# Chamber Music Amici

**Creating Community Through Great Music 2020/21**

# *Fairy Tales*

*Amici*

Eunhye Grace Choi ***piano***
Jessica Lambert ***viola***
Lillie Manis ***violin***
Steven Pologe ***cello***

*Guest*

Wonkak Kim ***clarinet***

**Online starting Dec. 14, 2020**

***Purple Cello,* by Irene Maguire**

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## Pre-Concert Talk

Wonkak Kim

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# Welcome!

Despite so many uncertainties surrounding us at the moment, we are truly grateful to be able to present our final concert of 2020 in this high-caliber virtual platform. The Amici musicians and guest clarinetist Wonkak Kim spent many hours in my well-ventilated garage, safely immersing ourselves with these jewels of chamber music repertoire. It gave us great joy when quite a few onlookers became spontaneous and regular audience members of our rehearsals while casually passing by our driveway. Now, I hope you can enjoy our virtual concert in full, performed more passionately than ever in our home venue, Wildish Community Theater, in the comfort of your very own homes!

Grace Choi Eunhye Grace Choi, Artistic Director

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## Program

**Suite, Op. 157b for violin, clarinet & piano** — **Darius Milhaud**

I. *Ouverture*
II. *Divertissement*
III. *Jeu*
IV. *Introduction et Final*

*Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Wonkak Kim, clarinet; Lillie Manis, violin*

**Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 11 for piano, clarinet & cello** — **Ludwig van Beethoven**

I. *Allegro con brio*
II. *Adagio*
III. *Tema: Pria ch'io l'impegno. Allegretto [variations]*

*Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Wonkak Kim, clarinet; Steven Pologe, cello*

**Running Blue for clarinet, violin, & piano** — **Victor Steinhardt**

*Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Wonkak Kim, clarinet; Lillie Manis, violin*

**Fairy Tales, Op. 132 for viola, clarinet & piano** — **Robert Schumann**

I. *Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell*
II. *Lebhaft und sehr markirt*
III. *Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck*
IV. *Lebhaft, sehr markirt*

*Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Wonkak Kim, clarinet; Jessica Lambert, viola*

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for over 11 seasons; we look forward to serving your desserts in seasons ahead.

## Program Notes

**Darius Milhaud** French composer Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) was born in Marseilles and raised in Aix-en-Provence in a former inn that had been converted into an almond factory and residence. His earliest musical influences were from his amateur-pianist father, contralto mother, and the songs that the workers sang while sorting the nuts on the ground floor of his family home. He began studying the piano with his father and by age seven he started violin lessons with Léo Bruguier. In 1905 Milhaud began taking harmony lessons with a local teacher and read the compositional treatises of Dubois and Reber in addition to studying the scores to Debussy's *String Quartet* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He studied harmony with Xavier Leroux and composition, counterpoint, and orchestration with André Gédalge at the Paris Conservatoire from 1909-1915. When his friend Paul Claudel, the newly-appointed minister of Brazil, asked Milhaud to join his staff as attaché in charge of propaganda, he jumped at the chance. He spent nearly two years in the country tending to his duties but also organizing concerts for the Red Cross and, perhaps most importantly, absorbing the sounds of the Amazon and the popular music of the day. Sometime after returning to France he was included by the author Henri Collet as a member of Les Six, which was a group of composers working in and around Montparnasse at the time. It is perhaps his greatest claim to fame but it had absolutely no impact on his actual writing. Although he was friends with the other members of this group, they were not actively trying to be a part of a shared movement.

Milhaud's output was staggering: 12 symphonies, 16 operas, 17 ballets, 18 string quartets, 21 concerti, and 28 film scores, among many other works. There was hardly a genre that he didn't attempt and excel at. His *Suite Op. 157b for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano* is a reworking of pieces from his incidental music for Jean Anouilh's play *Voyageur Sans Bagages* (Traveler Without Baggage) from 1936. The first movement ("Ouverture") bursts onto the scene with striking fortissimo octaves and an underlying, almost frantic, 3-3-2 síncopa rhythmic grouping—a common feature of South American popular music. The second movement ("Divertissement") begins with a melancholic call-and-response between the violin and clarinet and the mood persists throughout this short movement as the piano joins in adding intriguing contrapuntal interplay, which confirm the polytonal hints that came before. The third movement ("Jeu"), scored for just violin and clarinet, is a miniature, but no less joyful folk dance in the form of a scherzo and trio. The work's conclusion ("Introduction et Final"), is as lengthy as the three previous movements combined and begins with writing that speaks of anguish and longing. Whether it's farcical or not, I'll leave to you. But either way, less than two minutes later this somber tone is replaced by a lilting 6/8 dance that is usually congenial, occasionally enjoys a darker turn to a minor mode, and even hints at American Jazz and Brazilian Choros here and there. So much of what we associate with Milhaud's style (Neo-Classical forms and harmonies, polytonality, forays into the popular music idioms of the Americas) are on display in this little gem.

