



Sunday, September 20, 2026
3:00 pm

Williams Theatre
Tulsa Performing Arts Center

AKROPOLIS REED QUINTET

Tim Gocklin, OBOE
Kari Landry, CLARINET
Matt Landry, SAXOPHONE
Andrew Koeppe, BASS CLARINET
Ryan Reynolds, BASSOON

MARC MELLITS

(b. 1966)

Splinter

Movements selected from the following:

Scarlet Oak
Sugar Maple
Linden
Black Ash
Cherry
River Birch
Weeping Willow
Red Pine

**JENNIFER
HIGDON**

(b. 1962)

Rush Not The Reeds

(CMT Co-Commission)

- I N T E R M I S S I O N -

DERRICK SKYE

(b. 1982)

A Soulful Nexus

Movements selected from the following:

1
2
3
4

**GEORGE
GERSHWIN**

(1898-1937)

An American in Paris (arr. Raaf Hekkema)

Jennifer Higdon's *Rush Not The Reeds* was commissioned by **Akropolis Reed Quintet** with support provided by **Chamber Music Tulsa** and **The Barthelmes Foundation**.

This work was also made possible in part by support from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, with additional support provided by the **Paul M. Angell Family Foundation**, **The Amphion Foundation**, **The Aaron Copland Fund for Music**, the **Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University**, **The Kresge Foundation**, **New Music USA**, and individual donors.

PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

Photographing, sound recording, or videotaping this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Splinter

MARC MELLITS

- Born 1966 in Baltimore, MD
- Duration of selected movements: 10-15 minutes

Composed in 2014

Splinter, by Chicago-based composer Marc Mellits, is probably the most performed work of the reed quintet template. Composed in 2014, the work is ideal for introducing the sound world of the reed quintet to ears which may never have heard it before. *Splinter* is composed of short “miniatures,” each with its own personality. Combined, they express unique emotional qualities through hocketing rhythms — in which a single musical line is split between two or more instruments —

and colorful orchestrations. Mellits often composes for amplified acoustic instruments, including percussion, piano, and strings, so rhythmic drive and development are major components to his music. In *Splinter*, though, these complement his use of elongated phrases, subtle and effective harmonic motion, and beautiful textural creations.

Rush Not The Reeds

JENNIFER HIGDON

- Born 1962 in Brooklyn, NY
- World Premiere: Sep. 19, 2026

Composed in 2026

The thrill of pondering the sound of a group of reed instruments playing together evoked in my imagination the visual beauty of nature’s reeds and rushes, gently swaying in a breeze. Considering a “reed” quintet, the play on words (with different possible definitions) was inspirational in dreaming up the sound world of this piece. Listen carefully, and rush not the experience

of hearing exceptional reed players, singing to listeners through music in the power of a choir, but also in single melodic lines. Rush not the reeds.

- Jennifer Higdon

A Soulful Nexus

DERRICK SKYE

- Born 1982

- Duration of selected movements:
15-20 minutes

Composed in 2023

Composer's Note: "A Soulful Nexus is a transcultural classical work that blends elements of Persian classical music with ornamental vocal techniques found in solo Balkan vocal melodies and the groove-based polyrhythms characteristic of electronic dance music. From Persian classical music, the piece uses an E *koron*, which to the Western trained ear may sound like a flat microtonal pitch. However, in Persian classical music, a *koron* is considered its own note, not a microtone between notes. Sonically, this demonstrates how something initially perceived as an imperfection, over time and with change in perspective, can be seen as an aspect of perfection.

Central to A Soulful Nexus is the use of the melodic framework *Gushé Shekaste* from Persian classical music, which includes the E *koron*. *Shekaste* translated means "broken," due to the relationship between the main tetrachord and auxiliary notes of this

melodic framework. Throughout the piece, *Morakab-Navazie* is used to move between *Gushé Shekaste* and *Darâmad Dastgâh-e Mahur* and *Dastgâh-e Râstpanjgâh*. The fourth movement in particular is inspired by Afro-Persian music from Southern Iran. From Balkan music, the piece uses mordents and fragmented motivic phrasing often used by solo vocalists in Bulgarian women's choir music. From electronic dance music, A Soulful Nexus uses cyclical, groove-based polyrhythms to accompany instrumental solos. The title A Soulful Nexus serves as an invitation for listeners and performers to trace the intricate pathways of these musical idioms interwoven throughout the composition."

A Soulful Nexus has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Mellon Foundation.

