

# CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 22, 2026, AT 5:00 ▶ 4,692ND CONCERT

**Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage**

*Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center*

## Viano Quartet

**Lucy Wang, violin**

**Hao Zhou, violin**

**Aiden Kane, viola**

**Tate Zawadiuk, cello**

## The Viano Quartet

**Joseph Haydn**  
(1732–1809)

**Quartet in D major for Strings, Hob. III:79, Op. 76,  
No. 5 (1796–97)**

- ▶ Allegretto
- ▶ Largo ma non troppo: Cantabile e mesto
- ▶ Menuet: Allegro
- ▶ Finale: Presto

WANG, ZHOU, KANE, ZAWADIUK

**Felix Mendelssohn**  
(1809–1847)

**Quartet in D major for Strings, Op. 44, No. 1 (1838)**

- ▶ Molto allegro vivace
- ▶ Menuetto: Un poco allegretto
- ▶ Andante espressivo ma con moto
- ▶ Presto con brio

ZHOU, WANG, KANE, ZAWADIUK

## INTERMISSION

**Anton Webern**  
(1883–1945)

**Langsamer Satz for String Quartet (1905)**

WANG, ZHOU, KANE, ZAWADIUK

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
(1906–1975)

**Quartet No. 9 in E-flat major for Strings, Op. 117  
(1964)**

- ▶ Moderato con moto
- ▶ Adagio
- ▶ Allegretto
- ▶ Adagio
- ▶ Allegro

ZHOU, WANG, KANE, ZAWADIUK

This concert features members of the Bowers Program, CMS's residency for outstanding early career musicians. The Bowers Program is supported by the **Estate of Ann S. Bowers**. Additional support by the **Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund, Colburn Foundation, Dr. Nancy Maruyama and Mr. Charles Cahn Jr.**, and **Patricia Kopec Selman and Jay E. Selman, MD**.

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# From the Artistic Directors

Dear Listener,

What does a young string quartet need to become one of the world's best?

A look at the Viano Quartet's biography will tell you a lot about their current and future concerts, the prizes and accolades they have garnered, their touring, recording, and repertoire projects. But these facets of their career are not a product of where they come from—they are the results of who they are. To understand in depth what makes a great quartet, one has to dig deeply into the past of not only the ensemble, but the individual members as well.

A short list of string quartets that are recent alums of the Bowers Program (CMS's three-season residency for exceptional early-career musicians) includes the likes of the Calidore, the Escher, the Danish, and the Schumann. This is a very difficult list to top: these ensembles not only continue to appear on our stages, but on concert series worldwide. Each has similar assets in its possession: consummate instrumental techniques as individuals; perfect ensemble skills; world-class sound quality; a wide range of repertoire and the stylistic integrity necessary to interpret correctly; personal appeal that connects them to listeners, each in a different way; and finally, the kind of mature interpersonal relationships that hold these very tight families together, allowing them to work endless hours on the most demanding music in good spirits. The Viano is indeed fortunate to have all of the above.

A few facts about the Viano stand out for us. One is the list of mentors who guided them in their earliest days. They include the estimable faculty members of the Colburn School, violinist Martin Beaver and cellist Clive Greensmith, who were both members of the legendary Tokyo String Quartet until it disbanded in 2013. Musicians with such deep knowledge of and experience performing the vast quartet repertoire do not grow on trees, and the Viano was more than fortunate to have been artistically parented by these great musicians. The second fun fact about the Viano is that during the pandemic lockdown, instead of shutting down and waiting it out (as many quartets did) they shared various Airbnbs for the duration, working in a "bubble" (remember those?) and learning a huge list of repertoire, not to mention tons of quartet technique. Coming out of the pandemic, they had the goods to surge ahead in front of the crowd.

Please welcome this wonderful young quartet warmly. They are not hard to fall in love with, we promise.

