

CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE BARNs



NOV 16 | 7:30 PM

Viola Celebration

Beethoven, Vaughan Williams, Mozart

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Dan and Gayle D'Aniello, Wolf Trap Season Underwriters

Deborah F. and David A. Winston, 2025–2026 Chamber Music at The Barns Series Sponsors

Chamber Music at The Barns

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Program

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Stella Chen, violin

Alexander Sitkovetsky, violin

Matthew Lipman, viola

Paul Neubauer, viola

Jonathan Swensen, cello

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

Phantasy Quintet for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello (1912)

Prelude: Lento ma non troppo

Scherzo: Prestissimo

Alla Sarabanda: Lento

Burlesca: Allegro moderato

SITKOVETSKY, CHEN, NEUBAUER, LIPMAN, SWENSEN

BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Fugue in D major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, Op. 137 (1817)

CHEN, SITKOVETSKY, LIPMAN, NEUBAUER, SWENSEN

BOWEN (1884–1961)

Two Duos in G major for Two Violas (1920)

LIPMAN, NEUBAUER

BRETT DEAN (b. 1961)

Epitaphs for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello (2010)

I. Only I will know

...in memory of Dorothy Porter

(Gently flowing, with intimate intensity)

II. Walk a little way with me

...in memory of Lyndal Holt

(Moderato scorrevole)

III. Der Philosoph

...in memory of Jan Diesselhorst

(Slow and spacious, misterioso)

IV. György meets the “Girl Photographer”

...in memory of Betty Freeman; hommage à György Ligeti

(Fresh, energetic)

V. Between the spaces in the sky

...in memory of Richard Hickox

(Hushed and fragile)

SITKOVETSKY, CHEN, LIPMAN, NEUBAUER, SWENSEN

INTERMISSION

MOZART (1756–1791)

Quintet in C major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, K. 515 (1787)

Allegro

Menuetto: Allegretto

Andante

Allegro

CHEN, SITKOVETSKY, NEUBAUER, LIPMAN, SWENSEN

Meet the Artists



Stella Chen, violin

Praised for her “silken grace” and “brilliant command” (*The Strad*), American violinist **Stella Chen** captured international attention as the winner of the 2019 Queen Elisabeth International Violin Competition, followed by the 2020 Avery Fisher Career Grant. Her debut album, *Stella x Schubert*, was released in 2023 on Apple Music’s Platoon label to critical acclaim, garnering her the title of Young Artist of the Year at the Gramophone Awards. Chen has performed across North America, Europe, and Asia, appearing as soloist with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Brussels Philharmonic, and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. A recently appointed faculty member of The Juilliard School, she holds a bachelor’s degree from Harvard University and a doctorate from Juilliard, and is an alumna of

CMS’s Bowers Program. Chen performs on the 1720 “General Kyd” Stradivarius, generously loaned by Dr. Ryuji Ueno and Rare Violins In Consortium, Artists and Benefactors Collaborative.



Alexander Sitkovetsky, violin

Violinist **Alexander Sitkovetsky** was born in Moscow into a family with a well-established musical tradition. Since his concerto debut at the age of eight, he has performed as soloist and chamber musician in many of the major venues around the world including Vienna’s Musikverein, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, and the Wigmore Hall in London. This season he will make his subscription debut with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, among other engagements. He is the artistic director of the NFM Leopoldinum Chamber Orchestra in Wrocław, Poland, and he is a founding member of the Sitkovetsky Trio, which regularly

performs throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas and is recognized as one of the most important ensembles performing today. Sitkovetsky is an alum of CMS's Bowers Program and plays the 1679 "Parera" Antonio Stradivari violin, kindly loaned to him through the Beare's International Violin Society by a generous sponsor.



Matthew Lipman, viola

American violist **Matthew Lipman** has made recent appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, American Symphony Orchestra, Munich Symphony Orchestra, and Minnesota Orchestra. He has performed recitals at Carnegie Hall and the Zürich Tonhalle, and has recorded on the Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, Cedille, and Avie labels. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, he performs regularly on tour and at Alice Tully Hall with CMS. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and major prize winner at the Primrose and Tertis International Viola Competitions, Lipman is on faculty at Stony Brook University. He performs on a 2021 Samuel Zygmuntowicz viola.



