

## Collaborating Musicians:

### William Grant Still's *Three Songs for Bassoon and Harp*

Autumn Selover, harp

### Franz Schubert's *Schwanengesang* and Vincent & Vincent LaMonica's *Sonata Vocalise*

Samuel Deason, piano

### Otmar Nussio's *Variations on an Arietta by Pergolesi*

Christopher Ward, conductor

Jamie Lee, Nanao Yamada, Luke Lentini, and Rachel Peters, violin

Seth Van Embden and Caleb Paxton, viola

Hana Takemoto and James Cooper, cello

Ben Jacobs, bass

### Aaron Price's *Reedsongs*

Doclé Reed Quintet

Sharon Nakama, oboe

Josh Goo, clarinet

Caleb Carpenter, saxophones

Christopher Rueda, bass clarinet

Vincent LaMonica, bassoon

As I present this recital and wrap up my time here at Northwestern, there are so many people I need to thank: my family, for a lifetime of support; the army of teachers who got me to Northwestern and the brilliant faculty I've worked with here; my colleagues, friends, studio mates, and students, who inspire me to strive for more every day; the Bandstaph and crew members who helped with this recital; and, of course, for the incredible musicians sharing the stage with me today, who I am honored to be collaborating with.

Thank you all for coming or watching – I hope you enjoy the program!

### For more, visit:

[www.VincentLaMonica.com](http://www.VincentLaMonica.com)

[www.DocleQuintet.com](http://www.DocleQuintet.com)

[www.AaronPriceMusic.com](http://www.AaronPriceMusic.com)

[www.WilliamGrantStillMusic.com](http://www.WilliamGrantStillMusic.com)

# Northwestern

## BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 2:30pm CST

Galvin Recital Hall

## Reedsongs: A Bassoon Recital

**Vincent LaMonica,**

bassoon and contrabassoon

Three Songs for Bassoon and Harp

William Grant Still (1895 – 1978)

Bayou Home (1944)

If You Should Go (1949)

Song for the Lonely (1953)

Schwanengesang, D. 957 (1828)

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

Ständchen

Aufenthalt

Frühlingssehnsucht

Niggun (2013)

Philippe Hersant (b. 1948)

Sonata Vocalise (2019)

Vincent James LaMonica (1921 – 1985)

Want You To Know / It Girl

Vincent Edward LaMonica (b. 1993)

Crying

I Fell In Love Again With You / Connecticut Cutie /

Until Tomorrow, You're Mine

-Intermission-

Variations on an Arietta by Pergolesi (1953)

Otmar Nussio (1902 – 1990)

Theme ("God of Mercy and Compassion"), Scherzetto, Tamburino

Lamento, Ostinato

Rapsodia, Elegia, Barbaresca

Stornella, Danza

Reedsongs (2018)

Aaron Nathan Price (b. 1990)

*This recital is in partial fulfillment of a Master's Degree from the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University. Mr. LaMonica is a student of David McGill.*

## Reedsongs: A Bassoon Recital

This recital begins with the work of “the Dean of African-American Composers,” **William Grant Still** (1895 – 1978), who was the first African-American composer to have a symphony performed by a United States Orchestra. His Afro-American Symphony (1930) was premiered by the Rochester (NY) Philharmonic Orchestra in 1931 and became the most commonly-performed symphony by an American composer for about twenty years. Considered a part of the Harlem Renaissance, Still sought to incorporate influences from jazz bands and material in the African-American style, though he chose to rarely borrow actual melodies. He prioritized simple, commercial harmonies paired seriousness of purpose to bring to light concerns with the positions of African-American composers in US Society and programming habits of most major orchestras. This recital opens with three of his songs: *Bayou Home* (1944), *If You Should Go* (1949), and *Song for the Lonely* (1953).