Enjoy the performance,



David Finckel



Wu Han

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



# Notes on the Program

Joseph Haydn

## Quartet in D major for Strings, Hob. III:79, Op. 76, No. 5

- ▶ Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Lower Austria
- ▶ Died May 31, 1809, in Vienna

### Composed in 1796–97

- ▶ First CMS performance on January 21, 2014, by the Orion String Quartet (violinists Daniel Phillips and Todd Phillips, violist Steven Tenenbom, and cellist Timothy Eddy)
- ▶ Duration: 19 minutes

Many credit the late works of Ludwig van Beethoven, particularly his string quartets and piano sonatas, with splintering the formal conventions that had come to dominate music over the course of the 18th century. These were traditions of structure and style like four-movement symphonies, aspects of phrase construction and rhetorical balance, and so-called “sonata form,” which was a template for exposing and varying rotations of musical subjects. Such conventions were epitomized by the music of composers like Giovanni Paisiello, Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Luigi Boccherini, and Antonio Salieri, and they were brought to new heights of expression by W. A. Mozart and Joseph Haydn.

The truth is that these conventions were in flux for the entirety of the Classical era. Haydn wrote 104 symphonies and nearly 70 string quartets. More than 40 of the latter are mature works that were effectively responsible for establishing the quartet as a genre of artistic weight and substance. By the 1790s, toward the end of his time writing quartets, Haydn began departing from the formal norms for quartets that he himself had established, sometimes in quite dramatic

and surprising ways. This is certainly the case with his Quartet in D major, written between 1796 and 1797 and published as part of his Op. 76 collection in 1799. Each movement artfully subverts the expectations about Classical form that the broader corpus of Haydn’s works can teach us.

The piece’s first movement is an easygoing *Allegretto*, which decidedly doesn’t follow the sonata form that would usually serve as an opener to a string quartet. The melody we hear at the outset is the kind of musical idea that we would expect to serve as the theme of one of Haydn’s lovely variation sets, which might occur as a middle movement or maybe finale. But even this possibility is not realized. Haydn instead takes us on a varied, developmental journey, first through some touching minor-key counterpoint, and then by suddenly increasing the speed of the notes, though the pulse that sits behind the sudden flurry of activity remains the same calm  $\text{♩}$  time of the opening. At the end of the movement, he increases the actual tempo of the music, transforming the sweet lyrical theme into a burst of energy. We could slap a label on the form of this movement—call it a ternary (A–B–A) form with a varied recapitulation and a coda—but it’s perhaps more effective to think about it as a highly intuitive sequence of thoughts, in which Haydn investigates, in turn, each possible implication of his theme.

The *Largo*, marked *Cantabile e mesto*, or “singable and melancholy,” is one of Haydn’s most successful slow movements. It is in the key of F-sharp major. This is a hushed and

intimate tonality for a string quartet because the players cannot use any open strings; they must give each and every note a bit of extra expressive weight to make up for the lack of natural resonance. Haydn writes music that is perfectly simple and tender, and at times almost religiously somber, as if the whole ensemble is staring together at some awe-inspiring truth. It's sad, but never overwrought or exaggerated. Most of Haydn's quartets have been given nicknames over the years, and this one is sometimes simply known as "The Largo," pointing to this movement's status in the composer's oeuvre.

The third movement is one of Haydn's more smooth and singable minuets, though he also makes space in the music for some chirping gestures that play against the  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter.

In the contrasting trio, the cello plays a winding line that sounds like the basso continuo part from a Baroque cantata, above which the others hum some severe counterpoint. The *Presto* finale employs one of Haydn's favorite musical jokes. It starts with something that sounds like a final cadence: an A-major pickup to a resounding D-major chord, followed by a pause, both of which repeat several times. Then the second violin and viola start a running motor of eighth-notes that lasts for almost the entire delightful movement. The ending-like motif recurs at several points, so until the breathless final measures we are never quite sure when Haydn is truly going to bring the quartet to a close.

