



**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
ANNOUNCES TEN NEW BOWERS PROGRAM ARTISTS
AND
ELISE L. STOEGER PRIZE AWARDED TO COMPOSER
CHRIS ROGERSON**

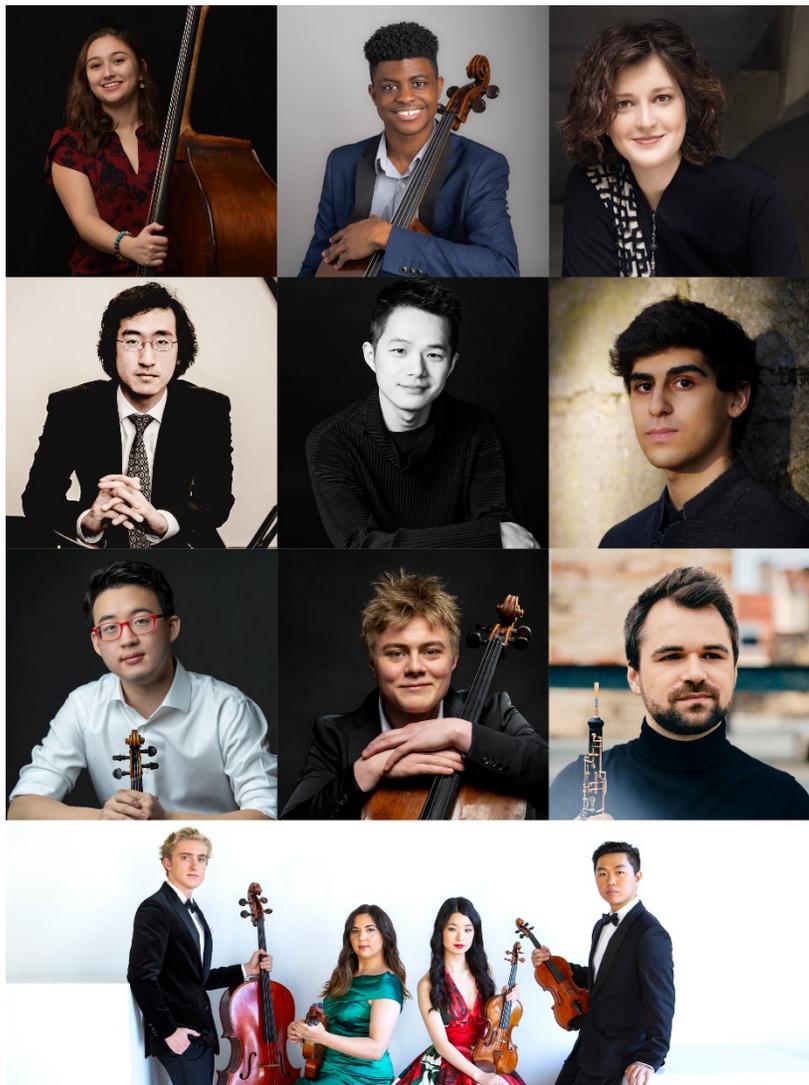
New York, NY, May 11, 2023 — [The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center](#) (CMS) announces the nine individual artists and one ensemble selected for **The Bowers Program**, a highly competitive three-season residency in which participants perform, tour, and teach alongside CMS artists. CMS also announces composer **Chris Rogerson** as winner of the **Elise L. Stoeger Prize**, which is awarded to recognize significant contributions to the field of chamber music composition. The Bowers Program and Stoeger Prize reflect CMS's ongoing support and development of chamber music artists and composers throughout their careers, on stage and off.

The Bowers Program, Class of 2024-2027

This year's participants in The Bowers Program were chosen from an international pool of 168 candidates through competitive auditions. The nine individual artists and one ensemble, who hail from seven countries (including the USA), range in age from 22 to 32 and are award winners and recipients of the world's most prestigious classical music honors for young musicians, including the Avery Fisher Career Grant, Van Cliburn Competition, Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Verbier, Elmar Oliveira Competition, and the Banff International String Quartet Competition, among many others. These award-winning artists, on instruments ranging from oboe to double bass, have chosen to participate in The Bowers Program to focus their careers on chamber music performed at the highest level.

