

ERC STAFF

Jon Salamon (Marketing and Media Manager)
Caity Quinn (Programs and Grants Manager)
April Thibeault (Publicist, AMT Public Relations)
Margy Steinberg (ERC Special Projects Coordinator)

ERC Board

Susan Winokur, President
Paul Leach
Eve Wolf
James Melo
Max Barros
Donald T. Sanders

ERC CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

SALON SUSTAINER (\$25,000 or more)
Susan Winokur and Paul Leach

SALON SUPPORTER (\$10,000-\$24,999)
Anonymous

SALON BENEFACTOR (\$3,000-\$4,999)
Bea Bloch & Alan Sagner
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
New York State Council on the Arts

PATRON (\$1,000-\$2,999)
Margery and Lewis Steinberg
Widder Foundation, in memory of Ruth Widder
Jeffrey and Deborah Birnbaum
Paola Baccaglioni
Suzan Amato & Tom Decanio
Francesca Kress & Jack Mayberry
Helen Little
Rita & Sidney Milstein

PATRON con't
Sheila Fiekowsky and Warren Schwartz
Janice & George Gewirtz
Nancy & Joel Streim

DONOR (\$500-\$999)
Steve Allen and Caroline Thompson
Sarah Henry Lederman
Dr. Laurence and Barbara Wolf

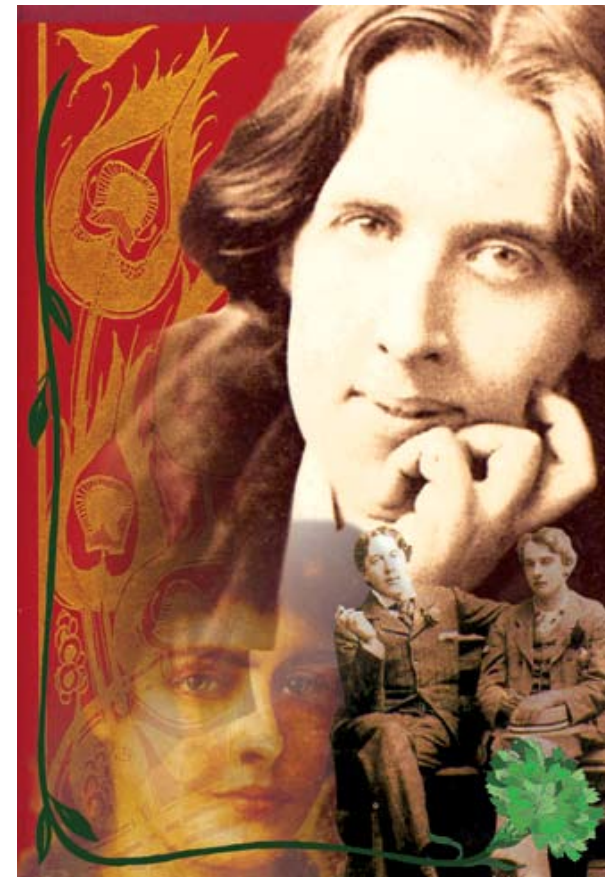
FRIEND (\$250-\$499)
Michael and Karen Brownlee
Michael Bruno
Patricia & Jeffrey Karp

CONTRIBUTOR (\$100-\$249)
Tom and Leslie Freudenheim
Diane Pachetti
Dr. Henny Wenkart

Ensemble *for the* Romantic Century
Theatrical Concerts
Eve Wolf & Max Barros, Artistic Directors
James Melo, Musicologist

PRESENTS

The Trial of Oscar Wilde



Leonard Nimoy Thalia at Symphony Space, New York, NY
June 19-21, 2014

Ensemble for the Romantic Century

presents

The Trial of Oscar Wilde

Leonard Nimoy Thalia at Symphony Space
June 19 - 21

Written by **James Melo**

Directed by **Donald T. Sanders**

Set and Costumes by **Vanessa James**

Lighting by **Beverly Emmons**

Eve Wolf and Max Barros, Artistic Directors

James Melo, Musicologist

Donald T. Sanders, Director of Theatrical Production

Special thanks to

Susan Winokur and Paul Leach for making this series possible

Mt. Holyoke College Department of Theatre Arts for the use of properties and costumes

Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie for her continuing support of ERC's activities at CUNY Graduate Center

This concert is dedicated to the memory of Ruth Widder, whose love for chamber music touched the lives of many people.

ERC's 2013-2014 season is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, by the Barry S. Brook Center for Musical Research and Documentation at CUNY Graduate Center, and ERC's *Circle of Friends*.



Program Notes

composed only one String Quartet (1890), from which comes the *Scherzo* performed tonight, one Piano Quintet (1878-79), one Symphony, and so on. The *String Quartet in D major* was one of Franck's last compositions, and it is symptomatic that he waited until very late in his career to tackle such a venerable musical genre. The *String Quartet* combines a strict handling of classical forms with an intense emotionalism typical of the late Romantic style. The *Scherzo* is somewhat idiosyncratic in regard to Franck's style, but it is structurally very much within his compositional practice of recalling themes and motives from one movement to the next. In this case, elements of the main theme from the first movement reappear in the *Scherzo*, and later on in the *Finale*, in accordance with Franck's preference for cyclical forms.

In the chamber music of **Gabriel Fauré** (1845-1924) the piano is invariably prominent, betraying the composer's fondness for this instrument. The piano is featured in the vast majority of his chamber works, including sonatas, trios, quartets, and quintets. Very likely, Fauré experimented with a varied number of strings in combination with the piano as a way of exploring balances in texture and sonority. In a number of individual character pieces, he paired the piano with either the violin or the cello, creating a number of Romantic vignettes that are among his most charming works. Such is the case with the *Berceuse op. 16*, for violin and piano (1879), a supremely lyrical composition whose charm is quintessentially French.

