Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

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ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

2026–2027 SEASON



SONIC SPECTRUM I

Thursday, November 12, 2026, at 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

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Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

SONIC SPECTRUM I

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 12, 2026, AT 7:30 ▸ 4,758TH CONCERT
Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio at CMS

Susanna Phillips, soprano
Calidore String Quartet
Jeffrey Myers, violin
Ryan Meehan, violin
Jeremy Berry, viola
Estelle Choi, cello

Mark-Anthony Turnage (b. 1960)
***Arietta: Variations on an Arietta by Beethoven* for String Quartet** (CMS Co-Commission, New York Premiere) (2025)
MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, CHOI

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)
***Blueprint* for String Quartet** (2016)
MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, CHOI

***And So* for Soprano and String Quartet** (2022)
PHILLIPS, MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, CHOI

Samuel Adams (b. 1985)
String Quartet No. 3, "Alma" (2024)
MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, CHOI
▸ I.
▸ II.
▸ III.
▸ IV.

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)
***Strum* for String Quartet** (2006, rev. 2012)
MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, CHOI

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

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

Essay on the Program

Same People, Different Show

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

The first two composers from whom we hear this evening both refer explicitly in their scores to works by Beethoven: late in the case of Mark Anthony Turnage, who, in his mid-sixties, is perhaps ready for a late period of his own, and early for Caroline Shaw, who was in her thirties when she came up with *Blueprint*. Echoes from two centuries ago exemplify how the classics are alive in the work of contemporary composers, but the echoes may also remind us how, in all that time, the string quartet as a performing ensemble has not changed. These are still four master musicians playing the same instruments—they could even be exactly the same instruments, since high-quality violins, violas, and cellos get passed down the generations. If we could bring forward Ignaz Schuppanzigh and his colleagues, who were the first to play Beethoven's last quartets, they might be surprised to find Turnage or Shaw on their music stands (or Samuel Adams or Jessie Montgomery), but they would have the means to play the music.

Turnage's source—or, more precisely, the object of his homage, not unmixed with a touch of challenge—is the finale of Beethoven's final piano sonata, the Arietta that, through variations in ever-diminishing note values, trembles towards evanescence. By turning the Beethoven melody upside down, so that what were rising intervals become falling ones and vice versa, Turnage creates a theme ready for a new sequence of transformations.

In F minor and marked "Very slow and sombre," the work opens in two ultra-long breaths, each rising in volume and falling. This manner continues until tension increases and then settles into a slightly faster section, "More flowing," started by the two violins in canon on a lifting motif. Edging further up in tempo, the second violin introduces a variant of the theme to pizzicato accompaniment from the cello. This is developed on the way to a pizzicato variation, faster yet, whose mounting agitation brings a pause for breath and a new section on the lifting motif, at almost triple the original tempo. Accelerating further, the music explodes in sixteenth notes before reaching a middle speed for the viola to recall the theme. This takes us to a sonorous harmonic climax, followed by a passage in which Turnage achieves Beethovenian evaporation in his own way.

Turnage came late to the string quartet; he was approaching fifty when he wrote his first, *Twisted Blues with Twisted Ballad*, though he has sped up since, with Arietta now his sixth.

In contrast, Caroline Shaw, a string player herself, was producing quartets from her emergence as a composer, her ten-minute *Punctum* of 2009 being among her earliest published works. Like Turnage, though, she has avoided the title "String Quartet," as if to keep away from the mainstream. Even a work in four movements of roughly standard size and shape has a title all its own (*The Evergreen*, 2020), and most of her quartet pieces have continued to come as independent single movements, as in the case of *Blueprint* (2016).

This, she notes, "takes its title from the beautiful blue woodblock printing tradition of Japan as well as from the familiar standard architectural representation of a proposed structure. The piece began its life as a harmonic reduction—a kind of floor plan—of Beethoven's Op. 18, No. 6, which, as a violinist and violist, I have played many times. Chamber music is ultimately about conversation without words. *Blueprint* is also a conversation—with Beethoven, with Haydn (his teacher and the 'father' of the string quartet), and with the joys and malinconia of his Op. 18, No. 6." We may recall that *La malinconia* is the title Beethoven gave to the long, slow introduction to the finale of this quartet, full of somberness and tragic jerkings. Whether or not the Beethoven model

is brought to our minds, however, *Blueprint* impresses as a précis, something vivid yet compact.

To follow, we hear from Shaw under her third hat, as a singer, in the last of three songs she wrote for Anne Sofie von Otter: *And So* (2018). Shaw riffs on Gertrude Stein's riff on Robert Burns (whose rose poem she set as the first number of this group) and adds touches from Billy Joel's song "And So It Goes."

