

CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 25, 2026, AT 5:00 ▶ 4,739TH CONCERT

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage

Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Calidore String Quartet

Jeffrey Myers, violin

Ryan Meehan, violin

Jeremy Berry, viola

Estelle Choi, cello

Summer Evenings VI

Benjamin Franklin*

(1706–1790)

Quartet in F major for Three Violins and Cello

- ▶ March
- ▶ Menuetto
- ▶ Capriccio
- ▶ Menuetto
- ▶ Siciliano

Joseph Haydn

(1732–1809)

Quartet in E-flat major for Strings, Hob. III:38, Op. 33, No. 2, “The Joke” (1781)

- ▶ Allegro moderato, cantabile
- ▶ Scherzo: Allegro
- ▶ Largo sostenuto
- ▶ Finale: Presto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756–1791)

Quartet in B-flat major for Strings, K. 589, “Prussian” (1790)

- ▶ Allegro
- ▶ Larghetto
- ▶ Menuetto: Moderato
- ▶ Allegro assai

INTERMISSION

* Likely a spurious attribution. See program note.

PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

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

Hugo Wolf *Italian Serenade for String Quartet* (1887)
(1860–1903)

Wynton Marsalis *Selections from At the Octoroon Balls for String Quartet* (1995)
(b. 1961)

- ▶ Many Gone
- ▶ Hellbound Highball
- ▶ Blue Light on the Bayou
- ▶ Rampart Street Row House Rag

Additional instruments for tonight's performance are provided by the **Noel Pointer Foundation**.

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**.

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From the Artistic Directors

Dear Listener,

Welcome to this program performed by the Calidore String Quartet. If you have not heard this ensemble, you are in for a real treat. It's hard to believe that this youthful foursome celebrated their 15th anniversary in 2025, and, on the other side of the coin, it is difficult to fathom how they have accomplished so much so quickly: recordings of the complete Beethoven quartets released in 2025; annual international concert tours; appearances at multiple summer festivals; premieres of works composed for them by today's finest composers; plus four consecutive teaching residencies. The Calidore has firmly established itself as one of the leading quartets of our time.

Today the Calidore performs a concert filled with a variety of styles from multiple eras and cultures. Their program has one fascinating feature: two string quartets by composers of legendary quartet tradition, and three string quartets by unexpected composers, not generally known for their chamber music. From Joseph Haydn's crowd-pleasing "Joke" quartet (at the end, the joke is on you!), to Mozart's sublime late quartet prominently featuring the cello (he was hoping for a court position from the cello-playing King of Prussia), you have enough great quartet music to satisfy any devotee's appetite. But from where do the other works come, and what are they all about?

This concert begins with one of the greatest anomalies in the entire chamber music literature. It has been attributed to the inventor, statesman, scientist, writer, philosopher, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, Benjamin Franklin. With this work, chamber music comes as close to the signing of the Declaration of Independence as it's ever going to. But why is it only attributed? Well, the manuscript is not in his hand, and on it, his name is misspelled. He also never refers to the work in any of his voluminous writings. Not good! However, in our view, the ingenious tuning of the instruments (making it possible to play the piece using only the open strings) plus Franklin's keen interest in music, plus his undisputed inventive genius, make it almost impossible for the work *not* to have been composed by him. It's up to you to decide, but we find it a lot more fun to believe it's really his doing.

The late-Romantic Austrian composer Hugo Wolf is known almost exclusively for his incredible contribution to the *lieder* repertoire. His chamber works number only three: a forty-plus minute mind-blowing string quartet that is seldom performed; a ten-minute Intermezzo for quartet that is truly puzzling; and the *Italian Serenade* we hear today, one of the most immediately likable and

most often heard works in the chamber music literature. Anyone familiar with music at all knows the name of Wynton Marsalis, one of the greatest trumpet players, jazz masters, and artistic leaders of our time. Thank heavens that Jazz at Lincoln Center and CMS teamed up in 1995 to commission Marsalis's first string quartet, premiered and marvelously recorded by the Orion String Quartet.

