

CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

TUESDAY EVENING, JULY 14, 2026, 7:30 ▶ 4,733RD CONCERT

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage

Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Michael Stephen Brown, piano

Sahun Sam Hong, piano

Lun Li, violin

James Thompson, viola

Nicholas Canellakis, cello

Ian Rosenbaum, percussion

Summer Evenings III

Joseph Haydn

(1732–1809)

Trio in C major for Piano, Violin, and Cello,

Hob. XV:27 (1795–96)

▶ Allegro

▶ Andante

▶ Finale: Presto

BROWN, LI, CANELLAKIS

Felix Mendelssohn

(1809–1847)

Quartet in C minor for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello,

Op. 1 (1822)

▶ Allegro vivace

▶ Adagio

▶ Scherzo: Presto

▶ Allegro moderato

HONG, LI, THOMPSON, CANELLAKIS

INTERMISSION

PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

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

- Johannes Brahms** **Selected *Hungarian Dances* for Piano, Four Hands**
(1833–1897) (1868, 1880)
▶ No. 5 in F-sharp minor: Allegro
▶ No. 15 in B-flat major: Allegretto grazioso
▶ No. 21 in E minor: Vivace
HONG, BROWN
- Leonard Bernstein** **Three Meditations from *MASS* for Cello and Piano**
(1918–1990) (1971, arr. 1977)
Meditation 1
Meditation 2
Meditation 3
CANELLAKIS, BROWN, ROSENBAUM
- George Gershwin** ***Cuban Overture* for Piano, Four Hands, and
Percussion** (1932)
(1898–1937) BROWN, HONG, ROSENBAUM, CANELLAKIS

The Summer Evenings Audience Engagement Initiative is underwritten, in part, by **Robert S. Feldman and Katherine Vorwerk**, the **Musicians Advocacy Fund**, **Leon Levy Foundation**, **Judy and Alan Kosloff**, and with public funds from the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

This concert features members of the Bowers Program, CMS's residency for young professional musicians of exceptional quality. 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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All CMS digital programming is supported by the **Hauser Fund for Media and Technology**.

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.

From the Artistic Directors

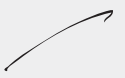
Dear Listener,

Chamber music, for years, has suffered unfairly from accusations of sleepiness, placidity, and easy listening. Tonight's concert is certain to put that false assumption to rest.

A glance from our perspective on today's concert reveals a common thread of rambunctious wildness from work to work. We'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who can keep still during the finale of the opening piano trio by Haydn, for example, one of the most spirited creations in all of chamber music, full of surprises, jokes, and headlong speed. Mendelssohn, even at the age of 13 (!) when he composed this piano quartet, knew no technical limitations at the keyboard and wrote for himself (and for future generations) fearlessly. Johannes Brahms's attachment to Hungarian music is well known; although a classicist at heart, Brahms had a folk-loving side to him, often sitting in the Viennese parks listening to bands play and, as a youth, touring as accompanist for the Hungarian violin virtuoso Ede Reményi. Leonard Bernstein's *MASS* was commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and composed for the opening of Washington's Kennedy Center in 1971. The multi-layered work tells a troubled story and is full of conflict, doubt, even violence. As relief from tension, Bernstein incorporated "Meditation" movements as interludes and later transcribed three of them for the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Although generally calm in nature, these meditations still convey much of the angst heard in the rest of the work.

Bringing this concert to a rousing conclusion is Gershwin's infectious celebratory *Cuban Overture* in an ingenious arrangement by tonight's artists themselves. We hope you leave this performance convinced forever that chamber music can be as much turbulent fun as a ride in an amusement park!

Enjoy the concert,


David Finckel 
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Notes on the Program

by Jack Slavin

Joseph Haydn

Trio in C major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Hob. XV:27

► Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Lower Austria

► Died May 31, 1809, in Vienna

Composed in 1795–96

► First CMS performance on February 25, 1977, by pianist Richard Goode, violinist Jaime Laredo, and cellist Leslie Parnas

► Duration: 18 minutes

During his first visit to London in 1791, Haydn encountered Therese Jansen, a piano student of Muzio Clementi. Jansen's playing impressed Haydn enough to earn her a mention in the first of his London Notebooks, where he referred to her as an important pianist of the day. When he returned to the city later that decade, he served as a witness at Jansen's wedding to the son of the prominent engraver Francesco Bartolozzi, and he later dedicated the Piano Trios Hob. XV:27–29 to the new Mrs. Bartolozzi.

