

Decoda Wind Ensemble with Piano

New Orleans Friends of Music, Monday, March 16, 2026

PROGRAM

Mozart Wind Quintet and the Contemporary Canon

Alicia Lee, *Clarinet and Project Leader*

Stuart Breczincki, *Oboe*

Shelly Monroe, *Bassoon*

Laura Weiner, *French Horn*

Elizabeth Joy Roe, *Piano*

Works for Solo Wind Instruments and Piano Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

1. Sonata for Bassoon and Piano in G Major, Op. 168
First Movement: Allegretto moderato
2. Sonata for Oboe and Piano in D Major, Op. 166
Second Movement: Allegretto
3. Romance for Horn and Piano in F Major
4. Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 167
Fourth Movement: Molto allegro

Contemporary Works for Wind Quartet

Azul

Adam Schoenberg (b. 1980)

Turbulence

Michael Atkinson (b. 1978)

given

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

Intermission

Quintet for Winds and Piano (K. 452) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

1. Largo; Allegro moderato
 2. Larghetto
 3. *Rondo: Allegretto*
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PROGRAM NOTES

by Marc Loudon

Board Member Marc Loudon provides these program notes in advance of each concert. These contain more detail than those in the program.

[*Note:* Performance links provided in these notes are generally available *YouTube* links that in some cases start with advertisements. You can skip the ads by clicking on the “Skip” message that will appear on the lower right of the video after a few seconds.]

The Ensemble begins the program by cleverly assembling a “quasi-sonata” from four different works of **Camille Saint-Saëns**. Movements 1, 2, and 4 are derived, respectively, from the same movements of the **Sonata in G Major** for bassoon and piano, the **Sonata in D Major** for oboe and piano, and the **Sonata in E-flat Major** for clarinet and piano. The “third movement” of the “quasi-sonata” is the **Romance in F Major** for horn and piano. This programming allows us to

hear the individual instruments in solo roles before they combine in the remainder of the program.

Saint-Saëns wrote the three woodwind sonatas in the year of his death (1921), writing on April 15 of that year to a friend, “At the moment I am concentrating my last reserves on giving rarely considered instruments the chance to be heard.” The clarinet sonata is dedicated to Auguste Périer, a professor at the Conservatoire de Paris, and the oboe sonata to Louis Bas, first solo oboe with the Société du Conservatoire de l’Opéra. The woodwind sonatas are rarely heard today outside of the woodwind community. These pieces are real gems, and it is a rare opportunity to hear them played on the same program.



The Romance for French Horn is an earlier work, written in 1874 for Henri Garigue, a renowned horn player in Paris who specialized in the valveless horn (photo). The valved horn had been introduced in France in 1839, but strangely (given that it would later be called the French Horn) the new-fangled instrument met with great resistance. In France, most horn players continued to play the natural horn, and teachers in the conservatoires refused to countenance anyone who played the young upstart valved instrument. So, when Garigue asked Saint-Saëns for a short piece for him to play with a salon orchestra (just strings, and 2 flutes, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets and 1 bassoon), Saint-Saëns readily complied. The Romance is generally heard, as it will be tonight, with the original piano accompaniment written by Saint-Saëns. Garigue’s advocacy for the natural horn lasted until 1890, when, in a startling turn of events, his son was barred from the Paris Conservatoire for daring to play the valved horn at an audition. So incensed was Garigue, that, out of solidarity for his son, he abandoned the natural horn and, literally, wrote the textbook on modern horn playing using valved horns.

The following links are to performances of the woodwind sonatas and the Romance for Horn.

[The Bassoon Sonata, performed by Theo Plath](#)

[The Oboe Sonata, performed by Marta Meštrović, Oboe, \(Masters recital\) and Ivan Batoš, Piano, from the Zagreb Academy of Music](#) (The second movement is at 3:49 in the performance.)

[The Clarinet Sonata, performed by Luis Fernández-Costelló](#) (The 4th movement is at 11:23 in the performance.)

[The Romance for Horn and Piano, performed by David Cooper of the Chicago Symphony.](#)

Mr. Cooper performs on the valveless horn for which the Romance was originally composed. He precedes the performance with an engaging discussion of the horn.

The four wind players join forces on three very short contemporary works, each written by an American composer under 50 years of age. **Adam Schoenberg**’s works have been performed by numerous orchestras and ensembles in the U.S. His honors include the 2007 Morton Gould Young Composer Award from ASCAP, and the 2006 Charles Ives Prize from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Schoenberg earned his Masters and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from The Juilliard School, where he studied composition with John Corigliano and Robert Beaser. Residing in Los Angeles, Schoenberg is Assistant Professor of Composition at Occidental College.

Michael P. Atkinson is a New York-based conductor, arranger/orchestrator, and accomplished horn player who holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Julliard School. Currently, Atkinson is Associate Conductor of *The Knights*, a group of young musicians who “seek to expand the boundaries of classical music.” Atkinson conducted the group at the Naumburg Bandshell in New York’s Central Park, at Tanglewood’s Seiji Ozawa Hall, and Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall. With Mikael Karlsson, Atkinson recently completed a jointly composed ballet for the Scottish Ballet, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, which received its premiere at the Edinburgh International Festival in August 2025. He has many other diverse performance, collaboration, and composition credits.

Caroline Adelaide Shaw is a New York-based composer of contemporary classical music, a violinist, and a singer. She is a founding member of the vocal ensemble *Roomful of Teeth*. In 2013 she became the youngest-ever winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Music for her cappella piece *Partita for 8 Voices*, and she received the 2022 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for her *Narrow Sea*. She also won the 2025 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance for her *Rectangles and Circumstance*. Shaw received her Bachelor of Music in violin performance from Rice University in 2004. She later completed a Master of Music degree (violin) from Yale University.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed his **Quintet for Winds and Piano (K. 452)** for a concert of entirely new works given at the Burgtheater in Vienna on April 1, 1784. About the quintet he wrote to his father Leopold shortly after the concert, “I consider it the best work I have ever written ... it called forth the greatest applause.”

The quintet has three movements, more like a concerto than a traditional quartet or quintet, and, indeed, it has certain elements of a concerto, with the winds playing the “solo” part and the piano the “orchestra” part. The first movement opens in a stately *Largo* of 22 bars—a bit reminiscent of a French overture—which serves as an introduction to the *Allegro moderato*, which is in traditional sonata form. The brief development section utilizes a sequential development of the opening theme that works its way from A-flat major to B-flat minor to C minor, and then back to the opening key of E-flat major.

The second movement, in B-flat major, is a serene *Larghetto* in $3/8$ meter. Although many of Mozart’s works in B-flat are jovial, this one has a lush beauty tinged with sadness.

The final movement is a *Rondo*. The episodes following the first two thematic expositions feature virtuosic piano interludes, and the second of these leads to an element occasionally used in his piano sonatas, but more often found in his concertos: a cadenza (marked “Cadenza in Tempo”) in which the winds *and* the piano participate in the cadential development. This leads to a final statement of the *rondo* theme.

A performance of the Wind Quintet from the Hochrhein Musikfestival in Salsburg:

[Mozart Wind and Piano Quintet from the Hochrhein Musikfestival](#)