

CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 31, 2023, AT 7:30 ▶ 4,350TH CONCERT

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage
Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

JENNIFER JOHNSON CANO, mezzo-soprano
ALESSIO BAX, piano
LUCILLE CHUNG, piano
ARNAUD SUSSMANN, violin
NICHOLAS CANELLAKIS, cello
AYANO KATAOKA, percussion
IAN DAVID ROSENBAUM, percussion

THRILLS AND CHILLS

**LUDWIG VAN
BEETHOVEN**
(1770–1827)

**Trio in D major for Piano, Violin, and Cello,
Op. 70, No. 1, “Ghost” (1808)**

▶ Allegro vivace e con brio
▶ Largo assai ed espressivo
▶ Presto
BAX, SUSSMANN, CANELLAKIS

GREGG KALLOR
(b. 1978)

***The Tell-Tale Heart* for Voice, Cello, and Piano
(2016)**

JOHNSON CANO, CANELLAKIS, CHUNG

INTERMISSION

BÉLA BARTÓK
(1881–1945)

**Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, BB 115
(1937)**

▶ Assai lento—Allegro molto
▶ Lento ma non troppo
▶ Allegro non troppo
BAX, CHUNG, KATAOKA, ROSENBAUM

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The Chamber Music Society acknowledges with sincere appreciation **Ms. Tali Mahanor**'s generous long-term loan of the Hamburg Steinway & Sons model “D” concert grand piano.

The Chamber Music Society acknowledges the generosity of **The Juilliard School** for use of its Steinway & Sons model “D” concert grand piano in this performance.

This concert is supported, in part, by **Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.**, and the **Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University**.

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Photographing, sound recording, or videotaping this performance is prohibited.

ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dear Listener,

When we saw that this concert happened to land on Halloween, the program sprang to life in record time! With suspense, drama, fright, and mystery as common denominators, pieces of music leaped to the fore.

It's simple to reach the conclusion that William Shakespeare was trying to scare the daylight out of his audience with the witches' scene in *Macbeth*: "Double, double toil and trouble; / Fire burn and cauldron bubble" is sure to put any theater goer on edge, and it must have affected Ludwig van Beethoven the same way. Beethoven was well read, and his personal library contained the writings of Goethe, Schiller, Euripides, Homer, and Shakespeare. Regarding Shakespeare, Beethoven likely saw his plays produced in his hometown of Bonn by the local court theater. At the time of this piano trio's composition, in 1808, Beethoven was reportedly considering composing an opera on the *Macbeth* plot. The slow movement of this trio is so unlike any other he composed, it does seem to have emanated from some special source of inspiration, and none is more fitting than the Shakespeare attribution.

Composer Gregg Kallor (pronounced KAY-lor) is a multi-faceted musician whose stylistic range covers a wide spectrum of genres and skills. By coincidence, this month also sees the world premiere of his opera *Frankenstein* by the Arizona Opera. His setting of Edgar Allan Poe's ghoulish tale has been championed by today's mezzo-soprano, Jennifer Johnson Cano, who performed it recently—in all places—in the catacombs of historic Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Bartók's unique creation for two pianos and percussion, one of the most iconic works in the chamber literature, ends this concert with music that is riveting, nervous, atmospheric, and exhilarating, all in good ways. It was not intended to scare anyone, but the language fits the program beautifully, and we can all go home wide awake!

Enjoy the performance,



David Finckel
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Wu Han



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Trio in D major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 70, No. 1, "Ghost"

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

- ▶ Baptized December 17, 1770, in Bonn (likely born December 16)
- ▶ Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna

- ▶ First CMS performance on November 24, 1972, by pianist Richard Goode, violinist Charles Treger, and cellist Leslie Parnas
- ▶ Duration: 27 minutes

Composed in 1808

Beethoven's first set of piano trios was written in 1795 for Prince Lichnowsky, one of his first important patrons in Vienna after his arrival three years earlier. The move was buoyed by the lofty ambition to "receive the spirit of Mozart through Haydn's hands," as Count Waldstein pronounced. Deliberately designating them his Op. 1, No. 1, though they were not his first official published works, the young composer was clearly earmarking them as his starting point. In 1808, he returned again to the genre, writing two trios grouped as Op. 70. The first of those trios, "Ghost," as well as Op. 97, "Archduke," written a few years later, emerged for posterity as audience favorites.

The nickname "Ghost" became attached to this trio after one of Beethoven's most famous students, Carl Czerny, remarked that the middle movement reminded him of a Shakespearean ghost—different accounts seem to remember differently if he thought of *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. Whether or not that extramusical drama was intended by the composer has not been documented, though it is known that Beethoven did entertain the idea of writing an opera based on *Macbeth* around that time. (It never materialized.)