**Robert Schumann** (1810-1856) was born in Zwickau, Germany (*before the establishment of Germany in 1871*), as the youngest child of Johanna Christiana Schumann (née Schnabel) and August Schumann. His father was an author of romance novels, a translator of Scott and Byron, and a successful book dealer. Consequently, young Robert was surrounded by an impressive home library. These sources had a profound effect on his compositional output and his exploratory efforts into what we now refer to as music criticism. It is not an overstatement to say that he was the western world's first, legitimate reviewer of high art music.

He began piano lessons at age seven and started composing shortly thereafter. His teacher in Leipzig, Friedrich Wieck, was sure that he could turn Robert into Europe's finest pianist but a hand injury curtailed his performing career before it really began. While living and studying in the Wieck household, Robert met his future wife Clara. Friedrich strenuously objected to the union, but when Clara became old enough to defy her father, the two married. She spent the rest of her life being the champion of her husband's music.

"Fairy Tales" was one of Schumann's last works, written in a single day in 1853. It is one of a long line of chamber pieces that he composed in the *phantasiestücke* (fantasy pieces) category. Others include "Scenes from Childhood," "Forest Scenes," "*Carnival Prank from Vienna,"* and, most closely related to today's work, "Fairy Pictures." Using the fairly unusual combination of viola, clarinet, and piano, Schumann attempts to paint a musical picture of a fantasy world that is not tied to any specific storyline. While not providing a literal story to guide the music, Schumann did at least give some program notes of his own:

> In the sequence of expressive characters and in the formal design of the pieces, the structure of the "Fairy Tales" discloses a vague resemblance to the succession of movements in a sonata-form cycle: the first piece contains a 'development-like' middle section, the second piece takes the place of a Scherzo with its clearly articulated three-section da capo form. No. 3, perhaps formally the most unusual, functions as a slow movement. The last piece, like the second, belongs to the category of the da capo piece, but bears traits reminiscent of a Rondo in its outer sections.

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) Compromised as the festivities may be given the COVID-19 pandemic, the western world is still attempting to celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday this calendar year. Let's hope that the fact that he was baptized on December 17, 1770 (and most likely born the day before) will allow for us to push through the observances well into 2021.

Despite the early opus number, Beethoven's *Trio for Piano, Clarinet, and Cello in B-flat Major, Op. 11* was not his first foray into the realm of chamber music. In addition to his ground-breaking piano quartets *WoO 36*, he also composed three piano trios, a short octet for winds, and the *Rondino, Op. 44* while still in Bonn. After he moved to Vienna in November 1792, he polished off what became his *Op. 1 Piano Trios* in addition to finishing some miscellaneous works and ensemble sonatas that he had brought with him.

Beethoven's *Op. 11 Trio,* published in October 1798, had been inspired by the Austrian clarinetist Franz Josef Bähr. Utilizing the clarinet as a featured chamber music instrument was still a relatively new phenomenon. Mozart's *"Kegelstatt" Trio,* published in 1788, and *Quintet* premiered in 1789, had opened the door. Beethoven seems to have been strongly influenced by the convivial nature of the *Kegelstatt* and its three-movement form. As is the case with most early Beethoven works, one could easily mistake the opening (Allegro con brio) movement's boisterous runs, playful call-and-response relationships, and bouncing bass parts for Haydn or Mozart. Only in the brooding (and sometimes thunderous) development section do we get our first glimpses of the master-to-be. The second movement (Adagio) is in beautiful contrast. Its aria-like melodies are first introduced by the cello before being shared with the rest of the ensemble. The final movement (Allegretto) is a theme-and-variations form set to "Pria ch'io l'impegno" (Before beginning this awesome task, I need a snack), a tune which was very popular in Vienna at the time. It was taken from Joseph Weigl's opera *L'Amor Marinaro*. Beethoven was unaware of this fact until sometime later and was upset to learn of the connection. It appears that he despised the way that Weigl's compositions pandered to the public-at-large when he clearly had the pedigree—F.J. Haydn was his godfather, Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and Antonio Salieri were his teachers—to write more serious music. Beethoven threatened to remove the movement and replace it with something else more suitable, but he never followed through.