There are very few composers as intriguing, perspicacious, and idiosyncratic as **Erik Satie** (1866-1925). Endowed with a personality that invariably put him at odds with the prevailing assumptions of society, Satie made it a credo to challenge every received notion about art, music, performance, pedagogy, and composition. His career evolved as a continuous series of experiments and daring acts, as he composed music that was often characterized by a strong satirical vein. He made fun of the traditional forms of Western music, dealt blows to the ivory towers and pedestals that supported performers and their crave for fame, and chipped away at all the bourgeois institutions. Satie's biographer Alan Gillmor has argued that, at heart, Satie was a *fantasiste* and a *fumiste* (practical joker), belonging to a tradition of absurdist humor that can be traced back to Rabelais. No wonder his musical legacy continues to puzzle critics and scholars alike. And yet, Satie holds a strong appeal for the lay audience, particularly through his piano music. His six *Gnossiennes* (1890-93), compositions which he wanted people to believe to be emulations of ancient Greek dances from Knossos, are among his most appealing works. Underneath their simple surfaces, each of the *Gnossiennes* unfolds a highly poetic and dreamlike landscape. Even though there is some variation in texture, the *Gnossiennes* are unified by certain commonalities of mood and style (for example, there are no barlines to divide the measures), and by a certain whiff of antiquity and archaism that makes them perpetually intriguing. A very different character pervades the *Véritables préludes flasques (pour un chien)*—"Truly Flabby Preludes (for a dog)" (1912), which are superb examples of Satie's humorous and satirical vein. They are littered with witty instructions in French and in mock-Latin, which Satie was in the habit of adding to his scores. The first one, *Sévère réprimande*, is a short outburst that would be perfectly adequate to discipline a man's best friend, at least of the kind that Satie envisioned.

England produced very little music of any substance during the 19th century, a period during which the country was supremely rich in literature and poetry. This is one of the puzzles of music history, especially because England had one of the liveliest musical scenes in Europe. It was only in the late 19th century that English music began to flourish in earnest again, evolving in tandem with other developments elsewhere in Europe. **Edward Elgar** (1857-1934) and **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958) were two of the greatest exponents of this development. Elgar's style was quintessentially Romantic, building on formal and technical procedures that were perfectly attuned to the mainstream European tradition. In his choice of musical genres Elgar was relatively conservative. The *Sospiri op. 70*, for example, belongs to the tradition of Romantic salon music, even though it was originally written for string orchestra, harp, and organ. The piece was intended as a companion to the enormously popular *Salut d'amour* (1888), but it was only in 1914 that Elgar got around to composing it. In its emotional intensity and subdued anguish, *Sospiri* moves a step beyond the realm of the salon miniature, leaving an impression of a deeply felt, private moment.

Vaughan Williams's youthful *String Quartet in C minor* (1889) is still anchored in the late Romantic vocabulary, and thus is less representative of his style. In choosing such a venerable musical genre to test his compositional prowess so early in his career, Vaughan Williams was clearly making a significant statement about his compositional goals. The result was a highly accomplished composition, marked by an innovative approach to the challenges inherent in writing a texturally and musically balanced composition for four similar instruments. The layout in four movements is wholly traditional, and echoes of Dvorák can be heard in the intense lyricism of the first movement. Throughout the work, Vaughan Williams achieved a degree of conciseness and thematic economy that was a great demonstration of his compositional skills. The *String Quartet in C minor* was his first major composition of any kind.

When Oscar Wilde appeared at the premiere of his play *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1895, his friend Ada Leveson penned this description:

He was dressed with elaborate dandyism and a sort of florid sobriety. His coat had a black velvet collar. He held white gloves in his small pointed hands. On one finger he wore a large scarab ring. A green carnation, echo in color of the ring, bloomed in his buttonhole, and a large bunch of seals on a black moiré ribbon watch-chain hung from his white waistcoat. This costume, which on another man might have appeared perilously like fancy dress, and on his imitators was nothing less, seemed to suit him perfectly.

Nothing could be more appropriate for the man whose main concern was to make his own life into a work of art. His irreverence remained a distinctive trait of his character, and his green carnation traveled as far as to find a niche in Noël Coward's late tribute.

- James Melo, Musicologist

Program Notes

that he feels his inner self confounded, the depths of his being broken up, and the bliss of the Beautiful possessing him to the tips of his fingers.

It is easy to imagine what Nordau thought of Oscar Wilde, who in his poem *Hélas* included a line that may very well stand as an epigraph for his own life: “To drift with every passion till my soul is a stringed lute on which all winds can play.”

As already pointed out, Oscar Wilde had a profound identification with French culture and aesthetics. When his play *Salomé* (which was written originally in French) was forbidden to be staged in London, he joked that it was time for him to change nationality, but the remark was more than an innocent joke. Wilde’s entire artistic creed, as well as the way he conducted his life, would have been far more accepted in France than it ever was in England. When he visited Paris shortly before his play *The Importance of Being Earnest* opened in London in 1895, the painter Edgar Degas made a very prophetic comment. Reflecting on Wilde’s uncompromisingly aesthetic approach to life and his disregard for conventional morality, Degas said that “so much taste would inevitably lead to prison.” As we now know, he was proved right a few months afterward.

Tonight’s music program pays tribute to the aesthetic and stylistic links between Oscar Wilde and French culture. All the works are contemporaneous with Wilde’s life, and some of them were composed around the time of his trials and imprisonment.

COMMENTS ON THE MUSIC

In general, French chamber music of the late 19th century emulated traditional models from the Classic and early Romantic periods. With very few exceptions, composers opted for recognized genres such as pieces for solo instrument and piano, the string quartet, and various combinations of piano and strings. Within this traditional framework, however, French composers achieved a style of great subtlety and refinement, expressed through glimmering musical textures and dazzling sonorities.

The style of **Ernest Chausson** (1855-1899) evolved through a combination of Wagnerian influences and the revitalization of French music carried out by César Franck. In his works, he attempted a synthesis between formal Classicism and the introspective element of Romanticism, which later were refashioned according to clearly Symbolist principles. An important feature of Chausson’s style is his adventurous and forward-looking treatment of harmony, as he developed a harmonic palette that carried a strong potential for visual and symbolic associations. Chausson’s chamber music is not very extensive, but whatever he composed in this medium is characterized by unflinching elegance and subtlety.

