

The Orion Ensemble

“Meet Orion Ensemble” Recognized as one of Chicago’s finest chamber music groups, the **ORION ENSEMBLE** is celebrating its 17th season. John von Rhein of the *Chicago Tribune* calls Orion “one of Chicago’s most vibrant, versatile and distinctive ensembles.” With the possibilities inherent in its unique combination of instruments—piano, string trio and clarinet—Orion offers exciting interpretations of standard repertoire, introduces audiences to rarely performed masterpieces and inspires composers with commissions for new works. Orion’s innovative programs feature diverse works by composers ranging from Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms to William Bolcom, Chick Corea, Paul Schoenfield and Augusta Read Thomas.

The Orion Ensemble boasts a roster of five superb musicians who have performed throughout North America, Europe and Asia, as an ensemble and individually in solo, orchestral and other chamber music roles. In Chicago, Orion presents a four-concert series in three venues, is heard regularly on the broadcast series “Live from WFMT” and appears frequently on the Chicago Cultural Center’s Lunchbreak Series “Classical Mondays.”

“Our Mission” The Orion Ensemble is a nationally recognized and highly acclaimed group of five core musicians dedicated to performing a broad repertoire of chamber music at the highest level. The Ensemble brings world-class concerts to a varied, growing audience in Chicago and to audiences across the nation. Orion is committed to the development of young artists through its summer chamber music program with OPUS and to outreach initiatives and educational master classes that develop a future audience of avid listeners.

Orion performs in a variety of venues, and strives to reach a wide range of audience members, from the seasoned music-lover to those who have never had an opportunity to experience chamber music.

“Touring” Throughout the years, Orion has performed in chamber music series across the U.S., from New York to Florida, from Minnesota to Arizona and throughout the Midwest.

National and overseas tours are booked through Parsons Artists Management.

“Residencies” The Orion Ensemble has been Ensemble-in-Residence of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University since 1996.

The Ensemble is also dedicated to developing young musicians and began an ongoing residency in 2007 with OPUS, a summer chamber music camp for pre-college musicians from across metropolitan Chicago held at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois. Student chamber groups from OPUS have performed as part of Orion’s concerts at its venue in Geneva, giving these young musicians an inspiring opportunity to grow in their artistry.

“An Amazing Repertoire” Orion received the prestigious “Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, ASCAP-Chamber Music America Award” for its cutting-edge performance series “Inside Look at Contemporary Music Initiative.” The Ensemble programs diverse works ranging from Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms to William Bolcom, Chick Corea, Paul Schoenfield, Augusta Read Thomas and other living composers. Orion’s impressive repertoire offers its fortunate audiences a remarkably broad chamber music experience.

The Ensemble’s expansive commitment to chamber music embraces the works of the classical through modern standard repertoire as well as an extensive range of new pieces for piano quartet and clarinet. Orion continues to inspire composers with commissions for new works written especially for its unique combination of instruments. As the *Chicago Tribune*’s John von Rhein wrote upon Orion’s 10th anniversary, “It seems like only yesterday that a remarkable chamber group of musicians calling itself the Orion Ensemble was born. The Orions ... quickly established themselves as one of the Chicago area’s most vibrant, versatile and distinctive ensembles, at home in every period but especially committed to enlarging the repertory of its unusual combination of piano quartet and clarinet.”