

Meridian

THE NEW ISRAEL WOODWIND QUINTET
Beethoven - Poulenc - Strauss - Ben-Ari

CDE 84566



A Natural Sound Recording

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Recorded by Richard Hughes
Produced by Dudl Hadad
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The New Israel Woodwind Quintet

Ludwig van Beethoven
Quintet in E flat major, op. 16
for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| [1] Grave - Allegro, ma non troppo | 13:08 |
| [2] Andante cantabile | 7:40 |
| [3] Rondo. Allegro, ma non troppo | 5:57 |

Francis Poulenc
Sextet for piano, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn

[4] Allegro vivace	7:33
[5] Divertissement: Andantino	4:28
[6] Prestissimo	5:42

Richard Strauss*
[7] Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche op 28 15:41
Arranged by David Carp
for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano

Ohad Ben-Ari*
[8] Sextet for piano and woodwind quintet 15:09

Itamar Golan - piano
Ohad Ben-Ari - Piano *

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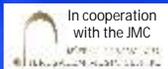
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The New Israel Woodwind Quintet

Itamar Golan - piano

Ohad Ben-Ari - piano

Beethoven Strauss Poulenc Ben-Ari



Ludwig van Beethoven
Quintet in E flat major, op. 16
for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon

The year 1796 was for Beethoven a particularly fruitful and significant period. Four years after his arrival in Vienna, and one year after the publication of his opus 1 (three piano trios), Beethoven was turning out new works at top speed, gradually establishing himself with the Viennese audiences. His compositions at this point in his career were still within the classical Viennese framework of Mozart and Haydn. Nevertheless they displayed Beethoven's typically fresh and innovative manner of writing, and were unmistakably marked by a musical style that presaged the far-reaching heights to which Beethoven was to soar in the coming years.

The quintet for piano and winds, opus 16, is an outstanding and fascinating testimony to the respect and admiration which Beethoven had for the musical tradition of his predecessors. The model on which Beethoven based this work was the quintet, K452, that Mozart had written some twelve years previously for exactly the same combination of instruments. In a letter to his father Mozart wrote of his quintet "it is the best work I have ever composed". There is no documentary evidence that Mozart's quintet was the inspiration for Beethoven's, but the number of similarities between the two works is remarkable. The instrumental ensemble that Mozart chose was not a common one in those days, when wind instruments were usually part of a larger grouping together with string instruments, or else employed to entertain the nobility with light music such as serenades. Further, the two pieces are written in the same key, E flat major, they are similar in the order of the three movements (fast/slow/fast) and in both there is a slow introduction to the first movement. Beethoven was undoubtedly influenced in his writing for the wind instruments by the orchestration used by Mozart in his serenades for winds.

Yet despite these similarities, there are a number of significant differences between the two works. Beethoven deliberately copied his Mozartean model, yet he managed to retain his own personal touch, so different from that of his mentor. With Beethoven there is a greater contrast between the winds as a group and the piano. Already in the opening introduction, the piano's delicate lyricism is opposed to the winds whose theme suggests a rousing hunting call. Overall, Beethoven emphasises contrast and struggle rather than the homogeneity and the balance which underlie the chamber concept, and also the extreme dynamic differences. In both works each instrument has its solo moments, but Beethoven gives the piano a greater solo role. At the premiere of the work in 1797 Beethoven extended the cadenza with an improvisation, notwithstanding the objection of the wind players who suspected that he was trying to "steal the show".

Richard Strauss
"Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche"
(Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks), op 28,
Arranged by David Carp
for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano

Shortly after completing the final version of his first opera *Guntram*, Strauss began to toy with the idea of writing an opera based on the character of Till Eulenspiegel. The origins of the story are to be found in Danish folklore, and various versions appeared in German as far back as the 14th century, often differing widely from one another. The central figure of the story is a serial trickster whose merciless pranks drive everyone crazy. He gallops wildly on horseback through the market, teases the merchants, argues with the preachers, flirts with the maidens and is rejected by them, and makes fun of the learned men of the city. In the end he is caught by the authorities and brought before the court, where he is sentenced to death. Nevertheless right up to the moment of his execution, Till Eulenspiegel carries on with his mocking protests against the court. Even though the character is presented



in a bad light, Till Eulenspiegel is something of a national hero, who challenges authority and the follies of the world.