The magnificent *Concerto for piano, violin, and string quartet* (1889-91) is very difficult to describe. It strides the boundaries between chamber and orchestral music, and a better description of its textures would be to consider it a duet for violin and piano, with accompaniment of string quartet. Chausson himself called the two solo instruments “projections against the quartet background,” a description that is reflected in long stretches of the piece during which those two instruments carry most of the thematic material. The work’s perfect cohesion among all the movements probably stems from the fact that all the themes were written out within the month of May of 1889, even though it took Chausson a couple of years to flesh out all the movements. The overall harmonic language of the *Concerto* is frankly Wagnerian, enhanced by a variety of archaic references to styles ranging from Classic to Baroque, as well as some veiled religious connotations. The first movement is based on a three-note motive introduced by the piano, which soon spins off into a flood of rich melodies. The thematic material is not treated according to any traditional principles, but is handled through ingenious textural juxtapositions. Older references are at play in the second movement, a *Sicillienne* of clearly Baroque affiliations that is infused with gracious and elegant rhythms. Nothing could be more contrasting than the emotionally intense *Grave* that follows, one of the most beautiful slow movements in the entire canon of French chamber music from the 19th century. The *Finale* once again harks back to the Baroque with its gigue rhythms, driving the work towards its conclusion with the energy and verve of a toccata.

Chausson dedicated the *Concerto* to the famous Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, who gave the premiere in Brussels in 1892, with the pianist Auguste Pierret and members of the Ysaÿe Quartet. On 26 February 1892, Chausson made an enthusiastic entry in his diary about the premiere: “Never have I had such a success! I can’t get over it. Everyone seems to love the *Concerto*. Very well played, with wonderful moments, and so artistically executed! I feel light and joyful, something I haven’t been for a long time. It has done me good and has given me courage. I believe I’ll work with more confidence in the future.”

By the time he composed the *Piano Quartet in A major, op. 30* (1897) Chausson was at the peak of his career. He was buoyed by an increasingly enthusiastic reception of his works, and the premiere of the *Piano Quartet* met with widespread recognition by critics and public alike. The slow movement, *Très calme*, unfolds with a majestic aplomb that elevates the poetic beauty of the main theme to great expressive heights. It is a simple ternary form, and its velvety sonorities owe much to the prominent role of the viola, as it introduces the main theme over gently supporting chords on the piano. The vitality and power of the *Piano Quartet* were remarked upon by many critics, and there was a general sense that Chausson’s style had finally crystallized into the blend of formal clarity and emotional intensity, an atmosphere of passionate reverie that had been his goal as a composer. Sadly, he died 18 months later as a consequence of a trivial bicycle accident, leaving the world to speculate about what directions his music would have taken had he lived longer.

César Franck (1822-1890) was one of the most fastidious composers in the history of Western music. His instrumental music remains one of the most impressive testimonies of the development of absolute music in France in the late 19th century. Many of his compositions are unique examples of a particular musical genre, as if he had fulfilled in that single example all the compositional and artistic expectations that the genre had to offer him. Thus, he

2013/14 Season

CAST

Michael Halling* Oscar Wilde

Robert Ian Mackenzie* Lord Queensbury

Susie Park, violin

Max Barros, piano

Amphion String Quartet

Katie Hyun, violin

David Southorn, violin

Wei-Yang Andy Lin, viola

Mihai Marica, cello

The Green Carnation Singers

John Bell, piano

Brian J. Gay

Andrew Howard

Trevor James

Matt Magrath

**appears courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States*

PROGRAM

ERIK SATIE	<i>Grossienne no. 4</i>
GABRIEL FAURÉ	<i>Berceuse</i> for violin and piano, op. 16
CÉSAR FRANCK	String Quartet in D major — Scherzo
ERIK SATIE	<i>Véritables préludes flasques (pour un chien)</i> — <i>Sévère réprimande</i>
NOËL COWARD	<i>We all wear a green carnation</i>
ERNEST CHAUSSON	Piano Quartet in A major, op. 30 — <i>Très calme</i>
ERNEST CHAUSSON	Concerto for violin, piano, and string quartet in D major, op. 21 — <i>Décidé—Animé</i>
INTERMISSION	
ERNEST CHAUSSON	Concerto for violin, piano, and string quartet in D major, op. 21 — <i>Grave</i>
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS	String Quartet in C minor — <i>Allegro</i>
ERNEST CHAUSSON	Concerto for violin, piano, and string quartet in D major, op. 21 — <i>Sicillienne: Pas vite</i>
EDWARD ELGAR	<i>Sospiri</i> for violin and piano, op. 70
ERNEST CHAUSSON	Concerto for violin, piano, and string quartet in D major, op. 21 — <i>Très animé</i>

About ERC

Ensemble for the Romantic Century (ERC), now in its thirteenth season, was founded by pianist Eve Wolf in 2001 to create an engaging and innovative approach to chamber music concerts. Co-directed by Eve Wolf and her fellow-pianist Max Barros, ERC's creative team includes James Melo, musicologist; Donald T. Sanders, director of theatrical production; Vanessa James, production designer; and Beverly Emmons, lighting designer, as well as some of the finest actors and musicians active today. ERC's theatrical concerts interweave dramatic scripts based on letters, memoirs, diaries, and other literature with music, reinforcing the music's historical context through its connections with history, politics, philosophy, and the other arts to create a compelling new performance experience. ERC has, to date, created 40 original theatrical concerts and has partnered with such institutions as The Jewish Museum of New York; the Archivio Fano at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Italy; the Festival de Musique de Chambre Montréal; the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts (MIFA); the French Institute-Alliance Française (FIAC), New York; the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies at Columbia University; the Italian Cultural Institute of New York; and the City University of New York (CUNY). In 2010, *Seduction, Smoke and Music: The Love Story of Chopin and George Sand*, a theatrical concert written and conceived by ERC, Barrett Wissman, and IMG Artists was performed in Italy at The Tuscan Sun Festival with Jeremy Irons as Chopin and Sinéad Cusack as George Sand, and ballet stars Irina Dvorovenko and Maxim Beloserkovsky of the American Ballet Theater. Since 2007, ERC has been a musicological affiliate in residence at the Barry S. Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation at the CUNY Graduate Center, where ERC has established an annual series of interdisciplinary seminars. ERC's artistic contribution is recognized through professional performance grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

