

INON BARNATAN
PIANO
VIANO STRING QUARTET

LUCY WANG, violin
HAO ZHOU, violin

AIDEN KANE, viola
TATE ZAWADIUK, cello

TIME TRAVELER'S SUITE

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH Keyboard Concerto in D Minor, BWV 1052
(1685-1750) Allegro

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL Sonata for Two Violins in G Minor,
(1685-1759) Op. 2, no. 8
Andante

JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU *La Poule* from Suite in G Major, RCT 6
(1683-1764) *Entrée de Polymnie* from *Les Boréades*

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN *Quatrième Concert Royal*
(1668-1733) Forlane

MAURICE RAVEL *Le Tombeau de Couperin*
(1875-1937) Rigaudon

IGOR STRAVINSKY *Suite Italienne*
(1882-1971) Serenata

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57
(1906-1975) Scherzo

INTERMISSION

ERWIN SCHULHOFF Five Pieces for String Quartet
(1894-1942) Alla Valse Viennese. Allegro
Alla Serenata. Allegretto con moto
Alla Czeca. Molto Allegro
Alla Tango. Andante
Alla Tarantella. Prestissimo con fuoco

JOHANNES BRAHMS *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by*
(1833-1897) *Handel, Op. 24*



INON BARNATAN

piano

INON BARNATAN

Inon Barnatan is celebrated for his poetic sensibility, musical intelligence, and consummate artistry. He inaugurated his tenure as Music Director of California's La Jolla Music Society Summerfest in 2019.

Barnatan is a regular soloist with many of the world's foremost orchestras and conductors. He recently served for three seasons as the inaugural Artist-in-Association of the New York Philharmonic, and in 2020 with the Cincinnati Symphony recreated Beethoven's legendary 1808 Akademie concert.

The recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, Barnatan is also a sought-after recitalist and chamber musician. He recently made his solo recital debut at Carnegie's Zankel Hall and reunited with frequent cello partner Alisa Weilerstein. In May 2020 Inon Barnatan was presented in a virtual recital by Shriver Hall Concert Series, a concert streamed to audiences around the world. Passionate about contemporary music, he has commissioned and performed works by many living composers, premiering pieces by Thomas Adès, Sebastian Currier, Avner Dorman, Alan Fletcher, Joseph Hallman, Alasdair Nicolson, Andrew Norman, and Matthias Pintscher.

Following up on his Pentatone releases of Beethoven's complete piano concertos with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Alan Gilbert, Inon Barnatan's newest offering on the label is *Time Traveler's Suite*, a journey through time and space that redefines the Baroque suite by combining movements of Bach, Handel, Rameau, and Couperin with more recent works by Ravel, Barber, Adès, and Ligeti. He has also released a live recording of Messiaen's 90-minute masterpiece *Des canyons aux étoiles* ("From the Canyons to the Stars"), in which he played the exceptionally challenging solo piano part at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1979, Inon Barnatan started playing the piano at the age of three, when his parents discovered his perfect pitch, and made his orchestral debut at eleven.

His musical education connects him to some of the 20th century's most illustrious pianists and teachers: he studied with Professor Victor Derevianko, a student of the Russian master Heinrich Neuhaus, before moving to London in 1997 to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Christopher Elton and Maria Curcio, a student of the legendary Artur Schnabel. The late Leon Fleisher was also an influential teacher and mentor.

Inon Barnatan is exclusively represented by Opus 3 Artists. For more information, visit www.inonbarnatan.com.

VIANO STRING QUARTET

Praised for their “huge range of dynamics, massive sound and spontaneity” (*American Record Guide*), the Viano String Quartet is the First Prize Winner of the 2019 Banff International String Quartet Competition and the current Nina von Maltzahn String Quartet-in-Residence at the Curtis Institute of Music. Formed in 2015 at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles, the quartet has performed all over the world in venues such as Wigmore Hall, Konzerthaus Berlin, and Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

The 2022-2023 season brings the Viano String Quartet on extensive tours throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States, with recital debuts in New York City, Hannover, Zurich, Budapest, Cologne, Heidelberg, Eisenstadt, San Diego, Denver, Calgary, Newport, and Philadelphia, among other cities. The quartet will also return to Southern Methodist University, where they are in residence through the 22/23 season.