However, the insistence on connecting Beethoven to Shakespeare reveals something intriguing about the

Enlightenment-Romantic perception of the composer. As "canons" of literature and music emerged, the concern over who would be included, and the idolization of the candidates, commenced. Shakespeare emerged as a pinnacle author for his ability to express the human condition in such totalizing terms. Thus, masters in other disciplines began to be associated with the author. Various individuals began to be referred to as the "Shakespeare of music," including Beethoven (musicologist Lawrence Kramer jokingly coins it the invention of "Shake-toven"). Numerous other works by the composer have been associated with Shakespeare (the *Tempest* piano sonata, for example), though none of them substantiated beyond word of mouth. Given this tenuous association with an Elizabethan play, it is of interest that, 167 years later, the middle movement of Op. 70, No. 1, was actually used as the dramatic and poignant soundtrack for a play by Samuel Beckett created for, and broadcast on, BBC television, fittingly called *Ghost Trio*.

The first performance of the trio took place in 1809 at the home of Countess Erdödy, to whom Op. 70 was dedicated, with the composer at the keyboard. It stands out for its unusual structure of only three movements,

rather than the traditional four. There is also a clear emphasis on the middle movement as the deliberate centerpiece; it is where the music lingers longest. The opening movement announces itself with a unison flourish, introducing one of the main themes that will be developed throughout. Then comes the *Largo*, with its ghostly mystery. If you listen carefully, you will notice that the music is created almost exclusively out of one musical

motive, presented fully, abbreviated, or elongated; yet Beethoven is able to build suspense and tension throughout the duration. After such an extended reverie, the finale abruptly drops us into a completely different emotional terrain, one full of exuberance that continues to its lighthearted conclusion. ♦

Kathryn Bacasmot writes about music and is a regular program annotator for CMS.

The Telltale Heart for Voice, Cello, and Piano

GREGG KALLOR

▶ Born in 1978 in Cleveland, Ohio

Composed in 2016

▶ This is the first CMS performance of this piece.

▶ Duration: 25 minutes

In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, an 1843 short story by Edgar Allan Poe, the narrator recounts committing the perfect murder and hiding the body of his kind but evil-eyed landlord under the house. Then, he is driven to madness and ultimately confession by the ringing crescendo of the dead man's heart, which thumps relentlessly beneath him. It's a narrative that has remained in the public imagination, subject to countless retellings, adaptations, and parodies, in media as wide-ranging as film, radio, comic books, and episodes of *The Simpsons* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

There is something evocative and genuinely terrifying about an aural representation of guilt. The disembodied nature of sound lends it to representing the spectral pull of conscience, and anyone who has ever experienced tinnitus knows that insistent, dull noises, actual or imagined, are extremely difficult to ignore.

In his operatic adaptation of the story for voice, cello, and piano,

composer and pianist Gregg Kallor takes advantage of music's capacity to express the haunting call of another plane of reality, which reminds a listener of what they have done. He wrote the piece in 2016, to be premiered in the crypt of the Church of the Intercession in Manhattan in late October by himself, mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Pojanowski, and cellist Joshua Roman. It has since become something of a Halloween season special on classical concert programs—a chilling take on a timeless tale.

We hear the heartbeat from the very beginning, in a percussive piano cluster whose pitches are a bit too low to fully resolve in the ear. The singer, too, beats out the word "nervous" on a brittle gesture that will drive the narrator's obsession and madness. In a higher register, the keyboard also introduces us to a sing-songy, textbook-creepy fill, which adds ominous notes to some of the narrator's more cogent statements.

Much of the 25-minute work is written to the beat of a waltz, complete with a soaring, Tchaikovsky-like cello line. The predictable, metrical order of this old-fashioned dance implies the sound mind that the speaker wants to project: his careful planning of the killing; his disposal of the evidence; his lies, which fool the police officers who visit the house. But that metrical order is constantly undermined by nervous changes in tempo, sudden expressions of a wild side that doesn't fit to 3/4 time. At the two climaxes of the work, the murder itself and the

moment where the drumming of the heart leads to confession, the thud of the piano's low gestures forces any sense of waltzing coherence into the background. We hear instead what the instruments have been telling us about the narrator all along from that otherworldly realm from which musical meanings come: that he is terrified and maddened by himself and his deeds. ♦

Cellist, writer, and music researcher Nicky Swett is a Gates Scholar and PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge.

Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion

BÉLA BARTÓK

- ▶ Born March 25, 1881, in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary
- ▶ Died September 26, 1945, in New York City

- ▶ First CMS performance on October 12, 1974, with pianists Ursula Oppens and André-Michel Schub, and percussionists Richard Fitz and Gordon Gottlieb
- ▶ Duration: 26 minutes

Composed in 1937

In 1922, composer Egon Wellesz and Cambridge professor Edward Dent started the International Society for Contemporary Music. The organization, which still operates, is dedicated to the sponsorship and performance of new compositions, and it holds a festival in a different city every year with premieres and conference panels on the state of new music. When the Swiss chapter of the ISCM had an anniversary in 1937, the impresario Paul Sacher asked the Hungarian modernist Béla Bartók to contribute something to mark the occasion. Bartók obliged with a quartet for two pianos and two percussionists, which had its first performance in Basel in January 1938 with the composer and his wife, Ditta Pásztory, on the piano parts.

The work is remarkable for many reasons: the theatrical jump scares of the opening *Lento*; the ways in which the drums, cymbals, xylophone, and tam-tam remind the listener of the piano's inherent percussiveness; the clarity of Bartók's harmonic language, which carefully balances chromaticism with common tonal structures. But, rightfully for a percussion quartet, it is through rhythm and meter that this piece makes its most striking statements.

Though there is great disagreement about the nature of sonata form in Western music, most concur that it involves a broad trajectory of tension and release as well as rotations of multiple contrasting themes. An "exposition" introduces us to a primary melody or musical idea,

a contrasting secondary tune that has a new pitch center, and often an energetic passage that achieves some provisional sense of closure. Themes are varied and juxtaposed in a bridge or “development” section, and then repeated in a more stable form in a “recapitulation.” Stability is almost always defined in terms of key areas: the exposition is disarming, its closure tenuous, because it moves away from the home tonality, while the recapitulation is more settled because all or most of the themes are presented in the main key of the work.

In the first movement of this sonata, Bartók creates a narrative of metrical stability that sits alongside the music’s harmonic trajectory. It is ostensibly in 9/8 time—a dancing meter, which would normally be felt as three large beats filled in with flowing triplets. The music Bartók gives us does not express the meter this way. The aggressive, highly syncopated primary theme chops up those nine eighth-notes in unpredictable groupings like 2+2+2+3, 3+2+2+2, and 2+3+2+2. The four players often divide the bars in different ways, producing an ever-changing field of impulses, pulling us this way and that. The secondary theme is more tranquil, but likewise uses asymmetrical groupings such as 4+2+3 or 2+2+5. It is only when Bartók gets to vivacious closing material that we find music that feels properly in 9/8, with a scampering pickup gesture hammering home every beat. The closing theme’s

meter is even more emphatically stable at the end of the movement, when it develops into a soaring fugue. The euphoria of this coda results from the combination of harmonic and rhythmic dissonance in a distinctly modern realization of sonata form.

The slow movement opens on the snare-drum licks of a militaristic march to the scaffold, a prelude to a dense dirge. Over the course of this patiently evolving *Lento*, a chirping, quintuplet bird call emerges, lending the proceedings a sense of eerie impatience. The general anxiety of the piece is finally dispersed in the folk-dance finale. For the bulk of the work, the two percussionists have served crucial, yet largely accompanimental roles. But in the closing *Allegro non troppo*, it is the xylophone that introduces the main melody, and the pianos that generally find themselves chasing the percussionists around. This dynamic persists to the very end, when the whole group gradually gets quieter above a disappearing drum call. The final cadence in the keyboards is a begrudgingly tonal one in C major. The first piano rolls up while the lower piano rolls down, giving the close a strangely antique feeling, as if Bartók wants to gesture to the 18th-century origins of the form against which he has so artfully played throughout the sonata. ♦

— Nicky Swett

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



LISA MARIE MAZZUCCO

ALESSIO BAX

▶ Alessio Bax won first prize at both the Leeds and Hamamatsu International Piano Competitions. He has appeared with more than 150 orchestras. Highlights of the 2023–24 season include his debut with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; return performances with the Dallas Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Helsinki Philharmonic, and Buenos Aires Philharmonic; and numerous appearances with CMS. He has received an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the

Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award, and the Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists. At age 14, Bax graduated with top honors from the conservatory of Bari, Italy. A Steinway artist, he lives in New York City with pianist Lucille Chung and their daughter, Mila. He is a former member of CMS's Bowers Program and is on the faculty at New England Conservatory.



SOPHIE ZHANG

NICHOLAS CANELLAKIS

▶ Nicholas Canellakis has become one of the most sought-after and innovative cellists of his generation, praised in the *New Yorker* as a "superb young soloist." Recent highlights include solo debuts with the Virginia, Albany, Bangor, and Delaware symphony orchestras; concerto appearances with the Erie Philharmonic, the New Haven Symphony, and the American Symphony Orchestra; Europe and Asia tours with CMS; and recitals throughout the US with his longtime duo

collaborator, pianist-composer Michael Stephen Brown. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, he is a regular guest artist at many of the world's leading music festivals. Canellakis is the Artistic Director of Chamber Music Sedona in Arizona and is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and New England Conservatory.



