Chameleon Arts Ensemble performs Schumann’s Piano Quartet and works by Faure, Arthur Benjamin, Theo Verbey, and Helen Grime on December 7-8

November 6, 2019 – Boston, MA – The Chameleon Arts Ensemble explores the hazy intersections between sleeping and waking, life and dreams, with five works filled with imagination, poetry, and invention on Saturday, December 7, 8 PM and Sunday, December 8, 4 PM at First Church in Boston, 66 Marlborough Street. The program, titled slow dreams of eternity, is anchored by Schumann’s E-flat Major Piano Quartet, Op. 47 and Fauré’s portrait of the Garden of Eden, La chanson d’Ève for soprano and piano, Op. 95. We’ve paired these classics with Arthur Benjamin’s 1949 Le Tombeau de Ravel “Valses-caprices” for clarinet and piano; Theo Verbey’s Four Preludes to Infinity for oboe and strings; and Helen Grime’s evocation of the harvest moon, Luna for flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, piano, and percussion.


ABOUT THE PROGRAM
One of the most beloved works in the repertoire, Robert Schumann’s Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47 is a profound reflection of humanity in all its complexity and contradiction. It was the final piece from his famed “chamber music year” of 1842 (which also included the three string quartets, Op. 41, the Piano Quintet, Op. 44, and the Fantasiestucke piano trio), and premiered in Leipzig in 1844 with his wife Clara at the piano. Its sweeping lyricism, deep reservoirs of emotion, and spectacular technique offer a window into the world of poetry, invention, and duality that Schumann so often spoke about: Florestan, the passionate Romantic; Eusebius, the cool Classicist ruled by intellect; and Meister Raro, a moderating voice to balance the two extremes.

Gabriel Fauré’s La chanson d’Ève for soprano & piano, Op. 95 similarly offers a portrait of Eve as a cosmic figure, surrounded by the wonder of the Creation and the Garden of Eden. The texts come from a collection of 96 poems by Charles van Lerberghe. Instead of the traditional
narrative of Adam and Eve being created by God, falling victim to temptation, and therefore
damning the whole of humankind, Faure selects 10 poems that form a symbolic arc from birth to
death. Adam barely figures, and Eve is presented as an extension of God put on the earth to give
voice to nature. Composed between 1906 and 1910, \emph{La chanson} is one of the pinnacles of the art
song genre.

A rarity on the Boston stage, \textit{Theo Verbey} is a Dutch composer of elegant and rhythmically
transparent works that have been performed by orchestras and ensembles around the world. His
\textit{Four Preludes to Infinity for oboe and string trio} was composed in 2013, and with each of the
work’s four movements Verbey examines facets of infinity while drawing on musical sources from
the past. “Mysterious” recalls the world of the Second Viennese School, “Restless” hearkens back
to the Russian avant-garde of the 1920’s, “Religious” makes use of chorales from the German
Baroque, and “Luminous” refers to the Impressionism of Debussy and Ravel.

Australian composer \textit{Arthur Benjamin} also captures the essence of Ravel with his 1957 “\textit{Valses-
caprices}” \textit{Le Tombeau de Ravel for clarinet and piano}. In it, he recalls Ravel’s own memorial
work, \textit{Le tombeau de Couperin}, as well as \textit{Valses nobles et sentimentales}. The introduction, six
waltzes, and finale are played without a break. It is one of Benjamin’s most affectionate works,
and a stylish homage to the master.

Finally, Scottish composer \textit{Helen Grime’s Luna} (2011) is a series of interwoven vignettes
inspired by the Ted Hughes’ poem “The Harvest Moon.” The unusual scoring – flute, oboe,
clarinet, French horn, piano, and percussion – serves to illuminates both the fragmented chatter
and quiet reflection of nighttime. Grime is one of the UK’s most distinguished younger voices with
a host of prizes, commissions, and appointments to her credit, including a prestigious appointment
as Composer in Residence at Wigmore Hall. Among her many international commissions are
works for the London Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, BBC
Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and the Tanglewood
Music Center. \textit{The New York Times} called her music “colorfully scored and cogently developed.”

ABOUT CHAMELEON ARTS ENSEMBLE OF BOSTON

Founded in 1998, \textit{Chameleon Arts Ensemble} has built a reputation as Boston’s most adventurous
chamber ensemble, integrating old and new repertoire into unexpected programs that are
themselves works of art. Over the past two decades, Chameleon has performed more than 325
concerts featuring a remarkable array of nearly 700 \textit{different} works by 300 \textit{different} composers
presented in smart, thematic programs that appeal to both connoisseurs and newcomers alike.
National honors include 2017 and 2015 awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, 2015
and 2004 awards from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, and a pair
of Adventurous Programming Awards from ASCAP and Chamber Music America.

The Ensemble is led by \textit{Artistic Director and flutist Deborah Boldin}. Her inspired vision and
vast knowledge of the chamber music repertoire have garnered widespread acclaim. \textit{The Boston
Globe} called Chameleon “a local treasure,” and noted that the Ensemble “has distinguished itself
over the course of two decades by sheer dint of its sparkingly imaginative programming.” \textit{The
Boston Musical Intelligencer} wrote “One of the joys of hearing the Chameleon Arts Ensemble
comes from Deborah Boldin’s whimsical thematic programming, mixing old and new, letting pieces echo and shed light on each other.”

Chameleon’s exceptional, multi-generational roster of artists was called “an all-star lineup of chamber musicians” by The Boston Globe, and individually, they have appeared in concert around the world with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Marlboro Music, Boston Symphony, Chamber Music Northwest, Music@Menlo, and the Verbier, Ravinia, and Caramoor Festivals, among others. The Boston Musical Intelligencer hailed “One sensed that all the Chameleons were born for chamber music.”

PERFORMERS
Deborah Boldin, flute
Vivian Chang-Freiheit, piano
Francesca dePasquale, violin
Nancy Dimock, oboe
Caitlin Lynch, viola
Mary Mackenzie, soprano
Trevor Nuckols, French horn
Kelli O’Connor, clarinet
Rafael Popper-Keizer, cello
Mika Sasaki, piano
Matt Sharrock, percussion

CALENDAR LISTING – 2019-2020 Season

Chamber Series 2: slow dreams of eternity

Program:
Gabriel Fauré, La chanson d’Ève for soprano & piano, Op. 95
Helen Grime, Luna for flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, piano & percussion
Arthur Benjamin, Le Tombeau de Ravel “Valses-caprices” for clarinet & piano
Theo Verbey, Four Preludes to Infinity for oboe & string trio
Robert Schumann, Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47

Date/Time & Location:
Saturday, December 7, 2019, 8 PM
Sunday, December 8, 2019, 4 PM
First Church, 66 Marlborough Street, Boston

The closest subway stops are Arlington Street on the Green Line and Back Bay Station on the Orange Line. First Church in Boston is wheelchair accessible.

TICKETS
Individual tickets are $49, $38, and $27, with $5 discounts for students and seniors.

Telephone: 617-427-8200
WWW: www.chameleonarts.org
E-mail: info@chameleonarts.org

*****