CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 21, 2024, AT 5:00 ▸ 4,433RD CONCERT

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

CHAD HOOPES, violin
BELLA HRISTOVA, violin
MATTHEW LIPMAN, viola
TIMOTHY RIDOUT, viola
SIHAO HE, cello

String Resonance

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)

Trio in E-flat major for Violin, Viola and Cello, Op. 3 (before 1794)
▸ Allegro con brio
▸ Andante
▸ Menuetto: Allegretto
▸ Adagio
▸ Menuetto: Moderato
▸ Finale: Allegro
HRISTOVA, RIDOUT, HE

JEAN FRANÇAIX
(1912–1997)

Trio for Violin, Viola, and Cello (1933)
▸ Allegretto vivo
▸ Scherzo: Vivo
▸ Andante
▸ Rondo: Vivo
HOOPES, LIPMAN, HE

INTERMISSION

FRANK BRIDGE
(1879–1941)

***Lament* for Two Violas** (1912)
RIDOUT, LIPMAN

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809–1947)

Quintet No. 2 in B-flat major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, Op. 87 (1845)
- Allegro vivace
- Andante scherzando
- Adagio e lento
- Allegro molto vivace

HOOPES, HRISTOVA, LIPMAN, RIDOUT, HE

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

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

Matthew Lipman occupies the **Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Chair**, supported by the **Wallach Artists Fund**.

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**.

ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dear Listener,

As we are a pianist and a cellist, one might not think it easy to live together. Our technical worlds, the size and portability of our instruments, and even the way our music looks on the page are hugely different from each other. Yet, we can safely say (having been together for a very long time) that our family happily coexists as a foursome: us, plus a stringed instrument and a piano—both of which we fell in love with long before the two of us met.

To be accurate, one must also describe the piano as a kind of stringed instrument, differing from the violin family only in the way that the strings produce sound. Somewhere in between the piano and the violin is the guitar and other plucked or hammered instruments, such as the lute and the cimbalom. Both likely having evolved from gut strung over hollowed logs and enjoyed around a mastodon barbeque, they have certainly come a long way. It is only in the last 400 years, however, that the violin blossomed into the marvelous instrument we know today. The violin, and its siblings the viola and cello, can be attributed primarily to the ingenuity and craft of Andrea Amati (1505–1578), the acknowledged inventor of the modern violin family. The models he created are still in use today, although Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737) refined the design to reach unsurpassed heights.

As we titled this program *String Resonance*, it's interesting to revel a bit in the background of the instruments you are about to hear. Without naming names (you are free to ask the musicians after the concert) you will hear an assortment of instruments, including one made in Brooklyn in the 21st century, one made in Italy in 1627, and one made in Chicago in the 20th century. The real miracle is that despite their ages and origins, they work together perfectly, making the case for being members of the happy family that they are.

The diversity of this concert's instrument lineup is reflected in the variety of composers and their works. How often can we hear two string trios side by side that were written 139 years apart? The Mendelssohn is the perfect conclusion to this get-together, all our participants finally able to gather around the same musical table.

Enjoy the concert,

David Finckel Wu Han
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Nicky Swett

Trio in E-flat major for Violin, Viola, and Cello, Op. 3

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

- Baptized December 17, 1770, in Bonn (likely born December 16)
- Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna
- First CMS performance on December 2, 1973, by violinist Jaime Laredo, violist Walter Trampler, and cellist Leslie Parnas
- Duration: 37 minutes

Composed before 1794

In the 1790s, Ludwig van Beethoven tried several different tactics when writing trios for violin, viola, and cello. His four-movement Op. 9 trios, formally and harmonically adventurous works that were published in 1799, are often viewed as warm-ups for his Op. 18 string quartets. These trios are pieces in which Beethoven tried to play with large-form string writing in a more constrained setting before letting loose with the extra violinist present in a quartet. His Op. 8 Serenade for String Trio is an odder, baggier collection of marches, dances, and romances—a cross between formal concert music and the occasional pieces he wrote for events and patrons in his early Vienna days. But it was only with his spectacular Op. 3 in E-flat major that he seems to have written a string trio that doesn't yearn to be anything but a

string trio, one that fully embraces the flexible instrumental roles required by this exposed ensemble, and explores those roles across a large group of closely linked movements.