*Program note* © Nicky Swett

Felix Mendelssohn

## Quartet in D major for Strings, Op. 44, No. 1

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

### Composed in 1838

- ▶ First CMS performance on October 27, 1972, by violinists Hiroko Yajima and Charles Treger, violist Walter Trampler, and cellist Leslie Parnas
- ▶ Duration: 30 minutes

In 1835 Felix Mendelssohn became the music director and conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, Germany. The post was a demanding one: he oversaw an annual subscription concert series as well as guest artist appearances, charity events, and chamber music performances. Under his leadership the orchestra grew in prestige, and Mendelssohn became one of the central figures of German musical life. Despite the demands of the job, he remained active as a composer, with several chamber and orchestral works (including the quartet heard on today's program) emerging from his early Leipzig years.

The D-major quartet came first in the set of three quartets published as Opus 44. It was composed *after* the other two pieces, but Mendelssohn thought so highly of it that he placed it first in the set. He wrote to Ferdinand David, the violinist of the ensemble that had premiered the earlier two quartets: "I've finished my third quartet in D major and take great pleasure in it; I only hope that you will like it as much as I do. But I'm almost certain that you will, for it seems to me that it is more passionate than the others and more grateful to play."

The quartet's joyful, exuberant character is immediately clear in the opening of the *Molto allegro vivace*: a flourishing gesture in the first violin announces the bright key of D major over a buzzing tremolo in the rest of the ensemble. The second theme is more subdued, thanks to a *pianissimo* dynamic marking and simple rhythmic profile. Nevertheless, the excitement of the initial idea persists, fuelling the ensuing development section.

A tribute to the Classical string quartets of Mozart and Haydn, the *Menuetto* opens with a warm, gently lilting melody. The texture changes rather abruptly in the middle section; set in an eerie minor key, this passage features sustained chords in the lower strings and a curious, winding line in the first violin.

The *Andante espressivo ma con moto* occupies the slow-movement slot of the quartet; however, the sixteenth-note gesture first introduced by the second violin provides a subtle but persistent pulse throughout. Despite the percussive articulation and constant motion of the ubiquitous sixteenth-notes, there are glimpses of *legato, cantabile* (singing) lines. Most notably, the first violin takes on a poignant, cadenza-like solo at the emotional climax of the movement.

The finale of the quartet is a jaunty *Presto con brio*. The rapid triplets lend a dance-like feel to the main theme and recall the energetic tremolos of the first movement. The bubbly spirit of this piece reflects the joyful context of its composition—Mendelssohn, newly married and thriving professionally, was solidifying his stance as a key pillar of the German musical establishment. His pride in this brilliant quartet was entirely justified: its premiere was received with what the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*—the leading German-language music periodical of the 19th century—described as “a huge round of applause.”

Program note © Jack Slavin

Anton Webern

## ***Langsamer Satz* for String Quartet**

- ▶ Born December 3, 1883, in Vienna
- ▶ Died September 15, 1945, in Mittersill, Austria

### **Composed in 1905**

- ▶ First CMS performance on February 3, 1984, by the Emerson String Quartet (violinists Eugene Drucker and Philip Setzer, violist Lawrence Dutton, and cellist David Finckel)
- ▶ Duration: 10 minutes

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“In the solitude of forests and mountains am I and my soul longs for her, for her love. O, if the wings of my longing could carry my love to her! How painful is parting.” This poetic snippet closed out the young Anton Webern’s own description of a 1905 tour of the mountains outside Vienna that he took with Wilhelmine Mörtl. Their love was clandestine: they were first cousins and under Catholic law, they were forbidden to marry. They eventually did in 1911, when they were expecting their first child, and the church

recognized the marriage in 1915. But in that early summer of passion, the relationship was their thrilling secret.

This hiking trip occurred at a time of significant professional development for Webern. He began to study with Arnold Schoenberg in 1904, after he had heard Schoenberg’s string sextet *Verklärte Nacht*. He later confided to his teacher that “the impression it made on me was one of the greatest I had ever experienced.” Schoenberg’s sextet, which musically narrates the complications of a secret and yet virtuous love affair, struck a chord with Webern. During these years, he wrote several pieces that featured the same intense, late-Romantic style that we find in early Schoenberg. Webern’s later 12-tone works are notable for their austere efficiency, and so these early, tonal compositions are in fact the longest continuous pieces that he wrote. In them, he indulges in many returns to favorite melodies and occasionally

withholds tonal resolutions for what feels like a pleasurable eternity.

