

Happy Holidays from Hop River Chamber Music!



As 2024 winds to a close, memories of our summer chamber series remain strong. Isn't live music wonderful? Our concerts took place in the Andover Congregational Church last July, but we expect to return in 2025 to von der Mehden Recital Hall at the University of Connecticut in Storrs Center. **Save the dates**, the concerts are the 10th, 17th, and 24th of July (7:30 pm Thursdays).

The 2024 programs for the three concerts were highly entertaining. The programs featured selections from Bach's *Goldberg variations* and Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, arranged for string quartet; Britten's *Phantasy for oboe and string trio in f*; Schubert's *String Quartet no. 14 in d* ("Death and the Maiden"); and Stravinsky's suite from *l'Histoire du Soldat*. The last work featured Hop River fixture, Gary Chapman, at the piano. The season finale piece fell to Franck and his *Piano Quintet in f*, a huge, fiery work, with Andrew King as the pianist. At its close, the audience provided rapt applause.



One big focus was Mozart: The first concert featured clarinetist Chris Howard in Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet*; the second featured Stephen Wade in Mozart's *Oboe Quartet*, and the finale featured Andrew King in Mozart's *Piano Quartet no. 2*. The oboe and clarinet works must have been works of love for Mozart: There is no record of any commission for these, and in that era, musicians did not routinely perform such works in front of large audiences.

As one of the big virtuosos (rock star!) of his time, Mozart may well have been lonely. When he happened to meet a musician with serious skills, enthralled, Mozart volunteered to write a work for this musician. It must have energized him to no limits when he made these new friends, and only a short while later—*voilà!*—a new work for chamber musicians emerged. The score completed, Mozart relegates himself to a supporting role when they play the piece. Note that these are usually not works with keyboard; instead, he writes the string section and when they perform, he is the violist. Do you see? The joy is all his.

The musician gifted with his score then tours with it, displaying their virtuosity; perhaps the musician made money on the whole thing, but not Mozart. I asked the violist in the Mozart Oboe Quartet, Gretchen Frazier, whether the viola part had any special Mozartean zeal, but she said there was nothing unusual. Thus, as I suspected, Mozart gained a reward that was 100% social, he got to accompany a gifted musician performing his own music.

For our 2024 season, Scott Lehmann once again produced a superb program book. You can find it elsewhere on this website; we will release our 2025 program book online so that you can read about the music you will hear beforehand.

Businesses or individuals who bought advertising space in our program booklets showed how much they support the arts in our community, endorsing live music as part of the high quality of life in our area. The Board now seeks annual sponsors and advertisers for the 2025 season. Contributions allow us to commission new compositions, feature guest musicians, reach new audiences, and pay for web and digital services. **Show your support for live music and community arts by making a tax-deductible contribution to Hop River Chamber Music today.** We also rely on volunteers to support our activities; see elsewhere on this website how to contact us.

We are happy to announce that Chris Howard and Andrew have joined the board as new members. Our Board and Artistic Directors are busy planning for summer 2025, our 47th season: It is not to be missed as there are several icons from the chamber music repertoire planned. One is Mendelssohn's Octet, one of the most powerful works he ever wrote. Of course, it requires not just one quartet but two, so it promises to be quite an enjoyable spectacle.

From the Hop River Chamber Music Board of Directors: **Have a most excellent holiday season!**

—Blair T. Johnson, Secretary of the Board