The Viano String Quartet has performed with world-class musicians such as pianists Emanuel Ax and Elisso Virsaladze, violist Paul Coletti, and violinist Noah Bendix-Balgley. Since the 2020 COVID lockdown, they have been actively presenting virtual concerts for organizations such as NYC's Schneider Series, the Friends of Chamber Music of Troy (NY), the Salt Lake Chamber Music Society, and the Banff International String Quartet Festival.



LUCY WANG

violin

HAO ZHOU

violin

AIDEN KANE

viola

TATE ZAWADIUK

cello

Committed to engaging with communities outside the concert hall, the Viano String Quartet has given presentations for school children and students of all ages through residencies in Bellingham, Washington (the “Play it Forward” residency, a collaboration between the Bellingham Festival of Music and the Whatcom Symphony to reach school children in the northern Washington State area), Northern Michigan University, and the Santa Monica Conservatory. In 2019 they gave multiple performances of “Over the Top,” a Musical Encounter Interactive presentation they scripted, developed, and performed at the Colburn School for inner city school children.

The name “Viano” was created to describe the four individual instruments in a string quartet interacting as one. Each of the four instruments begins with the letter “v,” (remember that the cello is also known as the violoncello) and like a piano, all four string instruments together play both harmony and melody, creating a unified instrument called the “Viano.”

NOTES

VIANO STRING QUARTET WITH INON BARNATAN, PIANO *TIME TRAVELER'S SUITE*

This recital program was born out of a mild obsession with making connections. I have always been fascinated by the conversation that composers have with one another across centuries, how they respect and build on the music they love and admire and find a way to make it their own. *The Time Traveler's Suite* is an attempt to take a journey through that continuous musical legacy.

Composers like Bach, Handel, Rameau, and Couperin took humble dance movements and made them into exquisite pieces of music that were too engrossing and complex to dance to. Ravel studied and rewrote Couperin's music and used it, among other influences, as a departure point for his own unique language and sound. Stravinsky and Shostakovich used Baroque forms and idioms to channel their own 20th-century style. Each composer uses the past as a way to move forward.

For my suite I used the form of the Baroque dance suite, a collection of dances that became a standardized way to write music in the 17th and 18th centuries, and one that composers kept on coming back to throughout the centuries. Each movement of the suite references a different composer, spanning over 300 years, with the movement of the Bach concerto acting as the overture and each subsequent piece standing in for the different dances, until we get to the sardonic and virtuosic Shostakovich. The relationship of keys and moods, and the way the composers were influenced by one another, keeps the “suite,” at least to my mind, a unified whole — a musical journey that highlights both the similarities and the innovations of each composer.

The second half of the program features Brahms and Erwin Schulhoff, a brilliant composer whose work and fame were cut short by the Second World War. Each composer comes to terms with the Baroque suite in his unique way.

I hope you enjoy this time traveling adventure.

— *Inon Barnatan*

Few of Bach’s instrumental concerti survive in their original form. Most of his 14 keyboard concerti are arrangements of his violin concerti. The D minor concerto is a case where scholars debate whether the original version was for keyboard and Bach later arranged it for violin and orchestra, or vice versa. In its keyboard version, it has become one of the best known of Bach’s concerti.

JOHANN
SEBASTIAN
BACH: KEYBOARD
CONCERTO IN
D MINOR, BWV
1052, ALLEGRO

He obviously thought highly of this piece, for he recycled it elsewhere in his compositions. The first and second movements appear, in adapted form, as both the opening *sinfonia* (instrumental overture) and chorus of his Cantata No. 146, “*Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal*.” The first movement material surfaces again in Cantata No. 188, “*Ich habe meine Zuversicht*,” arranged for organ and orchestra. The richness of Bach’s material permits success in all three guises.