The Op. 3 Trio is also an homage to W. A. Mozart. At the end of his life, Mozart wrote a work for String Trio (K. 563), a six-movement behemoth whose serious, searching nature is slightly obscured by the light-hearted title "Divertimento in E-flat." Beethoven's six-part response opens with an equally ambitious movement in sonata form, which juggles a dense, syncopated outburst heard at the start, a sweet yet sparkly secondary tune, and a set of operatic closing ideas. Sometimes, Beethoven passes music around the whole group; but just as often, he has the viola and the cello work as a duo to imitate the violin, creating a sense of both textural and registral contrast in almost every melody.

The second movement of Mozart's model, a transporting, slow *Adagio,* is not duplicated here. Instead, Beethoven gives us an *Andante* in which almost every note has a staccato indication. It's not fast, *scherzando* music; it takes its time, even plods along humorously in places, and yet its springy texture lends it an innocent joy that is characteristic of Beethoven's early music. This is followed by a minuet teeming with rhythmic ambiguities. Because of a mix of oddly placed rests and accents, it is almost impossible to feel the downbeat until the reprieve of the sweet, lyrical, contrasting trio section.

Beethoven saves his own transporting *Adagio* for the fourth movement of his Op. 3 Trio, and it's worth the wait. After three motoric numbers, he gives us a down-tempo chapter in the warm key of A-flat major, in which he calls for the winding accompaniment to be played just as expressively as the main melodies. As in the first movement, the violin and the viola-cello team call tunes and figures back and forth, but the spirit is collaborative rather than competitive. When the instruments at last join together for a few final utterances, with each phrase marked by a short breath, it is as if they have arrived at some earth-shattering conclusion that leaves them only able to whisper in awe.

The fifth movement, another minuet, is brimming with good cheer. It's a Viennese drinking song of sorts that includes a canon in which the main gesture is passed around the crowd. The contrasting trio, an extremely high, turn-filled dance for the violin above drones in the lower strings, comes as a total surprise. The rondo-form *Finale* is full of fireworks and includes a thrilling minor-key fugue in triplets. But the repeated main theme is stately and simple. It almost picks up where the close of the *Adagio* left off, with lots of rhetorical empty space. Beethoven emphasizes this connection at the very end, when we hear the finale's refrain in an *Adagio* tempo. It's as if the musicians drift back to that great idea they had earlier, just for a moment, and then fly off in excitement to do something about it. ◆

Trio for Violin, Viola, and Cello

JEAN FRANÇAIX

- Born May 23, 1912, in Le Mans
- Died September 25, 1997, in Paris

Composed in 1933

- First CMS performance on April 29, 1998, by violinist Ani Kavafian, violist Paul Neubauer, and cellist Fred Sherry
- Duration: 13 minutes

In 1927, brothers Jean, Pierre, and Etienne Pasquier formed what was at the time a rather unlikely fixed chamber ensemble. There simply wasn't that much music for violin, viola, and cello. W. A. Mozart's 1788 Divertimento, a handful of early works by Ludwig van Beethoven, the odd Romantic suite or serenade by the likes of Jean Sibelius or Ernő Dohnányi—it was repertoire that could fill a few concerts, but not a whole career. The Pasquier Trio stayed active by regularly teaming up with other musicians for concerts: with various violinists to form a quartet; with wind players to take a turn on Classical flute or oboe quartets; or with pianists, like their friend Jean Françaix, to play music for piano quartet. They were also in the business of commissioning new repertoire for string trio. They requested works from composers like Darius Milhaud, Bohuslav Martinů, and, in 1933, from Françaix, who penned for them a String Trio in C major.

On the whole, Françaix's works tend to have short movements that display quick changes in harmony and humorous spins and turns, but with some consistency in character and atmosphere. The opening *Allegretto vivo* is a perfect example of this sort of music; its relentless perpetual motion supports a number of changes in instrumental texture and tonal color. The *Scherzo* is a dance whose steps are capriciously destabilized by syncopations and strummed chords on the wrong beats. In a wild middle section, the violin plays a drunken tune, and then the viola repeats it while the violin plays the gesture a half-step off. It's a crunchy, unserious passage, rightfully marked "ironico" in the score.