Who's Who

MICHAEL HALLING

(Oscar Wilde) Broadway: *A Tale of Two Cities* (Gaspard); *The Pajama Game* (Cyrus, w/s Harry Connick Jr.), Roundabout Theatre Company; *The Boy From Oz* (Standby for Hugh Jackman); *In My Life* (Nick); *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Encores: *Bells Are Ringing*; NY City Opera's *Candide*. National Tours: *Les Misérables* (Enjolras); *The Full Monty* (Teddy Slaughter); *Beauty and the Beast* (Beast). Off- Broadway: *Giant*, The Public Theater; *The Streets of New York* (Mark Livingstone), *Donnybrook* (Sean Enright), The Irish Rep; Select Regional: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Jasper) Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; *Pride and Prejudice* (Mr. Darcy), Bristol Riverside; *Heaven's My Destination* (George Brush) Cleveland Playhouse; *Crazy For You* (Lank) Maltz Jupiter & Cape Playhouse; *The Full Monty* (Jerry) Stages St. Louis & Ogunquit Playhouse. Cast recordings: *Pajama Game*, *Giant*. TV: *Believe* (Co-star). Upcoming: *1776* (Jefferson) Cape Playhouse; *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, Denver Theater Center. B.A. University of Minnesota. Proud member of AEA.

ROBERT IAN MACKENZIE

(Lord Queensbury; Prosecutor) Following numerous occupations, ranging from a London policeman, to a water ski instructor on the Greek island of Corfu to managing director of a manufacturing company, Robert turned to the world of theatre, musicals, opera, films, TV, voice-overs and commercials. He has performed as an actor and singer in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Italy, India, Japan and the USA. For ERC, Robert has previously performed in *The Dreyfus Affair*, *Tolstoy's Last Days*, *Heinrich Heine*, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, *Akhmatova*, *Jekyll and Hyde* and is happy to be back again. He has also recorded over 40 audiobooks.

SUSIE PARK

(Violinist) Hailed as "prodigiously talented" (Washington Post) and praised for her "freedom, mastery and fantasy" (La Libre, Belgium), Australian violinist Susie Park is gaining worldwide attention for her emotive range and dynamic stage presence. She was violinist of the Eroica Trio from 2006 to 2012, performing extensively throughout the US and in countries including Brazil, Denmark, Germany and New Zealand. With the trio she released a Grammy-nominated album on EMI Classics. As soloist, she has performed with the Royal Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, the Orchestra of St. Lukes, the Memphis Symphony, Vienna Symphony, Korea's KBS Symphony Orchestra, the Lille National Orchestra, New Zealand's Wellington Sinfonia, and with the major Australian orchestras. She has appeared in venues including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the 92nd Street Y, the Kimmel Center, the Smithsonian Institution, Musikverein, Cologne Philharmonie and Dusseldorf Tonhalle. A finalist in the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, she has won top prizes in the Menuhin and Wieniawski International Competitions. Ms. Park attended the Marlboro Music Festival for three summers and has toured throughout the United States with *Musicians from Marlboro*. She has appeared at Music from Angel Fire, Open Chamber Music at Prussia Cove, England, the Aspen, Caramoor and Ravinia Festivals, and Sommerakademie Mozarteum in Austria. Ms. Park is a graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Jaime Laredo and Ida Kavafian. A former member of Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two, she also studied with Donald Weilerstein and Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory. She is a

Program Notes

The outcome of the trials should not have been a surprise to anyone, Wilde included. When the trials started, Wilde delighted the audience with his usual wit, answering the questions posed to him in a manner that caused many instances of hearty laughter in the room. But, as the proceedings unfolded, he realized that he probably had gone too far. As the evidence against him mounted, it became clear that he had not only committed acts of "gross indecency" but had also violated the strict code of class separation that was so important to English society. The fact that Wilde indiscriminately brought working-class young men into the precincts of high society, without the proper protocols, was as offensive as the acts he committed with them.

Wilde had an ambivalent relationship with English culture and society, and in many occasions he made it clear that his cultural and aesthetic ideals were far more attuned with those of France than with those of England. He once remarked, "this is England, the land of intellectual fogs... How strange to live in a country where the worship of beauty and the passion of love are considered infamous. That is our real tragedy. Everyone is born a king, but most people die in exile." One cannot help hearing echoes of this idea in a line spoken by Mrs. Erylne in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, as she justifies her decision to live abroad: "London is so full of fogs... and serious people. Whether the fogs produce the serious people or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know."

When his trial came to an end and the sentence was pronounced, Wilde was not allowed to say anything in his defense. He was brought first to the Pentonville and Wandsworth prisons in London, but later was transferred to Reading, where he served most of his sentence. In prison, Wilde's spirits, inspiration, joie de vivre, fame, sense of worth, intellect, and place in society were irrevocably demolished. He suffered tremendously with the coarseness of prison life, with his isolation from all that he deemed worthy in life, and with a profound feeling of shame that forever changed his sense of his own self. He suffered physical abuse, and on one occasion, forced to attend religious service, he collapsed from illness and hunger, bursting his right eardrum. This injury is credited with having contributed to the cerebral meningitis that would kill him a few years later. While in prison, the unraveling of his life continued: his mother died, he lost legal custody of his children, and went completely bankrupt. From prison, he wrote to "Bosie" a 50,000-word letter (*De Profundis*), a profound meditation on love and spirituality, and one of the most moving works ever penned by him. After he was released in May of 1897, he left England to live in voluntary exile in France. Shortly after leaving prison he wrote the great poem *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, signing it as "C. 33", his prison name. This poem contains the famous line "each man kills the thing he loves," which is as iconic in Oscar Wilde's biography as that line from the sonnet that "Bosie" wrote to him about "the love that dare not speak its name."