Bach's keyboard writing is virtuosic throughout the D minor concerto, providing a particularly demanding part for the right hand, with relatively simple accompaniment. The style is more akin to organ or harpsichord toccata writing, and less contrapuntal than much of Bach's music.

GEORGE FRIDERIC
HANDEL: SONATA
FOR TWO VIOLINS
IN G MINOR, OP.2
NO. 8, ANDANTE

In our culture, Handel is best known for *Messiah*, other sacred oratorios, and his operas. He also composed an astonishing amount of instrumental music: concerti grossi, organ and harpsichord works, and chamber music. The Sonata in G minor is a trio sonata, a Baroque genre that involved two melodic instruments and *basso continuo*, which in the 18th century would have meant harpsichord or organ, plus a reinforcing bass instrument such as the cello. (Paradoxically, that meant four players for a "trio" sonata!) Trio sonatas customarily comprised four movements arranged in a slow-fast-slow-fast pattern. We hear the first movement *Andante* of this G minor sonata in an arrangement for two violins and piano. The modern piano has the sonic "heft" to cover the continuo role.

Although this Sonata is listed in the Handel works catalogue (HWV or *Handel Werke Verzeichnis*), scholars have questioned its authenticity. It was published in 1730 by Jean Roger in Amsterdam, and subsequently in 1733 by Handel's English publisher John Walsh. However, it was probably composed earlier. Regardless of its origins, the music is well crafted and pleasing to the ear.

JEAN-PHILIPPE
RAMEAU: LA POULE
FROM SUITE IN G
MAJOR, RCT 6

France's greatest 18th-century composer and music theorist, Jean-Philippe Rameau, was also a brilliant keyboard virtuoso. His harpsichord compositions are in the top tier of the French *claveciniste* (or harpsichordist) school. He spent much of his early career as organist in regional churches, but settled in Paris in 1723, eventually becoming composer of the King's chamber music.

Most of Rameau's harpsichord pieces appeared in three groups: the youthful *Premier Livre de Pièces de Clavecin* (1706); *Pièces de Clavecin* (1724), which reveals a more personal and adventuresome Rameau; and *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin* (1726-27). The third group, which includes the Suite in G Major, is his crowning glory, and a landmark in solo keyboard literature.

The G Major Suite's eight movements are not dances, but illustrative character pieces. The fourth of them, *La Poule*, suggests the rude cacophony of the barnyard, bringing to life the scurry and cackle of a mother hen with a strong sense of her domain. The piece remained popular throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and Respighi arranged *La Poule* for orchestra in *Gli Uccelli* (The Birds, 1927).

* * *

Relatively late in life – at age fifty – Rameau began to write for the stage and embarked on a successful second career as an opera composer. His most substantial operas are called *tragédies en musique*. Such works were consistent in their five-act structure and serious aspect. Subject matter favored ancient Greek mythology, introducing elements of magic and supernatural powers that encouraged elaborate stage machinery and special effects.

ENTRÉE DE POLYMNIE FROM LES BORÉADES

Les Boréades was Rameau's last *tragédie en musique*. Rehearsals took place in Paris and at Versailles in April 1763, and a performance was apparently planned, but none is documented. The title means "The Descendants of Boréas" (the god of the North Wind). Other supernatural figures play a part in the plot. It takes place in an ancient kingdom, with the lovers Alphise and Abaris at the center of a battle among the gods. *Entrée de Polymni* (The Entrance of Polyhymnia) takes place in Act Four. Abaris has sought Apollo's assistance to lead him to his beloved, who has been captured. In response to Abaris's plea, Polyhymnia (the muse of sacred poetry and dance) descends from the heavens with her sister muses and other divine creatures. The music, marked *Adagio*, is elegant and expressive: suitable for the dignified appearance of the muse-goddess who, as *deus ex machina*, will effect a happy ending.