Shaw's near contemporary Samuel Adams has not shied from using the traditional nomenclature and numbering for his string quartets, which have come at roughly five-year intervals since his first, in 2013. He composed his Third String Quartet in 2024 as a result of the relationship he developed with the Alma Quartet of Amsterdam through working with them on his *Sundial* for string quartet and percussion during his residency in 2021–22 at the city's major concert hall, the Concertgebouw. Hence the work's subtitle, though he has said that he "was drawn equally to the Spanish meaning of *alma*—soul or spirit."

"The form of the work," he goes on in his own note, "is in the shape of the word 'alma' itself. The first and fourth movements share the same material, though the fourth movement is an unfinished transformation of the first—the piece thrusts into an unknown, new space at its close. The second movement is virtuosic and demanding, built as a set of double variations: two contrasting ideas evolve in parallel before colliding about two-thirds of the way through the movement. The third movement serves as the emotional core. It begins with a hushed melody—quiet and gnomic, like a whispered medieval chant—and traverses an arc toward music of tremendous intensity. The open notation here gives the first violinist breathing room to freely shape a melody that is bright, harsh, distorted, ecstatic, with immense bow pressure, and slow slides, like slowed down fiddle music played at full volume."

This third movement might well make us think we are hearing the music of the soul—of the soul under increasing strain, to the point of pain. The finale that follows is strikingly short, indeed enigmatic.

Adams's mention of fiddle music—the reference is unmistakable—might remind us how aspects of the American vernacular have been embraced and absorbed by many millennial composers, including all three on this program. The last from whom we hear is Jessie Montgomery, with a signature piece that began as a string quintet (with extra cello) in 2006 and acquired alternative scorings, for string orchestra and for string quartet, in the process of revision. Like Shaw, Montgomery is a professional violinist herself and writes for strings from the inside, richly and strongly, not least in *Strum*. Her own words take us further:

"I utilized texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic repetitions that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a texture motive and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration."

Program essay © Paul Griffiths

Learn More About Tonight's Program

For an interview with composer Samuel Adams about his Third String Quartet, "Alma," which appears on tonight's performance, scan the QR code or visit **ChamberMusicSociety.org/SonicSpectrum1**

SCAN HERE

Text

Caroline Shaw
And So

would a song by any other name
sound as sweet and true
would all the reds be just the same
or violets as blue
if you were gone
would words still flow
and would they rhyme with you
if you were gone
would I still know
how to love and how to grow
and how the vowel threads through

and so you say the saying goes
a rose is a rose is a rose
is a rose is a rose is a rose is a tired rhyme
but in the verse there's always time

would scansion cease to mark the beats
if I went away
would a syllable interrupt the feet
with tetrametric iambs
when I am gone

listen and I will sing a tune of love
and life and of the ocean's prose
and the poetry of a red, red rose
that's newly sprung in June

and so you say the saying goes
a rose is a rose is a rose
is a rose is a rose is a rose is how I'm
keeping track of time

when a' the seas rise high, my dear
and the rocks melt with the sun
will the memory of us
still rhyme with anyone
will we still tune our violins
will we still sing of roses
will we exist at all, my love
or will we fade to stanzas of the dust
that I suppose is all we were and all we'll be

and so the saying "so it goes"
depends a lot on if a rose is a rose is a rose
is a rose is a rose is a rose
is a rose is a thing sublime
and so we stay, on borrowed time

Music and Lyrics by Caroline Shaw

About the Artists



ZACHARY MAXWELL STERTZ

Susanna Phillips

Soprano Susanna Phillips has appeared in more than eleven roles at the Metropolitan Opera, originated the role of Rose in the world premiere of *Awakenings* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and portrayed Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* opposite Renée Fleming. Her operatic career also includes acclaimed performances with Boston Baroque, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Cincinnati Opera, Dallas Opera, and Gran Teatre del Liceu. A passionate advocate for chamber music, she has presented a tribute to Clara Schumann at the Library of Congress and appeared with Washington Performing Arts in a program co-curated by the late Justice Ruth

Bader Ginsburg. Among her many honors are the Beverly Sills Artist Award and the Laffont Competition from the Metropolitan Opera, as well as prizes from Operalia and the Marilyn Horne Foundation Competition. Ms. Phillips earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School. Beginning in the 2026–27 season, Ms. Phillips serves as Artist in Residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.



