

## **Demarre McGill, flute**

Winner of a 2003 Avery Fisher Career Grant, flutist Demarre McGill has performed concerti with the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Baltimore Symphony and Milwaukee Symphony, among others. An active chamber musician, Mr. McGill is a member of the Jacksonville, Florida based Ritz Chamber Players and has been a member of Chamber Music Society Two, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's program for emerging young artists. He has been featured on a PBS "Live From Lincoln Center" broadcast with the Chamber Music Society performing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #2 as well as on an Angel Records CD playing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #5 with pianist Awadagin Pratt and the St. Lawrence String Quartet. Mr. McGill has participated in the Music from Angel Fire, Santa Fe, Kingston, Cape Cod, Music@Menlo, Bay Chamber Concerts, Mainly Mozart, La Jolla and Marlboro music festivals. He has also performed on the Ravinia Festival's "Rising Star" series, the A&E Network Series "The Gifted Ones," and was special guest on the Mr. Roger's Neighborhood television program.

Currently principal flutist of the San Diego Symphony, Mr. McGill has held the same position with The Florida Orchestra and the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra. He also served as acting principal flutist of the Pittsburgh Symphony during the 2005-06 season.

In addition to his performance schedule, Mr. McGill is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Art of Élan, a chamber music organization in San Diego that aims to expose new audiences to classical music.

Mr. McGill received his Bachelor's Degree in Flute Performance from The Curtis Institute of Music where he studied with Julius Baker and Jeffrey Khaner. He continued his studies with Mr. Baker at the Juilliard School, where he received a Masters of Music degree.

## **Sarah Skuster, oboe**

Sarah Skuster is the newly appointed principal oboist of the San Diego Symphony. She has also held the positions of interim second oboe in the Dallas Symphony, (2006-2008), and second oboe in the Akron Symphony, (2004-2006). Skuster has performed as guest principal oboist with the Indianapolis Symphony and the New Jersey Symphony, and as a substitute with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. She spent the past year working toward a master of music degree at the Mannes College of Music as a student of Elaine Douvas. Skuster earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of John Mack and is a graduate of the Interlochen Arts Academy where she studied with Dan Stolper.

Skuster has been awarded fellowships to the Tanglewood Music Center (2005, 2006) and attended the Aspen Music Festival (2003, 2004). In the summer of 2006, she received the Ralph Gomberg Award, bestowed upon the exceptional Tanglewood oboe fellow each summer. As a soloist, Skuster has performed the Vaughan Williams Oboe Concerto with the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra and J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, and Concerto for Oboe and Violin with the Cleveland Bach Consort.

## **Sheryl Renk, clarinet**

Sheryl Renk is the Principal Clarinet of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. She was the Principal Clarinet of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra for 10 years and was an acting member of the San Francisco Symphony for four years. Prior to these positions, Ms. Renk performed extensively throughout the West Coast with various orchestras, opera orchestras, and chamber music groups. She has appeared as soloist with several orchestras as well as in a duo performance with renowned clarinet soloist Richard Stoltzman. Renk has also performed on many movie and commercial soundtracks, mostly recorded at the famed Skywalker Ranch in Marin County.

Sheryl Renk completed her music education at San Francisco State University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where she studied with Donald Carroll. She continued her clarinet studies with Rosario Mazzeo, formerly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Among the several festivals at which Ms. Renk has appeared are: the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego, the La Jolla Summerfest Chamber Music Festival, the Durango Music Festival in Colorado, the Cascade Music Festival in Oregon, the Carmel Bach Festival and the Bear Valley Music Festival.

## **Valentin Martchev, bassoon**

Valentin Martchev was born in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, and started playing the bassoon at age 10. He went to the State Academy of Music in Sofia and Duquesne University, studying with Yordan Metodiev, Tony Komitoff, and Nancy Goeres. During his student years in the states he attended the Aspen, Tanglewood, Music Academy of the West, Marlboro Music Festivals. Valentin was a tenured member of the Bulgarian State Radio Orchestra and the Charlottesville Symphony in Virginia, where he was also on the university faculty.

In 2001 Mr. Martchev joined the San Diego Symphony as their Principal Bassoonist. *The San Diego Union-Tribune* said his 2007 performance of John Williams' bassoon concerto *Five Sacred Trees* "... made this bassoonist a star." He has performed multiple times with the Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival, the Mainly Mozart Festival, and La Jolla Summerfest. In 2008 he was guest principal bassoon with the LA Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen. He is on the faculty of SDSU and plays on a 1985 Heckel Biebrich.

## **Benjamin Jaber, French horn**

Benjamin Jaber has been Principal Horn of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra since May 2009, serving in the same capacity since 2008 on an acting basis. He has also performed with the IRIS Orchestra, the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Houston, Richmond and New World Symphonies, and the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra. As a soloist, Mr. Jaber received first prize in the university division of the 2003 American Horn Competition and was the winner of the Aspen Music Festival's 2004 brass concerto competition. He was also a featured artist at the first-ever Conservatory Project series held at the Kennedy Center in Washington. He has spent his summers at the Aspen Festival, the National Orchestral Institute, the Pacific Music Festival, and the Marlboro Music Festival. He has also been active as a freelancer in the recording studios of Los Angeles, adding many different projects to his credit.

Mr. Jaber received his training at the Interlochen Arts Academy, Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, and the Colburn Conservatory where he was the first hornist ever to be graduated from the school. He studied with William Ver Meulen, John Zirbel, David Jolley, and Bruce Henniss. He performs on a horn handcrafted and custom-made for him by Keith Berg of Canada, and mouthpieces by Scott Laskey of Chicago.

During his undergraduate years at Rice, Ben Jaber developed an infatuation with traditional Irish music that has since become a full-blown obsession. He is completely self-taught on the Irish wooden flute, tin whistle and uilleann pipes, and has been active as a session player in Houston, Philadelphia, New York, New Orleans and Los Angeles. Mr. Jaber has also been fortunate to get to play music with some of traditional Irish music's biggest names, including Paddy Keenan, Kevin Crawford, Mick Moloney, Isaac Alderson, Eileen Ivers, Darren Maloney, Máire Ní Ghráda, David Power, and Eliot Grasso. Other major influences include Matt Molloy, Michael McGoldrick, John McSherry and older players such as Seamus Ennis and Liam O'Flynn. He plays whistles by Colin Goldie, a wooden flute by Patrick Olwell, and uilleann pipes by Kirk Lynch.