

Chamber Orchestra as both violinist and conductor, recording several compact discs on the Art Classics and Phoenix USA record labels. Daniel Kaplunas is currently Assistant Professor of Music at Wartburg College, where he is the director of Wartburg Community Symphony and Wartburg Chamber Orchestra.

Vladislav Bulakhov graduated from the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music. Mr. Bulakhov's artistic manner is characterized by convincing, precise and rhythmically clear gestures, a natural temperament and the ability to bring out each individual voice in the musical score. His intimate knowledge of stringed instruments enables him to achieve an extraordinary variety of orchestral tone colors with expressive articulation and a seemingly endless range of dynamic gradations. The conductor's careful consideration of the composer's score and his attention to details are displayed in unity with the confident perception of the architectonics of the musical whole. Vladislav Bulakhov has been distinguished as an Honored Artist of Russia. He is Artistic Director and Conductor of The Seasons Chamber Orchestra based in Moscow.

D. Ray McClellan is a professor of clarinet at the University of Georgia, and a member of the Georgia Woodwind Quintet. Prior to his appointment at the University of Georgia he held professorships at James Madison University and Henderson State University. Mr. McClellan is a former clarinetist and soloist with "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. Mr. McClellan has been principal clarinetist of The Savannah Orchestra, guest principal clarinetist with the Augusta Symphony, Charleston Symphony, Alexandria Symphony, and the Garden State Philharmonic. Mr. McClellan has performed recitals at the International Clarinet Convention on four separate occasions in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2010. He has recorded solo and chamber music discs with ACA Digital Recordings and Phoenix USA. Mr. McClellan received the doctorate of musical arts from The Julliard School where he studied with world-renowned pedagogue David Weber. Formerly the Co-Artistic Director and Host of ClarinetFest® 2006 in Atlanta, McClellan is an Artist/Clinician for Buffet Crampon clarinets.

David Zerkel is Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at the University of Georgia. His students have distinguished themselves by winning international and national competitions and attaining positions with professional performing organizations. Mr. Zerkel has performed with many orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. He is a member of the Brass Band of Battle Creek, was a founding member of the Washington Symphonic Brass and has performed with the Burning River Brass. He began his performing career as a member of the United States Army Field Band and The United States Army Band, both located in Washington, D.C. In addition, he has performed as a solo recitalist at many of the leading colleges and conservatories in the United States and at international, national and regional symposia and conferences. Mr. Zerkel's first solo CD, American Music for Tuba: *Something Old, Something New*, was selected as the recipient of the inaugural ITEA Roger Bobo Award for Excellence in Recording at the 2006 ITEC in Denver, Colorado. His newest CD, *Tuba Helper*, was a Bobo finalist at the 2008 ITEC held in Cincinnati, Ohio. Mr. Zerkel is a past President of the International Tuba Euphonium Association.



Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) was born in London, England. His father was of Italian Jewish descent and his mother was from a German Jewish family. Despite his Jewish heritage, Finzi became one of the most characteristically "English" composers of his generation and is primarily known for art songs, large scale sacred works and a concerto for cello and clarinet. He composed in the received tradition of Edward Elgar, Hubert Parry and Charles Stanford, yet he had a distinctive harmonic and rhythmic language that set his music apart. Finzi endured hardships in his life including the loss of his father when he was eight years old, the death of his three brothers during his childhood and at age 51, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease, a form of leukemia, and was told he had between five and ten years to live. The *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra* shows Finzi's empathy for the clarinet and the instrument's facility for sustained legato as well as virtuosic playing. He conducted the premiere with Frederick Thurston and the London Symphony Orchestra in 1949.

Mikhail Bronner graduated from the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory where he studied composition with Tikhon Khrennikov. He is a Professor of Composition at Moscow Music Ippolittov Institute. Mr. Bronner has set to music a large number of sacred texts (*Dona nobis pacem*, *Stabat mater*, *Ave Maria*, *Book of Psalms*, etc.) and has written many compositions inspired by images, themes and characters of The Book (Old Testament). The Russian monthly "Muzykalnoe Obozrenie" (The Music Review) named Mikhail Bronner Composer of the Year 2002. He has composed more than 100 works: three operas, three ballets, and several symphonies, choral, vocal and chamber pieces. His works were performed in Russia, Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and the USA.

The double concerto *Towards Meaning* was premiered in Moscow in November 2010 by Levon Ambartsumian and David Zerkel with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra together with The Seasons Chamber Orchestra conducted by Vladislav Bulakhov. This is the second major work composed by Bronner for violin and tuba which has been written for and dedicated to Levon Ambartsumian and David Zerkel. The first, *7 Yiddish Songs for Tuba, Violin and Orchestra* was premiered and recorded live for the Phoenix USA label at Hugh Hodgson Hall on April 8, 2010 by the ARCO Chamber Orchestra conducted by Daniel Kaplunas.

