joy to work with them as we prepared for this recording. Many of the works have been performed at the mansion during our concert series, and I hope you will enjoy this small sampling of some of the great music performed there.

About the Mansion

Home to the Riversdale Chamber Music Society, the Riversdale House Museum, a gracious Federal-era mansion, was built in the early nineteenth century. It was home to Rosalie Stier, an immigrant from Antwerp, and her husband, George Calvert, a descendant of Maryland's founding family. Mrs. Calvert wrote to her brother that her busy life as the mistress of a large estate left her with little time to play music, but, she added, "music makes me more sociable."

According to Riversdale History and Museum Specialist Ann Wass, PhD, one of the Calverts' sons founded the Maryland Agricultural College on part of the estate. This institution evolved into the University of Maryland, College Park. The Riversdale House Museum continues to value its ties to music and to the university, and is the proud host of the Riversdale Chamber Music Society.

Notes on the Program

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826):
Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B-flat Major, Op. 34, J. 182 (1811–1815)

My first encounter with the Weber Quintet took place when I was twelve years old and studying clarinet with William Blayney in Baltimore. During one of my many two or three hour lessons (yes, Mr. Blayney gave long lessons), I received a cassette of some of his favorite recordings to help me develop a better concept of clarinet sound. What he didn't realize was that side two of that cassette contained his own recording of the Weber Quintet. At my next lesson I asked him about this work and he said he had forgotten about the recording, which was made when he was a student at the Peabody Conservatory. After my first hearing, my father John DiLutis (a musician with the 229th Army Band at that time) took me to a local music store to find the sheet music. What I found, however, was not the quintet but Gustave Langenus' arrangement of the adagio and rondo movements with piano, called "Fantasia and Rondo." Two years later I was able to learn and study the piece with Mr. Blayney, implanting a love for this work that continues to this day.

The quintet, in four movements, is for clarinetists a dream come true. The writ-

ing flows beautifully between registers and showcases the instrument's versatility. From the soaring altissimo scales to the sustained beauty of the chalumeau registers, Weber clearly understood the clarinet. He wrote the quintet for his friend Heinrich Joseph Baermann, the great German clarinetist, whose *Adagio for Clarinet and Strings* is also featured on this recording. In 1811 Baermann and Weber toured through Austria and Germany. Baermann's eloquent performances helped establish Weber's reputation as a composer, and Baermann's influence is heard in Weber's brilliant writing for the clarinet.

Miklós Rózsa (1907-1995):
Sonatina, Op. 27 (1951)

If you love film scores, then you will love the music of the exceptional Hungarian-American composer Miklós Rózsa. One of the most prolific film composers of the twentieth century, Rózsa wrote more than one hundred film scores and dozens of other works. The Sonatina for Clarinet, written in 1951 when he was 44, was his first unaccompanied work for a solo instrument and is one of two works he wrote for clarinet alone, composed more than thirty-five years apart. The Sonatina, unlike the longer Sonata, is a two-movement work consisting of a theme and variations in the first movement and a brisk allegro second

movement. The work clearly demonstrates Rózsa's love of Hungarian music and the influence it had on all of his writing. Rózsa's travels as a youth through the countryside of Hungary are evident: He uses traditional harmonies and folk-like melodies to create a haunting opening theme. Toward the end of the first movement you can clearly hear the influence of rhapsodic folk music. The final page of the variations ebb and flow like a Romani violinist, and the virtuoso passages challenge every clarinetist. The second movement is a raucous Gypsy dance with odd meters and intense drive. Rózsa's exploration of rhythmic pulse and harmonic movement are evident as he modulates from key to key and ends in a fiery finish.

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936):
Rêverie orientale (1886)

Rêverie orientale, by the famous Russian composer Alexander Glazunov, reflects the mysterious and sometimes misunderstood cultures of Asia. Written during a time when many European composers and artists were trying to depict the music and art of the cultures of the Middle East and South and East Asia, this work exemplifies a style that came to be known as "Orientalism." This musical style was loosely based on second-hand accounts of Asian music and the study of other Eu-

ropean artists' interpretations. Glazunov achieves a beautiful and reflective mood in this single-movement work, and the feeling of melancholy could possibly be attributed to his reflection on the historical conflicts and suffering that took place during the various wars between Russia and other countries in Asia. When Glazunov wrote the piece at age 21, he had never traveled to the Far East, yet he is able to bring a fresh understanding to this musical style.

