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**Artist Series: Gilles Vonsattel**

**PROGRAM**

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827)
Trio in B-flat major for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Op. 11 (1797)

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Tema con variazioni: Allegretto

David Shifrin, clarinet; Nicholas Canellakis, cello; Gilles Vonsattel, piano

**Jan Ladislav Dussek** (1760-1812)
*The Sufferings of the Queen of France* for Piano, Op. 23 (1793)

The Queen’s imprisonment

She reflects on her former greatness

They separate her from her children

They pronounce the sentence of death

Her resignation to her fate

The situation and reflections the night before her execution

March

The savage tumult of the rabble

The Queen’s invocation

(The guillotine drops)

The apotheosis

Gilles Vonsattel, piano

**Franz Liszt** (1811-1886)
“Funérailles” from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* for Piano (1849)

Gilles Vonsattel, piano

**Frederic Rzewski** (1938-2021)
“Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues” from *Four North American Ballads* for Piano (1978-79)

Gilles Vonsattel, piano

**Greg Anderson** (1981)
*Carmen Fantasy* for Two Pianos (2010)

Wu Han, piano; Gilles Vonsattel, piano

**NOTES ON THE PROGRAM**

**Trio in B-flat major for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Op. 11 (1797)**
**Ludwig van Beethoven (Bonn, 1770 – Vienna, 1827)**

Beethoven’s first published works after he arrived in the musical capital of Vienna in 1792 were three piano trios. He also wrote much of his wind music in the following years, including his incredibly popular septet, which he arranged for clarinet, cello, and piano in 1803. The B-flat major Trio was probably written for the clarinetist Josef Bähr, and it straddles the line between wind repertoire and piano trio (when it was published, Beethoven included an optional violin part to replace the clarinet). Bähr had some influence on the piece, as he may have suggested the theme for the last movement, which is the most storied of the three movements. It’s based on a melody from a popular opera that debuted the same year: Joseph Weigl’s “Pria ch’io l’impegno” (Before I Work) from *L’amor marinaro* (The Sailor in Love). The melody was hummed and whistled all over Vienna and earned this trio the occasional nickname “Gassenhauer” or street song. Though the practice of writing variations on a popular theme was widespread, Beethoven rarely did it because he probably felt his own melodies were superior. Here he makes the format his own. After a straightforward statement of the upbeat theme, the first variation is an abrupt mood shift to serious virtuosic artistry in the piano, announcing that these variations won’t be just a superficial display, but will go to some deeper, unexpected places.

The first two movements are similarly light but Beethoven’s stormy personality lurks just under the surface. For instance, the first movement starts off with bustling, echoing parts for all three instruments before the second theme sneaks in on a surprising D major chord. The lyrical middle movement has an agitated middle section. The trio walks a fine line between Beethoven the piano virtuoso, Beethoven the path-breaking composer, and Beethoven the entertainer.

***The Sufferings of the Queen of France* for Piano, Op. 23 (1793)**
**Jan Ladislav Dussek (Čáslav, Czech Republic, 1760 – France, 1812)**

Czech composer Jan Ladislav Dussek was an internationally renowned piano virtuoso who traveled widely through Europe. In 1786, he settled in Paris, where he played for and hobnobbed with the highest members of French society, including Marie Antoinette. The outbreak of the French Revolution abruptly ended that stable time in Dussek’s life—he wasted no time leaving and settled in London in 1789. Undoubtedly he continued to follow events in France closely, and on October 16, 1793 he heard about the execution of Marie Antoinette. He wrote this piece immediately and published it before the end of the year under the title *The Sufferings of the Queen of France, A Musical Composition Expressing the Feelings of the Unfortunate Marie Antoinette During her Imprisonment, Trial & Etc.* (Dussek was fond of writing pieces on current events, including a “Farewell” Sonata that may have inspired Beethoven’s famous “Farewell” Sonata ten years later.) Its ten short, colorful movements paint a sympathetic portrait of the queen, full of striking contrasts and imaginative effects.

