

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 28, 2024, AT 5:00 ▶ 4,396TH CONCERT

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage

Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

WU HAN, piano RICHARD LIN, violin TIMOTHY RIDOUT, viola DAVID FINCKEL, cello

An Evening with David Finckel and Wu Han

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Sonata for Cello and Piano (1915)

(1862-1918) ▶ Proloque

▶ Sérénade

▶ Final

FINCKEL, WU HAN

BRUCE ADOLPHE

Couple for Cello and Piano (1998)

(b. 1955) Dreamily, expansively—Quicker, flowing

• Gently flowing, warmly

Gently nowing, warning

▶ Slowly, mysteriously

▶ Bouncily, playfully FINCKEL, WU HAN

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906-1975)

Sonata in D minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 40 (1934)

▶ Allegro non troppo

▶ Allegro

▶ Largo

▶ Allegro

FINCKEL, WU HAN

INTERMISSION

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

(1841 - 1904)

Quartet in E-flat major for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello, Op. 87 (1889)

- ▶ Allegro con fuoco
- ▶ Lento
- ▶ Allegro moderato, grazioso
- ► Finale: Allegro ma non troppo WU HAN, LIN, RIDOUT, FINCKEL

The Jerome L. Greene Foundation is the 2023–2024 CMS Season Sponsor.

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This concert is supported, in part, by Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.

This concert features members of the Bowers Program, CMS's residency for outstanding early career musicians. The Bowers Program is supported by **Ann S. Bowers**. Additional support by the **Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund** and **Colburn Foundation**.

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.

ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dear Listener,

With great pleasure we welcome you to a slice of our musical lives. Some of you may know that our relationship began as a musical one, as we found ourselves almost magically in sync even during our first rehearsal. With something of a language barrier in effect during our earliest interactions, music truly functioned as our international language, and with each other we spoke it fluently from the start. Anxious to present the duo music we knew and loved on stage, we quickly gobbled up not only the standard works but also expanded outward to include less-familiar pieces and new commissions. The concert you are about to hear samples our duo repertoire as well as one of our favorite works of chamber music by Dvořák.

One of the greatest thrills a musician can experience is having a work written for them by a composer they admire. Bruce Adolphe's *Couple* (that's us!) was commissioned for us by Lois and James Lasry, who were supporters of La Jolla's SummerFest during our early tenure there as Artistic Directors, some years before we came to CMS. It was the first work to be composed for us, and we are proud to say that the success of *Couple* likely lead to more commissions, four of which (by Bruce Adolphe, George Tsontakis, Pierre Jalbert, and Lera Auerbach) we proudly recorded for our label ArtistLed. As *Couple* was so consequential in our musical evolution, we decided to anchor today's program with it, pairing it in the first half with works whose language resonates with Bruce's, the sonatas by Debussy and Shostakovich, both longtime staples of our repertoire.

Those of you who have been around CMS for at least as long as we have (since 2004) also certainly know of our dedication to young artists. The future of chamber music is their hands, and one can hardly find more qualified torchbearers than our colleagues today, violinist Richard Lin and violist Timothy Ridout. Please welcome them warmly, and thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our most intimate repertoire with you.

Enjoy the concert,

David Finckel
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Wu Han

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Kathryn Bacasmot

Sonata for Cello and Piano

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

- ▶ Born August 22, 1862, in Saint-Germainen-Laye, France
- Died March 25, 1918, in Paris
- ▶ First CMS performance on May 9, 1975, by cellist Laurence Lesser and pianist Michael Tilson Thomas
- Duration: 12 minutes

Composed in 1915

When World War I broke out it stunned Debussy into silence, and he composed almost nothing for a year. Then, like a dam breaking, in a sudden rush of inspiration he began to write again, churning out several pieces and remarking to a friend, "I'm writing like a man possessed." He also resolved to compose six sonatas for a variety of instruments—an interesting choice given that these were his first works in that traditional genre. Of the total sonatas planned, only three were completed before his death from colorectal cancer. The first was the Sonata for Cello and Piano in 1915.

