



# 2023-24 Season

## Curtis Presents: String Sextets on February 27 at Field Concert Hall

Curtis alumni, faculty, and students unite for a concert of works by Strauss, Berg, and Brahms and the world premiere of Alyssa Weinberg's ('16) *Illuminating Arches*, featuring the artistry of renowned musicians, violinist Benjamin Beilman (Violin '12), violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt ('10, '11, '14), and cellist Oliver Herbert ('19)

PHILADELPHIA, PA—February 6, 2024—The 2023–24 **Curtis Presents** series continues on **Tuesday, February 27, at 7:30 p.m.** at **Field Concert Hall** with **String Sextets** featuring acclaimed violinist and Curtis faculty member **Benjamin Beilman** ('12), former Dover Quartet violist **Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt** ('10, '11, '14), award-winning cellist **Oliver Herbert** ('19), and emerging professional artists from Curtis—violinist Na Hyun Della Kyun, violist Emad Zolfaghari, and cellist Francis Carr ('21)—in a memorable evening of chamber music. The program features Richard Strauss's Sextet from *Capriccio*, Op. 85; Berg's Piano Sonata in B minor, Op. 1; Brahms's String Sextet No. 2 in G major; and the world premiere of *Illuminating Arches*, composed by Curtis alumna **Alyssa Weinberg** ('16). Presented as part of **Curtis on Tour**, the school's Nina von Maltzahn Global Touring Initiative, for its spring tour across the U.S. beginning on February 24 in Fort Worth, Texas, and ending on March 12 in Bradenton, Florida.

The concert opens with **Richard Strauss**'s masterful Sextet, lifted from his final opera, the wistfully comedic *Capriccio* (1942). Written during World War II in his late seventies, this lighthearted opera about operas is constructed as a series of sophisticated philosophical salon conversations that debate the relationship between words and music, or as the German composer once wrote, “a treatise on dramaturgy, a theatrical fugue.” Often performed as a standalone piece—a tradition that to months before the opera's premiere—this lusciously scored string sextet, written in the post-Wagnerian, Late Romantic style, plays at the top of Act I, a sumptuous prelude for the satirical tale to follow and a fitting start to this eclectic program.

Artemis Quartet violinist Heime Müller's transcription of Alban Berg's Piano Sonata in B minor follows. The culmination of early sonata sketches composed while Berg studied with lifelong mentor Arnold Schoenberg, this dark and turbulent work for piano based on a twelve-tone series and the whole-tone scales is transformed in Müller's colorful, chromatic arrangement, capturing the slowly building, sustained passion, intensity, and details of the original score and casting it all in an entirely new light. The evening continues with **Alyssa**

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**Weinberg's *Illuminating Arches***. Acclaimed for compositions that are “quite literally stunning” by the *Chicago Tribune*, the Curtis alumna, educator, and founding director of the Composer Institute at the Lake George Music Festival is fascinated with perception and playing with form, subverting audience expectations to create singular works that often feature surreal scenarios. This newly commissioned piece for string sextet explores sound and harmonics. Creating subtle shapes and waves of sound as it progresses through the vertical bowing technique and incorporating white noise, the work uses subtle left-hand movements that allow inharmonic overtones to come through and capture the light and symmetrically curved structures of its title.

The evening concludes with **Johannes Brahms's** String Sextet No. 2 in G major, Op. 36. Aching with nostalgia, this sublimely romantic work—composed from 1864 to 1865 against the lush green countryside backdrop of Lichtental near Baden-Baden—features a cleverly concealed reference to one of the composer's infatuations at the time, a woman named Agathe von Siebold, as illustrated in the notes a-g-a-d-h-e played within the first movement. As the piece develops, the richness of the string sonority bleeds through each of the emotionally contrasting movements, and an air of darkly veiled mystery gives way to the rowdy, rustic charm of a peasant dance, all leading to a bright, exhilarating finale.

This event is currently sold out. Join the [waitlist](#) to be notified should additional tickets become available. Single tickets for the remaining performances in the 2023–24 Curtis Presents series start at \$24 and are available for purchase at [Curtis.edu](#). Learn more about other upcoming Curtis performances at [Curtis.edu/Calendar](#).

### **CURTIS PRESENTS: String Sextets**

Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Field Concert Hall, Curtis Institute of Music, 1726 Locust Street, Philadelphia

Benjamin Beilman ('12), violin

Na Hyun Della Kyun, violin

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt ('10, '11, '14), viola

Emad Zolfaghari, viola

Oliver Herbert ('19), cello

Francis Carr ('21), cello

RICHARD STRAUSS

Sextet for Strings from *Capriccio*, Op. 85

ALBAN BERG

Piano Sonata in B minor, Op. 1 (Transcribed by Heime Müller)

ALYSSA WEINBERG ('16)

*Illuminating Arches* (commissioned work)

JOHANNES BRAHMS

String Sextet No. 2 in G major, Op. 36

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## CURTIS ON TOUR PERFORMANCES

Saturday, February 24 at 2 p.m.  
Fort Worth, TX  
Presented by Chamber Music Society of Fort Worth

Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30 p.m.  
Philadelphia, PA  
Presented by Curtis Institute of Music

Sunday, March 3 at 2 p.m.  
Davis, CA  
Presented by Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts

Tuesday, March 5 at 7:30 p.m.  
Phoenix, AZ  
Presented by Phoenix Chamber Music Society

Thursday, March 7 at 6 p.m.  
Phoenix, AZ  
Presented by Phoenix Chamber Music Society

Saturday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m.  
Evanston, IL  
Presented by Music Institute of Chicago

Tuesday, March 12 at 7:30 p.m.  
Bradenton, FL  
Presented by Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota, Inc

### **About Curtis Presents**

Past and future meet through Curtis Presents, which features a diverse collection of artists—alumni, faculty, students, and contemporary creators—whose musical foundations are rooted in the Curtis community. This series of intimate and innovative recitals offers a unique experience with exceptional artistry and one-of-a-kind programs.

### **About Curtis on Tour**

Curtis on Tour is the Nina von Maltzahn global touring initiative of the Curtis Institute of Music. Grounded in the school’s “learn by doing” philosophy, tours feature extraordinary emerging artists alongside celebrated alumni and faculty. In addition to performances, musicians offer master classes, educational programs, and community engagement activities while on tour. Curtis on Tour also manages solo engagements for Curtis artists with professional orchestras and presenters. Since the program was established in 2008, Curtis on Tour ensembles have performed more than 375 concerts in over 100 cities in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

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## **About the Curtis Institute of Music**

At Curtis, the world's most talented young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators. With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. A small school by design, students realize their artistic potential through intensive, individualized study with the most renowned, sought-after faculty. Animated by a learn-by-doing philosophy, Curtis students share their music with audiences through more than 100 performances each year, including solo and chamber recitals, orchestral concerts, and opera—all free or at an affordable cost—offering audiences unique opportunities to participate in pivotal moments in these young musicians' careers. Curtis students experience a close connection to the greatest artists and organizations in classical music, and innovative initiatives that integrate new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship—all within a historic campus in the heart of culturally rich Philadelphia. In this diverse, collaborative community, Curtis's extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled 100-year legacy of musicians who have led, and will lead, classical music into a thriving, equitable, and multidimensional future. Learn more at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

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