

# Making New Music March On

Carole Lemire-Bowman, horn player of Equinox Chamber Players

Although the world of classical music faces harsh economic times, dwindling audiences and competition from digitalized fields of entertainment, the Equinox Chamber Players continue to fulfill our mission of commissioning new music and bringing live performance to as many audiences as possible.

The Equinox Chamber Players ensemble is an all-female woodwind quintet comprised of flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. We incorporated in 1998 and immediately won acceptance as a part of an National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) initiative. The national project led us to high profile when we were selected as the first group, one of only five of 55 national ensembles, to be prominently featured in the PBS documentary *Continental Harmony* (1999-2000.) The program included our first commissioned work, Phillip Bimstein's *The Bushy Wushy Rag*. Intended to celebrate St. Louis' favorite pastimes, the theme centers on baseball and ragtime music. While it may seem incongruous to see classical musicians at Fair St. Louis performing a "techno-rag" while accompanied by the taped voice of the famed radio announcer Jack Buck and the roaring cheers of baseball fans, it was a success! How much fun it was to have music written for and about St. Louis. We've done so each year since, commissioning composers to create original music inspired by the lives and accomplishments of St. Louis musicians, explorers, literary artists and everyday heroes.

From the outset, we have maintained a global vision. We've purchased and commissioned music of the Americas, Asia, Middle East, Africa and many other areas of the world. Although the classical instruments of



The Equinox Chamber Players: Carole Lemire, horn, Paula Kasica, flute, Ann Homann, oboe, Jeanine York Garesche, clarinet, Donita Bauer, bassoon. Dana Hotle, new clarinetist, not pictured here.

today were not necessarily the original target instruments of some of the international music, there has been obvious interest from diverse communities to hear our contemporary versions. When asked about the purpose of our unique repertoire, we reply that through the creation of new works we can create a snapshot of today's culture for future generations, showcase contemporary scholarship on historical life and expose people to new music and different cultures from around the world.

How do we do it? The Equinox Chamber Players appeal to private donors and grant-makers every year. While the creation of new works is a wonderful thing in itself, the patron and grantor gifts serve more than one practical application. Both the music and its subject matter serve as an educational tool during our outreach programs for thousands of people each year, in schools, nursing homes, transitional-living houses and other

educational and healing centers. Our programs allow the audience members to learn about more than just music, including women's history, St. Louis history and a variety of cultural aspects. The music continues to live on through public concerts and recordings, which then perpetuates the purchase of the musical scores by other ensembles looking for new repertoire. This, in turn, benefits the composers whose voices deserve to be heard and supported. With such evidence of the strength in commissioning new works, the Equinox Chamber Players plan to continue on. We are very pleased to have our new Albany Records CD release, *Dark Winds Rising*, containing four newer works on it: *A Walk Through Shaw's Garden* (Lampkin), *Jordan and the Dog Woman* (Denisch), *Dark Winds Rising* (Bimstein) and *Migrations* (Lampkin). To know more about the Equinox Chamber Players, visit our website at [www.equinoxchamberplayers.org](http://www.equinoxchamberplayers.org).