An American in Paris

(arr. Raaf Hekkema)

GEORGE GERSHWIN

- Born 1898 in New York, NY
- Died 1937 in Los Angeles, CA
- Duration: 19 minutes

Composed in 1928

In *An American in Paris*, Gershwin aimed to create a serious work, despite his natural affinity for frivolity. He consulted Maurice Ravel about this conundrum, who wisely instructed that if Gershwin was making more money than Ravel (which he was), he shouldn't change how he writes his music. He sought advice from Nadia Boulanger, the great teacher of Aaron Copland and others. She also wisely suggested to Gershwin: try to be no one but Gershwin. And so, using complex motivic development which is constantly modulating and changing form, Gershwin manages to create his most accessible, but simultaneously most complex piece of music. In making this arrangement for reed quin-

tet, Dutch saxophonist Raaf Hekkema faced the challenge of conveying Gershwin's complex, orchestral-scale ideas with only five instruments. Hekkema brilliantly takes a smaller color palette and combines the instruments to create more textural possibilities than the listener could ever predict. While Gershwin's orchestrations maximize the orchestra's capabilities, the listener might find Gershwin's ideas even easier to comprehend in the small-ensemble format. The continually repeating and evolving motifs make for a challenging but thrilling performance which Akropolis is delighted to bring to the stage.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Akropolis Reed Quintet

Founded in 2009, the GRAMMY® Award-winning **Akropolis Reed Quintet** is “a sonically daring ensemble who specializes in performing new works with charisma and integrity” (BBC Music Magazine). Comprising five reed players and entrepreneurs unbounded by limits or categorization, Akropolis has graced the Classical Billboard Charts with each of their last three

albums, including #2 in April, 2024, and has won seven national chamber music prizes including the 2014 Fischhoff Gold Medal. Having premiered and commissioned more than 200 works by living artists and composers, they are pioneers and champions of a new genre of classical music—the reed quintet.

Composed of the same five members that brought about its founding at the University of Michigan, they are the first ensemble to receive the University's Paul M. Boylan Alumni Award. Akropolis delivers 120 concerts and educational events worldwide each year at luminary series including Tanglewood, Bravo! Vail, University Musical Society, Chamber Music Northwest, and more. Akropolis became the first ever GRAMMY® winning reed quintet with their 2024 album, *Are We Dreaming the Same Dream?*, in collaboration with Pascal Le Boeuf and drummer Christian Euman, taking home Best Instrumental Composition for the track “Strands” at the 67th Grammy Awards held in February, 2025.

Following this 2025 GRAMMY® win for *Strands* by Pascal Le Boeuf, Akropolis will release their 7th album on September 25, 2026, entitled *A Soulful Nexus*, which features an album-length transcultural work by composer Derrick Skye. Shaped by deep listening across musical traditions, the project blends Persian, Balkan, Indian, and electronic music across five movements that feature rhythmic, polyphonic, groove-based, and meditative elements in dialogue, emphasizing connection rather than contrast.

Utilizing their “sheer musical imagination” (Gramophone), the quintet is also known for powerful collaborations with youth and others within its Southeast Michigan community. Certified as a 510(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Akropolis runs a Detroit-based summer festival called *Together We Sound*, holds an annual, school year-long music composition residencies at Cass Tech, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Detroit School of Arts high schools, and produces a week-long Chamber Music Institute focused on artist training and mentorship in partnership with Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Described as “pure gold” by the San Francisco Chronicle, Akropolis Reed Quintet performs worldwide and is represented exclusively by Ariel Artists.

ABOUT CHAMBER MUSIC TULSA

Established in 1954, Chamber Music Tulsa's mission is to share the experience of chamber music through live performance and community engagement. Our vision is to make chamber music widely accessible in Tulsa, to present compelling performances, and to invest in the future of chamber music by commissioning new music.

For more information on our concerts and outreach activities, please visit chambermusictulsa.org.

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UP NEXT AT CMT

ISRAELI CHAMBER PROJECT

Sun, Oct 4, 3:00 pm
Williams Theatre, Tulsa PAC
Works by: Igor Stravinsky, Shulamit Ran,
George Gershwin, Noam Faingold,
Ernő Dohnányi, Béla Bartók

INVOKE

Fri, Oct 16, 7:30 pm
Renaissance Square Event Center
Works by: William Grant Still, Florence Price,
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THE VIANO QUARTET

Sat, Nov 21, 2026 • 7:00 pm
Westby Pavilion, Tulsa PAC



The Viano Quartet are laureates of the prestigious Banff International String Quartet Competition and recipients of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. They return to Tulsa, bringing their gorgeous playing in works by Antonín Dvořák and Felix Mendelssohn, as well as a new string quartet composed especially for them by Reena Esmail. CMT is a co-commissioner of this enchanting new work.



Chamber Music Tulsa gratefully acknowledges
Tulsa Community College, School of Visual & Performing Arts for its support.

Chamber Music Tulsa's concerts and education outreach programs are presented with assistance from the **Oklahoma Arts Council**, which receives support from the **State of Oklahoma** and the **National Endowment for the Arts**.



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