



Chamber  
Music Society  
of Lincoln Center

DAVID FINCKEL AND WU HAN,  
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

2025-2026 SEASON

**SONIC SPECTRUM III**

Thursday, March 5, 2026, 7:30 pm

*Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio at CMS*



**The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10023

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ChamberMusicSociety.org

*Lighting for this program was designed by **Joshua Benghiat**.*

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*The Chamber Music Society is deeply grateful to Board member **Paul Gridley** for his very generous gift of the Hamburg Steinway & Sons model “D” concert grand piano we are privileged to hear this evening.*

*The Chamber Music Society wishes to express its deepest gratitude for **The Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio**, which was made possible by a generous gift from the donors for whom the studio is named.*

*This season is supported by public funds from **New York City Council Member Gale A. Brewer; 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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# **CMS** Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

## **SONIC SPECTRUM III**

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 5, 2026, AT 7:30 ▶ 4,680TH CONCERT

**Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio at CMS**

**Orion Weiss**, piano  
**Benjamin Beilman**, violin  
**Bella Hristova**, violin

**John Corigliano** *The Red Violin Caprices for Violin* (1999)

(b. 1938)

- ▶ Theme
- ▶ Variation 1: Presto
- ▶ Variation 2: Con bravura
- ▶ Variation 3: Adagio, languid
- ▶ Variation 4: Slowly, con rubato
- ▶ Variation 5: Presto, pesante

HRISTOVA

**David Serkin** *Swan Song for Violin and Piano* (2013)

**Ludwig**

(b. 1974)

- ▶ Berceuse
- ▶ Refrain
- ▶ Lullaby

HRISTOVA, WEISS

**Frederic Rzewski** *Demons for Violin and Piano*

(1938–2021)

(New York Premiere) (2017)

- ▶ I. Nervous
- ▶ II. Slow, measured but free
- ▶ III. Timeless (senza misure)
- ▶ IV. [Quarter-note = 126]

BEILMAN, WEISS

PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

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

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# Essay on the Program

## Demons

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

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Unusually, this Sonic Spectrum concert focuses on one instrument: the violin, an instrument that has gathered through its history an aura—much more than, say, the bassoon—of demonic possession and power. In the middle of the 18th century, Giuseppe Tartini told how the Devil himself had appeared to him in a dream playing the violin with a wild frenzy that the dormant composer remembered when he woke up and wrote his “Devil’s Trill” Sonata. Of Niccolò Paganini, in the next century, it was widely believed that only a pact with the Devil could explain his incomprehensible virtuosity. Then there is François Girard’s film *The Red Violin*, showing episodes in the cursed history of an instrument from back in the 18th century.

John Corigliano, who wrote the Oscar-winning score for that movie, composed several concert works from it or in parallel with it, including a full-scale concerto and the set of caprices (a Paganini title, altogether suitably) with which this program begins. These, he writes “take a spacious, troubadour-inspired theme and vary it both linearly and stylistically. The variations intentionally evoke Baroque, Roma, and arch-Romantic idioms as they examine the same materials (a dark, seven-chord chaconne as well as that principal theme) from differing aural viewpoints.” The theme is indeed like a troubadour song in its Aeolian D-minor tonality, and the “Baroque, Roma, and arch-Romantic idioms” are not hard to spot. Superbly violinistic, the set plays for a little under ten minutes.

David Serkin Ludwig’s *Swan Song* also takes a song on its travels, within the penumbra of another composer, as he explains:

“*Swan Song* is one of three pieces of mine that draw directly from the materials of a past musical work, in this case Schubert’s Fantasy for Violin and Piano in C major, D. 934. I felt like I was writing a play with many characters

who are having separate conversations about the same piece of music.

“The work models Schubert in weaving in and out of a chain of related passages that, linked together, form a fantasy, playing for a little over 15 minutes. The opening passage appears several times throughout the piece, each time a little different (but always sparkling!), as if transformed by all of the music preceding it. In between are fast passages with quick exchanges between violinist and pianist, music in the extremes of volume and register, and many little games and conversations with Schubert.

“There are many characters, with their exits and their entrances, each making a statement and then stepping back for the next to take center stage. At one point, Schubert himself makes a brief appearance, but he is a phantom who emerges into the light and returns to the background as quickly as he appeared. Finally, after increasingly fast music that seems to plow headlong into a brusque ending, hope appears, rising toward a resolution of the quiet questions asked in the first twinkling sonorities of the piece.”

Ludwig wrote the work for Benjamin Beilman on a commission from Carnegie Hall for a performance in Weill Hall just over twelve years ago.