Enjoy the concert,



David Finckel Wu Han
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Notes on the Program

by Kathryn Bacasmot

Benjamin Franklin (attributed)

Quartet in F major for Three Violins and Cello

- Born January 17, 1706, in Boston
- Died April 17, 1790, in Philadelphia

Composition date unknown

- First CMS performance on February 8, 2008, by the Escher String Quartet (violinists Adam Barnett-Hart and Wu Jie, violist Pierre Lapointe, and cellist Andrew Janss)
- Duration: 7 minutes

Among the cadre of colorful characters in the history of the United States is the singular figure of Benjamin Franklin. Reflecting on his legacy, we recall his experiments with the electrical nature of lightning, his role in the founding of the United States, his work as a statesman and diplomat, and his publication *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Franklin's musical interests are discussed with less frequency,

but they were a source of personal enjoyment (he and Thomas Jefferson played guitar and violin together) and an area in which he had surprising influence.

Franklin's most prominent contribution to music was inspired by a concert he attended in England of someone playing glasses, producing sound by rubbing the tops of each glass in a circular manner, with pitches determined by various levels of water. Constantly innovating, Franklin was determined to build a more efficient design that would also enable harmonic complexity. The result was the glass armonica in 1761, which nestled glass bowls together in decreasing size and rotated them horizontally on a spindle. After the bowls were dampened with water

the performer played them like a keyboard. Its ethereal sound was bewitching, and the instrument became so popular that even Mozart wrote music to be played on it.

It is uncertain whether Franklin composed any music. For 30 years his Junto club gathered to exchange ideas and sing together, and while some of his letters include song texts, they lack musical notation, suggesting they used preexisting melodies. However, in 1941, a musicologist named Guillaume de Van stumbled across a string quartet score in the library of the Paris Conservatory, inscribed with the name Benjamin Francklin. Initially, it was excitedly ascribed to Franklin, despite the spelling, which was assumed to be a mistake. Today, that attribution is considered doubtful, largely because no mention of the quartet is made in any of Franklin's extensive correspondence or writings. The true composer remains unknown.

Regardless of authorship, the Quartet in F major is an intriguing work and provides insight into the kinds of music people experienced in their everyday lives in the 18th century. The score is written for three violins and a cello, but its most distinct feature is the use of *scordatura*, or alternate tunings, allowing it to be played entirely on open strings. No performer's left hand ever presses down on the strings to alter pitches, making it ideal for amateurs. This also creates a distinct, clear, sound without vibrato (Franklin disliked the ornamentation in Handel, and probably would have enjoyed this pared-down approach). Another notable characteristic of the quartet is its organization as a Baroque era dance suite featuring an intrata (or entrance) in the form of a lively march, two minuettos, each in swaying triple meter, a rollicking capriccio, and a siciliano, evoking the pastoral atmosphere of Sicily.

Joseph Haydn

Quartet in E-flat major for Strings, Hob. III:38, Op. 33, No. 2, "The Joke"

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

► Died May 31, 1809, in Vienna

Composed in 1781

► First CMS performance on February 26, 2015, by the Orion String Quartet (violinists Todd Phillips and Daniel Phillips, violist Steven Tenenbom, and cellist Timothy Eddy)

► Duration: 18 minutes

In the library of the Benedictine Monastery in Melk, Austria, is an incomplete manuscript copy of the set of quartets that comprise Haydn's Op. 33, copied by a scribe in the Esterházy household. On its pages Haydn wrote the following: "Six quartets by me Joseph Haydn in my own hand. I humbly ask you to observe the piano and forte" (referring to the dynamic markings in the score).

This represents the remains of a major promotional campaign undertaken personally by Haydn in 1781, during an exciting and pivotal moment in his career. By then he had spent 20 years working first as Vice-Kapellmeister, later elevated to Kapellmeister, for the Esterházy princes. At the start of 1779, Haydn signed a new contract with Prince Nikolaus that contained a crucial change allowing him to publish and sell his own music. Wasting no time, Haydn immediately began to hustle, writing letters to individuals he thought might want to purchase his six string quartets, Op. 33. He enticed them with the prospect of receiving an exclusive advance issue in manuscript form, prior to publication, and described them in glowing terms: "They are of a new and entirely special kind, for I

haven't written any for ten years." Scholars have debated how new or special the Op. 33 quartets are, but generally agree their freshness and playfulness is enhanced compared to Haydn's previous quartets.