LISA MARIE MAZZUCCO

JENNIFER JOHNSON CANO

▶ A naturally gifted singer known for her commanding stage presence and profound artistry, Jennifer Johnson Cano has garnered critical acclaim for committed performances of both new and standard repertoire. With more than 100 performances on stage at the Metropolitan Opera, her most recent roles have included Nicklausse, Emilia, Hansel, and Meg Page. Recent recordings include Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Bernstein's

Symphony No. 1, "Jeremiah," with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Cano joined the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program after winning the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and made her Met debut during the 2009–2010 season. Among her honors are Winner of the Young Concert Artist International Auditions, a Sara Tucker Study Grant, a Richard Tucker Career Grant, and a George London Award.



LUCILLE CHUNG

▶ Canadian pianist Lucille Chung debuted at age ten with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and toured with Charles Dutoit in Asia. She has performed with over 70 leading orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Moscow Virtuosi, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Weimar, Dallas Symphony, and St. Louis Symphony, and has appeared with conductors such as Penderecki, Spivakov, Nézet-Séguin, Petrenko, and Dutoit. Her

discography includes Saint-Saëns piano transcriptions, Mozart rarities, and more recently for Signum Records, Poulenc piano works, Liszt piano works, and a piano duo album with her husband, Alessio Bax. Chung graduated from both the Curtis Institute and the Juilliard School. She furthered her studies in London, at the Mozarteum, and in Imola, Italy. She and Bax live in New York City with their daughter Mila and are co-artistic directors of the Joaquín Achúcarro Foundation.



AYANO KATAOKA

▶ Ayano Kataoka is the first percussionist to join CMS's Bowers Program. Together with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, she gave the world premiere of Bruce Adolphe's *Self Comes to Mind*. She has also presented a solo recital on the *B to C* (Bach to Contemporary) recital series at the Tokyo Opera City Recital Hall. Other highlights include performances of Steven Mackey's *Micro-Concerto* for Percussion Solo and Chamber Ensemble at Alice Tully Hall, Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* at 92NY

with violinist Jaime Laredo and actors Alan Alda and Noah Wyle, and Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion at CMS with pianists Emanuel Ax and Yoko Nozaki. A native of Japan, Kataoka began her marimba studies at age five, and percussion at fifteen. She received her Artist Diploma from Yale School of Music, and is now a full professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst and a visiting professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln (Wuppertal).



IAN DAVID ROSENBAUM

▶ Grammy-nominated percussionist Ian David Rosenbaum is a passionate advocate for contemporary music, having premiered over 100 new chamber and solo works. He was nominated for three Grammy awards in 2021 for his performances on albums of music by Andy Akiho and Christopher Cerrone, including two nominations for *Seven Pillars*, an album by Sandbox Percussion. In 2012 he joined CMS's Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two) as only the

second percussionist selected in its history. He is a founding member of Sandbox Percussion, the Percussion Collective, and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. He has recorded for the Bridge, Innova, Naxos, and Starkland labels, and is on faculty at the Mannes School of Music and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.



ARNAUD SUSSMANN

► Winner of a 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Arnaud Sussmann has recently appeared as soloist with the Vancouver Symphony and the New World Symphony. As a chamber musician, he has performed at the Tel Aviv Museum, London's Wigmore Hall, the Dresden Music Festival, and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC. He has also given concerts at the Moritzburg, Caramoor, Music@Menlo, La Jolla SummerFest, Mainly Mozart, Seattle Chamber Music, Chamber Music Northwest, and Moab Music festivals. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, Sussmann is Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach and Co-Director of Music@Menlo's International Program, and teaches at Stony Brook University. In September 2022, he was named Founding Artistic Director of the Boscobel Chamber Music Festival.

ABOUT THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) was founded in 1969 under the leadership and patronage of Alice Tully and the artistic direction of Charles Wadsworth, beginning a new era for chamber music in the United States. Through its many performance, education, and digital activities, CMS brings the experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind. The performing artists constitute a multi-generational and international roster of the world's finest chamber musicians, enabling CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period. The Bowers Program, our 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. CMS reaches a growing global audience through a range of free digital media, including livestreams, an online archive of more than 1,000 video recordings, and broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners around the world.

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Updated on October 6, 2023

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Mrs. Robert Schuur
Susan Stempleski
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Stockwell, Jr.
Kenny Tan
Leo Tick
Suzanne E. Vaucher and
William R. Stensrud
Sally Wardwell
Alan G. Weiler
Janet and Peter White
John S. Wilson
Roger and Jill Witten
Anonymous (1)