



BERLIN PHILHARMONIC WIND QUINTET

Michael Hasel, flute
Andreas Wittmann, oboe
Walter Seyfarth, clarinet
Fergus McWilliam, horn
Marion Reinhard, bassoon

The Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet (Philharmonisches Bläserquintett Berlin) was founded in 1988, during the era of Herbert von Karajan, the first permanently established wind quintet in the famous orchestra's rich tradition of chamber music.

With four original members since inception (Marion Reinhard succeeded founding bassoonist Henning Trog in 2009), they are living musical witnesses to the hugely productive and influential musical partnerships of the Berlin Philharmonic not only with Karajan, but also with its two most recent Musical Directors: Claudio Abbado and Sir Simon Rattle. Naturally, as members of the Berlin Philharmonic, they have also enjoyed important collaborations with every other major conductor of their times, whether Leonard Bernstein, Carlos Kleiber, Sir John Barbirolli, Günter Wand, Carlo Maria Giulini, Bernard Haitink, Riccardo Muti, James Levine or Daniel Barenboim, to name only a few.

The Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet continues to astonish audiences worldwide with their range of expression, their tonal spectrum and their conceptual unity. Indeed many listeners and critics agree that the ensemble has succeeded in virtually redefining the sound of the classic wind quintet. Their repertoire covers not only the entire spectrum of the wind quintet literature but also includes works for enlarged ensemble, i.e. the Sextets of Janáček and Reinicke or the Septets of Hindemith and Koechlin. In addition, collaboration with pianists such as Lars Vogt, Stephen Hough, Jon Nakamatsu and Lilya Zilberstein have intensified in recent years.

The ensemble's commitment to the wind quintet repertoire is passionate and in 1991 they found the perfect partner for their recording plans, the Swedish company BIS Records, already well known in its own right for its uncompromising standards. The results of this long and exclusive collaboration have received critical accolades worldwide - indeed many of these recordings are already widely held to be "definitive" or "reference" performances.

In addition to their concert appearances throughout Europe, North and South America, Israel, Australia and the Far East, the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet are also popular guests at international festivals such as the Berliner Festwochen, the Edinburgh Festival, the London Proms, the Quintette-Biennale Marseille, the Rheingau Festival and the Salzburg Festival. Their televi-

sion productions and radio broadcasts are seen and heard throughout Europe, Asia and North America.

In recent years the members of the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet have intensified their teaching and coaching roles with youth; they give chamber music workshops and instrumental instruction in many countries, with a particular commitment, for example, to the youth orchestra program of Venezuela.

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INDIVIDUAL BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Hasel (flute) was born in Hofheim near Frankfurt and began his music studies on piano and organ, intending to graduate as a church musician. He studied the flute first with Herbert Grimm (Mainz) and Willy Schmidt (Frankfurt) and then with Aurèle Nicolet at the Freiburg Musikhochschule. His first orchestral appointment was from 1982 to 1984 with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, after which he became a member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Herbert von Karajan. For several years he performed as principal flute with the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra under conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez and James Levine. In 1994 he was appointed Professor of Wind Ensemble and Chamber Music at the Heidelberg-Mannheim Musikhochschule. He is internationally active as a soloist, chamber musician, conductor and teacher and in 2006 he became Artistic Director of Ensemble Madrid-Berlin, a musical collaboration of leading Spanish and Berlin Philharmonic musicians.

Andreas Wittmann, a descendent of Franz Liszt, was born in Munich and at age 12 began oboe studies with Heinz Brune in Regensburg. In 1976 he entered the Munich “Hochschule für Musik” as a “Jungstudent” with Prof. Manfred Clement and in 1977 he won first prize in the prestigious “Jugend Musiziert” competition. 1982 saw him at the “Hochschule der Künste” in Berlin with Hansjörg Schellenberger from where he graduated in 1985. Wittmann spent only one year as a scholarship student at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy before being appointed to the Berlin Philharmonic itself in 1986. He is an internationally active soloist, chamber musician and teacher, whose career also includes performing as principal oboe with the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic, as well as teaching at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy. He was Chairman of the Berlin Philharmonic from 2000 to 2005.

Walter Seyfarth (clarinet) is a native of Düsseldorf and a first prize winner at the age of sixteen in the Deutscher Tonkünstlerverband competition. Following his studies at the Freiburg Musikhochschule with Peter Rieckhoff and with Karl Leister at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy, he was appointed to the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra. In 1985, he joined the Berlin Philharmonic as Solo Eb-Clarinetist. It was Seyfarth who founded the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet in 1988. He is also a member of the larger ensemble “The Winds of the Berlin Philharmonic”. Among his teaching and mentoring responsibilities are the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy, the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra and the Venezuelan Youth Orchestras Programme.

Fergus McWilliam was born on the shores of Scotland's Loch Ness and studied initially in Canada (John Simonelli, Frederick Rizner, Eugene Rittich), making his *début* as a soloist with the Toronto Symphony under Seiji Ozawa at the age of 15. Further studies were undertaken in Amsterdam (Adriaan van Woudenberg) and Stockholm (Wilhelm Lanzky-Otto). From 1972 through 1979 McWilliam was a member of several Canadian orchestras and chamber music ensembles before joining the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Antal Dorati. From 1982 to 1985 he was a member of the Bavarian Radio Symphony under Raphael Kubelik and Leonard Bernstein and in 1985 he was appointed to the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan. He is not only active internationally as a soloist and chamber musician but teaches at a number of internationally renowned music schools including the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy. In addition, McWilliam is currently a Trustee of the Berlin Philharmonic Foundation.

Marion Reinhard (bassoon) was born in Nuremberg and from 1991 to 1995 studied at the Meistersinger Conservatory with Walter Urbach and Karsten Nagel. While still only a student, she began performing with the Nuremberg Philharmonic Orchestra as Contra-Bassoonist. In 1995 she won a scholarship to study at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy with Stefan Schweigert and Daniele Damiano. Further studies with Georg Kluetsch in Weimar rounded out her musical training and in 1999 she was appointed to the Berlin Philharmonic where she became a direct colleague of, and was inspired, by Henning Trog. From 1996 until her appointment to the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet, she was a founding member of the prize-winning Orsolino Wind Quintet as well as of Ensemble Berlin.