Oscar Wilde died in a shabby hotel in Paris, poor and destitute, plagued by alcoholism, isolated from many of his former friends, and aloof from social and intellectual circles. In his last few years, he lived under the adopted name of Sebastian Melmoth, a combination of St. Sebastian the Christian martyr and Melmoth the Wanderer, the main character in the eponymous gothic novel by his great-uncle Charles Maturin. Undoubtedly, that is how Wilde felt after his ordeal in prison: a wandering martyr from whom life had withdrawn its most beautiful promises.

OSCAR WILDE, MUSIC, AND AESTHETICISM

Oscar Wilde was arguably the most prominent representative of the cultural and artistic movement known as *aestheticism*, the English equivalent of *symbolism* and *decadence* in France, and of *decadentismo* in Italy. Aestheticism was predicated on the principle that art has a value in and of itself and no artistic creation is beholden to moral codes or didactic functions. Art for art's sake, an idea that germinated in the early 19th century, was aestheticism's litmus test of artistic excellence, and for the aesthetes no art could fulfill the requirements of pure aesthetic contemplation better than music.

Music appears often in Oscar Wilde's writings, where it is invariably linked to the same kind of aesthetic perspective that Wilde practiced in his own life. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, for example, an important component of Dorian Gray's personality is the fact that he plays the piano as an amateur, an activity that was heavily gendered in Victorian England, where it was perfectly acceptable for a woman to play the piano as a pastime, but highly suspicious for a man to do so. In one of the many scenes in the novel where music plays an important part, Lord Henry Wotton compliments Dorian Gray on his playing of Chopin, adding that music was the only non-imitative art that was left, the one that was capable of conveying the purest aesthetic enjoyment. He goes on to say that Dorian had made his own life a work of art when he "set himself to music." The following excerpt, from the contemporaneous dialogue *The Critic as Artist* (1891), further expands Wilde's ideas regarding music and its role in shaping one's sensibilities:

After playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins that I had never committed, and mourning over tragedies that were not my own. Music always seems to me to produce that effect. It creates for one a past of which one has been ignorant, and fills one with a sense of sorrows that have been hidden from one's tears. I can fancy a man who had led a perfectly commonplace life, hearing by chance some curious piece of music, and suddenly discovering that his soul, without his being conscious of it, has passed through terrible experiences, and known fearful joys or wild romantic loves, or great renunciations.

These ideas are remarkably similar, though with a positive bent, to the views on music expressed by Max Nordau (1849-1923), a tententious physician and social critic whose book *Degeneration* (1892) was greeted with a great deal of controversy and outrage. In the book, Nordau set out to map what he thought were clear signs of degeneracy in the cultural and artistic products of his time. He did not have much regard for contemporary artists, particularly those associated with aestheticism, and his zeal in linking modern artistic creation with degeneracy is clearly expressed in statements such as this:

Another mental stigma of a degenerate is his emotionalism... He laughs until he sheds tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion; a commonplace line of poetry or of prose sends a shudder down his back; he falls into raptures before indifferent pictures or statues; and music, especially, even the most insipid and least commendable, arouses in him the most vehement emotions. He is quite proud of being so vibrant a musical instrument, and boasts

Program Notes

The artist is the creator of beautiful things... Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault. Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope. They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty.

(from the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891)

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (Dublin, 16 October 1854 – Paris, 30 November 1900) had a special regard for those cultivated souls who could find "beautiful meanings in beautiful things," for this was the philosophy that informed his entire life and shaped his character and personality. One may say, without any fear of exaggeration, that Oscar Wilde approached life from a purely aesthetic perspective, one that is fully embodied in his assertion that "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." Herein lies one of the principles that, in many ways, contributed to Oscar Wilde's downfall when he was arrested, tried, and imprisoned for acts of "gross indecency." It was precisely that notion, which he extended to all works of art, that he invoked to defend himself of accusations that his writings were immoral. When he expounded those ideas during his testimony at the trials, he was giving voice to his deepest convictions. For a few years before the trials he had been the darling of English society, but the scandal broke the glittering and charming surface that made him accepted and loved for his wit and talent, and the English society was terribly distressed and disappointed by what it saw underneath.

Anyone attempting to provide a summary of the life, career, and cultural influence of Oscar Wilde will be confronted with an embarrassment of riches that may easily discourage one from pursuing the task. A short framework, with some important moments in his life, would include his graduation from Trinity College in Dublin in 1874, after which he enrolled at Magdalene College in Oxford; his move to London in 1879, which started a period of rather extravagant living; his marriage to Constance Lloyd in 1884, with whom he had two sons (Cyril and Vyvyan); the apex of his career in 1890-95, during which he published his most important works and saw his plays successfully staged in London and elsewhere; his trial and imprisonment in 1895 and release from prison in 1897; his voluntary exile in France and his death, poor and destitute, in 1900.

Very few writers have generated so much secondary literature as Wilde, whose works have been studied from a bewildering variety of perspectives. Wilde himself has enriched the English language with one of the most fascinating repertoires of aphorisms, witticisms, sparkling anecdotes, and elegant tirades. His name is instantly recognizable in virtually every cultural circle, and in his lifetime his fame was so much taken for granted that he was selected, as the high priest of aestheticism, to deliver a series of lectures across the United States in 1881-82. This trip, ostensibly intended to enlighten the common man about the doctrines of aesthetic living, had also an underlying economic motivation: the producers of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Patience*, a work whose subject-matter was precisely the fashionable aesthetic movement, wanted to bring their production to the farthest corners of America. The operetta had already been a big hit in New York, and Wilde's lectures were meant to prepare the grounds for its reception in places that included the most backward-looking mining towns in Colorado and other states. Wilde, who in some weeks delivered as many as six lectures in different cities, performed his task flawlessly. The local press took a great interest in this young man from Europe, who dressed flamboyantly and had a disarming way of captivating people of all social classes.