FRANÇOIS
COUPERIN:
FORLANE FROM
QUATRIÈME
CONCERT ROYAL

François Couperin, organist, harpsichordist, composer, and theorist, was the most important musician in France in the early 18th century. His treatise *L'art de toucher le clavecin* (*The Art of Harpsichord Playing*, Paris, 1716) is one of the finest essays on Baroque performance practice. He was the greatest in a long line of musicians named Couperin; in this respect his family is a direct analogue to the German Bachs. Couperin joined the court of Louis XIV as organist in 1693. By the following year, he was teaching harpsichord to the Dauphin, grandson of Louis XIV, and the Dauphin's wife, the Duchess of Burgundy. He remained active at the French court until 1730, well into the reign of Louis XV.

Couperin composed four *Concerts Royaux* in 1714-15 for the court of the aging Louis XIV. When he published the music in 1722, he wrote in the preface, "I composed them for the small chamber concerts for which Louis XIV had me play almost every Sunday of the year." Each *Concert Royal* is a suite of dances, with instrumentation unspecified to allow for performance by solo harpsichord or chamber ensemble. The Forlane – the only such dance that Couperin composed – is the final movement of Couperin's *Concert Royal* No. 4. The dance originated in Italy's northern Friulia region, and became popular in the French court. Customarily, *forlanes* were lively dances in compound meter (6/8 or 6/4) with dotted rhythms. Couperin's music delivers rhythmic punch and folk-like merriment, fusing the elegance of Louis's court with the spirit of popular music.

MAURICE RAVEL:
RIGAUDON FROM
LE TOMBEAU DE
COUPERIN

Maurice Ravel was educated to respect and love France's rich musical past. His *Le Tombeau de Couperin* is a group of dances and other musical forms that reached their apogee in the compositions of his 18th-century predecessors. The piece originally appeared in 1918 as a six-movement suite for solo piano. The following year, Ravel orchestrated four of its movements.

The word *tombeau*, as its spelling suggests, means tomb or grave. However, the French term connotes "homage" or

“tribute” as well. Ravel was paying his respects not only to Couperin, but also to French Baroque heritage. His neoclassical choices of older dance forms, such as the instrumental suite, are obvious bows to the earlier era.

The *rigaudon* is an ancient Provençal dance that was beloved by Ravel, and popular in the 18th century. Ravel’s musical language is contemporary. Although he adheres to the formal demands of the older dance, his sprightly music beams with high spirits and mischief.

This suite is a direct descendant of Stravinsky’s 1919 ballet *Pulcinella*. Stravinsky’s ballet had been an immediate success from its premiere. By arranging some excerpts for chamber orchestra, Stravinsky capitalized on its popularity.

IGOR STRAVINSKY:
SERENATA FROM
SUITE ITALIENNE

In 1932, Stravinsky arranged *Pulcinella* for violin and piano in collaboration with the violinist Samuel Dushkin. The two men were planning a European recital tour, in which Stravinsky wished to feature his own music. The *Pulcinella* suite was retitled *Suite Italienne* and condensed to five movements. One year later, Stravinsky arranged it for cello and piano with the input of Russian cello virtuoso Gregor Piatigorsky. The *Serenata* is a sicilienne, a lilting dance of Italian – and specifically Sicilian – origin that generally evokes a pastoral mood. This one is plaintive and melancholy, ideally suited to the cello’s warm timbre.

Shostakovich composed the Piano Quintet during the summer of 1940, shortly before the Nazi invasion forced the Soviet Union into the Second World War. The composer played the premiere in Moscow on November 23, 1940 with members of the Beethoven Quartet. (Its members were lifelong friends; they also premiered 13 of Shostakovich’s 15 string quartets.) Critical and popular reaction to the new piece was electric. The quintet was immediately hailed as a masterpiece. It earned Shostakovich the Stalin Prize of 100,000 roubles. At the time, this was the largest sum of money ever awarded for a piece of music.