[Manuscript](https://ks.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/2/28/IMSLP174972-PMLP308480-Sufferings_of_the_Queen_of_France-Dussek.pdf)

**“Funérailles” from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* for Piano (1849)**
**Franz Liszt (Raiding, Hungary, 1811 – Bayreuth, Germany, 1886)**

“Funérailles” is the most famous of the ten works from Liszt’s *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, a technically and emotionally demanding piano cycle inspired by the French Romantic poet Alphonse de Lamartine. Liszt wrote “Funérailles” to channel his grief over the brutal suppression of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution by the Austrian Empire. More specifically, the title commemorates the execution of Hungarian Prime Minister Lajos Batthyány on October 6, 1849. The piece has three sections—the first evokes tolling bells across a battlefield, the second section is a lyrical funeral march, and the third section, which has thundering left-hand octaves that sound like Chopin (who also died in October 1849), has a driving rhythm that pianist Gilles Vonsattel describes as “nothing less than a cavalry charge into the abyss.” The last two sections are reprised before the unsettled ending.

**“Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues” from *Four North American Ballads* for Piano (1978-79)**
**Frederic Rzewski (Westfield, MA, 1938 – Montiano, Italy, 2021)**

American composer Frederic Rzewski wrote socially conscious music that often takes inspiration from protest movements and other progressive causes. He wrote *Four North American Ballads* for Paul Jacobs, one of the leading new music pianists of the 60s and 70s in New York. The last of the ballads, “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues” from Winnsboro, South Carolina, was collected in the 1930s by William Wolff at a School for Southern Women Workers. The text is by an unknown author and the melody was borrowed from *The Alcoholic Blues*, an anti-prohibition song from 1919. It was famously recorded by folk singer [Pete Seeger](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozLGnD8Hpyk). In a striking juxtaposition, Rzewski captures the powerful clattering of the cotton mill, its relentlessly motoric sound only stopping for a brief, beautiful respite to play “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues,” setting the tune in high relief. The piece mirrors the creative energy of the workers’ movement pushing back against the exploitive system they labored under.

Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues

Old man Sargent, sittin' at the desk
The damn old fool won't give us no rest
He'd take the nickels off a dead man's eyes
To buy a Coca-Cola and eskimo pies.

I got the blues, I got the blues
I got the Winnsboro cotton mill blues
Lordy Lordy spoolin's hard
You know and I know, we don't have to tell
You work for Tom Watson got to work like hell

When I die, don't bury me at all
Just hang me up on the spool-room wall
Place a knotter in my hand
So I can spool in the Promised Land.

Refrain

When I die, don’t bury me deep,

Bury me down on Six Hundred Street

Place a bobbin in each hand

So I can doff in the Promised Land.

Refrain

***Carmen Fantasy* for Two Pianos (2010)**
**Greg Anderson (St. Paul, MN, 1981)**

Greg Anderson writes, “*Carmen Fantasy*, in the grand romantic tradition, weaves together several scenes from Bizet’s beloved opera. The *Danse bohémienne* from Act II serves as an introduction. That is followed by the *Aragonaise* (the entr’acte to Act IV, just before the opera’s climactic bullfight), the famous *Habanera* from Act I (in which Carmen sings *L’amour est un oiseau rebelle*—Love is a rebellious bird), and the ‘Card Aria’ from Act III (in which Carmen reads in the cards that both she and Don José are doomed to die). Following that terrifying omen of death, the music cuts to the ‘Flower Song’ from Act II, a scene that epitomizes the love Don José and Carmen once shared for one another. Ultimately, the juxtaposition serves to highlight the tragedy of the opera without actually recreating the opera’s climactic recitative (in which Don José murders Carmen). The fantasy concludes with a party scene from the beginning of Act II, in which Carmen and her friends entertain army officers with a song about Gypsy girls (much like themselves). The music accelerates in a whirlwind of fevered rhythm, Basque tambourins, and ecstatic dance.”