Wilde's America tour was one of the happiest events in his life. Upon his return to England, he soon began carving his niche in the social and intellectual circles of London, first as a journalist, reviewer, and poet, and later as the most successful living playwright, not only in England but, arguably, in the whole world. The period between 1890 and 1895 marked the heyday of Oscar Wilde's fame. In quick succession, he published his two iconic and most controversial works, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and the shocking play *Salomé* (1893), which had been forbidden to be staged in London in 1892, while the rehearsals with Sarah Bernhardt for a much anticipated premiere had been stopped by the censors. Within a few years, Wilde's sparkling sequence of comedies--*Lady Windermere's Fan*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*--became all the rage in London, and he found himself very much revered by the social and intellectual circles of English society. His brilliant genius, however, did not save him from the wrath of that same society, once he stirred its murky waters too deeply. Wilde walked a very tight rope between appearance and reality, decorum and irreverence, accepted social behavior and transgression. In addition to a dangerously public relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas ("Bosie"), an Oxford graduate whom Wilde met in 1891, there were a number of furtive affairs with young men from the working classes that left Wilde open to blackmail. He was prosecuted under the rather broad Labouchere Amendment to the English sodomy laws, which passed in 1885 as a sneaky addition to a bill intended to prevent prostitution and sexual exploitation of underage girls. The particular amendment reads as follows:

Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures, or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of any act of gross indecency shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted shall be liable at the discretion of the Court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labor.

Wilde himself was conscious of the dangers involved in his lifestyle, which he used to characterize as "feasting with panthers." Thus, in 1895, after an incident involving the Marquis of Queensberry (Lord Douglas's father) Wilde saw his world crumbling down before his eyes. The Marquis had left a card on the public bulletin board of Wilde's club, with the inscription "*To Oscar Wilde, posing sodomite* [sic]." Instigated by "Bosie" but against the advice of his closest friends, Wilde decided to sue the Marquis for criminal libel. In doing so, he opened the Pandora's box of his life. During the trials that ensued, evidence was uncovered that exposed Wilde's lifestyle mercilessly to the gaze of British society, and he saw his reputation irrevocably demolished, his name vilified, his person outraged and humiliated, culminating in a sentence of two years imprisonment with hard labor, the severest that was permitted under the Labouchere Amendment.

Who's Who

founding member of ECCO, or East Coast England, the Aspen, Caramoor and Ravinia Festivals, and Sommerakademie Mozarteum in Austria. Ms. Park is a graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Jaime Laredo and Ida Kavafian. A former member of Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two, she also studied with Donald Weilerstein and Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory. She is a founding member of ECCO, or East Coast Chamber Orchestra, which released its debut album in 2012.

MAX BARROS

(Pianist) has won wide acclaim as one of South America's foremost pianists. Born in California and raised in Brazil, Mr. Barros was presented with the "Soloist of the Year" Award by the São Paulo Music Critics Association. He is also a dedicated champion of Brazilian music, having premiered and recorded several works by the nation's foremost composers. He recorded Amaral Vieira's *Piano Quintet* with the Ensemble Capriccio and has recorded for Naxos the complete piano concertos by Camargo Guarnieri with conductor Thomas Conlin and the Warsaw Philharmonic, which won a "Discovery" prize from the magazine *Diapason* in France. Mr. Barros has toured South America with the Virtuosi di Praga and has been a guest artist with the American String Quartet and the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble. He is well known for his stylistic and historically informed interpretations, and his extensive research into the performance practice of early keyboard instruments has allowed him to bring fresh insights to his performances on the modern piano. Together with Stephanie Chase he has recorded the complete trios of Boccherini and Stephen Storace on period instruments. In 2008, Mr. Barros made his debut at the Caramoor Festival performing Guarnieri's *Concertino* for piano and orchestra with the St. Luke's Orchestra under Michael Barrett. He has recently recorded Guarnieri's complete *Ponteios* for Naxos and is in the process of recording the composer's complete solo piano music in six volumes.

AMPHION STRING QUARTET

Hailed for its "precision, assertiveness and vigor" (The New York Times), its "gripping intensity" and "suspenseful and virtuosic playing" (San Francisco Classical Voice) and for a "hair-raising performance (Strad Magazine), the Amphion String Quartet is a winner of the 2011 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition. The Quartet recently served as the Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Festival for the 2012-13 season and has recently joined the roster of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center CMS Two program. Violinists Katie Hyun and David Southorn, violist Wei-Yang Andy Lin, and cellist Mihai Marica first joined together for a performance at Sprague Hall at the Yale School of Music in February, 2009. The overwhelmingly positive audience reception at

this concert was the inspiration behind their mutual desire to pursue a career as the Amphion String Quartet. Recent honors include the 2012 Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant in New York; First Prize at the Hugo Kauder String Quartet Competition in New Haven, CT; and First Prize in the Piano and Strings category as well as the Audience Choice Award at the 2010 Plowman Chamber Music Competition held in Columbia, MO.

JOHN BELL

(Arranger/Pianist - A Green Carnation) New York: Sondheim's *Marry Me A Little* (Keen Company, Drama League Nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Musical); *Radio City Christmas Spectacular; Donnybrook, New Girl in Town, Meet Me In St. Louis, Transport, and A Child's Christmas in Wales* (Irish Rep); *Tomorrow Morning, Harold & Maude, The Body Beautiful* (Cast Recording), *Plain & Fancy, and Knickerbocker Holiday* (York Theatre Company); as well as many readings and workshops of new musicals, including four productions in NYMF. John has worked with City Center's Encores (*Irma La Douce*), the New York Pops, Pittsburgh CLO, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. He holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Ithaca College, an MA in Piano from CUNY, and has studied at the Manhattan School of Music.