**Victor Steinhardt** (b. 1943), one of the founding members of Chamber Music Amici, was Amici's pianist until his retirement after the 2017-2018 season. Victor comes from Los Angeles, California, where he studied with Aube Tzerko. He made his debut as piano soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at age 15. He studied composition with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Henri Lazarof and earned an M.A. in Composition at UCLA, which led to the creation of many works for chamber ensembles and for piano. From 1968 to 2007 he was a professor of piano at the University of Oregon. He has performed often as a soloist with the Oregon Mozart Players and the Eugene Symphony. He has also been a featured artist at the Oregon Bach Festival, the Oregon Coast Music Festival, the Ernst Bloch Music Festival, the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming, the Mohawk Trails Concerts in Massachusetts, the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival in California, Chamber Music Northwest in Oregon, and Bargemusic in Brooklyn. He has performed chamber music in Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Hawaii, Taiwan, Germany and the Czech Republic. His recordings include Chamber Works by Jon Deak (CRI); David Schiff's Scenes from Adolescence (Delos); An American Sampler (Olympic), Songs of Bartok and Kodaly (Vox-Turnabout); and a disc of his own compositions, Sonata Boogie (TownHall Records). With his brother, violinist/violist Arnold Steinhardt, he has recorded music of Robert Fuchs (Biddulf) and "American Journey" (Naxos).

Despite the title, at the onset of *Running Blue for Clarinet, Violin and Piano* we're not immediately off to the races. As early as the second piano chord, the mood is dark and deeply sad. As the tension builds near the end of the first section and the dynamics increase, something nefarious seems to be creeping forward. The second section, marked by a dramatic uptick in tempo, brings with it off-

balanced meters (7/8 and 5/8 time signatures) and numerous jazz influenced utterances whose appearances are seemingly a natural development from the first section's many blue notes. One can't help but feel the spirit of Leonard Bernstein in many of these rhythmic devices and slick harmonic turns. Steinhardt asks for quite a bit of virtuosity from the trio as the work develops and, thankfully for all involved, the payoff is worth all of their efforts. The opening material eventually returns—this time with anger—and is somehow filled with even more despair here than its original appearance. Hope, though, should not be lost. Steinhardt takes the audience on one more spirited run for the rollicking conclusion to the work.

Program notes by Dr. M. Brent Williams

## Amici

**Eunhye Grace Choi** is a highly acclaimed collaborative pianist and chamber musician who regularly appears on international concert stages and recordings with world-class musicians. She has performed extensively throughout the United States, France, Belgium, the UK, and South Korea, and has recorded for Naxos, Emeritus, and Origin Classical. Her performances have been broadcasted on the radio, including NPR's Performance Today.
Choi is currently the Artistic Director of Chamber Music Amici. She served as Collaborative Piano Faculty for six years at Eastern Music Festival, where she was the principal keyboardist of the Festival Orchestra with conductor Gerard Schwarz. She has called Eugene home since 2017 with her husband, clarinetist Wonkak Kim, and their 4-year-old daughter.

**Jessica Lambert** has played with Amici for five years and has just completed her tenure as Artistic Director for Chamber Music Amici. She is a graduate of The Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Zvi Zeitlin and members of the Cleveland Quartet. Other major teachers include Alice Schoenfeld and Alexander Treger. Concertmaster of the Corvallis Symphony Orchestra since 2007, she is also the Artistic Director of the OSU Chamber Music Workshop, an intensive quartet program held in Corvallis in July.

Jessica is widely recognized as a teacher and maintains a private studio in Corvallis. Her students have won regional and national competitions and have matriculated to the nation's most prestigious conservatories and summer programs. She has played viola with the Oregon Symphony and violin with the El Paso Symphony. She was concertmaster of the El Paso Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, for which she was a featured soloist in the New Music series. A frequent guest of the Chintimini Music Festival since 2004, she performs as a soloist and chamber player throughout the Northwest.