A curious mystery hangs over the inspiration for this sonata. It was long thought that Debussy intended the work to be a programmatic depiction of Pierrot, the lovesick, naïve stock figure of the commedia dell'arte, titled "Pierrot Angry at the Moon." However, it eventually came to light that the whole story may have been based on text from a program annotation by the cellist Louis Rosoor, which read: "Pierrot wakes up with a start and shakes off his stupor. He rushes off to sing to his beloved [the moon] who, despite his supplications, remains unmoved. To comfort himself in his failure he sings a song of liberty." Rosoor knew Debussy,

and while they may have discussed extramusical elements of the sonata, letters from the composer to publisher Jacques Durand reveal that the cellist may have been habitually free with his interpretations. Debussy noted with tangible exasperation, "It no longer surprises me that my poor music is so frequently misunderstood," adding a few days later, "M. Louis Rosoor . . . won a first prize at the Paris Conservatoire. That doesn't stop him from having his own individual understanding of my music." Additionally, in a letter to Igor Stravinsky, Debussy shared, "I've actually written nothing except 'pure' music," including two sonatas for various instruments. Interestingly, the Cello Sonata opens with the same notes as the popular traditional song "Au clair de la lune," which features Pierrot, but Debussy's correspondence seems to indicate he deliberately chose abstraction even if he included allusions, such as the theatrical Prologue title of the opening movement.

Debussy said of the structure of this sonata, "the proportions are almost classical in form . . . in the best sense of the word." The first movement is in a loose sonata form with a clear A–B–A design expressed with the movement, flow, color, and texture that are integral

to Debussy's music. After the bold opening comes a secondary, sighing theme that imperceptibly transforms into a transitional section of rhythmic complexity before the return of the A-section material. The second movement, Sérénade, in a rondo-like form is marked with the directive fantasque et léger (whimsical and light), achieved in part through profuse pizzicato (plucked strings) and strumming. Throughout, the score is peppered with instructions for tempo changes, moods (such as ironique), dynamics, techniques for making the cello sound like a flute,

or changes of the bow placement on the strings to create an even broader variety of sounds. The effect is exquisite. A unique feature of the work is the attachment of the second movement to the Final. The score is marked *léger et nerveux* (light and nervous) here, and Debussy again uses a rondo form, this time colored with a recurring Spanish undertone, highlighting the differences between sections with key and tempo changes. Toward the end, a brief cello cadenza injects a dramatic sense of spaciousness before the final flourishing chords.

Couple for Cello and Piano

BRUCE ADOLPHE

▶ Born May 31, 1955, in New York City

Composed in 1998

In the earliest days of David Finckel and Wu Han's musical collaboration. their chemistry as collaborators was so clear that they were occasionally asked if they were married. "I just got to know this guy!" was her reply at the time. After they did marry, it brought an extra layer of intimacy and unspoken communication to their work that they treasure. In an interview, Wu Han has expressed, "It really is one of the most amazing things that I know even before I play the first note. David already knows what I want, and that's really nice." This rare closeness is evoked in Couple, the title of which, as Adolphe has noted, "suggests an intensification of the more common musical word 'duo.'" The work also holds the distinction

- ▶ First CMS performance on April 7, 2005, by cellist Clancy Newman and pianist Marija Stroke
- Duration: 15 minutes

of being commissioned by a couple (James and Lois Lasry) for a couple—a rarity as most works centered around a relationship in the repertory were written by a composer for, or about, a spouse or love interest.

The first movement features a triptych opening in which a slow introduction of widely spaced intervals floats in a dream-like state, landing as the cello slides into a moderate rocking motif before both parts finally take off, propelled by the perpetual movement of rippling notes in the piano. Throughout the development a mercurial spirit pervades, showcasing the synchronism required of the duo.