DMITRI
SHOSTAKOVICH:
SCHERZO FROM
THE PIANO
QUINTET IN G
MINOR, OP. 57

The quintet has five movements, but it may also be perceived in three large sections, because the first two and

last two movements are played without pause. These outer sections make a centerpiece of the middle scherzo, creating a sort of arch form of the complete work.

The scherzo, marked *Allegretto*, is rambunctious, assertive music. Shostakovich's acerbic wit and sardonic irony jar the senses. The piano delivers a sassy theme, while the string quartet barks aggressive chordal ripostes. The central section introduces a rustic dance for the violin, later echoed by the piano in high octaves. Flirting with both waltz and the Austrian folk *Ländler* forms, Shostakovich's Scherzo revels in its rough edges. It closes with Beethovenian insistence.

ERWIN
SCHULHOFF:
FIVE PIECES
FOR STRING
QUARTET

Czech-born Erwin Schulhoff was a protégé of Dvořák and a student of Reger and Debussy. He was a musician of remarkable versatility and stature in his day. He earned prizes in both piano and composition as a student in Leipzig and Cologne, and went on to a successful career as a jazz performer. Between 1918 and 1938, his music was widely performed in Europe. Although the work we hear this evening is hardly revolutionary, Schulhoff allied himself with a number of *avant-garde* movements, including Dadaism and quarter-tone music. Schulhoff was one of the first to address the challenges of music “between” the pitches of the western piano, as developed by his contemporary Aloïs Hába. Schulhoff did not limit his radical causes to musical ones. He became a communist and a naturalized Soviet citizen. Schulhoff was imprisoned by the Nazis when they invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. His Jewish heritage and communist affiliation led to his incarceration, and he died in the German concentration camp at Wülzburg, in Bavaria.

Schulhoff's 1923 *Fünf Stücke* is essentially a neo-baroque dance suite for quartet. As the movement titles indicate, each of these miniatures adopts a different musical

style. Schulhoff was no mere mimic, however, and the nationalities and dances of each movement are filtered through his personal compositional lens. The work was introduced in Salzburg at the International Society for New Music on August 8, 1924.

In the original 1929 edition of *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, Erich Steinhard wrote of Schulhoff: "The distinguishing qualities of his style are humour, audacity, transparency, brilliance and grace." Steinhard also noted, rather bizarrely, that "English dancing and English cheerfulness also appeal to [Schulhoff]." Seven decades later, the assessment of his music has altered, not only because of the passage of time, but also because of intense interest in Jewish composers who lost their lives in the Holocaust. Josef Bek's article in *The New Grove II* (2001) identifies a stylistic shift beginning in the mid-1920s to a "synthesis of avant-garde aggression and the continuing European mainstream tradition." Czech music strongly influenced Schulhoff's compositions. These Five Pieces are strongly flavored with the rhythms and inflections of Czech speech and dance, despite the more international sweep implied by waltz, tango, and tarantella. In that respect, they show a strong kinship with the music of Leoš Janáček, whose work Schulhoff had studied in depth.

Brahms composed variations throughout his career, including several sets for solo piano. The crowning achievement of them all is the Handel Variations, whose colossal scale and splendid invention transcend and ennoble their modest Baroque origins.

Brahms drew his theme from Handel's *Leçons*, a collection of harpsichord suites originally published in London in 1733. The eight-bar theme is the air from the *Petite Suite* in B-flat. Handel's original included five simple variations. Brahms's treatment is vastly more extensive and complex, consisting of 24 variations and a splendid concluding fugue. Throughout the variations, he maintains the strict formal outlines of the original theme, and his first variation pays tribute to Handel. From the second variation on,

JOHANNES
BRAHMS:
VARIATIONS AND
FUGUE ON A
THEME BY HANDEL,
OP. 24

however, the music is pure Brahms, with voyages through heavy chromaticism, occasional forays into the parallel and relative minor keys, one in Hungarian style, another rather like a *siciliana*. The level of invention is dizzying.

