Espina-Schwartzman Duo:
Two Masterworks from 1945

Oskar Espina Ruiz, Clarinet
Victoria Schwartzman, Piano



"Mr. Espina Ruiz is a phenomenal clarinetist – a subtle and discreet virtuoso whose dynamic control matched that of the string quartet."
—CVNC

Oskar Espina Ruiz a multifaceted clarinetist from Spain, praised for his "masterful virtuosity" (*El Nuevo Día*, Puerto Rico), "rhapsodic ease" and "generous, tender warmth" (*The Millbrook Independent*), artistic director of Music Mountain Festival and clarinet artist-faculty at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, presents his latest collaboration with pianist **Victoria Schwartzman:** *Two Masterworks from 1945.*

This program is centered around two sonatas for clarinet and piano written in 1945 by two composers who emigrated in opposite directions: Mieczysław Weinberg fled Poland for the Soviet Union, while Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco fled Italy for the United States. Both sonatas are large in scale, but completely different. While Weinberg writes in a poetic language that often becomes enigmatic as in the music of Dmitri Shostakovich, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, best known as the foremost guitar composer of the twentieth century, writes in a lyrical and virtuosic style. Both sonatas are relatively unknown because they were not published until the 1970s.

The second half of this program presents Prokofiev as possible context for Weinberg, and Pinto-Correia and Poulenc as possible descendants of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's approach.

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PROGRAM

Clarinet Sonata, Opus 28 (1945) — Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996)

Allegro
Allegretto
Adagio

Clarinet Sonata, Opus 128 (1945) — Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)

Andante con moto
Scherzo
Lullaby
Rondò alla Napolitana

Intermission

Cantos e danças, for unaccompanied clarinet (2011, revised 2025) — Andreia Pinto-Correia (born 1971)

Piano Sonata No. 2 in D minor, Opus 14 (2012) — Sergey Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Allegro ma non troppo
Scherzo. Allegro marcato
Andante
Vivace

Clarinet Sonata, Opus 184 (1962) — Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Allegro tristamente
Romanza
Allegro con fuoco

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PROGRAM NOTES

Mieczysław Weinberg was born in Poland into a family of Jewish musicians. In 1939 Weinberg fled from anti-Semitic Nazi persecution. While many fellow countrymen fled to the United States, Weinberg fled to the Soviet Union. His family, who stayed behind, was murdered at the Trawniki concentration camp in Poland. Weinberg lived first in Minsk from 1939 to 1941, and eventually settled in Moscow in 1943 with help from Dmitri Shostakovich, who recognized Weinberg's exceptional talent. Weinberg composed his sonata for clarinet in A and piano in the autumn of 1945, after the end of the war. While regularly performed in the Soviet Union during the XX century, especially after its publication in 1971, Weinberg's clarinet sonata is now being discovered in the United States.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco emigrated with his family to America in 1939 after Italy's antisemitic racial laws became untenable. Jascha Heifetz, for whom Castelnuovo-Tedesco had written a violin concerto in 1931, was his sponsor. Castelnuovo-Tedesco is best known as the foremost guitar composer of the twentieth century, with almost one hundred compositions for guitar. Most of his career took place in Hollywood, as a film composer for some 200 movies. Among his composition students are Henry Mancini, André Previn, and John Williams. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Clarinet Sonata was composed in 1945 in the United States, but it was not published until 1977, making a late entry into the standard clarinet repertoire.

Andreia Pinto-Correia's music has been described as "compellingly meditative" by *The Boston Globe*, an "aural fabric" by *The New York Times* and "fascinating" by the *San Francisco Classical Voice*. Following a family tradition of scholars and writers, her work often reflects the influence of literary sources from the Iberian Peninsula. Recent highlights include L.A. Philharmonic and NY Philharmonic premieres led by maestro Gustavo Dudamel.

Sergey Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 2 in D minor, Op. 14 (1912), is a four-movement masterpiece of early modernism, balancing his characteristic percussive energy with sardonic lyricism.

Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, composed in 1962, stands as one of his final and most beloved works. It was written just months before his death and premiered posthumously in 1963 by Benny Goodman and Leonard Bernstein at Carnegie Hall.

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

OSKAR ESPINA RUIZ, CLARINET

Oskar Espina Ruiz has emerged as one of the leading clarinetists of his generation, praised as a concerto soloist at the Casals Festival for his “masterful virtuosity” (*El Nuevo Día*, Puerto Rico), and admired for his “rhapsodic ease” and “generous, tender warmth” (*The Millbrook Independent*) in chamber music collaborations with the top string quartets and piano trios of our time.