Broadly speaking, Haydn's contribution to the development of the string quartet genre was to elevate the level of complexity in the conversation happening between the parts. His genius was his ability to take something simple and spin it into something spectacularly entertaining. The opening measures of the quartet Op. 33, No. 2, are straightforward, but as the movement progresses, we realize our ears have been treated to a seemingly endless variety of transformations of a few simple gestures. Haydn also played with expectation by substituting the usual minuet movement with something livelier—a scherzo, in a pivot toward lightheartedness. Here, the contrasting section adds a winking

levity as the first violin shimmers and slides in the upper register.

The *Largo sostenuto* third movement immediately flips the spotlight onto the low strings, grounding the mood and continuing in a more reserved and elegant manner, here and there punctuated by emphatic chords. Mozart once praised Haydn's ability to "amuse and shock, arouse laughter and deep emotion, as no one else," and in the *Presto* we are given a front-row seat to this skill. Haydn gives us a rousing rondo, in which we hear a main theme returning between excursions into contrasting material. The final measures give the quartet its famous nickname, "The Joke," as Haydn plays with expectation using a key factor in humor, which is timing. We are kept on our toes with a series of feints as the piece seems to end, and then almost ends again, and finally truly ends (usually accompanied by the sound of relieved laughter).

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Quartet in B-flat major for Strings, K. 589, "Prussian"

► Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg

► Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna

Composed in 1790

► First CMS performance on February 10, 2019, by the Escher String Quartet (violinists Adam Barnett-Hart and Danbi Um, violist Pierre Lapointe, and cellist Brook Speltz)

► Duration: 23 minutes

In the spring of 1789, Mozart embarked on a journey from his home in Vienna to Potsdam to visit the court of King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia. Mozart painted this trip optimistically to his wife Constanze as an opportunity to make a positive connection that would hopefully result in commissions from Friedrich Wilhelm, who was an accomplished amateur musician like his uncle, Friedrich II, "The Great," before him. Along the way, Mozart made stops in Prague, Dresden, and Berlin.

He also made a special detour to Leipzig to pay homage to Johann Sebastian Bach's legacy there, improvising on Bach's organ and examining Bach's autograph scores. However, when Mozart finally arrived in Potsdam, the situation on the ground did not match the positive picture he had painted. The king, when notified of Mozart's arrival, simply routed him to the court cellist and director of chamber music, Jean-Pierre Duport. Mozart later wrote to Constanze that he was invited to play for the Queen and received a commission for six string quartets for the king and six keyboard sonatas for Princess Friederike. However, no court records exist to support any of Mozart's claims.

During these years Mozart struggled immensely with money. He earned a good amount but spent too much. That summer, he began writing a string of desperately

apologetic yet pleading letters to his friend Michael Puchberg, asking for money to help fill the gaps. It appears that in Potsdam, Mozart may have indulged in wishful thinking, hoping if he showed up the king would want to meet him, and that writing music for the family would entice them to commission more works by the former Wunderkind. But the scheme did not work. Mozart began writing the six quartets but only completed three, K. 575, K. 589, and K. 590—the last in the genre he would write before his early death. “I have now been forced to give away my quartets (that exhausting labor) for a mere song,” he wrote plaintively, “simply in order to have cash in hand to meet my present difficulties.” They were published posthumously.

Despite the bleak spirit that haunted Mozart, the quartet K. 589 opens with an *Allegro* shimmering with relaxed brilliance. The two violins ease us in, followed by the viola and cello, the latter of which enjoys prominence throughout as it was Friedrich Wilhelm II’s

instrument. The movement is shaped by the triplet rhythm that lends a rippling, buoyant feeling briefly interrupted in the stormier seas of its middle section. Ever a master of melody, Mozart opens the slow *Larghetto* with a gracious theme introduced by the cello and echoed in the first violin. In the score, he marks it to be delivered “sotto voce,” or under the voice. Syncopated rhythms here are offset by luxuriously flowing cascades of scales.

