

# PHAROS QUARTET



Jennifer Bill    Amy McGlothlin  
Emily Cox      Zach Schwartz

*Special Guest Ensemble*

## Improbable Beasts

Thomas Carroll, Celine Ferro, Gary Gorczyca, Diane Heffner, Bill Kirkley  
Katherine Matasy, Jonathan Russell, Walter Yee

7:00 p.m.  
March 26, 2022  
Marsh Chapel  
Boston, MA

## Pharos Quartet

*Howler Back*

Zack Browning (b. 1953)

Quartet in F Major  
I. Allegro moderato

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)  
trans. Emily Cox

## Improbable Beasts

*Prelude/Chant \**

Jonathan Russell (b. 1979)

*Hear My Prayer O Lord*

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

*Funky Groove Vortex \**

Jonathan Russell

*Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*

African-American spiritual  
arr. Jonathan Russell

*Dido's Lament*

Henry Purcell

*Prometheus*  
VII

Marc Mellits (b. 1966)  
arr. Jonathan Russell

## Pharos Quartet and Improbable Beasts

*Plyve Kacha*

Ukrainian Folk Song  
arr. J. Bill

## Pharos Quartet

*Mending Time \**

Martin Bresnick (b. 1946)

I. Two Can Pass

II. The Gaps I Mean

III. The Wall Between Us (Is Where We Meet)

IV. Moves in Darkness and The Shade of Trees

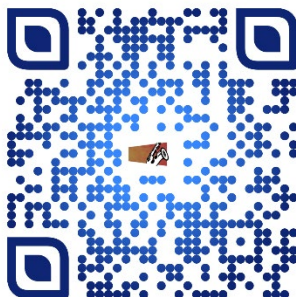
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Mike Mower (b. 1958)

\*world premiere

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Based in Boston, the **Pharos Quartet** is a stirring musical collaborative formed by four New England saxophonists. Emerging from their unique combination of ideas, styles, and expressions – Pharos brings the sound of the saxophone quartet to a new apex. With a vivid repertoire, balanced between notable pioneers as well as visionaries of tomorrow, Pharos maintains a steady appetite for today's most demanding saxophone quartet literature. Its members bring together their own international performance experience and fuse it into a distinct chamber music event.

Pharos, the great lighthouse of antiquity and often considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World was built by the Ptolemaics in c.280 BC in the port city of Alexandria on the coast of Egypt. This great beacon of light that stood for around 1,000 years inspires the quartet to be a guiding light in chamber music performance of the 21st century.



Please visit [www.pharosquartet.com](http://www.pharosquartet.com) and follow us on social media



**Improbable Beasts** is a Boston-based professional bass clarinet ensemble dedicated to bringing the deeply expressive power of multiple bass clarinets before a broad audience. Our repertoire ranges from Renaissance choral music to brand-new compositions to klezmer tunes and holiday songs. Our mission is to share the deep resonances, soaring lyricism, and propulsive grooves of bass clarinet ensemble music with as many people as we can.

The members of Improbable Beasts are some of the most sought-after clarinetists in the Boston area, regularly appearing with groups such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops Orchestra, Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and numerous regional orchestras, new music groups, and chamber ensembles.

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## **Plyve Kacha**

“Plyve Kacha” or “Plyve Kacha Po Tysyni” translates literally to “the duckling swims”. A duck crossing waters is a symbol of death and going to the other side. The song is a beautiful lament that speaks to the dangers and price of war. But, the lyrics are a dialogue between a mother and a son going off to war, according to the BBC’s Irena Taranyuk. She translates two of the most moving lines of the song this way:

*“My dear mother, what will happen to me if I die in a foreign land?”*

*“Well, my dearest, you will be buried by other people.”*

Please consider donating to **Project Hope**, an organization that is directly helping the Ukrainian people in their country and as refugees.

<https://www.projecthope.org/crisis-in-ukraine-how-to-help/03/2022/>



## **PROGRAM NOTES**

**Zack Browning** is a composer whose music is described as “way-cool in attitude...speed-demon music” (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*) and “propulsive, giddy, rocking... a rush of cyclic riffs and fractured meters” (*The New York Times*). *The Irish Times* proclaimed he is “bringing together the procedures of high musical art with the taste of popular culture”. His solo album *Banjaxed* on Capstone Records has been called “the aural equivalent of the pinball machine. Imagine sassy, brilliant bumpers with each slam of the ball sending a glitter of lights and mechanical twitters through your chest.” (*American Record Guide*). His recent solo albums *Soul Doctrine*, *Secret Pulse*, and *Venus Notorious* are available on Innova Recordings. Browning is an Associate Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois and director of the Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Award.

**Howler Back** was commissioned by the PRISM Quartet for their twentieth-anniversary concert and is a sonic salute to the ensemble’s dedication to and promotion of contemporary music.

**Maurice Ravel**, (born March 7, 1875, Ciboure, France—died Dec. 28, 1937, Paris), French composer. At age 14 he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire. Completing his piano studies, he returned to study composition with Gabriel Fauré, writing the important piano piece *Jeux d’eau* (completed 1901) and a string quartet. In the next decade, he produced some of his best-known music, including *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (1899), the String Quartet (1903), and the Sonatine for piano (1905). His great ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912) was commissioned by the impresario Sergey Diaghilev. Other works include the opera *L’Enfant et les sortilèges* (1925), the suite *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1917), and the orchestral works *La Valse* (1920) and *Boléro* (1928). Careful and precise, Ravel possessed great gifts as an orchestrator, and his works are universally admired for their superb craftsmanship; he has remained the most widely popular of all French composers.

Even though Ravel worked on his sole string **quartet in F major** from late 1902 to April 1903, while he was still a student at the Paris Conservatoire, it is far from a student work. The piece integrates the several styles that he had incorporated into his own musical vocabulary. A major influence was Debussy, particularly Debussy’s Quartet in G Minor, with its Impressionist quality and fascinating tone colors. At the same time, the clear and transparent textures, impelling logic, and tight control of the basic organization bear testimony to Ravel’s strong neoclassical proclivity and admiration for Mozart. Finally, some of the strange and unfamiliar tonal effects reflect an interest in the exotic music of the Far East.

**Martin Bresnick**’s compositions, from opera, chamber, and symphonic music to film scores and computer music, are performed throughout the world. Bresnick delights in reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, bringing together repetitive gestures derived from minimalism with a harmonic palette that encompasses both highly chromatic sounds and more open, consonant harmonies and a raw power reminiscent of rock. At times his musical ideas spring from hardscrabble sources, often with a very real political import. But his compositions never descend into agitprop; one gains their meaning by the way the music itself unfolds, and always on its own terms.

Martin Bresnick speaking about his work **Mending Time**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJvvVw-qZV4>

**Mike Mower** originally studied classical flute at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and was later awarded the ARAM (Associate of the Royal Academy of Music). He has since been involved in many different styles of music. Mike also plays the saxophone and clarinet and leads “Itchy Fingers”, the world-famous jazz saxophone quartet. “Itchy Fingers” has performed at major festivals and concert halls in over 40 countries since 1985 and has won many international music awards.

He has performed or recorded as a session musician with jazz and rock bands, with artists such as Gil Evans, Tina Turner, Flora Purim & Airtó Moreira, Paul Weller, Björk, and Ryuchi Sakamoto. He has also played in west-end shows, jazz gigs, and with classical ensembles. As a composer and arranger, Mike has been commissioned to write works for the BBC Big Band and Radio Orchestra, NDR Radio Big Band, the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, for Airtó Moreira and Flora Purim, and for numerous wind ensembles throughout Europe.

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