The set is a testament to her abilities, with demanding piano writing throughout. Indeed, Haydn himself referred to these late trios as keyboard sonatas with string accompaniment, implying the primacy of the keyboard part relative to the rest of the

ensemble. This is not to say, however, that the strings are present to merely double and ornament the piano, as was the case in the Baroque trio sonata. Haydn's writing here is more sophisticated, showcasing all three instruments and creating dialogue among the ensemble.

The first movement opens with a celebratory, fanfare-like gesture whose energy is immediately countered by a soft, delicate response. The sonata form unfolds from there, driven by an active piano part. In the development, the opening gesture returns in A-flat major, as if to signal the arrival of the recapitulation, but in the wrong key. The true recapitulation, when it does arrive, emerges out of a hushed transitional passage. The *Andante* is graceful and measured: neither saccharine nor aloof, it adheres to the expectations of a slow movement while maintaining a gentle forward momentum. Minor-mode passages offer contrast to the main theme but do not upset the delicate balance of the movement. The *Presto* finale, which combines elements of rondo and sonata form, is cheerful and witty throughout.

Felix Mendelssohn

Quartet in C minor for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello, Op. 1

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

Composed in 1822

- ▶ First CMS performance on March 29, 2015, by pianist Gloria Chien, violinist Sean Lee, violist Richard O'Neill, and cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan
- ▶ Duration: 30 minutes

Felix Mendelssohn lived from 1809 to 1847, making him a close contemporary of the likes of Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) and Robert Schumann (1810–1856). While the latter two are labeled as strictly Romantic composers, Mendelssohn's oeuvre occupies a middle ground between the Classical and the Romantic. A strong Classical foundation was laid in early childhood, owing to a rigorous musical and general education overseen by his parents, Lea and Abraham Mendelssohn.

Perhaps only Mozart could rival Mendelssohn in his precocity; his musical gifts, especially as a composer, were evident early on. His innate talent was nurtured by his family's relative affluence and commitment to education, which allowed for tutelage across many disciplines, including classics and visual arts. Felix pursued composition studies under Carl Friedrich Zelter, director of the Berlin Singakademie, where he and his sister Fanny sang in the chorus. His composition notebook from this period shows extensive contrapuntal work, including fugues in the style of J. S. Bach alongside pieces modeled after those of Haydn and Mozart.

The Mendelssohn family held house concerts which drew Berlin's artists and intellectuals to hear Felix and Fanny perform. This domestic setting was Felix's primary milieu, with relatively few public appearances throughout his early adolescence. It is fitting,

then, that his first published work, the Piano Quartet in C minor, would be in a genre primarily intended for the home. The choice of the piano quartet over other chamber music groupings was likewise apt: the piano gave him a part to play himself, the three string voices afforded opportunities for contrapuntal texture, and the ensemble carried none of the intimidating legacy of more established genres like the string quartet.

The cello introduces the *Allegro vivace* with a gesture that establishes the C-minor tonality and ushers in the first theme, which is built on a repeated-note motif. The strings take turns with the elegant second theme, throughout which the piano accompaniment is more subdued. The first theme returns to close the exposition and lead into the development, which is relatively tame compared with those of Mendelssohn's later works.

The *Adagio* opens with a lyrical, tender theme in A-flat major. A quiet tension builds, leading to a contrasting middle section with long, slow-moving lines in the strings over murmuring arpeggios in the piano. The *Scherzo* presents a technical challenge across all parts, but most notably the piano. The nimble, effervescent quality that would become synonymous with the Mendelssohnian scherzo is already audible in this early example.

The finale is laid out in sonata form, though unusually, the first and second themes are built around the same melody. Different tonal and affective contexts obscure the connection somewhat, but the overall contour of a descending sweep followed by an ascending return remains discernable. This curious movement closes Mendelssohn's Opus 1, offering a glimpse of the composer's maturing voice.