Between June and August of 1905, Webern wrote *Langsamer Satz*, a “Slow Movement” for string quartet. In it, he uses a series of long melodies to build to two climaxes: the first, a dramatic unison cry that fades into string tremolos and a breathless, muted cadence; the second, an emotional

explosion with expansive triplets in the upper strings and tonal drones in the cello. At the very end, we hear the initial melody in eerie, dream-like fragments that perhaps hint at the pain of parting, but also anticipate the innovative, highly segmented music the composer would be known for later in his career.

*Program note © Nicky Swett*

Dmitri Shostakovich

## Quartet No. 9 in E-flat major for Strings, Op. 117

► Born September 25 (O.S. September 12), 1906, in Saint Petersburg

► Died August 9, 1975, in Moscow

### Composed in 1964

► First CMS performance on March 24, 2013, by the Jerusalem Quartet (violinists Alexander Pavlovsky and Sergei Bresler, violist Ori Kam, and cellist Kyril Zlotnikov)

► Duration: 26 minutes

In the latter part of his career, the Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich developed a penchant for self-plagiarism. He would regularly take motives, themes, and even longer sections developed in existing pieces and integrate them into new compositions. This was not exactly pastiche and collage, compositional tools that became more common in the mid-20th century. It was more like the figures that are shared by several of the late string quartets of Ludwig van Beethoven: in Shostakovich's music, we get the sense that certain musical shapes and patterns have a richness and complexity that merits development and exploration over the course of many pieces of music.

This tendency emerged in the late 1950s, and it is epitomized by the 1960 String Quartet No. 8, in which Shostakovich borrows ideas from his 1959 Cello Concerto, his E-minor Piano Trio, his First and Fifth Symphonies, and several other works. The

piece miraculously never feels like a hodgepodge, or like one thing doesn't quite fit with another. These strains of music past are reconfigured enough that the piece stands on its own and makes perfect sense even if one is not familiar with the sources of the borrowings. He tried to write another quartet soon after, in 1962 (though some sources suggest 1961), but it didn't work: in a letter to his friend, he claimed that “in an excess of healthy criticism I burnt it in the stove.” He made another attempt at writing a new quartet in 1964, shedding all his previous material, which he described as fragments from his childhood. The Beethoven Quartet, for whom Shostakovich wrote all except one of his quartets, premiered the final version of the Ninth Quartet together with the Tenth in Moscow in November of 1964. He dedicated the piece to Irina Antonovna, his third wife, who married him in 1961. Though the quartet contains dense and aggressive moments, there is a passionately romantic, even joyous, current that runs through the music and distinguishes the piece from the darker tendencies of many of the other works Shostakovich had recently written.

The Ninth Quartet features one of the composer's serene, watery openings. The cello and viola provide a solid, resonant E-flat drone, while figures in the second violin flow

along, forming little ripples here and there. The first violin joins with a lamenting line that comes in and out of harmonic alignment with the other players. As the movement develops, Shostakovich introduces gestures in the cello that have a highly spoken and rhetorical nature. The instruments alternately murmur and speak declaratively until Shostakovich finds a way to combine these ideas and then move on to something else.

Like the Eighth Quartet, the Ninth is set in five continuous movements. The second is a solemn and, at turns, quite dissonant prayer. The melody includes many repetitions of the same note, a strategy that connects Shostakovich's writing to Russian Orthodox music. At the end of the movement, the solo first violin takes a chanting melody and transforms it into the subject of a rollicking *Allegretto*, devilish horse-riding music with a relentless, offbeat bassline. Later, the angular, rhetorical idea from the first movement is recruited in an eerie fashion above a bed of trills. In a passage at the end of the movement, iterations of the energetic theme from the *Allegretto* patter around below a haunting descant in high harmonics, an echo of the earlier chant tune. The placid fourth movement brings this chanting idea together with

the swimming figures from the opening of the piece, which swirl around choruses of the ancient-sounding melody.