The stately mood of the *Menuetto* is periodically overtaken by short exuberant outbursts, culminating in an energetic and bustling Trio section, which takes an unexpected dip into a minor mode, enhancing the sense of drama. Finally, the *Allegro assai* recalls the triplet rhythms from the opening, as well as the ascending scale figures, now sped up, from the third movement. Here, the melodic material is playfully tossed around the ensemble. Rather than winding up to a flashy conclusion, the work ends with a surprising, breezy nonchalance.

Hugo Wolf

Italian Serenade for String Quartet

► Born March 13, 1860, in Windischgrätz, Styria (now Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia)

► Died February 22, 1903, in Vienna

Composed in 1887

► First CMS performance on January 28, 1973, by the Juilliard String Quartet (violinists Robert Mann and Earl Carlyss, violist Samuel Rhodes, and cellist Claus Adam)

► Duration: 7 minutes

Born into a large musical family in the Austrian Empire, Hugo Wolf was taught piano and violin from an early age. Seeing his first opera at just eight years old ignited an unrelenting passion, and after several years of academic struggle Wolf successfully petitioned to study music. Thanks to his aunt who supported him, he moved to Vienna to enroll at the conservatory, where his

classmates included Gustav Mahler. Wolf’s studies were cut short, however, due to his rebellious nature, which got him expelled. After briefly returning home, Wolf made a living in Vienna by teaching music students, some of whom came from notable families, including the daughters of physician Josef Breuer, whose work with Sigmund Freud contributed to the development of psychoanalysis. It was during these years working in the city that Wolf contracted syphilis after a friend took him to visit a brothel. The disease would eventually lead to his insanity and early death at age 42.

For three years, between 1884 and 1887, Wolf worked as a music critic. However, his forthright style of appraisal earned him some significant enemies who occasionally seized

opportunities to retaliate. On one occasion, Wolf so deeply hurt and offended members of the Vienna Philharmonic that his composition, submitted to the orchestra as part of a review of new works, was played and then summarily dismissed with gleeful derision. Shortly after this humiliation, Wolf resigned from criticism to focus again on composition.

It was in this period that the *Italian Serenade* was written within just a few days in early May 1887. A work of exquisite

craftsmanship, it opens in a lighthearted manner as the violin sings over a galloping, syncopated accompaniment in the ensemble. Halfway through, the mood shifts abruptly. The action pauses, and the cello interjects a sorrowful, slightly alarmed cry creating an air of unsettled drama, which is taken up by the other voices. From there, the sense of distress begins to dissipate, slowly releasing tension and returning to the warmth and ease of the opening theme.

Wynton Marsalis

Selections from *At the Octoroon Balls* for String Quartet

► Born October 18, 1961, in New Orleans

Composed in 1995

► The world premiere was given at CMS on May 7, 1995, by the Orion String Quartet (violinists Daniel Phillips and Todd Phillips, violist Steven Tenenbom, and cellist Timothy Eddy).

► Duration: 25 minutes

In 1892 the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák was hired as artistic director and professor of composition at the National Conservatory of Music in America in New York City to help answer the question, “What is ‘American’ music?” Throughout his tenure he met with African American composers, was introduced to spirituals, and became acquainted with Native American melodies, observing in a *New York Herald* interview, “These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are American. They are the songs of America, and your composers must turn to them.”

Shortly after Dvořák left the United States in 1895, jazz developed out of African American communities in New Orleans. It quickly flourished into a nationwide phenomenon as a distinctly American form of music that many European composers enthusiastically embraced. In early 1928, Maurice Ravel

embarked on a lengthy tour of the United States and Canada, relishing the opportunity to experience jazz firsthand. On February 26 he remarked to the *New York Times* reporter Olin Downes how much he admired and valued the genre, specifically noting his own use of jazz idioms in his recently composed Violin Sonata No. 2.

