



Chameleon
Arts Ensemble
of Boston

Transforming experiences in chamber music.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2024

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Chameleon Arts Ensemble resumes 2023-2024 season with “Seeking Syllables” on Feb 24-25

January 24, 2024 – Boston, MA – Chameleon resumes its 2023-2024 season with *Seeking Syllables* on **Saturday, February 24, 8 PM and Sunday, February 25, 4 PM** at First Church in Boston. The program is a tour de force of expressive possibility and includes Felix Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte* for cello and piano, Op. 109; Sebastian Currier’s *Vocalissimus* for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion; and Johannes Brahms’ Piano Quintet in f minor, Op. 34.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

A perfect, perfectly exquisite miniature, **Felix Mendelssohn’s *Song without Words*** opens the concert with a wink and a nod to the program’s title. The work was composed around 1845 and first published in 1868 after Mendelssohn’s death, when it was given the Op. 109 designation. It’s presumed to have been commissioned by the French cellist Lise Cristiani who met Mendelssohn while concertizing in Leipzig. The title was Mendelssohn’s own invention and used to highlight its lyrical qualities, bridging the gap between art song and instrumental splendor.

Sebastian Currier takes this idea of “bridging the gap” to the nth degree with his 1991 cycle *Vocalissimus*. He uses a single poem – “To the roaring wind” by Wallace Stevens – and interprets it (and reinterprets it) through a prism of 18 different characters. The resulting 18 miniature movements operate as a fantasy on the inherent subjectivity of setting words to music, and the

piece as a whole is a study in contrasts, with a tremendous range of color and invention and wildly divergent emotional states brought to life by Currier's impeccable craftsmanship.

A notorious perfectionist and restless spirit, **Brahms** was his own harshest critic, writing and rewriting his scores with the precision of a poet. His **Piano Quintet in f minor, Op. 34** underwent three major transformations on the way to becoming the sublime essay we know today. It began in 1861 as a string quintet but Brahms was not satisfied, destroying the score and reworking it as a sonata for two pianos in 1864. Still disappointed and armed with feedback from trusted friends Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim, he finally settled on the piano quintet that Joachim declared the finest chamber work since Schubert. In the end, Brahms found what he was seeking: a hybrid of the two earlier versions combining youthful exuberance with sophisticated textures and masterful techniques, resulting in one of the most celebrated entries in the chamber music literature.

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. Now entering its 26th season, Chameleon has performed more than 400 concerts featuring a remarkable array of nearly 650 *different* works by 325 *different* composers brought together in smart, thematic programs that connect with our shared humanity and appeal to both connoisseurs and newcomers alike. National honors include 2020, 2017 and 2015 awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, two 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* noted that the Ensemble "has distinguished itself over the course of two decades by sheer dint of its sparkingly imaginative programming." *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* (BMI) 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 have appeared with such venerable organizations as Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Marlboro Music, Boston Symphony, Chamber Music Northwest, Music@Menlo, and the Verbier, Ravinia, and Caramoor Festivals. *BMI* wrote "one sensed that all the Chameleons were born for chamber music," and "the cast of players Boldin can summon to concert after concert simply amazes me."

ARTISTS

Deborah Boldin, flute	Rafael Popper-Keizer, cello	Matt Sharrock, percussion
Elizabeth Fayette, violin	Sarah Rommel, cello	James Thompson, violin
Gary Gorczyca, clarinet	Mika Sasaki, piano	Scott Woolweaver, viola
Mary Mackenzie, soprano	Miki Sawada, piano	

CALENDAR LISTINGS

chamber series 3: Seeking Syllables

Program: Felix Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte* for cello & piano, Op. 109
Sebastian Currier, *Vocalissimus* for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano & percussion
Johannes Brahms, Piano Quintet in f minor, Op. 34

Dates/Times: Saturday, February 24, 2024, 8 PM
Sunday, February 25, 2024, 4 PM

Location: 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

For tickets or more information, concertgoers can call **617-427-8200** or visit chameleonarts.org. Individual tickets are \$52, \$41, and \$30; with \$5 discounts for students and seniors.

Masks are now optional at Chameleon events; **safety protocols** and policies are posted at <https://chameleonarts.org/safety>.

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