Johannes Brahms

Selected *Hungarian Dances* for Piano, Four Hands

► Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg

► Died April 3, 1897, in Vienna

Composed in 1858–68 and 1880

► First CMS performance of No. 5 on January 17, 1982, by pianists Earl Wild and Charles Wadsworth. This is the first CMS performance of Nos. 15 and 21.

► Duration: 10 minutes

Brahms's fascination with the Hungarian and Romani musical traditions can be traced back to the influx into Hamburg of political refugees on their way farther west following the upheaval of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Brahms is said to have made the acquaintance of one such refugee, a violinist by the name of Ede Reményi, who introduced him to the *style hongrois*, which draws on the musical vocabulary of the Romani people. The influence of this style can be heard throughout Brahms's career, whether in outright homage—as in the *Hungarian Dances* heard today—or more subtly woven into larger pieces.

The *Hungarian Dance* No. 5 in F-sharp minor is the calling card of the set, with its instantly recognizable opening melody and a

Vivace section built on a repeated-note motif. The piece exemplifies the key characteristics Brahms adopted from the *style hongrois*, including extensive *rubato* (fluctuation in tempo) and stark dynamic contrasts. Some of the material for this dance was taken directly from *Bárfai emlékek* (Memories of Bárfai), written in a dance form known as *csárdás* by Béla Kéler, which the composer named after his hometown.

The 15th dance lives up to its tempo marking: *Allegretto grazioso*. Dotted rhythms in the secondo part lend an almost jazzy feel while *dolce e leggiere* (sweet and light) passages flit across the primo part. The roles then reverse, with the dotted figures moving to the upper register and sixteenth-note runs appearing in the secondo, before an *animato* passage surges toward the emphatic middle section.

The final *Hungarian Dance*, in E minor, concludes the set with an intense opening melody followed by a bright and lively second theme. A delicate *Più presto* closing section in a major key is marked by repeated trills in the primo part and a virtuosic sixteenth-note run that cascades to a triumphant finish.

Leonard Bernstein

Three Meditations from *MASS* for Cello, Piano, and Percussion

- Born August 25, 1918, in Lawrence, Massachusetts
- Died October 14, 1990, in New York City
- Composed in 1971, arranged in 1977**
- First CMS performance on March 17, 2023, by cellist Nicholas Canellakis, pianist Michael Stephen Brown, and percussionist Ian Rosenbaum
- Duration: 16 minutes

Leonard Bernstein's *MASS: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers* is perhaps his most ambitious and multifaceted compositional undertaking. Commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for the 1971 opening of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, it is an epic, staged work that layers elements of Broadway, rock, and other vernacular idioms onto its classical foundation. In Bernstein's own words: "Essentially [*MASS*] is concerned with a celebration of the Roman ritual using the Latin text of the Catholic liturgy; but simultaneously there is a subtext in English reflecting the reactions, doubts, protests, and questionings—positive and negative—of all of us who are attending and perceiving this ritual."

The Three Meditations for Cello and Piano (heard on this program with added percussion) are drawn from various moments in *MASS*: the first two bookend the *Gloria*, while the third is assembled from the *Epiphany*, *In Nomine Patris*, and *Chorale: Almighty Father*. Marked *Lento assai, molto sostenuto* (very slow, very sustained), the first meditation is at times severe, and at others serene. The cello begins the second meditation—a set of variations on an eleven-note sequence from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—with a *pizzicato* (plucked) statement of the theme, which is echoed by the piano in the first variation with staccatos in the lower register. The second variation is brief but chilling, with a *fortissimo* trill in the cello. A triplet-based third variation follows. The piano leads the fourth and final variation before the coda rounds out the piece. The third meditation features an extended dance episode, its jaunty mixed meter echoing the trance-like effect achieved in *In Nomine Patris*. The rhythmic drive of this section is offset by expressive passages in the cello.