Paul Neubauer, viola

Violist **Paul Neubauer**, hailed by *The New York Times* as a "master musician," will release two new albums in 2025 on First Hand Records, featuring the final works of two great composers: an all-Bartók album including the revised version of the Viola Concerto, and a Shostakovich recording that includes the monumental Viola Sonata. Appointed principal violist of the New York Philharmonic at the age of 21, Neubauer has appeared as soloist with the New York, Los Angeles, and Helsinki Philharmonics; the Chicago, National, St. Louis, Detroit, Dallas, San Francisco, and Bournemouth Symphonies; and the Santa Cecilia, English Chamber, and Beethovenhalle Orchestras. He has premiered viola concertos by Bartók (revised version), Friedman, Glière, Jacob, Kernis, Lazarof, Müller-Siemens, Ott, Penderecki, Picker, Suter, and Tower. A two-time Grammy nominee, Neubauer is artistic director of the Mostly Music series in New Jersey and serves on the faculties of The Juilliard School and Mannes College.



Jonathan Swensen, cello

Cellist **Jonathan Swensen** is the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and joint first prize of the Naumburg International Cello Competition, and he was featured as “One to Watch” in *Gramophone*. He made his concerto debut performing the Elgar Concerto with Portugal’s Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música, and he has performed with the Philharmonia Orchestra; Orquesta Ciudad de Granada; Copenhagen Philharmonic; Mobile Symphony; Greenville Symphony; and the Aarhus, Odense, and Iceland symphonies. He has captured first prizes at the Windsor International String Competition, Khachaturian International Cello Competition, and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. A graduate of the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Swensen continued his studies with Torleif Thedéen at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and Laurence Lesser at New England Conservatory, where he received his artist diploma. He is now an artist in residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel working with Gary Hoffman, and he is a member of CMS’s Bowers Program.

Rich Kleinfeldt, host

Rich Kleinfeldt is a professional musician, broadcaster, teacher, and lecturer. He is a founding member of the Washington Saxophone Quartet, which has been together since 1976, and he performs as a soloist and chamber musician. Kleinfeldt currently announces for WETA Classical 90.9 FM and is the former host of the long-running nationally syndicated radio program *Center Stage from Wolf Trap*. This evening’s concert is being recorded for WETA Classical’s weekly program, *Front Row Washington*. Kleinfeldt is a former international broadcaster for the Voice of America and the Maestro Classical Music Channel of the WorldSpace Satellite Network.

Kleinfeldt maintains a teaching studio in his home. A graduate of Millikin University in Decatur, IL and The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, Kleinfeldt performed with the United States Army Band until 1983 as saxophone soloist and master of ceremonies. He has been the onstage host for *Chamber Music at The Barns* since the series’ inception.

THE BARN'S 300TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL CONCERT & DINNER EVENT



TUE, DEC 2 • 7:30 PM

GIL SHAHAM, VIOLIN & AKIRA EGUCHI, PIANO

Celebrate the German Barn's 300th anniversary with virtuoso violinist Gil Shaham and pianist Akira Eguchi performing music by Leclair, Vivaldi, Beethoven, and Fauré.

This very special concert will be followed by an elegant dinner supporting Wolf Trap's arts and education programs.

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for more information.**



Program Notes

Ralph Vaughan Williams *Phantasy Quintet for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello*

- Born October 12, 1872,
in Down Ampney,
Gloucestershire, England
- Died August 26, 1958, in London
- Composed in 1912

After completing his doctorate at Cambridge, Vaughan Williams served as editor of *The English Hymnal*—a role that profoundly influenced his musical voice. Reflecting later, he wrote, “Two years of close association with some of the best (as well as some of the worst) tunes in the world was a better musical education than any amount of sonatas and fugues.” This deep immersion in hymnody, along with his personal immersion in collecting English folk songs, permeates his early chamber works, including the *Phantasy Quintet*.

The spirit of English Renaissance consort music inhabits every page, but filtered through a harmonic sensibility that owes as much to Debussy as to Dowland. This 1912 competition entry, written in the requested “phantasy” style of old English viol consorts, showcases Vaughan Williams’ masterful handling of the Renaissance form.

Rather than simply reviving an archaic structure, he uses

it as permission to think beyond traditional movement boundaries. The opening viola solo—unaccompanied, almost conversational—immediately establishes an intimacy that persists even in the work’s more animated passages. The pentatonic violin melody that emerges in response becomes a kind of musical DNA, threading through the entire piece with the inevitability of a folk motif.

The *Scherzo* second movement, in a nimble 7/4 meter (subdivided into 4 + 3), creates a subtly off-balance energy with its buoyant rhythms and playful exchanges. This echoes English folk dance, where “proper” rhythm varies by village rather than following strict metropolitan norms.