Whilst writing the opening passages of the libretto and the music for his opera, Strauss wrote in a letter to his father "it is the story of a rogue and nothing more, a shallow character on the stage. On the other hand, the great depth of the character raises a whole lot of other problems". In the end, Strauss decided to abandon the idea of an opera, and began working on a symphonic poem in one movement, based on the same story. The symphonic poem, or tone poem as Strauss called it, was a genre developed by Franz Liszt in the second half of the 19th century, rooted in an attempt to combine the rich and colourful sound of the symphony orchestra with the literary "programme" contents of the Romantic Movement, then at its peak. Strauss brought the symphonic poem genre to new heights of expression and wide-ranging variety, and with "Till Eulenspiegel" he reached a culmination of the art of weaving together music and story. At first Strauss refused to disclose details of the particular musical passages and their connection to the story, but some years later he changed his mind and gave the precise details. The work is in the form of a rondo, with the main theme, representing the hero, repeated between the various episodes, portraying the different facets of this maddening and obstinate character. In the section which represents the court scene for example, we hear material which recalls a funeral march, where the clarinet plays a wailing variation on the theme of the hero, a kind of desperate cry as he faces death. The moment of hanging is depicted by string *pizzicato*, recalling a similar effect used much earlier by Berlioz in his *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Strauss's orchestration of his symphonic poem represents one of the finest achievements of the romantic period. He gives great prominence to the wind section, with no less than 34 different wind parts, including some rare instruments such as the clarinet in

D. This emphasis on wind instruments inspired David Carp to arrange the work for piano and five wind instruments, successfully transforming Strauss's huge orchestra into a chamber ensemble, whilst retaining the special nature of each section and the whole range of internal contrasts. The piano has an outstandingly rich and virtuoso part, which contributes to the fidelity to the original orchestration of this arrangement.

Francis Poulenc
Sextet for piano, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn

Francis Poulenc was one of the most colourful and fascinating characters on the musical scene of France in the first half of the 20th century. Against the background of the rapidly changing, multi-directional background of the period, Poulenc can be seen as one whose life and music faithfully reflect the spirit of an entire generation. Poulenc was born in Paris to a well-established family, and began studying music at an early age. Both his personality and his music were filled with internal contradictions, which he himself, incidentally, did not recognise as such. Aged 19 he was drafted and served in the French army for four years. Later, at the time of the German invasion of France in World War II, Poulenc gave expression in his music to his anti-war ideas, and even anti-Nazi ideas. However he made the decision to stay in German-occupied Paris and not to leave for the United States. He was the first among the composers of his generation to openly acknowledge his homosexuality, and yet in his later years he became a devout Roman Catholic. In those years he wrote a number of liturgical vocal works which today are recognised as among the great achievements of the 20th century. In 1950, at the age of 51, in an article published in "France Presse" Poulenc was described as "half bad boy, half monk".

Poulenc is recognised as the leading member of the "Les Six", the group of six French composers working in Paris whose mission was to change the nature of French



art music. Their aim in their compositions was to turn their backs on concepts such as "impressionism" (even though they were greatly influenced by this movement), "formalism" and "intellectualism". They wrote in a manner that was more direct and more accessible to the wider public. Nevertheless the works of "Les Six", in particular those of Poulenc and his friend Honegger, are anything but shallow, and can be seen as a significant trend in the development of 20th century music. Poulenc's work, like his personality, is eclectic and many-sided, and often contains a mixture of music that is light and ironic, together with sentimental and melancholy overtones. There is a strong neo-classical influence in his work, notably that of Stravinsky.

Poulenc was always fond of the various wind instruments, and unlike most composers preferred the family of winds to that of the string instruments. He wrote more than a dozen chamber works for various wind ensembles, both with and without piano, including a sonata for clarinet and a sonata for oboe, the last of his major works. In comparison he wrote only two important chamber works for string instruments – a sonata for violin, and a sonata for cello. The sextet for piano, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn was written in 1932, but remained in Poulenc's drawer until he completed the final version in 1939. The combinations of the five winds with one another, and with the piano, create a wonderfully rich sound palette. This is Poulenc at his best, with his "winning combination" of typically French light music and great emotional depth. Here too can be found the influence of Stravinsky's neo-classicism. The short *finale* has an interesting and unusual form; towards the end of the movement the tempo slows down considerably, and out of the slowness comes a crescendo that expands right up to the end of the work.

Text: Uri Yaakov
Translation: Sara Manobla

Ohad Ben-Ari *Sextet for piano and woodwind quintet*

The piece was commissioned by the Rabinovich Fund for the New Israeli Woodwind Quintet. Having performed with the group many times before, I consider the members to be my closest friends, and I can proudly say that I have learned much about woodwinds and about music in general from them. When I set to compose this piece I had literally each member's persona in my mind, in other words, not only what instrument would perform his part but I could also hear in my head exactly how it would be executed according to each member's unique characteristic of his playing.