The artists chosen for The Bowers Program for the next three seasons are (name, age, instrument, and country of origin provided in this list; short bios can be found at the end of this section of the release):

- **Nina Bernat**, 22, double bass, (USA) | 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient
- **Sterling Elliott**, 23, cello (USA) | 2021 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient
- **Anna Geniushene**, 32, piano (Russia) | 2022 Silver Medalist, Van Cliburn International Piano Competition
- **Sahun Sam Hong**, 28, piano (South Korea) | 2017 Vendome Prize winner at Verbier, 2021 American Pianists Award recipient
- **Lun Li**, 27, violin (China) | 2021 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions First Prize winner
- **Evren Ozel**, 24, piano (USA) | 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient
- **Julian Rhee**, 22, violin (USA) | 2020 Elmar Oliveira International Competition First Prize winner
- **Jonathan Swensen**, 26, cello (Denmark) | 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient
- **Juri Vallentin**, 32, oboe (Germany) | 2019 International Tchaikovsky Competition prizewinner as first oboist
- **Viano Quartet: Lucy Wang**, 26, violin (Canada); **Hao Zhou**, 26, violin (USA); **Aiden Kane**, 27, viola (USA); **Tate Zawadiuk**, 25, cello (Canada) | 2019 Banff International String Quartet Competition first prize winner



Top Row: Nina Bernat, Sterling Elliott; Anna Geniushene 2nd Row: Sahun Sam Hong, Lun Li, Evren Ozel; 3rd Row: Julian Rhee, Jonathan Swensen, Juri Vallentin; Bottom: Viano Quartet

“Each musician who makes it to the Bowers auditions finals is at the top of their game. While it is enormously inspiring to hear such playing, the uniformly high level makes it all the more difficult to arrive at conclusions,” remarked CMS Artistic Directors **Wu Han and David Finckel**. “This is where our incomparable jury comes in: their dedication, sensitivity, discretion, and wisdom make it possible for us to name the eventual winners, and this year our new roster of Bowers artists received enthusiastic, positive votes from the entire panel. The CMS audience has a real treat in store, and we offer these extraordinary young players our heartiest congratulations and warmest welcome.”

“CMS Two—now the Bowers Program—was absolutely indispensable to me when I first moved to the United States,” says pianist **Inon Barnatan**. “It was an immediate introduction to one of the top cultural centers in the world, some of the top presenters and concert halls in the country, and a connection to a group of fantastic musicians, most of whom are still in my musical life more than 15 years later. The way that the program is structured meant that us ‘newbies’ felt completely integrated into the CMS family without a sense of hierarchy and without feeling like junior or temporary members.”

“The beginning of my time in the Bowers program coincided with the massive impact of the COVID lockdown, and I was deeply moved by CMS’s fervent and continued efforts to connect us all through livestreams and the like, both as performers and as audience members,” said violinist **Stella Chen**, currently participating in the Bowers Program, and soon to become an alumna. “Since those early days, I’ve enjoyed playing concerts and tours with many on this spectacular roster of artists, who are not only exquisite musicians but the most charismatic people, with hearts of gold. I feel privileged to have been part of such a supportive team, not only when we were on stage performing, but also during rehearsals, travels, and many meals together. I have made both friendships and musical partnerships through CMS that will last a lifetime!”

The Bowers Program has proven to be a springboard for many of today's most successful chamber music artists, and it provides CMS itself with the next generation of artists. Approximately fifty percent the current roster at CMS is composed of Bowers alumni, the current Bowers cohort, and incoming members of the program, who perform as equal colleagues alongside CMS artists of all generations. Bowers Program artists are integrated into every facet of CMS activities for a three-season term, performing on CMS’s New York stages as well as in cities across the US and abroad alongside established CMS artists; program participants also appear as part of CMS education and community outreach programs.

The Bowers Program began as “CMS Two” in 1994 and was renamed after Ann S. Bowers in 2018, in recognition of her leadership donation to CMS to secure the development of the next generation of outstanding young musicians. Over the course of its history, 101 individual artists and 11 ensembles have completed the program, many of whom have gone on to become the world's leading classical musicians, including Hilary Hahn, Inon Barnatan, Alisa Weilerstein, Anthony McGill, and the Miró, Escher, and Danish String Quartets, among many others. A list of Bowers/CMS Two alumni can be found [here](#).

The Bowers Program jury, composed of chamber music artists and distinguished artistic administrators, is headed by CMS Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han, who personally oversee the CMS activities of all Bowers artists for the duration of their residencies.

Short Bios of the 2024-2027 Bowers Program Class

Double bassist **Nina Bernat** was recently named as a recipient of the 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant, among other first prizes, including the Barbash J.S. Bach String Competition, Juilliard Double Bass Competition, and the 2019 International Society of Bassists Solo Competition. Among her regional chamber performances are appearances with the Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Series, and Mostly Music. This summer, Ms. Bernat performs her second season at both the Marlboro Music Festival and the Lake Champlain Music Festival.