Erland von Koch (1910-2009): Monolog 3

Swedish composer Erland von Koch wrote six symphonies, an opera, concertos, ballets, songs and chamber music. His Monolog No. 3 for solo clarinet is one of my favorite unaccompanied works and is one of eighteen Monologs von Koch wrote for various instruments. Its opening melody, a mysterious and haunting theme, showcases von Koch's love of Swedish melodies. It then slowly and methodically transforms into a tirade of emotion. The work quickly and seamlessly returns to its somber opening. This movement fades into nothingness and could only be followed by something more lively. The second movement is a fast-paced journey with moments of soaring melodies and racing gestures.

Heinrich Joseph Baermann (1784-1847): Adagio for Clarinet and Strings from the Quintet No. 3, Op. 23 (1821)

I first found this work at a local music store under the title "Wagner's Adagio." To my surprise, I later learned the work was actually composed by the aforementioned Heinrich Joseph Baermann. The Adagio was finally correctly attributed to Baermann in the 1970s, when it was discovered that it came from his Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in E-Flat Major, Op. 23. The Adagio is full of extremely emotional phrases and sensitive character and endures on its own as a one-movement piece.

Willson Osborne (1906-1979): Rhapsody (1952)

I was first introduced to this short work by American composer Willson Osborne when I was in high school. The practical approach of finding a piece to play alone, without the burden of needing a pianist, brought me to the Rhapsody, Osborne's best-known work. The piece is highly demanding because of the composer's detailed musical instructions: Every bar but two has some form of musical guidance. Like Rózsa's Sonatina and Glazunov's Rêverie orientale, one can hear an Asian influence. The one-movement work is

rooted in an ancient Asian method of expanding a short melodic fragment; and by this method Osborne is able to grow the work over several minutes. Although the work was originally for bassoon, Osborne intended it to be played on either clarinet or bassoon. With its free and rhapsodic feel, the work has become a staple in the bassoon repertoire as well as among clarinetists.

— Robert DiLutis

Robert DiLutis is currently Associate Professor of Clarinet at the University of Maryland School of Music in College Park, MD, and Principal Clarinetist of the Annapolis Symphony. Previously, Mr. DiLutis was on faculties of the Louisiana State University and the Eastman School of Music, and was Assistant Principal and E-flat Clarinet with the Rochester Philharmonic and San Antonio Symphony. Making his Carnegie Recital Hall debut in 1989, Mr. DiLutis has also performed as featured soloist with the Baton Rouge Symphony and Rochester Philharmonic. In 2008 Mr. DiLutis toured with the New York Philharmonic on its historic trip to Pyongyang, North Korea. He is a graduate of the Juilliard School, where he studied with David Weber. In addition to his performing career, Mr. DiLutis is the creator of the Reed Machine, a reed-making device used by



professionals around the world. Mr. DiLutis is an Artist for Buffet Crampon. For more information about Robert DiLutis and the reed machine, see robertdilutis.com; thereedmachine.com; and www.music.umd.edu.

Mellifera Quartet: Catherine Gerhiser and Christina Wensel, violin, Nicholas Hodges, viola, Benjamin Wensel, cello

While the four members of the Mellifera Quartet have been collaborating in a variety of musical formations for years, this recording was made during their debut season and the beginning of a new era of shared artistic endeavors. Mellifera (Mel-IF-air-ah), from the Latin word meaning honey-bearing, signifies the aural aspirations of the group.

By crafting programs that span the musical spectrum, Mellifera brings newly composed works to their audiences alongside well-traveled classics. The MQ can be heard performing works written by Mellifera violist Nicholas Hodges on the score for the film *Hunting Lands* (APS Films, 2018).

For more information please see www.melliferaquartet.com.