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 Fischoff, 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 Composers



LENNY GONZALEZ

Samuel Adams

Samuel Adams is an American composer whose music weaves acoustic and digital sound into "mesmerizing" (*New York Times*) orchestrations. Sought after by orchestras and contemporary ensemble alike, he has received commissions from a broad range of organizations including the San Francisco Symphony, Carnegie Hall, the New World Symphony, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and the Spektral Quartet, and has collaborated with conductors and performers such as Esa-Pekka Salonen, David Robertson, Michael Tilson Thomas, Anthony Marwood, Jennifer Koh, Karen Gomyo, Emanuel Ax, Sarah Cahill, David Fung, and Joyce Yang. Adams was Mead Composer in Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 2015 to 2018 and, in the 2021–22 season, was the Composer in Residence with Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. He has held residencies at Civitella Ranieri, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Ucross, and Visby International Centre for Composers. He is a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow and lives and works in Seattle, Washington.



Jessie Montgomery

Jessie Montgomery is a Grammy-winning composer, violinist, and educator whose work interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, poetry, and social consciousness, establishing her as an acute interpreter of 21st-century American sound and experience. Named *Performance Today*'s 2025 Classical Woman of the Year, her works have been described as "turbulent, wildly colorful, and exploding with life" (*Washington Post*), and are performed regularly by leading orchestras, ensembles, and soloists around the world. A founding member of PUBLIQuartet and a former member of the Catalyst Quartet, she is a frequent and highly engaged collaborator with performing musicians, composers, choreographers, playwrights, poets, and visual artists alike. At the heart of Montgomery's work is a deep sense of community enrichment and a desire to create opportunities for young artists and underrepresented composers. Her awards and fellowships include the Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, the Sphinx Medal of Excellence and Sphinx Virtuosi Composer-in-Residence, the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation, and *Musical America*'s 2023 Composer of the Year.



J. HENRY FAIR

Caroline Shaw

Caroline Shaw moves among roles, genres, and media, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist, and vocalist. Shaw is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Music, an honorary doctorate from Yale, five Grammys, a Tony nomination, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. She has written and produced for artists and ensembles including Rosalía, Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, Tiler Peck, Nas, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the New York Philharmonic. Recent projects include *Death of a Salesman* on Broadway, *Hedda Gabler* at the Old Globe, *Leonardo Da Vinci* (Ken Burns/PBS), *Fleishman is in Trouble* (FX/Hulu), Rosalía's *LUX* and *MOTOMAMI*, *Pastoral* (Pam Tanowitz), *The Crucible* (National Theatre), *Partita* (Justin Peck/NYC Ballet), *Moby Dick* (Wu Tsang), and *LIFE* (Gandini Juggling/Merce Cunningham Trust). Current touring projects include shows with Sō Percussion, Ringdown, Attacca Quartet, Roomful of Teeth, Graveyards & Gardens, Gabriel Kahane, Andrew Yee, and Kamus Quartet.



Mark-Anthony Turnage

Mark-Anthony Turnage's first opera, *Greek*, established his reputation in 1988 as an artist finding his own path between modernism and tradition with a unique blend of jazz and classical styles. He has been resident composer with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and London Philharmonic Orchestra. Collaborations with the London Symphony Orchestra have included Speranza, premiered under Daniel Harding, and Remembering, conducted by Simon Rattle. Recent works include his opera Festen, based on the film by Thomas Vinterberg and premiered at the Royal Opera in London in 2025, and his opera *The Railway Children*, staged by Glyndebourne in autumn 2025. Much of his music is recorded on Decca, Warner Classics, Chandos, and the LPO and LSO labels, while *Scorched*, on Deutsche Grammophon, was nominated for a Grammy. Turnage is Research Fellow in Composition at the Royal College of Music, and is published by Boosey & Hawkes. He was awarded a CBE in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours.

About the Chamber Music Society

Founded in 1969, the **Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS)** brings the joy of chamber music to more people than any other organization in the world. Under the artistic leadership of cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han, the multi-generational and international performing artist roster of more than 140 acclaimed musicians enables CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period.

CMS reaches a global audience with more than 150 performances each season—at its Lincoln Center home (both in Alice Tully Hall and the Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio), in free community concerts throughout New York City, and on tour around the world. CMS also offers a wide range of master classes, lectures, and educational programs to engage and inform listeners of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of musical knowledge. Through the Bowers Program, a competitive three-season residency, CMS develops the next generation of classical music leaders, offering exceptional young professional musicians the opportunity to participate in every facet of the organization's activities.

CMS's robust digital presence, which reaches millions of viewers and listeners annually, includes a weekly national radio program, heard locally on WQXR; a partnership with Apple Music Classical; and appearances on SiriusXM's Symphony Hall channel and *In Concert with CMS* on PBS ALL ARTS. Additionally, CMS hosts an online archive of more than 2,000 video recordings of performance and education videos free to the public, as well as extensive digital learning resources.

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