Cellist **Sterling Elliott** is a 2021 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and winner of the Senior Division 2019 National Sphinx Competition. He has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Boston, Dallas, and Detroit symphonies. This summer, Mr. Elliott returns to the Hollywood Bowl to perform with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He also serves on faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy at Juilliard, and he performs chamber music at festivals including La Jolla SummerFest, Edinburgh Festival, Chamberfest Cleveland and Festival Mozaic.

Anna Geniushene won the silver medal of the 2022 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. She has been heard in major world venues such as the Town Hall in Leeds, National Concert Hall in Dublin, Museum of Arts in Tel Aviv, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genova, Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, and Sala Greppi in Bergamo. Her dedication to chamber music is reflected in duo piano repertoire with her husband, Lukas Geniušas, and close collaboration with Quartetto di Cremona.

Sahun Sam Hong is the recipient of a 2021 American Pianists Award. He was also the winner of the 2017 Vendome Prize at Verbier and the Second Prize at the 2017 International Beethoven Competition Vienna. A sought-after interpreter of the duo and chamber repertoire, Hong has been invited to perform at major chamber music festivals including Marlboro, Music@Menlo, Ravinia's Steans Institute, Taos, and Four Seasons.

Violinist **Lun Li** is a native of Shanghai and currently based in New York, where he won First Prize in the 2021 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions. Additionally, he is joint winner of the First Prize at the Lillian and Maurice Barbash J.S. Bach Competition 2021.

American pianist **Evren Ozel** combines fluent virtuosity with thoughtful interpretations. Having performed extensively in the US and abroad, Mr. Ozel is the recipient of a 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2022 Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant. He is represented by Concert Artists Guild as a winner of their 2021 Competition. In the 2023-24 season, he will make his debuts at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Frick Collection.

Julian Rhee is the Silver Medalist of the 11th Quadrennial International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, winner of Astral Artists' National Auditions, and first prize winner of the 2020 Elmar Oliveira International Competition, where he was also awarded the special Community Award. A passionate chamber musician, Mr. Rhee has performed at and attended festivals including the Ravinia Steans Institute, Marlboro Festival, Rockport Music, and North Shore Chamber Music Festivals.

Cellist **Jonathan Swensen** is the recipient of a 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant. He has performed with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Orquesta Ciudad de Granada, Copenhagen Philharmonic, and the Aarhus, Odense, and Iceland symphonies. He is a frequent performer of chamber music in the US and Europe, appearing at the Tivoli Festival, Copenhagen Summer Festival, Chamberfest Cleveland, Krzyżowa-Music, among others. He has captured first prizes at the Windsor International String Competition, Khachaturian International Cello Competition, and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions.

German oboist **Juri Vallentin** gained international attention as prizewinner of major competitions, such as the International Tchaikovsky Competition as first oboist, the German Music Competition, and the International Oboe Competition of Japan. He has performed as a soloist with the MDR Symphony Orchestra, the Mariinsky Orchestra St. Petersburg, the Beethoven Orchestra Bonn, the Lower Saxony State Orchestra Hanover, Musikkollegium Winterthur, the Brandenburg State Orchestra Frankfurt and the Munich Chamber Orchestra, among others. In 2021 he won the Berlin Prize for Young Artists curated

by *VAN* magazine with his solo performance *INNER VOICES*, developed together with stage director Neil Barry Moss.

The **Viano Quartet** won the first prize at the 2019 Banff International String Quartet Competition and have performed in New York, London, Berlin, Vancouver, Paris, Beijing, Toronto, Lucerne, and Los Angeles, among others. The quartet was named the inaugural June Goldsmith Quartet-in-Residence for the Music in the Morning series in Vancouver until 2025, where their focus will be to commission new works and lead extensive community engagement initiatives. Formed in 2015, the quartet has held residencies at the Curtis Institute, the Colburn Conservatory, Northern Michigan University, and Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University. Summer 2023 brings re-invitations to Chamber Music Northwest and the Bravo! Vail Festival, along with appearances at the Intimacy of Creativity Festival in Hong Kong, Ottawa Chamberfest, Minnesota Beethoven Festival, and BISQFest, among others.

Full bios of the artists can be found at ChamberMusicSociety.org/Bowers.