Opening the beautiful second movement is a flowing motif in the piano, adorned with triplet rhythms. The mood is warm—a tender, reflective happiness that bubbles into a jaunty, dance-like rhythm in the piano while a meandering melody glides atop in the cello. These two ideas oscillate throughout with the interpolation of a cello cadenza whose rapidly shifting meters lend the effect of pausing time in the middle of the movement. A deeply intimate, unadorned, third movement is the emotional center of

the work. Here is a simple exchange between piano and cello, with fleeting allusions to motifs heard earlier in the piece, almost as if the music and performers are reflecting on what they have built together so far. The buoyant conclusion to the work recalls the bouncing rhythm of the second movement and maintains the energy through to the final measures that end, unexpectedly, in a knowing hush. •

Sonata in D minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 40

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

- Born September 12 (September 25 Gregorian), 1906, in Saint Petersburg
- Died August 9, 1975, in Moscow
- First CMS performance on February 13, 1971, by cellist Leslie Parnas and pianist Brooks Smith
- Duration: 25 minutes

Composed in 1934

In January 1934, Dmitri Shostakovich premiered his second opera, Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District. It was received with acclaim and continued a successful run for two years. By this time, the composer had been on an upward trajectory since the premiere of his First Symphony nearly a decade earlier, in 1926. A work of his teenage years, the symphony catapulted Shostakovich onto the international stage, earning him attention from conductors such as Toscanini and Stokowski, and composers as diverse as Darius Milhaud and Alban Berg. Building on this cornerstone, the remainder of his twenties saw a flurry of productivity; he reached the finals of the first Chopin Piano Competition and created many works that have endured in popularity, including two more symphonies, his first opera (The Nose), the First Piano Concerto, and the 24 Preludes for Piano

The Cello Sonata was one of the first works Shostakovich completed after Lady Macbeth, and also represents his first mature foray into chamber music. It was commissioned by Viktor Kubatsky, principal cellist of the Bolshoi Theater, and its inception collided with a turbulent period in the composer's domestic life: the temporary separation from his wife, Nina, following an affair he pursued with a young translator. The marriage, mutually agreed to be open, was emotionally complex, marred by some reluctance, and further complicated by a desire for children that hung in the balance when Nina was diagnosed with a kidney disease that doctors believed could be lifethreatening in childbirth. After she underwent a successful treatment and became pregnant, Shostakovich wrote to a friend, "There is to be no more talk of my divorce from Nina." But the drama was just beginning. Two years later, in

January 1936, Shostakovich was giving a performance of the Cello Sonata while simultaneously finding himself the direct target of public political intimidation. An unsigned article was published in the newspaper *Pravda* condemning *Lady Macbeth* as "Muddle Instead of Music," just days after Stalin had attended a performance. A second disapproving article, this time singling out one of his ballet scores, ran less than a month later. Performances of Shostakovich's works were canceled, and he fell into an abyss of fear as Stalin's purges raged around him.

Ironically, Shostakovich would be censured from that moment for "formalist" tendencies (a government catch-all for anything they deemed outside of the Socialist-Realism ideal), while his Cello Sonata is almost staunchly traditionalist in its structure. Opening with an elegant melody in the cello, the expansive beauty of the first movement is by turns pensive, laced with gloom, and sweetly wistful. This emotional ambiguity is enhanced by the vagueness of the

movement's tonal centers. This is all hung on a scaffolding of Classical-Romantic sonata form (A-B-A), but modified with unique features such as the return of the A-section material strikingly changed to a slower tempo. The second movement is in perpetual motion, powered by a vigorous triple meter that churns with an array of short, repeated patterns. In stark contrast, the third-movement Largo is lugubrious yet beautifully expressive. Everything is pitched down into the very low register of each instrument, communicating a palpable sense of oppression, and the cello is the definitive focal point. The final movement is a customary rondo (A-B-A-C-A) conclusion for a sonata, but rendered as a tour de force of virtuosity and novelty where breathtakingly rapid finger work is required of both players and new themes combine without transition. Covering the entire folk-music inspired finale is a gloss of sardonic humor—an attribute that would become a hallmark of Shostakovich's works for years to come.