"Composed for two very different and apparently incompatible instruments, violin and tuba, which have never been combined in this way before". The author suggests, somewhat ironically, that different persons, nations and confessions, and even different creative personalities (including composers) can find common ground if they move "towards meaning." (M. Bronner)

Efrem Podgaits graduated from the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. In 2000, he was awarded the title of Merited Propagator of the Arts of Russia. Podgaits' works include: 12 operas, 3 symphonies, 27 concerti for different instruments and orchestra. His works are regularly performed in Russia and abroad, including in Britain (notably at the festival of contemporary music in Huddersfield) in Turkey, Hungary, Switzerland, France, Italy and Japan. Many CDs with symphonic, choral and chamber music have been released under different international labels, including Melodiya, Opus 111, Artservis and

Phoenix USA. His works have been performed or conducted by, amongst others: Mstislav Rostropovich, Saulas Sondetkis, Vassily Sinajsky, Yuri Bashmet, Alexander Brusilovsky, and Levon Ambartsumian. *Cras Ignotum* (Unknown Tomorrow), a Concerto for violin, strings, piano and percussion was composed in January 2010 for Levon Ambartsumian and premiered in Moscow in November 2010 with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra conducted by Vladislav Bulakhov. This one-movement work is a meditation on the story of human life, combining resignation, struggle and dramatic conflicts and moments of happiness, hope and inevitability. (E Podgaits)

The **ARCO Chamber Orchestra**, founded in 1990 by Levon Ambartsumian during his years as professor of violin at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, drew together handpicked instructors, students, and recent Conservatory graduates. Almost immediately ARCO performances throughout Europe drew high critical praise and enthusiastic audience response. International acclaim grew following ARCO's concert tours in Italy, Spain, Germany, Romania, France and Korea. In 1995, Mr. Ambartsumian joined the University of Georgia's School of Music as the Franklin Professor of Violin, while remaining the artistic director and conductor of ARCO. Because he was able to bring some of his students to America with him, the home base of the orchestra shifted to this hemisphere, where the ensemble has now become a talented international blend of musicians. Since its performance in 2001 in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, ARCO has been invited to return every year. ARCO has released several CDs with music by Vivaldi, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Piazzolla, Bronner and Podgaits. The most recent ARCO tour in Italy included a performance in La Fenice, the famous opera house in Venice.

Levon Ambartsumian, Franklin Professor of Violin at the University of Georgia, and formerly professor at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory (1978-1993) and Indiana University School of Music (1993-1995), is an internationally acclaimed violinist, winner of the 1977 "Yaclav Huml" International Violin Competition in Zagreb, the 1979 Montreal International Competition, and the Soviet Violin Competition of 1981. Ambartsumian is a Merited Artist of Armenia and of the Russian Federation. He is the founder, conductor, and artistic director of the ARCO Chamber Orchestra, now based at the University of Georgia in Athens. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he continues to perform and present master classes around the world. More than thirty compact discs have been released under different recording labels in the USA and Russia.

Daniel Kaplunas is a native of Vilnius, Lithuania. He started playing the violin at the age of six under the tutelage of his mother, who is also a violinist. By the time he graduated from Vilnius Gurlionis School for the Arts, Mr. Kaplunas had won two Young Lithuanian Musicians' competitions, as well as concertized in Denmark, Holland, and Germany. After coming to the United States, he continued his violin studies with Julia Bushkova at the Interlochen Arts Academy (Michigan) and with Philip Lewis at the University of North Texas, where he received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees. During his doctoral studies at the University of Georgia with Levon Ambartsumian, Mr. Kaplunas performed with the ARCO



The ARCO Chamber Orchestra

Gerald FINZI

Mikhail Bronner

Efrem PODGAITS

Gerald FINZI

Concerto for clarinet and chamber orchestra

- 1. Allegro vigoroso 7:43
- 2. Adagio ma senza rigore 11:07
- 3. RONDO. Allegro giocoso 8:22

D. Ray McClellan, clarinet
Levon Ambartsumian, conductor

Mikhail BRONNER

"Towards Meaning"

Concerto for violin, tuba and chamber orchestra

- 4. Allegretto 16:17

Levon Ambartsumian, violin David Zerkel, tuba
Daniel Kaplunas, conductor

Efrem PODGAITS

"Cras Igotum" (Unknown Tomorrow)

Concerto for violin, strings, piano and percussion

- 5. Misterioso 26:30

Levon Ambartsumian, violin Anatoly Sheludyakov, piano
Kevin Burk, percussion Vladislav Bulakhov, conductor

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Jeffrey Kaufman

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Douglas Moore and Will Marlowe
Mastering: Igor Kholopov

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