The Handel Variations require enormous musical intelligence and massive strength from the pianist. Like the early piano sonatas, they date from a time in the composer's life when he was still a virtuoso pianist himself. This work is among the most fiendishly difficult in the entire piano literature. It is also a masterpiece of compositional and fugal technique. The closing fugue pulls out all the contrapuntal stops, employing inversion and augmentation of the fugue subject, then a combination of the two, in a monumental ascent to the musical climax of the entire work. The effect is electrifying. The *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* are not only Brahms's finest essay into the form; they also take their place with pride alongside Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* as a cornerstone of the virtuoso keyboard repertoire.

Notes by Laurie Shulman ©2022



**BENJAMIN
GROSVENOR**
PIANO

**WED, MAR 16, 2022
7:30 PM**

We are thrilled to welcome back British pianist Benjamin Grosvenor after his performance was postponed in March 2020. Grosvenor is an internationally renowned artist, recognized for his electrifying performances, distinctive sound, and insightful interpretations.

Program

César Franck: Prélude, Chorale et Fugue, M.21
Robert Schumann: Kreisleriana, Op. 16
Isaac Albéniz: *Iberia*, Book 1
Maurice Ravel: *Jeux d'eau* and *La Valse*

Tickets are \$40 each, \$15 for ages 30 and under,
and \$18 for livestream. www.newmantix.com/fcm.

MUSIC IN THE GALLERIES

SUN, MAR 13, 1:00 & 2:00 PM

Clyfford Still Museum • 1250 Bannock Street, Denver

Complementing the Museum's exhibit *Clyfford Still, Art, and the Young Mind*, the March Music in the Galleries will feature young musicians from El Sistema Colorado, an organization that empowers students from some of Denver's lowest income communities by offering immersive music training and vital life skills.



Each hour will showcase a professional string duo (El Sistema teaching artists) followed by an upper-level El Sistema string quartet. Join us in celebrating the joy that music brings to these young leaders and musicians.



1:00 PM

Solazur, featuring Katie Burns, cello, and Russ Callison, guitar, is a Denver-based duo that formed to offer intimate performances of cello and guitar music. The duo performs the diverse canon of existing music for the ensemble as well as new compositions, supporting and advocating for a thriving culture for living composers.

Student Ensemble: Mycelium Quartet

2:00 PM

Duo Issen features violinists Joy Yamaguchi and Julia Taylor, both doctoral students at the University of Colorado Boulder studying with Károly Schranz and Charles Wetherbee. The duo formed in 2018 with the mission to introduce audiences to works for duo violin by underrepresented composers in addition to traditional repertoire.

Student Ensemble: Quartet Maravilla



Joy Yamaguchi



Julia Taylor



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Nancy Livingston, *in memory of*
Dr. Louis & Nellie Mae Duman
Evi & Evan Makovsky
Janet & Drew Mallory
Philippa Marrack
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Mary Pritchett, *in memory of*
Peyton Bucy
Annastasia Psitos
Richard Replin & Elissa Stein, *in*
memory of Robert Graham
Jill & Lee Richman
William & Merry Sample
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FCM was pleased to support the Denver Citywide Honors String Orchestra program by sponsoring a performance by the Ivalas Quartet, held in the Newman Center's Gates Hall on February 3, 2022.



UPCOMING CONCERTS

Benjamin Grosvenor, piano
Wed, Mar 16, 2022

Quatuor Ébène
Wed, Apr 6, 2022

Daniil Trifonov, piano
Thu, May 5, 2022

*All concerts begin at 7:30 pm at Gates
Concert Hall, 2344 E. Iliff Avenue,
Denver*

MUSIC IN THE GALLERIES

Clyfford Still Museum
1250 Bannock Street, Denver
El Sistema Colorado
Sun, Mar 13, 2022
1:00 & 2:00 PM

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