Quartet in E-flat major for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello, Op. 87

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

- Born September 8, 1841, in Nelahozeves, Bohemia
- Died May 1, 1904, in Prague

Composed in 1889

A profoundly impactful period in Antonín Dvořák's life was marked by the enthusiastic reception of his works by orchestras and audiences in England. Everything had changed for the Czech composer when Johannes Brahms extended his support in 1877,

- First CMS performance on March 31, 1974, by pianist Richard Goode, violinist Jaime Laredo, violist Walter Trampler, and cellist Leslie Parnas
- Duration: 35 minutes

encouraging his own publisher, Fritz Simrock, to take on Dvořák as a new talent. Virtually overnight he went from a church organist and regionally popular composer to a burgeoning European celebrity. However, the endorsement could not spare him

from the political climate of increasing anti-Czech sentiment in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, most vividly evidenced by the Vienna Philharmonic's extended delay premiering his Symphony No. 6, which ultimately ended with a first performance in Prague instead.

Amid this storm, Dvořák was invited to England in 1884 for the first of what would become multiple tours over the course of twelve years. His optimism after such a warm reception leaps off the page in one of his letters: "From all I have gained the conviction that a new, and with God's will happier, period is now beginning here for me in England." This turn of events paved the way for his work to spread throughout the continent and to the United States, where he would spend three years as director of the new National Conservatory of Music in New York. It also provided him with true financial security for the first time, allowing him to purchase a summer home in the country where he could write, and giving him leverage to demand better pay from Simrock now that there was competition for publishing rights.

In 1889, now at a new height in his career, Dvořák completed the Quartet, Op. 87, which fulfilled a request from Simrock for a new piano quartet. It was written quickly, between July 10 and August 19, just a few weeks after Dvořák was awarded one of the highest orders of merit, the Austrian Order of the Iron Crown. The buoyant feelings he surely felt as this transformative decade neared its end resonate throughout the quartet, which is one of his most delightful works. Opening the piece is a full-throated statement of the primary

theme by the strings in unison, followed by a call-and-response passage with the piano. Shifting into G major, Dvořák introduces the sweetly lyrical second theme on the viola—a personal touch as this was his instrument during the years he worked as a performer before turning to composition. Throughout the movement the intensity grows until it is bursting with nearly symphonic energy as Dvořák brilliantly transforms the themes.

The expansive second movement is rhapsodic in its treatment of multiple themes and moods through a slew of key changes. The first theme is a melancholy melody delivered by the cello, accompanied by sparse pizzicato (plucked) chords and harp-like arpeggiation. The second, equally lyrical theme is picked up by the violin before a third chordal theme is introduced by the piano. A tumbling cascade of chromatic octaves introduces a passionately strident fourth theme that dovetails into a fifth theme, again carried by the piano, accompanied by sighs in the strings.

For the third movement, Dvořák takes a cue from the Classical minuet-and-trio structure, but inserts evocations of traditional folk dances into the ternary (A-B-A) form. Closing the work is a high-spirited finale in the same folk-music vein. Beginning unexpectedly in E-flat minor, the movement displays Dvořák's endless capacity for melody all the way to the end before pivoting to conclude in the home key.

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

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO

DAVID FINCKEL

▶ Co-Artistic Director of CMS since 2004, cellist David Finckel's dynamic musical career has included performances on the world's stages in the roles of recitalist, chamber artist, and orchestral soloist. The first American student of Mstislav Rostropovich, he joined the Emerson String Quartet in 1979, and during 34 seasons garnered nine Grammy Awards and the Avery Fisher Prize. His quartet performances and recordings include quartet cycles of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann,

Mendelssohn, Dvořák, Brahms, Bartók, and Shostakovich, as well as collaborative masterpieces and commissioned works. In 1997, he and pianist Wu Han founded ArtistLed, the first internet-based, artist-controlled classical recording label. ArtistLed's catalog of more than 20 releases includes the standard literature for cello and piano, plus works composed for the duo by George Tsontakis, Gabriela Lena Frank, Bruce Adolphe, Lera Auerbach, Edwin Finckel, Augusta Read Thomas, and Pierre Jalbert. In 2022, Music@Menlo, an innovative summer chamber music festival in Silicon Valley founded and directed by David and Wu Han, celebrated its 20th season. As a young student, David was winner of the Philadelphia Orchestra's junior and senior divisions, resulting in two performances with the orchestra. Having taught extensively with the late Isaac Stern in America, Israel, and Japan, he is currently a professor at both the Juilliard School and Stony Brook University, and oversees both CMS's Bowers Program and Music@Menlo's Chamber Music Institute. David's 100 online *Cello Talks*, lessons on cello technique, are viewed by an international audience of musicians. Along with Wu Han, he was the recipient of *Musical America*'s 2012 Musicians of the Year Award.