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**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Hailed by the *New Yorker* as a “superb young soloist,” **Nicholas Canellakis** has become one of the most sought-after and innovative cellists of his generation. In the *New York Times* his playing was praised as "impassioned... the audience seduced by Mr. Canellakis's rich, alluring tone.” His recent highlights include his Carnegie Hall concerto debut with the American Symphony Orchestra; concerto appearances with the Albany, Delaware, Lansing, Bangor, and New Haven symphonies, and Erie Philharmonic; and Europe and Asia tours with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He also performs recitals throughout the United States with his long-time duo collaborator, pianist-composer Michael Brown, including a recital of American cello-piano works presented by CMS. He is a regular guest artist at many of the world's leading music festivals, including Santa Fe, Ravinia, Music@Menlo, Bard, La Jolla, Bridgehampton, Hong Kong, Moab, Music in the Vineyards, and Saratoga Springs. He was recently named artistic director of Chamber Music Sedona. An alum of CMS’s Bowers Program, Mr. Canellakis is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and New England Conservatory. Filmmaking and acting are special interests of his. He has produced, directed, and starred in several short films and music videos.

A Yale University faculty member since 1987, clarinetist **David Shifrin** is artistic director of Yale's Chamber Music Society and Yale in New York, an annual concert series at Carnegie Hall. He has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since 1982 and served as its artistic director from 1992 to 2004, inaugurating CMS's Bowers Program and the annual Brandenburg Concerto concerts. He was the artistic director of Chamber Music Northwest in Portland, Oregon from 1981 to 2020. He has collaborated with the Guarneri, Tokyo, and Emerson quartets and frequently performs with pianist André Watts. Winner of the Avery Fisher Prize, he is also the recipient of a Solo Recitalist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. A top prize winner in the Munich and Geneva competitions, he has held principal clarinet positions in numerous orchestras including The Cleveland Orchestra and the American Symphony under Leopold Stokowski. His recordings have received three Grammy nominations and his performance of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto with the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra was named Record of the Year by *Stereo Review*. His most recent recordings are the Beethoven, Bruch, and Brahms Clarinet Trios with cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han on the ArtistLed label and a recording for Delos of works by Carl Nielsen. Mr. Shifrin performs on a MoBA cocobolo wood clarinet made by Morrie Backun in Vancouver, Canada and uses Légère Reeds.

Swiss-born American pianist **Gilles** **Vonsattel** is an artist of extraordinary versatility and originality. He is the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant, winner of the Naumburg and Geneva competitions, and was selected for the 2016 Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award. In recent years, he has made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and San Francisco Symphony while performing recitals and chamber music at Ravinia, Tokyo’s Musashino Hall, Wigmore Hall, Bravo! Vail, Chamber Music Northwest, and Music@Menlo. Deeply committed to the performance of contemporary music, he has premiered numerous works both in the United States and Europe and has worked closely with notable composers including Jörg Widmann, Heinz Holliger, and George Benjamin. Recent projects include appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Bernstein’s *Age of Anxiety*), Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg (Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue)*, Beethoven concertos with the Santa Barbara Symphony and Florida Orchestra, as well as multiple appearances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, Mr. Vonsattel received his bachelor’s degree in political science and economics from Columbia University and his master’s degree from The Juilliard School. He currently makes his home in New York City and serves as a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Co-artistic director of the Chamber Music Society since 2004, pianist **Wu Han** produced a 2020-21 season, normally packed with concerts and touring, of more than 240 digital projects. Included among them are her own performances of duo and chamber repertoire, as well as lectures viewed across the United States. Beginning in March 2020, she and David Finckel conceived and led the full slate of CMS’s pandemic programming, including six expanded or newly created series as well as mainstage concerts replacing live concerts in Alice Tully Hall. They also created CMS’s innovative *Front Row National* project, which has brought more than 400 CMS digital performances and events to over 60 chamber music presenters and their audiences nationally. In 2012 Wu Han was the recipient of *Musical America’s* Musician of the Year award, the highest honor bestowed by the legendary organization. Co-founder and artistic director of Music@Menlo Chamber Music Festival and Institute in Silicon Valley, she is also Artistic Advisor of The Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts’ Chamber Music at the Barns series, as well as for the Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach. In 1997 Wu Han and David Finckel founded ArtistLed, classical music’s first musician-directed and Internet-based recording company, whose catalogue has won widespread critical praise and comprises over 20 releases, including the staples of the cello-piano duo repertoire as well as chamber music. Through CMS *LIVE*, Menlo *LIVE*, and ArtistLed, Wu Han has produced over 160 CD’s, performing in 85 of them.