George Gershwin

***Cuban Overture* for Piano, Four Hands, and Percussion**

- Born September 26, 1898, in Brooklyn, New York
- Died July 11, 1937, in Hollywood, California

Composed in 1932

- First CMS performance on March 17, 2023, by pianists Michael Stephen Brown and Gilles Vonsattel, and percussionists Ian Rosenbaum and Nicholas Canellakis
- Duration: 10 minutes

By the early 1930s, George Gershwin was already a highly successful composer, both in the popular sphere with Tin Pan Alley and Broadway hits and in the classical world with major works like *Rhapsody in Blue*, the Concerto in F, and *An American in Paris*. Success notwithstanding, he took an interest in furthering his musical education in a more rigorous way, and to that end took up composition lessons with Joseph Schillinger. Schillinger, a composer, theorist, and pedagogue of Russian origin, worked with many of Gershwin's contemporaries, including Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, and Tommy Dorsey. The lessons with Schillinger were demanding and thorough; their influence is clear in *Cuban Overture*, whose construction is indebted to the strict forms and orchestration principles he acquired in his studies.

Schillinger's teachings formed the skeleton of the piece, but the inspiration came from a 1932 trip to Havana, of which the composer himself said: "I spent two hysterical weeks in Havana where no sleep was had, but the quantity and the quality of fun made up for that. Cuba was most interesting to me, especially for its small dance orchestras, who play the most intricate rhythms most naturally." One such musical group was the Septeto Nacional led by Ignacio Piñeiro, a key figure in the rise of *son*—a fusion of Hispanic and African musical elements that became one of Cuba's most popular genres.

One of Piñeiro's most famous compositions, *Échale Salsita*, would serve as Gershwin's melodic inspiration for the *Cuban Overture*, and the percussion instruments he brought home supplied its rhythmic foundation.

Cuban Overture was originally premiered under the title *Rumba* by the New York Philharmonic in August 1932 before an enormous crowd at Lewisohn Stadium. Notably, Gershwin indicated in the score that the percussion ensemble, consisting of maracas, bongos, claves, and güiros, be placed directly in front of the conductor—a clear signal of how central he perceived them to be to the music. He renamed the piece *Cuban Overture* to give, in his words, "a more just idea of the character and intent of the music," and explained further: "In my composition, I have endeavored to combine Cuban rhythms with my own thematic material. The result is a symphonic overture which embodies the essence of the Cuban dance."

The four-hand piano arrangement of the piece is heard on today's program with added percussion, coming as close to the original as possible short of a full orchestra and honoring the importance Gershwin placed on the percussion section. *Cuban Overture* unfolds in a three-part structure: driving, rhythmically charged outer sections frame a pensive middle section introduced by a clarinet cadenza in the orchestral original. Beneath the infectious dance rhythms and exuberant melodies, the piece is anchored by complex musical processes, including polytonality and contrapuntal writing, which the composer himself highlights in his program note. *Cuban Overture* exemplifies Gershwin's ability to blend formal structures with the vitality and appeal of his popular writing.

Program notes © Jack Slavin

About the Artists



SOFIAN KAHN

Michael Stephen Brown

Michael Stephen Brown is a composer and pianist hailed by the *New York Times* as “one of the leading figures in the current renaissance of performer-composers.” He has appeared as soloist with the Seattle Symphony, American Symphony Orchestra, The Orchestra Now, Phoenix Symphony, and Poland’s NFM Leopoldinum, and performs at major festivals worldwide. The recipient of the 2026 Andrew Wolf Award, Lincoln Center’s Emerging Artist Award, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant, he was recently in residence at MacDowell and Yaddo.

Recent highlights include a recital at Alice Tully Hall with CMS and collaborations with longtime artistic partner Nicholas Canellakis, as well as Pinchas Zukerman, Kristin Lee, and Arnaud Sussmann. His first album devoted entirely to his own music, *Twelve Blocks*, was released in 2026 to critical acclaim. Current projects include *The Carnival of Endangered Wonders* and the score for Angeline Gragasin’s film *Look But Don’t Touch*. An alum of CMS’s Bowers Program, Brown lives in New York City with his two 19th-century Steinways, Octavia and Daria.



