

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Quintet in E-flat Major Op. 4*

In 1792, Beethoven composed his wind octet for pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns. The piece would be assigned the relatively high opus number of 103 upon publication, but at the time of its writing, Beethoven was still a young student of composer Joseph Haydn. Beethoven wrote the piece in Bonn for the woodwind ensemble at the court of Prince Elector Maximilian Franz, a highly skilled group of musicians that performed music for social events.

Clearly, Beethoven was taken by the experience of writing the wind octet. For one, he added the direction “in a concert” to the score, indicating that he wanted the music to have a life as a concert work rather than mere background music. More telling, he took a rare step for a composer and transcribed his own music from winds to strings. The resulting piece, the Quintet in E-flat Major Op. 4 for 2 violins, 2 violas, and cello, mostly retains the original writing of the Op. 103 octet and adds new themes to the latter three movements.

While Beethoven did not compose a wind quintet, the Op. 4 string quintet is, in a roundabout way, the closest proxy we have. Israeli bassoonist Mordechai Rechtman created this transcription from the score of the string quintet but preserved as much of Beethoven’s orchestration from the wind octet as possible, leaving us a preview of the masterful wind writing to come in the composer’s symphonies.

Marc Mellits: *Apollo*

Apollo was commissioned by WindSync, inspired by the Apollo 11 mission of July 1969. The piece is seven short movements that together present a kaleidoscopic view of the Apollo program, from the famous phrase “One small step...” to the geography of the moon, the mythology behind cosmic bodies, and scenes from the composer’s own childhood.

Marc Mellits is one of the most performed living American composers, enjoying hundreds of performances throughout the world every year. His music is eclectic, all-encompassing, and colorful. Mellits often constructs his pieces as sets of short, contrasting movements that explore a single subject. His unique musical forms alternate driving rhythms with soaring lyricism.

Mellits has been commissioned by groups such as Kronos Quartet, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bang On a Can All-Stars, and Canadian Brass. Mellits has scored numerous films, including the PBS mini-series “Beyond the Light Switch,” which won a 2012 Dupont-Columbia award. He also directs and plays keyboards in his own ensemble, the Mellits Consort.

Erberk Eryılmaz: *Rakı Havası*

Rakı Havası for Woodwind Quintet and Optional Davul was commissioned by WindSync in 2019. The work is inspired by the celebratory drinking tunes and dances of the northwest region of Turkey. Rakı is Turkey's national alcoholic drink and mainly produced from the grapes and aniseed of the region. This drink does not only influence the human body but has also influenced the folk music of the region with super cheerful and explosively energetic music in 9/8 meter. For an authentic performance, drinking by the performers is recommended, but for an accurate performance, maybe not.

Ivan Trevino: *Song Book, Vol. 3*

Byrne
Thom
St. Annie
Jónsi

“Scored for wind quintet and percussion soloist, *Song Book, Vol. 3* was commissioned by the award winning quintet, WindSync. The collection features four pieces written as musical thank-you’s for artists who have inspired me.

Byrne was written in the spirit of David Byrne and Talking Heads. As is the case with much of David's music, *Byrne* is dancy and quirky, with rhythmic grooves and riffs at the forefront of the music. *Thom* was written with Thom Yorke in mind. He’s a soulfully gifted singer / songwriter who can take a simple motive and craft it into something beautiful. *St. Annie* was written with Annie Clark in mind. She's a breath of fresh air for me and one of my favorite artists. While her project, St. Vincent, is known for a wild stage show, some of my favorite Annie songs are the ones that are stripped down to minimal instrumentation and presentation. I hope this moment in the collection gives listeners a chance to breathe, as Annie’s music does for me. To end the song book, I wanted to write something hopeful. Written in the spirit of Jónsi Birgisson and his band, Sigur Rós, *Jónsi* threads elements of his musical language with my own percussive way of thinking. Perhaps if Jónsi became a percussionist, he might write something that sounds kind of like this.

WindSync and I premiered *Song Book, Vol. 3* in Houston, TX at Miller Outdoor Theatre on September 29, 2018. Thanks to Kara, Anni, Emily, Julian and Garrett for helping bring this music to life.”

--Ivan Trevino