Beilman himself was responsible for commissioning Frederick Rzewski, having been given the opportunity by Music Accord to approach whomever he wanted to write him a work. He immediately chose Rzewski, who, as he has recalled, came to one of his concerts and, over a vinous dinner afterwards, agreed. The first performance was in Boston in 2018.

Rzewski’s own program note on *Demons* reveals the background and the reason he dedicated the piece to Angela Davis:

“In Dostoyevsky’s novel of the same name

(1871), the character Kirillov kills himself in order 'to become God.' Inspired by the Russian Nihilist movement of the 1860s, and specifically by the charismatic figure Sergei Nechaev, Dostoyevsky's book is a study of the self-destructive forces present in the Russian society of his time. It foreshadows Lenin and the Revolution of 1917, as well as the ideas of Nietzsche and Freud, and had a deep influence on writers like Thomas Mann, whose *Doctor Faustus* is a similar study of modern Germany.

"While it is futile to try to express musical ideas in words, it is possible to say that my piece is a meditation on similar trends in the world of today. In early November 2016, I had the honor to assist at a spectacular performance of my composition *Coming Together* of 1972 at the San Francisco Conservatory, with Angela Davis as the speaking soloist, a few days before the presidential elections. There was a public discussion that followed. Davis seemed to know the results already.

"She said that, if the Left had done its job, the present situation would not have arisen. These and similar ideas were all going through my head as I was writing *Demons* a few months later. I am not religious, and don't know much about devils and such, but as an artist I cannot help feeling sensitive to whatever it is that awakens these ideas in humans, causing them to go crazy. I am not sure that scientists or doctors understand these things any better than writers or musicians. Perhaps, on the contrary, although we cannot explain them

in rational terms, we can nevertheless throw some light on them, in our own way.

"My piece is in four movements, and so is a kind of sonata, like the piece that preceded it, *Notasonata*, written for Jennifer Koh. There are periodic references to two songs throughout the piece: 'Iroes' (Heroes), made popular in the 1990s by the singer Maria Dimitriadi, and a song that became known during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (notably as performed by Barbara Dane), 'Freedom Is a Constant Struggle,' which also provided the title for Angela Davis's book of 2015.

"Thanks to a new generation of classical musicians like Benjamin Beilman, there is a revival of interest among younger players in new music that in some way continues the classical tradition. One can only hope that this trend will continue. Although Marx's analysis of capitalism as a ruthless system following its relentless course independently of human will continues to be valid, there are nonetheless reasons to think that alternatives are possible. As Mark Twain put it, prophecy is really hard, especially when it's about the future."

*Program essay © Paul Griffiths*

# About the Artists

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## Benjamin Beilman

Benjamin Beilman's 2025–26 season highlights include appearances with the Minnesota Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony, Solistes Européens Luxembourg, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, and Nashville Symphony. He will also curate, stage, and lead two chamber music programs at Sun Valley Music Festival, and continue his ongoing recital partnership with pianist Steven Osborne. In the summer, he embarks on a month-long tour of Australasia, including appearances with the Sydney Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony, West Australian Symphony, and Auckland Philharmonia. He studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Ida Kavafian and Pamela Frank, and with Christian Tetzlaff at the Kronberg Academy. He has received many prestigious accolades including a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a London Music Masters Award. He has also recorded works by Stravinsky, Janáček, and Schubert for Warner Classics, and is an alum of CMS's Bowers Program. Beilman performs with the ex-Balakovic F. X. Tourte bow (c. 1820), and plays the "Ysaÿe" Guarneri del Gesù from 1740, generously on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.



SOPHIE ZHANG

## Bella Hristova

Acclaimed for her passionate, powerful performances, beautiful sound, and compelling command of her instrument, violinist Bella Hristova has appeared as a soloist with orchestras across the US, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and New Zealand. She was the featured soloist for an eight-orchestra concerto commission, written by her husband, composer David Serkin Ludwig, and recently recorded it with the Buffalo Philharmonic and JoAnn Falletta. Her discography also includes the complete Beethoven



DANIO ACOSTA

and Brahms sonatas with pianist Michael Houstoun. A champion of new music, her project Lineage features six new solo violin commissions by Dai Wei, Gloria Kravchenko, Nokuthula Ngwenyama, Eunike Tanzil, Joan Tower, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. She is a recipient of a 2013 Avery Fisher Career Grant and first-prize winner of the Michael Hill and YCA competitions. Hristova studied with Ida Kavafian and Jaime Laredo, is an alum of CMS's Bowers Program, and plays a 1655 Nicolò Amati violin.



