Chameleon Arts Ensemble performs Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet and works by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schnittke, and Steven Stucky

January 30, 2020 – Boston, MA – The Chameleon Arts Ensemble resumes its 2019-2020 chamber music series with a tribute to Mozart titled *whose fragments we inherit* on Saturday, February 29, 8 PM and Sunday, March 1, 4 PM at First Church in Boston, 66 Marlborough Street. The program is anchored by Mozart’s sublime Quintet in A Major for clarinet and strings, K. 581. Steven Stucky’s Serenade for wind quintet brings Mozart’s popular entertainment form into the 21st century, and Schnittke’s *Moz-Art* for two violins pays tribute with more than a touch of Mozartean humor. Rounding out the program are Mendelssohn’s Variations Concertantes for cello and piano, Op. 17 and Haydn’s “Gypsy” Piano Trio in G Major, Hob. XV:25.


ABOUT THE PROGRAM
Romanticized by history as the ultimate child prodigy, Mozart produced a staggering body of work in his 36 short years, glorious music of crystalline clarity and sublime beauty. With a masterpiece among masterpieces, his *Quintet in A Major, K. 581* gave birth to the voice and soul of the clarinet. It was composed in 1789 as a showpiece for his friend, the virtuoso clarinetist Anton Stadler (for whom he also wrote the Kegelstatt Trio, K. 498 and the Concerto in A Major, K. 622). At the time, the clarinet was still a “novelty” instrument, and it was the combination of Stadler’s superb playing, Mozart’s supreme craft, and their enduring friendship that transformed it into a permanent member of the orchestra and compelling soloist.

Alfred Schnittke’s humorous – yet reverent – 1977 *Moz-Art for two violins* is based on an unfinished pantomime by Mozart and includes snippets of the 40th Symphony and other works. Schnittke’s deft handling of the fragments, with an eye toward his own aesthetic, results in a fascinating synthesis of the two composers and a heartfelt homage. The late Steven Stucky, in
turn, takes the entertainment form so beautifully wrought by Mozart into the 21st century. His Serenade for wind quintet was composed in 1990 and is laid out as a suite of five short, aphoristic “musical moments” each contrasting strongly with the next. He combines the instruments in unusual ways – a very low flute with a high bassoon, for example – to create a world filled with nocturnal sounds and vivid colors.

One cannot consider Mozart without Haydn and vice versa; their mutual influence and respect was immense. In a letter dating from 1798, Haydn wrote, “…scarcely any man can brook comparison with the great Mozart…If I could only impress on the soul of every friend of music, and on high personages in particular, how inimitable are Mozart's works, how profound, how musically intelligent, how extraordinarily sensitive!” Haydn similarly exercised his supreme gifts in his G Major Piano Trio, Hob. XV:25. His late keyboard trios are the pinnacle of the accompanied sonata style and paved the way for Mozart’s full evolution of the form for three equal players. Composed in 1795, and nicknamed “Gypsy” for its third movement finale “Rondo all'Ongarese,” it is a joy-filled work of harmonic and intellectual energy, and contains some of Haydn’s most virtuosic keyboard writing.

Finally, Mendelssohn’s Variations Concertantes for cello and piano, Op. 17 dates from 1829 and shows the influence of both Mozart’s and Beethoven’s similar variations (Beethoven’s in particular, on themes from Mozart’s operas for cello and piano). It was dedicated to his younger brother Paul and is an equally virtuosic showpiece for both instruments.

ABOUT CHAMELEON ARTS ENSEMBLE OF BOSTON

Founded in 1998, 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 different works by 300 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 Artistic Director and flutist Deborah Boldin. Her inspired vision and vast knowledge of the chamber music repertoire have garnered widespread acclaim. 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 sparklingly imaginative programming.” 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                  Eunae Koh, violin          Kenneth Renshaw, violin
Nancy Dimock, oboe                     Rafael Popper-Keizer, cello Elizabeth Schumann, piano
Eli Epstein, French horn               Damian Primis, bassoon       Scott Woolweaver, viola
Gary Gorczyca, clarinet

CALENDAR LISTING – 2019-2020 Season

Chamber Series 3:  whose fragments we inherit

Program:  Felix Mendelssohn, Variations Concertantes cello & piano, Op. 17
          Steven Stucky, Serenade for woodwind quintet
          Franz Joseph Haydn, Piano Trio No. 39 in G Major Hob. XV:25 “Gypsy”
          Alfred Schnittke, Moz-Art for two violins
          Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581

Date/Time & Location:  Saturday, February 29, 2020, 8 PM
                       Sunday, March 1, 2020, 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.

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