The third movement, *Alla Sarabanda*, is an ethereal, slow dance scored for muted upper strings, revealing Vaughan Williams’ genius for creating soundscapes. With the cello silent, the texture becomes weightless and translucent—a delicate wash of sound that seems to exist in perpetual dusk, where colors bleed gently into one another.

The finale, *Burlesca*, is wittily irreverent, parodying the solemn tone of traditional phantasies. Even amid its humor, Vaughan Williams offers moments of introspection

through improvisatory violin cadenzas before concluding on a quiet, contemplative cadence.

Program note © Noémie Chemali

Ludwig van Beethoven
Fugue in D major for Two
Violins, Two Violas, and Cello,
Op. 137

- Baptized December 17, 1770, in Bonn (likely born December 16)
- Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna
- Composed in 1817

The string quintet medium itself deserves comment before we turn to this particular work. Its distinctive richness comes from its expanded middle and lower registers, thanks to its instrumentation of string quartet with either an added viola (sometimes called a “viola quintet”) or an added cello (a “cello quintet”).

Mozart—often regarded as the standard-bearer of the viola quintet, perhaps due in part to his fondness for playing the viola in chamber settings—composed six exemplary works that helped define the genre. This cast such a long shadow that few composers dared follow—Beethoven included, whose Op. 29 was his only full-scale viola quintet. He returned to the form sporadically, including in this late-period Fugue in D major, a concise gem completed in 1817.

This work reveals Beethoven’s evolving relationship with counterpoint in his final decade. While scholars have long debated

whether Op. 137 originated as preparatory work for the “Hammerklavier” Piano Sonata’s finale, such questions are less compelling than what the piece accomplishes on its own terms. This late fugue suggests Beethoven understood something crucial about the quintet’s sonic possibilities: that second viola doesn’t merely fill out the harmony but contributes equally to the work’s conversational space.

Published posthumously in 1827, this fugue exemplifies Beethoven’s lifelong engagement with counterpoint—not only as academic exercise, but as expressive art. By exploiting the overlapping registers and allowing all five voices to emerge and submerge with an almost liquid fluidity, he succeeds in reimagining this ancient form with fresh eloquence and flair.

Program note © Noémie Chemali

York Bowen
Two Duos in G major for
Two Violas

- Born February 22, 1884, in London
- Died November 23, 1961, in London
- Composed in 1920

York Bowen—a virtuoso pianist, composer, and violist—was one of the earliest champions of the viola as a solo and chamber instrument. He also remains one of English music’s great “what-ifs,” a composer of genuine gifts whose career was

derailed by changing fashions and perhaps his own reluctance to embrace modernist trends.

Although Bowen is remembered mainly for his close association with the English viola virtuoso Lionel Tertis—often seen as the source of his enthusiasm for writing for the viola—his own technical expertise as a longtime violist is often overlooked. The way he exploits the viola's middle register, where the instrument sings with particular warmth, suggests someone who had spent countless hours exploring these sonorities in practice rooms and concert halls.

His *Two Duos for Two Violas* are compact yet deeply expressive. The first duet opens with a lyrical exchange of bold, declamatory phrases and rhapsodic interjections. Both violas share melodic material equally, exploiting their shared timbral warmth through imitation and dialogue. The second duet offers a spirited contrast. Brisk and rhythmically animated, it features playful exchanges and tightly woven motivic interplay.

This work occupies a fascinating stylistic position: too chromatic for the English pastoral school, yet too tonal for the emerging modernists. It reminds us that musical history is not simply a succession of revolutionary breaks, but also includes quieter continuities sustained by artists who found meaning and beauty in the in-between.

Program note © Noémie Chemali

Brett Dean

Epitaphs for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello

- Born October 23, 1961, in Brisbane, Australia
- Composed in 2010

Epitaphs is among Australian composer Brett Dean's most personal works. Written in memory of five close friends and artistic collaborators who passed away between 2008 and 2009, it honors them in five distinct musical portraits. This premise risks sentimentality but achieves something far more complex: a meditation on how we preserve memory through sound.

Scored for string quintet—with a second viola to enhance the ensemble's sonorous depth—the work evokes the rich associations of the viola with grief and remembrance, a lineage that includes Reger, Bartók, and Shostakovich. Dean, himself a former Berlin Philharmonic violist, understands this tradition intimately while avoiding its more obvious trappings.

