

audite

# SAGA



ARUNDOSquintett



**Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

**Gordon Davies (Arr.)**

**Petite suite**

I. En bateau. Andantino 3:55

II. Cortège. Moderato 3:07

III. Menuet. Moderato 3:23

IV. Ballet. Allegro giusto 3:22

**Kevin Beavers (\*1971)**

**Quintett für Flöte, Oboe,  
Klarinette, Horn und Fagott**

I. Animato e giocoso 6:13

II. Misterioso e sensuale 7:03

III. Presto euforico 4:07

**Lalo Schifrin (\*1932)**

**La Nouvelle Orleans 7:45**

**Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)**

**Kvintet op. 43**

I. Allegro ben moderato 8:39

II. Menuett 4:55

III. Praeludium 2:17

Tema con variazioni 0:51

Variation 1 0:50

Variation 2. Un poco di più 0:35

Variation 3. Meno mosso 0:40

Variation 4. Più vivo 0:24

Variation 5. Tempo giusto 0:40

Variation 6. Andantino con moto 0:48

Variation 7. Un poco di più 0:48

Variation 8. Poco meno 0:47

Variation 9. Tempo giusto 1:10

Variation 10. Allegretto 0:49

Variation 11. Tempo di marcia 1:01

Andantino festivo 1:20







## SAGA

With its second CD, *Saga*, the ARUNDOSquintett brings to life four varied soundscapes that immediately stimulate the imagination. Claude Debussy's colourful recreations of a bygone ideal, Carl Nielsen's playful take on the diversity of human characteristics and Lalo Schifrin's own interpretation of the New Orleans style have long been part of the ensemble's repertoire, becoming firm favourites. Expanding the repertoire for its classical formation is of particular importance to the five musicians and, as for their debut CD, *Origin*, they have once again commissioned a new work, this time from the US composer Kevin Beavers: the "saga" continues...

### Claude Debussy: *Petite suite*

1 March 1889, a salon concert at the home of the Parisian music publisher Auguste Durand: Claude Debussy and his fellow student Jacques Durand, the publisher's son and business partner, perform the premiere of the *Petite suite* for piano four hands. Durand et Fils had also published the cantata *L'enfant prodigue*, which in 1884 had earned Debussy the coveted Prix de Rome when he completed his course at the Paris Conservatoire. Otherwise, the 26-year-old composer had as yet no great successes to show when he played four hands at Durand's house: struggling to counter the French music of his era and the general Wagner euphoria of the time with a voice of his own, he was still searching for a compositional means of expression.

The "small suite" breaks new ground: the first two movements, *En bateau* ("On the boat") and *Cor-tège* ("Procession"), refer to poems in Paul Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes* of 1869 – a modern form of poetry evoking the mythical serenity of Watteau's rococo scenes. The third and fourth movements, *Menuet* and



*Ballet*, point directly to French baroque music, which was to become paradigmatic and groundbreaking for Debussy's late work. But the *Petite suite* already leaves behind the indulgent idiom of late romanticism and heroic pathos, instead painting an idealised picture of past times as an utopia for the future.

Debussy himself was apparently fond of this short work: a few months after the first performance, with Paul Dukas as his piano partner, he presented it in Ernest Guiraud's composition class at the Paris Conservatoire. One of the students was Henri Büsser, who almost twenty years later was to arrange the *Petite suite* for orchestra. Debussy himself programmed this orchestral version – alongside groundbreaking works such as his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *La mer* – for two important portrait concerts that were arranged for him in Vienna in 1910 and in London in 1914.

As cheerful and light-hearted as the music of the *Petite suite* may sound, on closer inspection it is rhythmically varied and harmonically differentiated. This becomes especially clear in Gordon Davies' arrangement for chamber ensemble – recorded here for the first time on CD – which combines the colours of the wind instruments with the graphic precision of the original.

#### Kevin Beavers: *Quintet*

In his wind quintet, commissioned by the ARUNDOSquintett and dedicated to the ensemble's horn player, Lisa Rogers, Kevin Beavers also finds a musical language that is both accessible and witty – “A personal connection with some of the members and my familiarity with their work undeniably influenced and inspired the creation of my quintet.” Beavers gives all five players the opportunity to burgeon as soloists on an equal footing as well as to blend artfully into the ensemble.

Born in the USA, Beavers studied with William Bolcom at the University of Michigan and with Theo Loevendie at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Since 2005 he has lived and worked in Germany. He





consistently combines traditions from both sides of the Atlantic: on the one hand, American symphonic music stretching from Aaron Copland to John Williams, but also popular idioms such as jazz, funk, rock and folk; and, on the other hand, twentieth century classical European modernism, drawing from composers such as Stravinsky, Bartók, Dutilleux, Ravel, Prokofiev, Lutosławski, Britten, Hindemith and Sibelius. “Much of my inspiration derives from the previous century. I yearn for the spirited and vibrant music of these composers and wish that today’s contemporary music retained more of that ethos and sparkle.”

The first movement is marked *animato e giocoso* – at the opening a playful, mocking motif in thirds appears, from which Beavers develops not only the varied moods of the first movement, but of the entire work: “The three movements of the piece, though not explicitly titled, are personal reflections of characters I’ve imagined: a charmer, a lover, and a jokester. While each movement has its distinct ambiance and character, there’s a unifying thread. The recurring musical motif, reminiscent of a child’s taunt – ‘nah-nah, nah-nah’ – provides a shared DNA, showcasing disparate movements tethered by a singular musical idea.”

The central second movement, *misterioso e sensuale*, explores intimate and meditative spheres of sound and expression, led by the extended monologues of the flute and bassoon. In the finale, a *presto euforico* characterised by energetic jazz rhythms, it is ultimately – despite the virtuoso bravura elements – the shared rhythmic-harmonic patterns which lead to a notional happy ending.