Nicholas Canellakis

Nicholas Canellakis is one of today’s most sought-after and innovative cellists, whose career seamlessly blends traditional classical performance with boundary-pushing creative ventures. He performs internationally as a soloist and chamber musician and is also a composer/arranger, artistic curator, teacher, and filmmaker, with comedic digital content that has reached millions of views worldwide. Recent highlights include concerto appearances with the Orlando, Virginia, Albany, Delaware, Stamford, Richardson, Lansing, and Bangor Symphonies, the Erie

Philharmonic, The Orchestra Now, the New Haven Symphony as Artist-in-Residence, and the American Symphony Orchestra. He tours in recital throughout the US with his longtime duo collaborator, pianist-composer Michael Stephen Brown. He is Artistic Director of Chamber Music Sedona in Arizona, an alum of CMS’s Bowers Program, and a frequent guest at leading festivals. Canellakis is on the cello faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He performs on an 1840 Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume cello.



Sahun Sam Hong

Renowned for his “imaginative, intoxicating . . . high-voltage” playing (*Sindelfinger Zeitung*) and “wide range of rich colors” (*San Diego Story*), Korean-American pianist Sahun Sam Hong commands the world’s most prestigious stages with his distinctly magnetic tone and effortless vitality. He is a prize winner of numerous international competitions, including the Naumburg Competition, Vendome Prize, Beethoven Competition Vienna, and the American Pianists Awards. In addition to performing, Hong is a prolific arranger and orchestrator recognized for his innovative transcriptions

that are featured in the touring programs of Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Mount Vernon Virtuosi, and ensemble132, which he co-directs. His primary mentors have included John Owings, Leon Fleisher, and Yong Hi Moon. A member of CMS’s Bowers Program and a Steinway Artist, Hong is currently based in New York City and serves on the faculty of CUNY Queens College.



Lun Li

Violinist Lun Li, a native of Shanghai based in New York, is the First Prize winner of the 2021 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions. He has appeared on major stages including Carnegie Hall, Helsinki Music Center, Konzerthaus Berlin, Kulturpalast Dresden, Wiener Konzerthaus, and Verizon Hall, and has recently made recital and concerto debuts at Merkin Hall, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, the Tokyo Symphony, the Osaka Symphony, and the Kyoto Symphony. An avid chamber musician, he has performed at the

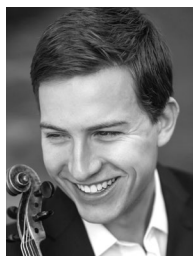
Marlboro, Music@Menlo, Verbier, Tippet Rise, Newport, and Bard music festivals. A member of CMS's Bowers Program, Li holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School, where his teachers included Ida Kavafian, Catherine Cho, and Joseph Lin. He plays the 1735 "Samazeuilh" Stradivarius, on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.



Ian Rosenbaum

Praised for his "spectacular performances" (*Wall Street Journal*), and his "unfailing virtuosity" (*Chicago Tribune*), percussionist Ian Rosenbaum has developed a musical breadth far beyond his years. As a passionate advocate for contemporary music, he has premiered dozens of new chamber and solo works, and his recordings have been nominated for eight Grammy awards. In 2012, he joined the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two) as only the second percussionist selected in the program's history. Rosenbaum is

a founding member of Sandbox Percussion, and is on faculty at the Peabody Institute, the Mannes School of Music, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.



James Thompson

Violinist/violist James Thompson enjoys a multifaceted career as a chamber musician, concertmaster, educator, and lecturer. He is a recent graduate of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program. Thompson performs regularly for chamber music organizations across the country, and he serves as the director of Music@Menlo's annual winter residency in California. Solo engagements include appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Asheville Symphony, the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra, and the Cleveland Pops orchestra. He currently serves as concertmaster of the Erie Philharmonic, the Blue-Water Chamber Orchestra, and the Caroga Arts Ensemble. As a guest artist, he has recently led classes for the Eastman School of Music and the Music Institute of Chicago, among others. Thompson holds bachelor's, master's, and artist diploma degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music; his primary teachers include Jaime Laredo, William Preucil, and Paul Kantor.

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 enables 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 performances and education events free to the public.

CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

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