Françaix's sincere side comes out in the *Andante*. He was a gifted melodist, and here writes a tune that seamlessly moves between different time signatures: modal, almost medieval passages in 4 that are played to droning harmonies, and $\frac{3}{4}$ passages that point back to the second movement with hints of a slow waltz. The finale, a rondo that returns to the staccato textures of the opening movement, shows the composer experimenting with a modernist tendency to switch tracks abruptly. An eerie, slow passage in the middle of the movement represents an intrusion of Alban Berg. And the whole piece unexpectedly ends on a swaggering jig. It is perhaps a reappearance of the drunken fellow from the second movement, but rather than coming to an uproarious conclusion the music skips away on quiet, glassy gestures. It's as if nothing in the preceding four movements had actually happened, but were just visions or distorted memories. ◆

Lament for Two Violas

FRANK BRIDGE

- Born February 26, 1879, in Brighton, England
- Died January 10, 1941, in Eastbourne, England
- First CMS performance on January 14, 2016, by violists Paul Neubauer and Richard O'Neill
- Duration: 8 minutes

Composed in 1912

A squad of two violas is a special, rarely-heard sound. It can be found for short passages in many Romantic and 20th-century string sextets and so-called 'viola' quintets, in which the two, middle voices will stand out of the texture. But true viola duets are rarer than works for two cellos, or two violins, or even two double basses (whose general lack of repertoire has perhaps led to a swelled sense of solidarity).

Lionel Tertis, one of the first internationally touring viola soloists, was born in England in 1876. By 1900 he was a professor at the Royal Academy of Music and actively encouraging students, colleagues, and friends to write new works for the instrument. When a concert was planned in 1912 for him to perform at London's Aeolian Hall with the young composer and fellow violist Frank Bridge, Bridge wrote a *Lament* and also a *Caprice* for the two to perform together. Neither was published, but the *Lament* has been reconstructed for performance from sketches in Bridge's archive.

In this piece, the two violas swim in and out of one another's rich tone. The two instruments are often playing two notes each, with the effect that it sounds like a viola choir is singing a mourning chorus. In these passages, the density of the chromatic counterpoint mixes with the inherently thick sound of the violas to produce a gripping, guttural buzz. At other moments, one viola soars above the other, singing a longing dirge while the other continues the harmonic support in tense, resonant double stops. In a central passage, the two violas trade tune and accompaniment almost every bar, locking into one another's sound and becoming a single, husky instrument. When the piece opens up at the end, and the two instruments split the possible range of the ensemble cleanly into high and low, it creates a striking release of textural tension.

In this expressive use of orchestration, we hear a condensation of the melancholic style Bridge advanced throughout his career. There are notes of the bucolic nostalgia we find in his early works like *3 Idylls* for String Quartet, which his student Benjamin Britten would later use as a basis for a towering homage, *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge*. And we might hear this two-viola *Lament* as an expressive preparatory exercise for Bridge's later *Lament* for strings, which expressed his sorrow at the sinking of the British ship *Lusitania* in World War I. ◆

Quintet No. 2 in B-flat major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, Op. 87

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

- Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg
- Died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig

Composed in 1845

- First CMS performance on December 13, 1969, by the Orford String Quartet (violinists Andrew Dawes and Kenneth Perkins, violist Terence Helmer, and cellist Marcel Saint-Cyr) and violist Raphael Hillyer
- Duration: 29 minutes

In the summer of 1845, Felix Mendelssohn was in Frankfurt, and while he was enjoying a productive spell he completed a string quintet in B-flat major. He did not send it to his publisher; he wasn't happy with the piece, and it would not be released to the public until 1851, four years after his death. Mendelssohn was always hard on himself as a composer, and it seems that he wasn't quite satisfied with the work's finale. His friend the pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles recalled that one evening in 1846 when they "looked at the Viola Quintet in B-flat major . . . Mendelssohn claimed that the last movement was not good."

What was the deficit? The movement is exuberant and flashy; it's got a furious, Mozartian fugal passage in the middle, a prayerful viola duet for some lyrical contrast, and a soaring final section reminiscent of Mendelssohn's early String Octet. Joyous explosions and prayers are really the stuff of Mendelssohn's Op. 87 String Quintet, and I might conjecture that the purported issue with the last movement is only that we get so little development of the more solemn, praying, second subject.