Since then, jazz and classical music have blended to varying degrees in the hands of many composers, including William Grant Still, George Gershwin, and Duke Ellington, to name a few. A vibrant contribution to the repertoire was added in 1995 with *At the Octoroon Balls*, Wynton Marsalis’s first foray in the string quartet genre, co-commissioned by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Structured as a seven-movement suite, *At the Octoroon Balls* is a synthesis of history, narrative, and sound from New Orleans—Marsalis’s hometown. The title refers to 19th-century gatherings in New Orleans where free women of mixed race and white men socialized within a complex system of race, class, and gender relations. Marsalis elaborates on the scene, commenting, “A ball is a ritual and a dance. Everybody was in their finest

clothing. At the Octoroon Balls there was an interesting cross-section of life. People from different strata of society came together in pursuit of pleasure and fulfillment. The music brought people together.”

Marsalis’s hybridization of jazz idioms with the string quartet framework is a richly evocative portrayal of complex layers of culture, emotion, and meaning. The first of the selected movements on this program, *Many*

Gone, is a lament for lives lost in slavery, punctuated by allusions to spirituals and field hollers. *Hellbound Highball* is a train thundering down the track until it slowly screeches to a halt. A mysterious, ghostly aura emerges in *Blue Lights on the Bayou*, and the work concludes with the stylish, somewhat tipsy, *Rampart Street Row House Rag*.

Program notes © Kathryn Bacasnot

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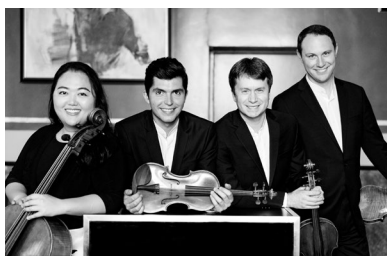
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About the Artists



Calidore String Quartet

The Calidore String Quartet has been recognized for achieving an extraordinary cohesion of individual artistry and collective expression—as the *Washington Post* wrote, “four more individual musicians are unimaginable, yet these speak, breathe, think and feel as one.” Their artistry reflects a profound engagement with both the classical canon and the evolving language of 21st-century chamber music.

The Calidore has performed at many of the world’s greatest concert halls, including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Wigmore Hall, and festivals such as the BBC Proms, Verbier, Ravinia, and Caramoor. Collaborators have included Anne-Sophie Mutter, Joshua Bell, Anthony McGill, Marc-André Hamelin, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, David Finckel and Wu Han, the Emerson String Quartet, and Quatuor Ébène, among others.

Dedicated advocates for today’s music, the Calidore has premiered works by Caroline Shaw, John Williams, Anna Clyne, and Gabriela Montero, to name a few. During the 2025–26 season, they gave the world premiere of a new quartet, *Arietta* by Mark-Anthony Turnage, at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

In 2026, the Calidore released an all-American album, *American Tapestry* on Signum Records, featuring music by Samuel Barber, Wynton Marsalis, Erich Korngold, and John Williams. In 2025, they unveiled a landmark box set of the complete Beethoven string quartets, recorded for Signum following their live cycle at CMS during the 2024–25 season.

Formed in 2010 at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, the Calidore has won top prizes at major US chamber music competitions, including the Fischhoff, Coleman, Chesapeake, and Yellow Springs. In 2016, they won the Grand Prize of the inaugural M-Prize International Chamber Music Competition as well as the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship. Additional honors include the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award, and selection as BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists. They are alums of CMS’s Bowers Program.

Currently the Distinguished String Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Delaware, the Calidore has also held residencies at the University of Toronto, University of Michigan, and Stony Brook University.

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 more than 140 of the world's finest chamber musicians enables CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period.

Each season, CMS reaches a global audience with more than 150 performances and education programs at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and the Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio at CMS, and on tour with residencies worldwide.

CMS offers 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, a 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.

CMS's incomparable digital presence, which regularly enables us to reach millions of viewers and listeners annually, includes our weekly national radio program, heard on WQXR; a partnership with Apple Music Classical; as well as 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. CMS also hosts an online archive of more than 1,700 video recordings of performance and education videos free to the public.

CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

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