



Chameleon
Arts Ensemble
of Boston

Transforming experiences in chamber music.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chameleon Arts Ensemble continues 28th season with “Bards & Ballads” Feb 21 and 22

January 22, 2026 – Boston, MA – Chameleon continues its 28th season with *Bards & Ballads* on **Saturday, February 21, 7:30 PM and Sunday, February 22, 4 PM** at First Church in Boston. Timeless song meets rustic charm in a program of soulful storytellers, idyllic atmospheres, and irresistible joy including Rebecca Clarke’s 1940 *Dumka*: Duo Concertante for violin, viola, and piano; Einojuhani Rautavaara’s *Ballad* for harp and string quintet; Carl Nielsen’s Wind Quintet, Op. 43; and Dvořák’s sparkling Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Anchoring the program, **Antonín Dvořák’s Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81** is a perennial favorite that overflows with the poetry, freshness, and spirit of Czech song and dance. It was composed at his country estate in Vysoká between August and October of 1887 as he approached the peak of his international fame. The piece reflects his idyllic surroundings, mastery of form, and especially his seamless fusion of Czech nationalism and Austro-German traditions through the quintet’s rich melodies, contrasting moods, and integration of folk elements like the melancholic dumka and fiery furiant.

In her **Duo Concertante for violin, viola, and piano**, **Rebecca Clarke** creates her own captivating version of the dumka. The work was composed around 1940 (exact date unknown) and

illustrates her affinity for gorgeous melodies and the mercurial moods of Eastern European folk music – with nods to both Dvořák and Brahms.

Carl Nielsen had an uncanny knack for tapping into the distinctive character of wind instruments and his superb **Wind Quintet, Op. 43** is the culmination of that particular gift. In the fall of 1921, Nielsen happened to hear a rehearsal with members of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet and was so taken with their artistry that he immediately resolved to compose something for them. He began work in early 1922, shortly after completing the 5th Symphony, and the Quintet was premiered in October of that year. The piece is at turn elegant and elegiac, rustic and reedy, colorful and conversational with themes tossed between the five soloists with ease and panache, earning its place as *the* crown jewel of the wind quintet repertoire.

Lastly, Finnish **composer Einojuhani Rautavaara's 1981 Ballad for harp and string quintet** opens our mind's eye to the epic ballads of ancient days. Though he assigns no specific "plot" to the piece, it is typically programmatic in execution with the story up to the listener. Like the other works on the program, he leans into changeable moods and architectural symmetry to tell his tale. The harp leads the dialogue and lends an air mystical otherworldliness in its solo role, and the musical language lies somewhere between lush Romanticism and post-modern eclecticism.

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 in its 28th season, Chameleon has performed hundreds of concerts covering a remarkable array of more than 700 *different* works by 400 *different* composers brought together in smart, thematic programs that connect with our shared humanity and appeal to 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.

Flutist and Artistic Director Deborah Boldin leads the Ensemble, and her unique vision and vast knowledge of the repertoire have garnered widespread acclaim. *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* (BMI) wrote "One of the joys of hearing Chameleon comes from Boldin's whimsical thematic programming, mixing old and new, letting pieces echo and shed light on each other." *The Arts Fuse* commended her for "making the past as immediate as the present," and *The Boston Globe* hailed, "planning a good chamber music program is a delicate art unto itself, and few in town have mastered it as persuasively."

Our multi-generational roster of artists was called "an all-star lineup of chamber musicians" by *The Boston Globe*, and they regularly appear with groups such as Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Marlboro Music, Boston Symphony, Chamber Music Northwest, Music@Menlo, and the Verbier, Ravinia, and Caramoor Festivals, among others. *BMI* called us "a wildly gifted group," and wrote "the cast of players Boldin can summon to concert after concert simply amazes me."

ARTISTS

Deborah Boldin, flute
Hazel Dean Davis, French horn
Nancy Dimock, oboe
Elizabeth Fayette, violin
Gary Gorczyca, clarinet
Edward Kass, double bass

Nathan Meltzer, violin
Rafael Popper-Keizer, cello
Mika Sasaki, piano
Lishan Tan, harp
Jacob Thonis, bassoon
Scott Woolweaver, viola

CALENDAR LISTINGS

chamber series 3: Bards & Ballads

Program: Rebecca Clarke, *Dumka*: Duo Concertante for violin, viola & piano (1940)
Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Ballad* for harp & string quintet
Carl Nielsen, Wind Quintet, Op. 43, FS 100
Antonín Dvořák, Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81

Dates/Times: Saturday, February 21, 2026, 7:30 PM
Sunday, February 22, 2026, 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 \$54, \$43, and \$32; with \$5 discounts for students and seniors.

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