Next up are three songs by **Franz Schubert** (1797 – 1828) from the last set of songs he wrote, *Schwanengesang* (*Swan Song*). As is typical of this period, all three songs represent a dramatic main character who is filled to the brim with emotion. *Ständchen* (*Serenade*) depicts their late-night serenading of a lover, begging for them to “Come, make me happy!” *Aufenthalt* (*Resting Place*) shows their identification with nature, and how a surging river in a forest represents their never-ending tears of sorrow. *Frühlingssehnsucht* (*Spring Longing*) again compares nature to emotion, but in this case, the main character proclaims how beautiful the world is with vivid imagery while noting that its beauty fills them with sadness and longing, which could only be resolved by the lover depicted in *Ständchen*.

The Hebrew word “nigun” means a tune or melody, and a Niggun is a form of Jewish religious song or prayer, often described as a mystical musical prayer or a spiritual language beyond words, which uses repetitive sounds instead of formal lyrics. This style of praying emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the Hasidic movement, during which Jewish people turned to music and dance as powerful forms of religious expression. The Niggun, referred to as “the pen of the soul,” became a fundamental part of Ashkenazi culture.

**Phillipe Hersant** (b. 1948) uses the bassoon as a powerful representation of this prayer, using contemporary techniques such as multiphonics and tongue slaps to portray the repetitive sounds that make up a standard Niggun. Many audiences and musicians shy away from music that uses unfamiliar sounds, but I implore you to seek out the lyricism in everything you hear. Within the unique sounds of contemporary techniques, there is still a fundamental melody to be heard, the foundation of this prayer. I hope you will find yourself open to the cultural and religious significance and emotional impact of these sounds throughout the work.

My grandfather, **Vincent James LaMonica** (1921 – 1985), who I was named after, was an opera singer and organist, and wrote a large collection of songs. I never met him, as he passed away almost a decade I was born, but there’s always been some form of connection. A couple years ago, after the passing of my uncle, my dad and I got a hold of the collection of songs, and I started to play through them on my grandfather’s upright piano in my spare time. I always knew I would find a way to present his music, but never knew how. When I pieced together this program in the spring of 2018, I realized that I would have a chance to fit a recital concept around presenting these songs, but with the Still and Schubert in the lineup, I knew I couldn’t simply play another set of songs; I had to find a different way to present them.

This *Sonata Vocalise* is comprised of three classical form movements: a Sonata, a Verse-Chorus, and a Rondo. The first movement uses melodic content from two songs: *Want You to Know* and *It Girl*. These are among “our” favorites (*Want You To Know* being my absolute favorite). There were more copies (hand-written!) of these two than any other in the collection, especially of *It Girl* (definitely his favorite). The two songs fit together so well that I felt obligated to present them together!

The second movement is primarily based on a song called *Crying*, but also draws from two other songs, *Your Believing Heart* and *Hurt, I’m So Hurt*.

Finally, the third movement Rondo is based on three songs. The primary A theme comes from *I Fell In Love Again With You*, the B theme comes from *Connecticut Cutie*, and the C theme and accompaniment are directly from *Until Tomorrow, You’re Mine*. The piano part from the C theme may sound familiar – it is used as the opening material in the first movement. To compliment that, the very end of the third movement should sound familiar, quoting *Want You to Know*.

This piece is dedicated to my father, Ronald James LaMonica, who did not know this was happening until today (I think / I hope). I love you Dad, and I’m so glad you’re healthier than ever. This premiere performance is dedicated to my Great Aunt Jo (my father’s aunt), who passed away in February of this year, sharp as a tack at 97.

I am extremely excited to be presenting the *Variations on an Arietta by Pergolesi* by **Otmar Nussio** (1902 – 1990). This piece has been at the top of my bucket list for years, and it so perfectly fits the concept of Reedsongs. The theme is a Lenten hymn tune called *God of Mercy and Compassion*, which is fitting since we are currently in the Lenten season. The hymn tune is transformed and developed through several types of songs and dances, which build in excitement and intensity to the finish line.

Lastly, this recital is closing with a commissioned piece by **Aaron Price** (b. 1990) written for the Doclé Reed Quintet. *Reedsongs* is made up of five songs, each featuring a different member of the quintet. The motives show up in different songs, and the movements can be played in any order, allowing the quintet to draw out different salient features. We have elected to group the songs into three movements: Oboe+Saxophone, Clarinet+Bassoon, and Bass Clarinet.