I am not a composer per se; over the years I have collected different musical ideas which I intended to bring together into a greater musical work. When the request came in for this piece I was at a point in my life where I slowly shifted my interest away from classical music into the exploration of other, non-classical, musical genres.

Yet, I felt like this was an opportunity for me to put a closure on my "classical period", by incorporating the musical ideas I had in my head for some time, and by paying homage to the music that I had been performing as a soloist and with the quintet over the years.

The work is very post modernistic in its approach, although I didn't quite know what it meant when I wrote it. It expresses the longing for a tonal language and romantic lyricism. I did not place any rules on myself, I just let my ideas flow onto the staves; everything is allowed nowadays, hence, it is OK to use thematic ideas and motives only once throughout a piece. It's also OK to go with a traditional sonata form as a structure and with a clear tonality if you wish to do so.

Among the various fragments used in this piece I am paying tribute to Poulenc's work for piano and winds (his Trio and the Sextet) and to pianist-composers, such



as Prokofiev, Liszt, Scriabin and Rachmaninoff. These are never direct quotes but rather melodic or thematic references that come and go, twisted like psychedelic visions.

Listening to the work is in a sense like going to a club, of classical music, of course. One can wonder thru rooms where different music is being played in. Unlike traditional classical thought nothing really needs to be fully developed. This attitude correlates to our present day culture there is so much info available to everyone just a click away; as a result we are all developing a very short attention span; forget about hour-long symphonies, what we mostly like to consume today are one minute clips on Youtube.

I have dedicated this work to my teacher and mentor, Prof. Josef Dorfman, who passed away very unexpectedly last year.



Ohad Ben-Ari

Ohad Ben Ari began his formal studies with Mrs. Hana Shalgi and was accepted to the Tel Aviv University at the mere age of 13, where he studied with Prof. Pnina Salzman and Prof. Josef Dorfman. He continued his studies in Germany with Prof. Irina Edelstein where he graduated Cum Laude.

As a pianist Ohad performed around the globe with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Israeli Chamber Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony, the Munich Opera and the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra, among many others.

After winning top prizes at numerous international music competitions, including a gold medal at the coveted Arthur Rubinstein Master Piano Competition, Ohad decided to change direction.

He headed for the USA and set to work as a music producer specializing in urban music (R&B and Hip Hop). Big success followed his joint venture with his sister, violinist Miri Ben-Ari, who won a Grammy Award while working with Ohad on her solo album for Universal Records.

Upon his return to Israel, with the support of the American Israeli Cultural Foundation, Ohad has joined the faculty of the School of Music of the Tel-Aviv University last year. In addition to his activity as a classical musician Ohad is working as a writer/producer for Israeli and international artists.



He is a frequent participant in many prestigious international music festivals, such as Salzburg, Verbier, Lucerne, Tanglewood, Ravinia, and has made a numerous recordings for labels such as Deutsche Grammophon, Warner Classics, Teldec, EMI and Sony Classical.

Dudu Carmel - Oboe

Oboist Dudu Carmel is a winner of the 1996 International Oboe Competition in Toulon, France and the 1990 François Shapira prize in Israel.

He serves as the assistant principal oboist of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and as faculty member of the Winds Department at the Rubin Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem.

Between the years 1992-1997, he has been the principal oboist of the in-house orchestra of the New Israeli Opera and since 1998 he has been playing as a guest oboist with the Budapest Festival orchestra.

Mr. Carmel studied at the Rubin Academy of music in Tel-Aviv and received his KA Diploma from the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe, Germany, as a student of Thomas Indermühle.

Dudu Carmel is a founding member of the New Israel Woodwind Quintet. He recorded label CD's for the Israel Music Center, Camerata, Meridian and DUX.

Eyal Ein-Habar - Flutist & Conductor

Eyal Ein-Habar was born Israel. He has served as assistant principal flute of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra since 1997 and since 1999 has taught flute at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in collaboration with the IPO at the Tel-Aviv University. Since 2005 he has been the school's winds coach and conductor.

A prizewinner in various competitions in Israel and abroad, he received the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarship between 1983 and 1996. He

Itamar Golan - Piano

For almost two decades, Itamar Golan has been partnering the most outstanding instrumentalists of our time. His work has brought him great critical acclaim, and he is one of the most sought after pianists of his generation, playing on the most prestigious stages around the world.

Born in Vilnius, Lithuania, his family emigrated to Israel when he was a year old. There he started his musical studies and at the age of 7, gave his first concerts in Tel-Aviv.