This calm sets up the virtuosic finale. It's a demonic waltz, which is supplemented by diversions that recall music heard earlier in the quartet and by a new chugging, folksy idea heard in the viola and cello. The climax of the movement is a momentous fugue, which devolves into a dramatic cello cadenza and a thunderous strummed version of the chorale idea. Throughout the piece, Shostakovich has included little hints of earlier works: a motif that is important to his Eighth String Quartet, rhythmic and harmonic patterns from his First Cello Concerto, and music from his score to a film of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. But as with his other self-borrowings, he nonetheless manages to keep the music entirely self-contained. Allusion is a kind of Easter egg in Shostakovich. Recognizing his references to music of the past is pleasing, but it is not a necessary ingredient for meaning. In the piece itself, the composer gives us everything we need to feel like the thrilling final unison measures have been thoroughly earned.

Program note © Nicky Swett

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*Liszt, Bartók, Ligeti, Dohnányi*

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# About the Artists

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## Viano Quartet

Praised for their “virtuosity, visceral expression, and rare unity of intention” (*Boston Globe*), the Viano Quartet has quickly soared to international acclaim as one of the most dynamic and in-demand string quartets of their generation. Winners of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2025, the ensemble has captivated audiences worldwide ever since they were awarded First Prize at the 13th

Banff International String Quartet Competition, with appearances at renowned venues such as Lincoln Center, Berlin’s Konzerthaus, Toronto’s Koerner Hall, Hong Kong’s City Hall, and London’s Wigmore Hall. The Viano Quartet are members of CMS’s Bowers Program from 2024 to 2027.

Highlights of the Quartet’s 2025–26 season include debut performances at London’s Southbank Centre, the Frick Collection in New York, Dublin’s National Concert Hall, Coast Live Music, Friends of Chamber Music Kansas City, Apex Concerts, the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, the Fortas Series at the Kennedy Center, Premiere Performances HK, and a mainstage full recital debut at CMS. The quartet also makes return appearances at Stanford Live, Forte Chamber Music, the Beaches Fine Arts Series, the Buffalo Chamber Music Society’s Slee Series (for the second half of their Beethoven cycle), Chamber Music Albuquerque, and the Sanibel Music Festival. The Quartet looks forward to visiting residencies this season at Stanford University through the St. Lawrence Legacy Series, the University of Victoria, Music in the Morning in Vancouver, and the Auditorium Chamber Music Series at the University of Idaho. This season also features collaborations with mandolinist Avi Avital, pianist Sir Stephen Hough, pianist Gilbert Kalish, clarinetist Anthony McGill, guitarist Miloš Karadaglić, and singer-songwriter Vienna Teng.

Equally committed to both beloved masterworks and contemporary repertoire, the Viano Quartet actively collaborates with today’s leading composers, including Sir Stephen Hough, Kevin Lau, Chris Rogerson, and Caroline Shaw. They are set to premiere a newly written string quartet by Indian-American composer Reena Esmail in the summer of 2026. Their first full-length album, *Voyager*, was released in summer 2025 with Apple Music/Platoon Records, and features Beethoven’s Op. 130 alongside Alistair Coleman’s *Moonshot*. Their debut EP *Portraits* was released in 2023 as one of the first albums to be launched on the Curtis Studio label, featuring works by Schubert, Florence Price, Tchaikovsky, and Ginastera.

The Viano Quartet was formed in Los Angeles at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in 2015. Each member of the quartet is grateful for the unwavering support from their mentors at the Curtis Institute and Colburn Conservatory, including members of the Dover, Guarneri, and Tokyo string quartets.

# 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 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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*Updated on February 28, 2026*

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