BRIAN J. GAY

(Vocalist - A Green Carnation) is a recent graduate of Western Carolina University where he earned a BFA in musical theatre. During his time at WCU he had the privilege to work under endowed professor in musical theatre and three-time Tony nominee Terrence Mann. Favorite collegiate roles include Aldolfo Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, Feldzieg in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and Dr. Madden in *Next To Normal*. This May he made his debut at Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium, where he was a featured artist in a "Broadway Showcase". In June he will be heard at New York's Symphony Space where the Ensemble for the Romantic Century will present *The Trial of Oscar Wilde*. In this theater piece Brian will sing Noel Coward's Green Carnations, and interpret an excerpt from Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In July the young graduate will be heard in the ensemble of *Big River* at Maple's Repertory Theater (MO). His credits also include Friedrich in *The Sound of Music*, Grantaire in *Les Misérables*, and colonist #15 at *The Lost Colony* on the Outer Banks of NC! In his spare time Brian enjoys cooking, playing the piano, snow skiing, and visiting the family Christmas tree farm.

ANDREW HOWARD

(Vocalist - A Green Carnation) is a graduate of Northwestern University where he studied theater and musical theater. At Northwestern, Andrew held many roles, among which his favorites were Ernst in *Cabaret*, Starbuck in *Moby Dick: An*

American Opera, Uncle Henry / Guard of Oz in *The Wizard of Oz*, and The Celebrant in Bernstein's *MASS*. Since moving to New York City, Andrew has participated in two concerts at the Lincoln Center, has been a cast member of the 14th Street Repertory Theater's on-going production of *Line*, was a featured soloist of the world premiere of various selections from Richard Maltby and Charles Strouse's *North and South* at the 2012 West Point Labor Day Concert, and had the pleasure of assistant directing a staged reading of *Bowery Boys* at the 2010 NAMT Festival. He is very excited to be a cast member of *The Trial of Oscar Wilde*.

TREVOR JAMES

(Vocalist - A Green Carnation) recently graduated with his master's degree in voice from New York University. At NYU he has appeared in *Carousel* as Billy Bigelow, *Beguiled Again*, *City of Angels*, and *Oh, What a Lovely War*. Professionally he has appeared in *Pirates of Penzance* (Frederick) and *A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline* (Jordanaire) at Maples Rep Theater, *All Shook Up* (Dean) and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Levi) at Pines Dinner Theater, and *The Music Man* (Jacey) and *The Secret Garden* (Archibald u/s) at *Shawnee Playhouse*. Opera credits include Susannah (Little Bat) with the Philadelphia Opera Collective, and *Die Zauberflöte* (Monostatos), *Le Mamelles de Tiresias* (le Journaliste), and *A Month in the Country* (Yeodorov) with Temple Opera.

MATT MAGRATH (Vocalist – A Green Carnation) is a versatile singer-actor who will soon be seen as Rolf in New Bedford Festival Theatre's production of *The Sound of Music*. Regionally, he played Thalia in *Xanadu* (Cape Rep.) and Mark in *RENT* (UMass). He also performed as Dominic Daley in a Workshop performance of Eric Sawyer's opera *The Garden of Martyrs* in Amherst, MA. Matt has an extensive choral singing background having sung with Essential Voices USA (New York Pops) and with several church choirs, most notably as a soloist for St. Joseph's in Greenwich Village. His choral singing repertoire has ranged from large choral works (Beethoven's *Christ on the Mt. of Olives* with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra) to pop (*Joy to the World* with Neil Diamond at NBC's Rockefeller Christmas Tree lighting) and Musical Theatre (New York Pops Gala at Carnegie Hall featuring the music of Ahrens and Flaherty). He is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst with degrees in music (classical voice) and communication. With his classical training and experience in classical, musical theatre, jazz, and pop styles, Matt looks forward to growing as an artist both collaboratively and as a soloist.

Creative Team

EVE WOLF

(Founder & Executive Artistic Director of

Ensemble for the Romantic Century, pianist, playwright) founded Ensemble for the Romantic Century in 2001 with the mission of creating an innovative and dramatic concert format in which the emotions revealed in memoirs, letters, diaries, and literature are dramatically interwoven with music, thus bringing to life the sensations and passions of a bygone era. For the past thirteen seasons, Ms. Wolf has written scripts for more than twenty-five of ERC's theatrical concerts and has performed in most of the ensemble's forty-plus original productions. Some highlights include Wolf's scripts for *Van Gogh's Ear* at the Festival de Musique de Chambre de Montréal; *Fanny Mendelssohn: Out of her Brother's Shadow* commissioned by the Jewish Museum of New York; and *The Dreyfus Affair* and *Peggy Guggenheim Stripped Bare by her Bachelors*. In 2009 she performed before a sold-out audience at the Sale Apollinee of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice in the Italian production of her script, *Toscanini: Nel mio cuore troppo di assoluto*. During the 2010-11 season, Wolf was the featured soloist in the theatrical concert *Beethoven Love Elegies*, for which she wrote the script. She also wrote the scripts for *Jekyll & Hyde* (2013), in which she was a featured soloist, and *Frankenstein: Every Woman's Nightmare* (2013). Praised for her compelling performances, Wolf has appeared in Europe and the United States as a chamber musician and soloist. She received a BA in Art History from Columbia University and an MA in Piano Performance from New York University. She teaches at the Curtis Institute of Music and Columbia University-Teachers College, and is a professional mentor at The Juilliard School.

MAX BARROS

(Co-Artistic Director) *See biography above*.

