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## Music

# At Wolf Trap, A Paris Pastiche

*N.Y. Chamber Soloists Recall the '20s*

Paris in the 1920s had many faces. The French writer Jean Cocteau promoted the aesthetic manifesto of Les Six, a clique of young composers bent on wiping out the excesses of Wagner, the lush harmonies of Debussy and the complexities of Schoenberg.



They favored a native posture of flippancy, brevity and accessibility with overtones of the cabaret. Meanwhile, Paris had attracted Stravinsky and Prokofiev, and the eminent teacher Nadia Boulanger was coaxing young Americans such as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Roy Harris and Roger Sessions along the path of neoclassicism.

The New York Chamber Soloists, 10 strong, presented music from the Paris of that era Friday night at the Barns of Wolf Trap. Despite the different approaches of each composer sampled, all the music tended to-

ward a studied apathy and cryptic parody.

The performances were all first-rate, displaying the adroitness and comprehension of personal styles that veteran musicians share. Somehow, one of the shortest works—Stravinsky's Pastorale for violin and a woodwind quartet—had the greatest substance. In Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, the composer's pleasant nonchalance came through thanks to the fleet-tongued caprice that only outstanding woodwind players can manage.

A Villa-Lobos "Choros" for five winds imaginatively exploited instrumental timbres, and a Prokofiev quintet gave the double bass a chance to air its resonance. But amplification failed to give the harpsichord the importance de Falla intended in his concerto for that instrument with a quintet of winds and strings.

—Cecelia Porter