RICHARD LIN

▶ Taiwanese-American violinist Richard Lin continues to gain international prominence since his Gold Medal prize at the 2018 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. Following his June 2022 Carnegie Hall Stern Auditorium recital debut, New York Concert Review asserted, "Richard Lin. Remember the name. For he has everything required to take the world by storm." He has collaborated with numerous orchestras and performed at celebrated concert venues

throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States. He is a laureate of the Sendai, Joseph Joachim, Singapore, and Michael Hill International Violin competitions and has just joined the faculty of the National Taipei University of Education. His 2023–24 season includes appearances as Guest Concertmaster, soloist, and chamber artist with the National Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan and Japan. He will appear in recitals across the United States, including performances with CMS as a member of the Bowers Program. He recently released an album with pianist Thomas Hoppe on the Azica label featuring his Carnegie Hall program with works by Vitali, Richard Strauss, John Corigliano, and Frolov. Born in Phoenix, Arizona, and raised in Taiwan, Lin graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Aaron Rosand and Lewis Kaplan, respectively.

KANPO OKKIKAS

TIMOTHY RIDOUT

▶ Timothy Ridout, a former BBC New Generation Artist, Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship 2020 winner, and recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society 2023 Young Artist Award, is one of the most sought-after violists of his generation. The 2023–24 season sees him join the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra alongside the likes of Kazuki Yamada and Sir Simon Rattle. Further highlights include

his return to America with Camerata Pacifica and his debut with Royal Northern Sinfonia. Recent seasons have included appearances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Odense Symphony Orchestra, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, hr-Sinfonieorchester, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Hamburger Symphoniker, Orchestre National de Lille, Camerata Salzburg, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestra. Across his engagements he has worked with conductors such as Sakari Oramo, Lionel Bringuier, Sylvain Cambreling, Nicholas Collon, and Sir András Schiff, and performed as far and wide as South America and Australia. In 2020 Ridout won Hamburger Symphoniker's inaugural Sir Jeffrey Tate Prize and in 2021 he joined CMS's Bowers Program. Born in London in 1995, Ridout studied at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with the Queen's Commendation for Excellence. He completed his master's at the Kronberg Academy with Nobuko Imai in 2019 and, in 2018, took part in the Kronberg Academy's Chamber Music Connects the World. He plays a viola by Peregrino di Zanetto, c. 1565-75, on loan from a generous patron of Beare's International Violin Society.



WU HAN

▶ Pianist Wu Han, recipient of *Musical America*'s Musician of the Year Award, enjoys a multi-faceted musical life that encompasses artistic direction, performing, and recording at the highest levels. Co-Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since 2004 as well as Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Silicon Valley's innovative chamber music festival Music@Menlo since 2002, she also serves as Artistic Advisor for Wolf Trap's Chamber Music at the Barns

series and Palm Beach's Society of the Four Arts, and as Artistic Director for La Musica in Sarasota, Florida. Her recent concert activities have taken her from New York's Lincoln Center stages to the most important concert halls in the United States, Europe, and Asia. In addition to countless performances of virtually the entire chamber repertoire, her concerto performances include appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, and the Aspen Festival Orchestra. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of ArtistLed, classical music's first artist-directed, internet-based recording label, which has released her performances of the staples of the cello-piano duo repertoire with cellist David Finckel. Her more than 80 releases on ArtistLed, CMS Live, and Music@Menlo LIVE include masterworks of the chamber repertoire with numerous distinguished musicians. Wu Han's educational activities include overseeing CMS's Bowers

Program and the Chamber Music Institute at Music@Menlo. A recipient of the prestigious Andrew Wolf Award, she was mentored by some of the greatest pianists of our time, including Lilian Kallir, Rudolf Serkin, and Menahem Pressler. Married to cellist David Finckel since 1985, Wu Han divides her time between concert touring and residences in New York City and Westchester County.

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 1,300 video recordings, and broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners around the world.

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