He has performed at major concert halls and festivals to high critical acclaim, including recitals in New York City, Washington DC, Moscow, Madrid, Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. He has appeared as soloist with the St. Petersburg State Academic Symphony (Russia), St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic (Russia), Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra (Casals Festival, Puerto Rico), Orquesta Sinfónica de la Ciudad de Asunción (Paraguay) and Bilbao Symphony (Spain).

Highlights of recent seasons include his sold-out concert tour of Spain with Terra String Quartet in 2026; his Casals Festival debut as soloist with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of Alfonso Fuentes’ Clarinet Concerto; a Music Mountain performance of the complete Brahms Clarinet Sonatas with pianist Misha Dichter; as well as his recital program, *Brilliant American Women Composers of Our Time*, with works by Teresa Carreño, Amy Beach, Gabriela Lena Frank, Eleanor Alberga, Jessie Montgomery, Joan Tower, Jennifer Higdon, and Claudia Montero. His *Clarinet Quintet Project* in three parts at Music Mountain in 2026 included premieres of quintets by Alfonso Fuentes, Seth Grosshandler and Javier Montiel in collaborations with the Erinys, Ulysses and Cassatt Quartets.

His 2026-2027 season includes performances of the Brahms Quintet and Danielpour’s "The Last Jew in Hamadan" with the Terra and Erinys String Quartets, a new recital program with pianist Victoria Schwartzman including works by Mieczysław Weinberg, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Andreia Pinto-Correia, as well as chamber music concerts with UNCSA faculty colleagues.

Oskar Espina Ruiz holds an MFA from the Conservatory of Music at Purchase College, and a DMA from Stony Brook University, where his major teachers were Charles Neidich and Ayako Oshima. While at the European Mozart Academy, flutist Aurèle Nicolet was one of his coaches and mentors. From 2009 to 2011 he was on the clarinet faculty at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, in San Juan, PR, and since 2011 is clarinet artist-faculty at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC, currently serving as associate professor.

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VICTORIA SCHWARTZMAN, PIANO

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, Victoria Schwartzman (formerly Mazin) performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician. Victoria has appeared with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra chamber players, at Bard Music Festival, at the Music Mountain Festival, in the New York Philharmonic Ensembles series at Merkin Hall, at Summit Music Festival, at Bargemusic, in the Gessner- Schocken concert series in Cambridge, WMP Concert Hall, and the Nicolas Roerich Museum concert series in New York City. As a member of the Yanvar Trio, she was a prizewinner in the Val-Tidone Chamber Music Competition and a finalist in the Zinotti International Chamber Music Competition, both in Italy.

After graduating from Jerusalem Conservatory, Victoria Schwartzman continued her education at the Longy School of Music and New England Conservatory. While pursuing various degrees in solo and chamber music performance, she was selected to perform in masterclasses given by Dmitri Bashkirov, Menahem Pressler, and Richard Goode, among others. Her principal teachers include Irina Kivaiko, Issak Kossov, Victor Rosenbaum, Sally Pinkas, Eda Shlyam, and Eteri Andjaparidze.

As a soloist with orchestra, Victoria Schwartzman has performed with the Jerusalem Chamber Orchestra, the Longy School of Music Chamber Orchestra, and the Riverside Orchestra. She has performed at the Quartet Program in Pennsylvania and participated in the Tel-Hai International Piano Festival in Israel, and the Lyrica Chamber Music Festival in New Jersey. Also active in the field of opera and art song, Victoria Schwartzman was a vocal coach and accompanist at the Boston Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Bard Music Festival, the Brevard Music Center, the Westchester Summer Vocal Institute, and the American Institute of Musical Studies Festival in Graz, Austria.

Victoria Schwartzman is as committed to performance as she is to education. She has given a master's class in Russian vocal repertoire at Queens College, NY. She is on the coaching faculty at Montclair State University, and the piano faculty at the Bard College Preparatory Division. She joined the AIMS in Graz faculty during the summer of 2024.

PRESS PHOTOS AND PRESS-KIT:

Espina-Schwartzman Duo photo:
https://oskarespinaruiz.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Oskar-Espina-Ruiz-and-Victoria-Schwartzman-2026-1600w.jpg

Other materials:
https://oskarespinaruiz.com/press-kit/
https://www.victoriaschwartzman.com/

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