## Orion Weiss

Orion Weiss has performed with dozens of orchestras in North America including the Chicago Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Boston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and New York Philharmonic and at major venues and festivals worldwide. Known for his affinity for chamber music, he performs regularly with violinists Augustin Hadelich and James Ehnes; pianists Michael Stephen Brown and Shai Wosner; and the Ariel, Parker, and Pacifica Quartets. Weiss can be heard on the Naxos, Telos, Bridge, First Hand, Yarlung, and Artek labels. He has been awarded the Classical Recording Foundation's Young Artist of the Year, Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and the Mieczyslaw Munz Scholarship. A native of Ohio and an alum of CMS's Bowers Program, Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax.

## Learn More About Tonight's Program

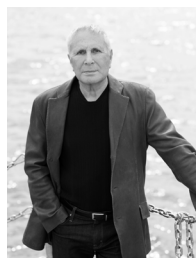
SCAN HERE



For an interview with composer David Serkin Ludwig and violinist Bella Hristova about *Swan Song*, Ludwig's fantasy for violin and piano, which appears on tonight's performance, scan the QR code or visit [ChamberMusicSociety.org/SonicSpectrum3](https://ChamberMusicSociety.org/SonicSpectrum3).

# About the Composers

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J. HENRY FAIR

## John Corigliano

John Corigliano continues to add to one of the richest, most unusual, and most widely celebrated bodies of work any composer has created over the last forty years. Corigliano's scores, now numbering over one hundred, have won the Pulitzer Prize, the Grawemeyer Award, five Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, and have been performed and recorded by many of the most prominent orchestras, soloists, and chamber musicians in the world. Attentive listening to this

music reveals an unconfined imagination, one which has taken traditional notions like "symphony" or "concerto" and redefined them in a uniquely transparent idiom forged as much from the post-war European avant-garde as from his American forebears.



## David Serkin Ludwig

David Serkin Ludwig's first memory was singing Beatles songs with his sister; his second was hearing his grandfather perform at Carnegie Hall. These foreshadowed a diverse career collaborating with many of today's leading musicians, filmmakers, and writers. His choral work *The New Colossus* opened the private prayer service for President Obama's second inauguration. The next year NPR Music named him in the world's Top 100 Composers Under Forty. He has held positions and residencies with nearly

two dozen orchestras and music festivals in the US and abroad. Ludwig has received commissions from many of the most recognized artists and ensembles of our time. He was recently honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters as recipient of their annual award in music. In 2022 Ludwig was awarded CMS's Stoeger Prize. In 2021 he became Dean and Director of Music of the Juilliard School. He lives in New York City with his wife, violinist Bella Hristova.



HIRVUKI THORGETTY IMAGES

## Frederic Rzewski

Frederic Rzewski was American pianist and composer whose works have been performed throughout the world. As a child, he studied music with Charles Mackey in Springfield, Massachusetts, and later studied composition with Walter Piston, counterpoint with Randall Thompson, and orchestration with Claudio Spies at Harvard University. Other teachers included Milton Babbitt, Roger Sessions, and Oliver Strunk, and Luigi Dallapiccola. As a pianist, he frequently performed with flutist Severino Gazzelloni

in the 1960s. He then co-founded, with Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum, the improvisational and live-electronic ensemble Musica Elettronica Viva in Rome, with which he performed from 1966 to 1971. He was thereafter active as a pianist, primarily in performances of his own pieces and music by other contemporary composers. He taught at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Liège from 1977 to 2003. He died in 2021.

# About the Chamber Music Society

Founded in 1969, the **Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS)** brings the transcendent experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind worldwide. Under the artistic leadership of cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han, the multi-generational and international performing artist roster of 140 of the world's finest chamber musicians enable us to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period.

Each season, we reach a global audience with more than 150 performances and education programs in our home at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and on tour with residencies worldwide.

We offer a wide range of learning formats and experiences to engage and inform listeners of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of musical knowledge through our education and community engagement programs. The Bowers Program, our competitive three-season residency, is dedicated to developing the chamber music leaders of the future and integrates this selection of exceptional early-career musicians into every facet of CMS activities.

Our incomparable digital presence, which regularly enables us to reach millions of viewers and listeners annually, includes our weekly national radio program, heard locally on WQXR 105.9 FM on Saturday and Monday evenings; radio programming in Taiwan and mainland China; and appearances on American Public Media's *Performance Today*, the monthly program *In Concert with CMS* on the PBS ALL ARTS broadcast channel, and SiriusXM's Symphony Hall channel, among others. The PBS documentary film *Chamber Music Society Returns* chronicles CMS's return to live concerts at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and on a six-city national tour. It is currently available to watch on PBS Passport. Our website also hosts an online archive of more than 1,700 video recordings of performance and education videos free to the public.

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