JAMES MELO

(Musicologist) has written extensively for scholarly journals and music magazines in Brazil, Uruguay, the United States, and Austria, and has been invited to participate as a panel discussant in conferences in Indiana, New York, and Canada. He has written program notes for several concerts at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and for over 70 recordings on the Chesky, Naxos, Paulus, and Musikus labels, among others. He is the New York correspondent for the magazine *Sinfónica* in Uruguay, reviewer of music iconography for the journal *Music in Art*, and senior editor at RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale) at CUNY. In March 2005, he chaired a session in the conference *Music and Intellectual History*, organized by the Barry Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation (CUNY), and presented a paper on the history of musicological research in Brazil. He received a grant from the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Switzerland, where he conducted research on the manuscripts of Anton Webern. Mr. Melo is the program annotator

for the recording on Villa-Lobos' complete piano music and Camargo Guarnieri's complete piano concertos and complete solo piano music on Naxos. In 2006, he began collaborating with the Montréal Chamber Music Festival as musicologist and program notes writer. In March 2008, he chaired a session on music iconography in Brazil and Portugal in the conference *Music, Body, and Stage: The Iconography of Music Theater and Opera* at CUNY Graduate Center. He was the scriptwriter for *Seduction, Smoke and Music*, performed at The Tuscan Sun Festival in Cortona in the summer of 2011, with Jeremy Irons as Chopin and Sinéad Cusack as George Sand.

DONALD T. SANDERS

(Director) has been Director of Theatrical Production for ERC since 2005. He directed ERC's *Tchaikovsky: None But the Lonely Heart* at Shakespeare & Co and at BAM Fisher Theatre in March 2014. In 2011 he directed the ERC production of *Seduction, Smoke and Music* at the Tuscan Sun Festival starring Jeremy Irons and Sinéad Cusack and its reprise at the Napa Valley Festival del Sole in 2012. Other notable ERC productions include: *Fanny Mendelssohn: Out of Her Brother's Shadow* at New York's Jewish Museum; *Toscanini: Nel Mio Cuore Troppo di Assoluto* at Venice's Teatro La Fenice Sale Apolline; and *Van Gogh's Ear* at New York's Florence Gould Hall and the *Festival de Musique de Chambre Montréal*. He has directed productions at the New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater (*The American Pig: an Anti-Imperialist Vaudeville*, *Naked Lunch*, *33 Scenes on the Possibility of Human Happiness*, *Thomas Cole*, *A Waking Dream*, *Edith Wharton's Old New York*) as well as off-Broadway productions of the plays of Arnold Weinstein, Eric Bentley, Kenneth Koch and the music works of William Russo. He is a founder of New York Art Theatre Institute (NYATI). He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Bristol, England and the Yale School of Drama. Since 1993 he has been Executive Artistic Director of The Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts (MIFA), where he presents artists such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Vanessa Redgrave, England's *Out of Joint*, *Complicite*, Shakespeare's Globe Theater, and France's *Comédie Française*. In 2002, Sanders was made a *Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* of the Republic of France.

VANESSA JAMES (Set & Costume Designer) is a designer of sets, costumes and lighting for theatre, and an Emmy award-nominated art director for film and TV. She has been Designer in Residence for ERC since 2004, designing productions in New York City, Cortona, Italy, La Fenice in Venice, the Napa Festival in California, and Shakespeare & Company in the Berkshires. Her designs in paper and plastic are archived in the library of the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is currently a professor of theatre at Mount Holyoke College, MA, and the author of two books: *The Genealogy of Greek Mythology*, and *Shakespeare's Genealogies*.

BEVERLY EMMONS

(Lighting Designer) has designed for Broadway, off-Broadway, regional theater, dance, and opera. Her Broadway credits include *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Heiress*, Stephen Sondheim's *Passion*, and *The Elephant Man*. Her lighting of *Amadeus* won her a Tony Award. She has worked at the JF Kennedy Center, the Guthrie Theatre, Arena Stage, and the Alley Theatre. Off-Broadway, she has worked with Joseph Chaikin and Meredith Monk, as well as for Robert Wilson (*Einstein on the Beach*), and others. Her designs for dance include works by Martha Graham, Trisha Brown, Alvin Ailey, and Merce Cunningham. She has been awarded seven Tony nominations, 1984 and 1986 Bessies, a 1980 Obie for Distinguished Lighting, and several Maharam/American Theater Wing Design Awards. She curated TheLightingArchive.org and LightingDB.nysl.org, two websites making historical lighting documents accessible to students and scholars on the Internet.

Production Staff

KRYSTLE HENNINGER

(Production Stage Manager) is a second year MFA stage management student at Columbia and a recent graduate of Belmont University where she received her BA in songwriting. Recent credits include: *Tchaikovsky: None but the Lonely Heart* at BAM with ERC, *The House of Connelly* with ReGroup Theatre Company, and serves as ReGroup's Resident Stage Manager. Other credits: *Les Misérables* (first collegiate production) and *Almost, Maine* (KCACTF SM Nominee). Krystle also has ten 10-minute scripts published by Brooklyn Publishers, is working on her first two novels and has had her first original musical *Hold please...I'm harvesting pineapple* produced.

DANIELA ORTIZ

(Assistant Stage Manager) recently graduated SUNY Purchase College in May with a Bachelors of Arts in theater performance and arts management. She worked on productions such as *BREATH, BOOM, A Children's Tragedy*, *4.48 Psychosis*, and an adaptation of *Tartuffe*. She is excited to be working on "The Trial of Oscar Wilde" and would like to thank Krystle Henninger for the opportunity.

SUEANN LEUNG

(Design Assistant, Hair & Wig Stylist) is a New York-based costume designer and the Costume Director of Opera Roanoke. She has been featured in a number of fashion columns, most notably *The Wall Street Journal*. *The Trial of Oscar Wilde* is her fifth production with Ensemble for the Romantic Century following *None but the Lonely Heart*, *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *The Heart is not Made of Stone*. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a degree in Costume Design and Gender Studies. Fascinated by the links between sartorial signifiers and the creation and recreation of one's various identities, the fusion of her two fields of study is often reflected in her work.

EFTHYMIA PAPALEXI (Costume Runner)

ANNA SLOCUM (Costume Runner)