Such is not the case in the rest of the work. A cascading, contrapuntal, chorale-like idea appears as the somber contrasting tune in the opening *Allegro vivace*. The movement is dominated by energetic bursts in the first violin supported by shimmering tremolos, and the prayer idea is initially introduced as a brief respite. But this melody becomes a primary focus of the development section, and is varied in a striking, Romantic fashion in the coda. The second movement admittedly does not pray or explode, but flirts; a lyrical tune appears momentarily, played by a viola and then a violin, but the primary action of the movement is a fluttering atmosphere rather than melody or harmony.

Hopeful prayer is cast as an antidote to grief in the third movement. This *Adagio* opens with a funeral march, which intensifies into some of the most pained and passionate music that Mendelssohn wrote. The ensemble veers to the edge of desperation for several minutes before we finally get a glimpse of hope in a major-key chorale. He alternates these ideas until the climax of the movement. The funeral music is played above tremolos that bring to mind the energy of the work's first movement, and indeed that shaking accompaniment pushes a harmonic transfiguration that allows the hymn's spirit to win

out in a peaceful D major. This tonality allows Mendelssohn to create a clever, smooth, yet contrasting transition to the finale, which begins *attacca* (played without a break between movements). In context, the finale feels like an elating answer to the prayers heard in the rest of the piece, even if the composer might have made a few tweaks had he lived long enough to get back to it. ◆

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

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SIHAO HE

▸ Sihao He first came to international prominence as a 14-year-old cellist winning first prize at the International Antonio Janigro Cello Competition. He is also the grand-prize winner of the prestigious 3rd Gaspar Cassadó International Cello Competition. As soloist, he has performed with leading orchestras including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, and Brussels Philharmonic. As a chamber musician, he has appeared at Music@Menlo, Bravo!Vail, and the Meadowmount School of Music. As a member of the Galvin Cello Quartet, he won the 2022 Victor Elmaleh Competition and joined the Concert Artists Guild roster. He is a faculty member at the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University and a member of CMS's Bowers Program.

JIYANG CHEN

CHAD HOOPES

▸ American violinist Chad Hoopes performs with the world's leading orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, l'Orchestre de Paris, l'Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, and the Minnesota and National Arts Centre orchestras, as well the San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Houston, and National symphonies. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, he has been featured on recordings including the recent Moritzburg Festival Dvorák album with cellist Jan Vogler, released by Sony Classical, and with the MDR Leipzig and conductor Kristjan Järvi performing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto on the Naïve label. A 2017 recipient of Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Career Grant, Hoopes studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Kronberg Academy. He plays the 1991 Samuel Zygmuntowicz, ex Isaac Stern violin.

LISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO

BELLA HRISTOVA

▸ Acclaimed for her passionate, powerful performances, beautiful sound, and compelling command of her instrument, violinist Bella Hristova has performed as a soloist with orchestras around the US, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and New Zealand. She was the featured soloist for a concerto commission written for her by her husband, composer David Serkin Ludwig, and has recorded the complete Beethoven and Brahms sonatas with renowned pianist Michael Houstoun. She received a 2013 Avery Fisher Career Grant and first prizes in the Michael Hill International Violin Competition and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Hristova studied with Ida Kavafian and Jaime Laredo. She is an alum of CMS's Bowers Program and plays a 1655 Nicolò Amati violin.

JIYANG CHEN

MATTHEW LIPMAN

American violist Matthew Lipman has made recent appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, American Symphony Orchestra, Munich Symphony Orchestra, and Minnesota Orchestra. He has performed recitals at Carnegie Hall and the Zürich Tonhalle, and has recorded on the Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, Cedille, and Avie labels. An alum of the Bowers Program, he performs regularly on tour and at Alice Tully Hall with CMS, where he occupies the Wallach Chair. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and major prize winner at the Primrose and Tertis International Viola Competitions, Lipman is on faculty at Stony Brook University. He performs on a 2021 Samuel Zygmuntowicz viola.

KAUPO KIKKAS

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 WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Further highlights include his return to America with Camerata Pacifica and his debut with Royal Northern Sinfonia. 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 2021, joined CMS's Bowers Program. He plays a viola by Peregrino di Zanetto c. 1565–75 on loan from a generous patron of Beare's International Violin Society.

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 1,500 video recordings, and broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners around the world.

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