Elise L. Stoeger Prize Awarded to Chris Rogerson

As part of its long history of supporting living composers, the [Elise L. Stoeger Prize](#), a \$25,000 cash prize, is awarded biennially by CMS to recognize significant contributions to the field of chamber music composition. CMS is thrilled to announce that this year's Stoeger Prize has been awarded to [Chris Rogerson](#). Hailed as a "confident new musical voice" by *The New York Times* and a "fully-grown composing talent" by *The Washington Post*, Chris Rogerson's music is often characterized by its lyricism; recent notable works include *Of Simple Grace*, for cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and *Dream Sequence*, for Anne-Marie McDermott and the Dover Quartet. An avid traveler who has visited over 90 countries around the world, Rogerson's work is frequently evocative of a sense of place, such as his *String Quartet No. 4*, commissioned for the Escher Quartet, which draws from his experience in a remote corner of Afghanistan.



"We are personally delighted that this year's Stoeger jury has selected Chris Rogerson as the 2022 recipient of the prize," said CMS Artistic Directors **Wu Han and David Finckel**. "Chris's music embodies all that we look for in the works of today's chamber music composers: genuine inspiration; knowledgeable and skillful instrumental writing; a combination of immediate appeal and intriguing challenge which invites further hearings; and very importantly, a true sense of the very nature of chamber music as an art form of dialogue between equals. In addition, Chris has proven to be very much a 'performer's composer' in that so many fine players have asked for works from him. Their advocacy and passion, combined with new music of real quality, is what truly drives our art form forward."

"I am truly honored to receive the Stoeger Prize," said Mr. Rogerson. "Many of the past winners of this award are my musical heroes (and former teachers!) and I am so moved to be included among them. In many ways I have poured much of my musical energy into chamber music, and to have CMS, an

organization I so deeply respect and admire, recognize me in this way is beyond meaningful—and it motivates me to continue to create.”

Mr. Rogerson’s *Afterword* for Two Violins and Piano will be performed as part of CMS’s new-music series, Sonic Spectrum, on January 18, 2024.

[Chris Rogerson full bio.](#)

About the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) is one of eleven constituents of the largest performing arts complex in the world, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Through its many performance, education, recording, digital, and broadcast activities, CMS brings the experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind with a full season in New York, as well as national and international tours. Under the artistic leadership of David Finckel and Wu Han, CMS presents a wide variety of concert series and educational events for listeners of all ages, appealing to both connoisseurs and newcomers. The performing artists constitute a revolving multi-generational and international roster of the world's best chamber musicians, enabling CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period. The CMS Bowers Program, its competitive three-season residency, is dedicated to developing the chamber music leaders of the future and integrates this selection of extraordinary early-career musicians into every facet of CMS activities. Its incomparable digital presence, which regularly enables CMS to reach hundreds of thousands of viewers and listeners around the globe annually, includes: a growing number of live-streamed programs; more than 1,000 hours of performance and education videos free to the public on its website; a 52-week public radio series across the US; radio programming in Taiwan and mainland China; appearances on American Public Media; the monthly program "In Concert with CMS" on the ALL ARTS broadcast channel; the NY-Emmy-nominated documentary "Transcending: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Celebrates 50 Years;" the PBS documentary film, "Chamber Music Society Returns;" and performances featured on Medici.tv, Tencent, and SiriusXM's Symphony Hall channel.

Thousands of children, teens, and adults discover the joys of chamber music and deepen their knowledge and appreciation of this beautiful art form through CMS education and community engagement programs. CMS offers an extraordinary number of learning formats and experiences to engage and inform listeners of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of musical knowledge, and to provide unique educational opportunities for the most talented early career chamber musicians. This includes school-based programs for elementary school students, family concerts in both traditional and casual and accessible formats, teen-centered programs, master classes throughout the United States and internationally, pre-concert composer chats, and insightful lectures for adults on the season's repertoire.

The Bowers Program is supported by **Ann S. Bowers**. Additional support by the **Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund** and **Colburn Foundation**.

Jerome L. Greene Foundation is the 2022-2023 CMS Season Sponsor.

All CMS digital programming is supported by the **Hauser Fund for Media and Technology**.

CMS education and community engagement programs are made possible, in part, with support from the **Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation**, **Chisholm Foundation**, **Colburn Foundation**, the **Tiger Baron Foundation**, the **Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation**, **Con Edison**, **The Frank and Helen Hermann Foundation**, **The Rea Charitable Trust**, the **Hearst Foundations**, **Alice Ilchman Fund**, and the **Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Fund**. Public funds are provided by **New York City Council Member Gale A. Brewer**; the **National Endowment for the Arts**; the **New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**, in partnership with the **City Council**; and the **New York State Council on the Arts**, with the support of **Governor Kathy Hochul** and the **New York State Legislature**.

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