He was repeatedly awarded scholarships from the American-Israel Cultural Foundation which enabled him to study with Emmanuel Krasovsky and his chamber music mentor, Chaim Taub. Later under a full scholarship from the New England Conservatory of Boston, he was chosen to study with Leonard Shure.



has appeared as soloist with all major Israeli orchestras and with orchestras in the Netherlands, Canada and Japan. He has presented recitals internationally and has performed chamber music in festivals and concert tours in Israel, Europe, North and South America, and Canada. He has toured Canada as soloist and chamber musician with the Quebec Symphony Orchestra and I Musici de Montréal.

Mr. Ein-Habar is a founding member of the New Israel Woodwind Quintet. He recorded three CDs with the Quintet and 4 with the Israel Flute Ensemble for Centaur, Meridian, IMI and others.

Yevgeny Yehudin - Clarinet

Yevgeny Yehudin was born into a musical family, in the former Soviet Union. As a child he studied both the piano and the clarinet in his hometown Minsk, and later on, he graduated the Minsk Music Academy. During the course of his studies he was twice the recipient of the first prize in the Belarusian national contest.

He has appeared as soloist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Music Director Zubin Mehta and with the Israel Sinfonietta of Beer Sheva. He performs frequently as a chamber musician with renowned artists such as Yuri Bashmet, Nabuko Imai, Steven Kovacevic and the Ysaye String Quartet and records frequently for radio stations both in Israel and abroad. Yevgeny Yehudin is a regular member of the New Israel Woodwind Quintet. He recorded label CD's for the Israel Music Center, Meridian and DUX.

Chezy Nir - Horn

A household name in his native Israel, Mr. Nir serves as Principal Horn of the Israel Symphony Orchestra-Rishon Le'zion - in-house orchestra of the New Israeli Opera since 1999. He played as guest Principal in the Israel Camerata Jerusalem and the Israel Sinfonietta Beer-Sheva, and performed as soloist with most of Israel's leading orchestras. In addition he appeared in recitals in Israel and abroad, including a recital and a

solo performance with orchestra at the "Alte Oper" hall in Frankfurt. Mr. Nir studied with the late Meir Rimon at the Rubin Academy of Music, Tel-Aviv, and with Marie Luise Neunecker at the Frankfurt Musikhochschule in Germany. Chezy is a founding member of the New Israel Woodwind Quintet, and is a much in demand Professor of Horn at the Buchman Mehta Academy of Music at Tel-Aviv University.

Mauricio Paez - Bassoon

Born in Costa Rica, one of the most versatile Israeli musicians, as a concert artist, chamber music player and a teacher, his students hold positions in many major orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic.

Mr. Paez is a founding member of the New Israel Woodwind Quintet, and founder of the Israel Chamber Orchestra Wind Ensemble, holds the principal bassoon position of the Israel Chamber Orchestra and is the bassoon and Woodwind Workshop teacher at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Givat Ram.

At the age of 17, he was offered the principal bassoon position at the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica. Since then he has held principal positions with the Israel Sinfonietta, the Israel Chamber Orchestra, as Guest Principal with the Israel Philharmonic and for a decade as Principal Bassoonist at the New Israeli Opera (RishonLeZion Orchestra), playing under the batons of conductors such as Lorin Maazel, Yoel Levy, Valery Gergiev, Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado.

As a chamber musician he has collaborated with artists such as Daniel Barenboim, Shlomo Mintz, Guy Braunstein, Maurice Bourgue, Klaus Thunemann, Herman Baumann, Frank Cohen, Robert Levine, Karl-Heinz Steffens, Elena Bashkirova among others.

Paez has participated in the Upper Galilee Chamber Music Days-Kfar Blum, Red Sea Festival, Schleswig Holstein, Rolandseck Pro, Jerusalem Classic Winter, Israel Festival, Potsdam Festival, Davos Festival (Switzerland), Rehingau Festival.





The New Israel Woodwind Quintet

“One of the remarkable phenomena that have emerged in music life in Israel...”

Hanoch Ron, music critic of Yediot Aharonot

The Quintet was founded in 1993. Its members have been performing as soloists with renowned orchestras in Israel and abroad, including the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. They have been scholarship recipients by the America-Israel Cultural Foundation and were awarded prizes in local and international music competitions.

The Quintet has received wide critical acclaim and was praised by distinguished musicians whom they collaborated with, among them Mordechai Rechtman, Pinchas Zukerman and Gyorgy Kurtag.

Since its establishment, the Quintet has performed in Israel, Germany, Switzerland, USA, Canada, Colombia and Costa Rica. The Quintet has participated in festivals, such as the Israel Festival, the Schleswig Holstein Festival, the Postdam Festival and the Davos Festival.

In 2005, the quintet was awarded the Binyamini Prize for chamber music ensembles, by the Ministry of Culture of the State of Israel.