**Lillie Manis** is widely recognized for her work as a Suzuki educator and is currently completing her doctorate at Teachers College, Columbia University, where her research focuses on studio teachers' holistic strategies for cultivating expressive performance in young violinists. From 2009-2020, she was a faculty member at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, where she mentored graduate violin and viola pedagogy students and served as the Assistant Director of the Community Music Institute. Lillie is currently on the faculty at the Willamette Violin Academy in Eugene.

In the first decade of her teaching career, both the members of her vibrant pre-college studio and her graduate student mentees have achieved noteworthy musical and professional success, including competition wins, full scholarships to major music schools and summer programs, and college teaching appointments. Active as a clinician, master class presenter, adjudicator, and conference presenter at both the regional and national levels, she enjoys performing chamber music alongside some of the Northwest's finest players, and recently joined the editorial committee of the American String Teacher.

**Steven Pologe** has performed throughout the United States, and in Italy, Sweden, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, and Canada. His CDs include quartets by William Grant Still and All That Jazz (both with the Oregon String Quartet), works by Jon Deak for solo cello and piano trio, and the piano trio of Lev Abeliovich.

Steven is professor of Cello at the University of Oregon. He has performed frequently with the Oregon Bach Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Rome Festival Orchestra, and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival. In 2006, Pologe and a colleague in neuroscience won a grant from the organization behind the coveted Grammy awards, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. The award supported his research and publications documenting the precise movements of string players. Prior to moving to Oregon, Pologe was principal cellist with the Honolulu Symphony and faculty member at the University of Hawaii. To keep up with all Steven's activities, find him here, on his website, www.stevenpologe-cello.com/.

## Guest

**Wonkak Kim** Korean-born clarinetist Kim has captivated audiences around the world with his **"excellent breath control"** (*The Washington Post*) and **"exuberant musicianship"** (*Fanfare*). Kim appeared as a soloist and chamber musician at major venues throughout the United States such as Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and Constitution Hall as well as in Paris, London, Madrid, Ghent, Geneva, Seoul, Osaka, Costa Rica, and Brazil. A Naxos

Recording Artist, he has garnered international acclaim through his extensive discography: *Gulfstream*, a collection of new American chamber music, received many distinctions, including "Music US Choice" (*BBC Music Magazine*), "Recording of the Month" (*MusicWeb International*), and *American Record Guide* Critic's Choice, and was praised for its **"very highest quality"** (*Gramophone, UK*). *The International Clarinet Association Journal* lauded Kim's **"sensitive playing, a lovely sound and consummate facility"** in *François Devienne: Clarinet Sonatas*. On his most recent Naxos release of Stephen Krehl's Clarinet Quintet, *American Record Guide* wrote: **"Kim renders the Clarinet Quintet with a clear and nicely rounded timbre…with seamless blend and excellent legato."** Kim's live and recorded performances have been featured on Radio France, BBC Radio 3, Swedish Radio, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, CJPX Radio Classique Québec, Hong Kong RTHK-HK, Korean Broadcasting System, and NPR stations around the US. Kim is Assistant Professor of Clarinet at the University of Oregon and a performing artist/clinician for Buffet Crampon, Silverstein, and Vandoren. He is regularly invited as a guest artist and teacher at world's renowned institutions, including the Juilliard, Yale, and Manhattan School of Music.

## Featured Artist

**Irene Maguire** *Purple Cello*

Irene is a local artist. She has lived in Eugene for 41 years and grew up in New York. She started her artistic career in mainly photography and is a small-time competitor. In possession of a pile of blue ribbons from the Lane County Fair in photography, she even made it to the Oregon State Fair as 'Best of Lane County' one year. Preferring now to work with art on the computer, she says "It feels more ecological. My style is not so much of painting but of moving and twisting shapes and colors into new arrangements."

Of *Purple Cello*, Irene says "the background yellow circle is both the sun and the spotlight which features the music being played by the cello and creating the intimate feeling of a chamber music ensemble. I enjoy creating a design with nature themes with the vines and leaves swirling about with the music, all floating together through the harmony of the universe. I love colors which I think creates a bit of excitement."

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**César Franck** Piano Quintet in F Minor

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***The Dawning*** by Chris Pontrelli

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