Violinist **Catherine Gerhiser**, a native of Savannah, Georgia, received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Juilliard School, studying with Masao Kawasaki. Prior to her time at Juilliard, she attended the Cleveland Institute of Music Young Artist Program, studying with Linda Cerone. Her many inspiring coaches and teachers include Michael Tilson Thomas, Joseph Kalichstein, Joel Smirnoff, Bonnie Hampton, and John Mack, among others. Gerhiser has performed with the Tanglewood Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, National Repertory Orchestra, and Spoleto Festival Orchestra. She has appeared as soloist with the Savannah Symphony, the Hilton Head Philharmonia, the National Repertory Orchestra, The New World Symphony, and the U. S. Army Orchestra. Prior to joining the U. S. Army Strings, Catherine spent four years in Miami, playing with the New World Symphony.

Violinist **Christina Wensel** began instruction in music in her hometown of Evanston, Illinois. Early on she discovered an intense love of chamber music. Christina performed with the Midwest Young Artists (MYA) Quartet, which won first prize at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. At 15, she joined the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. After winning the

Walgreens National Concerto Competition, she was a featured soloist with the MYA Orchestra. She received her Bachelor of Music Degree at Oberlin Conservatory and went on to receive her Master's degree from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Ronald Copes. Christina has performed at many festivals and has been a featured soloist with The Dayton Philharmonic, U. S. Army Strings and the Galesburg Symphony. She is also an active fiddler and studio musician.

Violist **Nicholas Hodges** currently performs with the U. S. Army Strings and the U. S. Army String Quartet in Washington, D. C. His degrees are from the Eastman School of Music (BM, Performance and Education), Pennsylvania State University (MM, Performance and Conducting), and the University of Maryland (DMA, Performance). In June 2016 Nicholas was a soloist at the American Viola Society Festival at Oberlin College as part of their "Rising Stars" series. He has served on the faculty at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, and the Levine School of Music. His compositions are featured in the film *Hunting Lands*, produced by APS Films and released in fall 2018. Nicholas has studied viola with Katherine Murdock, Karin Brown, and Daniel Foster. He studied violin with Timothy Ying, James Lyon, Da-

vid Salness, James Stern, John Eaken, and Odin Rathnam.

Cellist **Benjamin Wensel** earned degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Eastman School of Music. While at Eastman, Ben served as assistant to renowned pedagogue Alan Harris. He has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, and the Syracuse Symphony, and has been a member of The U. S. Army Orchestra, Strolling Strings, and String Quartet since 2003. As a member of the Tarab Cello Ensemble, Ben performed the world premieres of more than twenty works written by established and emerging American composers. He also participated in the ensemble's residencies at Princeton University, Stetson University, and the University of South Florida. Fortunate to have many avenues to pursue chamber music in the artistically rich National Capital area, Ben performs with the LeDroit Chamber Players and is the cellist of the Piano Trio-in-Residence of the National Gallery of Art.

Robert DiLutis editing the recordings during one of many session breaks



On-site recording in the beautifully restored carriage house of the Riversdale mansion



Catherine Gerhiser perfecting some last minute changes



Audio Engineer Christian Amonson



Recorded at Riversdale House Museum, December 11-13, 2017

Audio Engineer: Christian Amonson, *Arts Laureate, Washington, D.C.*

Producer: Robert DiLutis

Photographer: Pat Doyen

Booklet editing: David Brin

Booklet layout and design: Lonnie Kunkel

Instruments—Clarinet: Buffet Crampon; Clarinet Equipment: Buffet Crampon Festival;
Selmer Concept Mouthpiece; Rovner Platinum Ligature; Robert DiLutis Clarinet Reeds;
viola: Vincenzo Sannino, Naples, ca. 1890; cello: Vincenzo Postiglione, Naples, 1885.

Cover photo: Riversdale House Museum; photo by the Maryland-National Capital Park
and Planning Commission.

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Fall day outside the Riversdale House Museum, Riverdale, Maryland

Left to Right, Catherine Gerhiser, Benjamin Wensel,
Robert DiLutis, Nicholas Hodges, Christina Wensel

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