#### Lalo Schifrin: ***La Nouvelle Orléans***

There are composers whose names immediately bring particular works to mind. In the case of Lalo Schifrin, this is inevitably the theme music for the television series *Mission Impossible*, composed in 1966.



What is less well known is that the Argentinian-born composer wrote not only over a hundred other television and film scores (including for Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* films), but also more than sixty classical works, including the wind quintet *La Nouvelle Orléans*, composed in 1987 at the suggestion of the Dorian Wind Quintet.

It was for this famous American ensemble that the composer developed his own version of the classic New Orleans band – within the scenario of a traditional funeral. A lamentation is heard on the way to the cemetery and a cheerful rag on the way back: “Eleven macks a-ridin’ to the graveyard, but only ten a-comin’ back.” However, Schifrin’s concept goes far beyond a whimsical genre piece, as revealed by the two quotes which he contributed for the first recording of the work: “Wear out to be renewed” (Lao-Tse) and “The secrets of evolution are time and death” (Carl Sagan).

To represent these universal ideas of growing and withering Schifrin creates an elaborate *adagio non troppo* – an “art-music” blues vacillating between a persistently progressing ostinato and excited solos within Messiaen-inspired harmonies. Finally, the composer drops this mask and finds his way, via a short blues march (*più lento*), into the jazzy, groovy, concluding *allegro*.

#### Carl Nielsen: *Kvintet*, Op. 43

Copenhagen, autumn 1921: Carl Nielsen calls his pianist friend Christian Christiansen. In the background, four woodwind players – members of the Københavns Blæserkvintet – are rehearsing Mozart's *Sinfonia concertante*. Nielsen is so enthusiastic that he immediately drops in on the rehearsal. A few months later, he presents a wind quintet, which he dedicates to the ensemble. The first performance takes place on 30 April 1922 at the home of the banker and music patron Herman Mannheimer, a close friend, in Gothenburg, Sweden.





At this time, alongside Jean Sibelius, Carl Nielsen was Scandinavia's leading composer, as well as an extremely important voice of European modernism. With its partly pessimistic, partly confrontational style, his fifth symphony had triggered a number of controversies. There is hardly any sign of this in the wind quintet, which was composed only a little while later: Mozart, whose freedom from all rules and whose balance between individuality and objectivity Nielsen greatly appreciated, is the inspiration and model for this work. Classical forms may therefore characterise the three movements of the wind quintet, but they are presented in Nielsen's very own interpretation.

The graceful opening movement causes the sonata form to flow organically. The relaxed minuet – as the finale later on – emphatically testifies to Nielsen's preference for a contrapuntal style of writing. The prelude to the third movement hints at the composer's darker side, which was to emerge clearly in his later works but always strived for positive resolutions. The wind quintet concludes with a set of eleven short and cheerfully contrasting variations. The theme is a popular chorale from Nielsen's pen, "Min Jesus, lad mit Hjerte faa" – a trademark, so to speak, of the composer, who in several collections enriched Danish folk and sacred song with numerous melodies. The variations are a tribute to the five players of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet and are real character studies. In 1925, on the occasion of the premiere of his sixth symphony, the *Sinfonia semplice*, Carl Nielsen said in a newspaper interview: "The funniest thing can be truly profound if it is expressed correctly. Profundity means saying what is said in the right way."

Elisabeth von Leliwa  
Translation: Viola Scheffel



**ARUNDOSquintett**

The international ARUNDOSquintett – Anna Saha (flute), Yoshihiko Shimo (oboe), Christine Stemmler (clarinet), Lisa Rogers (horn) and Yuka Maehrle (bassoon) has its artistic home in the federate state of North Rhine-Westphalia, which awarded the quintet a three-year ensemble grant in 2020. The debut CD *Origin* was supported by a grant from the Kunststiftung NRW and received enthusiastic reviews in the specialised press as well as from Deutschlandfunk, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and rbb Berlin. With *Saga*, the ensemble is now presenting its second CD release, again sponsored by the Kunststiftung NRW.

On stage, the ARUNDOSquintett has delighted audiences in numerous chamber music series, for example at the Kölner Philharmonie, the WDR Funkhaus Köln and Beethovenhaus Bonn, on tours to Spain, Italy, Denmark and Belgium, as well as at the Rheingau Musik Festival and Kempen Klassik.

Founded in 2013 at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, the ARUNDOSquintett won prizes at the Antón García Abril 2014 and Castilla y León 2015 chamber music competitions, as well as a scholarship from the Werner Richard – Dr. Carl Dörken Foundation and the Best of NRW 2016 concert series. The ensemble qualified for participation in the ARD Music Competition 2014, Carl Nielsen International Music Competition 2015 and Osaka International Chamber Music Competition 2017.

Its extensive repertoire ranges from the classical composer Anton Reicha and arrangements from the romantic period to French and German wind chamber music of the twentieth century, as well as very recent compositions. In 2020, the ensemble announced a composition competition at German music colleges in order to inspire the next generation of composers for the wind quintet genre.

Broadening musical horizons is just as important to the ARUNDOSquintett as is varied and knowledgeable programme design spanning different epochs and styles – and, not least, dialogue with the audience, stimulated by their own personal concert introductions. The CD recordings bear witness to this passion for presenting the newer repertoire for wind quintet in first recordings and expanding it with commissioned compositions.



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ARUNDOSquintett

**Anna Saha**  
flute • piccolo

**Yoshihiko Shimo**  
oboe • English horn

**Christine Stemmler**  
clarinet

**Lisa Rogers**  
horn

**Yuka Maehrle**  
bassoon

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