Only I will know honors Australian poet Dorothy Porter. Inspired by her poem "The Bluebird of Death," the movement begins with ghostly viola harmonics and unfolds with eerie clarity, with cello and first violin doubled at the fourth octave. The effect is echo-like, as if we're hearing memory itself reverberating across temporal distance.

The second epitaph, *Walk a little way with me*, memorializes Lyndal Holt, an Australian solicitor and academic. Using shifting pairs of instruments in rhythmic unison and *tremolo* textures, it evokes the act of mutual support and quiet companionship during illness.

Der Philosoph is the title of the epitaph for Jan Diesselhorst, a longtime cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic. Known to his community as a man of great intelligence and introspection, the movement begins with an inward-looking cello cadenza, eventually giving way to a chaotic ensemble climax and a quiet return to solitude, with the cello having the final word.

György meets the “Girl Photographer” commemorates the lives of two significant cultural figures—Hungarian-Austrian composer György Ligeti and American arts patron and photographer Betty Freeman—in a whimsical imagined meeting. It features dance-like rhythms, meter shifts, and lively exchanges between instrument pairs, an homage to two “irrepressible personalities.”

The final movement, *Between the spaces in the sky*, commemorates Opera Australia’s late conductor Richard Hickox, who had planned to conduct Dean’s opera *Bliss* before his untimely passing. The movement’s title, taken from the opera’s libretto by Amanda Holden, evokes ecstasy and transcendence. Its music oscillates between

agitation and awe, ultimately dissolving into a celestial texture of delicate accompaniment effects.

Epitaphs is a deeply personal eulogy that also serves as a meditation on loss. What prevents this work from becoming merely programmatic is Dean’s commitment to musical logic alongside literary reference. His vivid imagination, extended string techniques, and richly textural writing create a work that succeeds both as absolute music and as a living tribute to those he once held dear.

Program note © Noémie Chemali

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Quintet in C major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, K. 515

- Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg
- Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna
- Composed in 1787

The ebullient Quintet in C major was crafted during a phase of satisfying professional achievement for Mozart, between the creation of two operas that would be among his most enduringly beloved works. *The Marriage of Figaro* premiered in Vienna during the spring of 1786 and was well received with a successful run, but when the production opened in Prague, it ballooned into a runaway smash hit. Mozart was invited to visit the following January and was treated like a celebrity. In an effusive letter to a friend Mozart, wrote that in

the city, “Nothing is played, sung, or whistled but *Figaro*.” This led to a commission for another opera, *Don Giovanni*, to be premiered in Prague that October. Astonishingly, just a couple of months after the Mozart family returned to Vienna, he produced not only one, but two, string quintets in quick succession. The first, in C major, was completed on April 19, and the second, in G minor, on May 16.

In total, Mozart wrote six quintets for strings. All of them are “viola quintets,” configured for the same instrumentation of a string quartet with additional viola—two violins, two violas, and one cello. It is typically assumed that he followed the model of his close friend, Michael Haydn (brother of Joseph Haydn), who also preferred the sound of the additional viola, whereas their slightly older contemporary, Luigi Boccherini, wrote more than 100 quintets with additional cello (which was his own instrument). Both Mozart and Michael Haydn’s first efforts in the genre came as early as 1773, which for Mozart came directly after the conclusion of his extended tours as a child prodigy, when he began working as a court musician in his hometown, Salzburg. A 14-year gap buffers the time between the composition of his first and second quintets, whereas he wrote the others in a four-year period before his untimely death at the age of 35.

The Quintet in C major is a substantial work, reaching almost

orchestral proportions in its scope over the course of its four movements. From the onset, we are greeted with two of Mozart’s particular talents, his sense of fun and humor, and his seemingly endless capacity to generate a hummable tune. In the opening movement, Mozart toys with our sense of meter and pulse, and creates a puzzle for himself by deliberately elongating the phrases. What we expect to hear is a well-balanced pair of four-measure segments, but instead Mozart delivers slightly off-kilter five-measure groups that he corrects by abruptly inserting a full measure of resting silence. The remainder of the movement is a play on this set-up of even or uneven groupings, all while showcasing a parade of serene melodies. In the second movement, Mozart returns to the asymmetrical phrasing that dominated the first, but here it is highlighted even more since the minuet would normally be danceable. A graceful *Andante* follows, featuring tender exchanges in the style of vocal duets—unsurprising given the work’s genesis between operas. Concluding the work is a jovial rondo, in which we hear the main theme interpolated between contrasting sections, tinged only slightly by dramatic urgency or minor-key shadowing before its sunny ending.

Program note © Kathryn Bacasmot