

23/24



Curtis on Tour String Sextet

Sunday, March 3, 2024 • 2:00 pm
Jackson Hall, UC Davis

THE SEASON IS PRESENTED BY
The Nancy and Hank Fisher Family Fund

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We should take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people.

Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.

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In Memory of Rodney Boon | 1967 - 2024

Rodney Boon began working for the Mondavi Center in 2011 with a background as a musician, touring sound engineer and tour manager working with bands in the 1990s and early 2000s. He was promoted to Head Audio Engineer in 2013. Over the years, he worked tirelessly to improve and upgrade the sound and sound control systems in both Jackson Hall and the Vanderhoef Studio Theatre, especially the Meyer Leopard speaker arrays that are hanging in Jackson Hall and strived to make our theatre spaces sound perfect for our patrons. In fact, whenever you hear the lobby chimes, know that he personally created and recorded them!

Rod was able to pass on his knowledge of touring and live sound mixing to our current Mondavi Center team and leaves behind a legacy of excellence and ensuring a superb patron experience for all who come to the Mondavi Center. He was also a great friend and mentor to all of us on the production team.

Rod's impact to the Center cannot be overstated and his presence is felt every time you hear music in our venues. Our thoughts are with his wife, Melissa, and Rod will be greatly missed by those who knew him.

Curtis on Tour

String Sextet

The Nina von Maltzahn Global Touring Initiative of the Curtis Institute of Music

Benjamin Beilman, violin
Na Hyun Della Kyun, violin
Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola
Emad Zolfaghari, viola
Oliver Herbert, cello
Francis Carr, cello

PROGRAM

String Sextet from *Capriccio*, Op. 85 (1942)

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Piano Sonata in B Minor, Op. 1 (1909)

Alban Berg (1885-1935)
Transcribed by Heime Müller (b.1970)

***Illuminating Arches* (2024)**

Alyssa Weinberg
(b. 1988)

- INTERMISSION -

String Sextet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 36 (1864-1865)

I. *Allegro non troppo*
II. *Scherzo. Allegro non troppo – Presto giocoso*
III. *Poco Adagio*
IV. *Poco Allegro*

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

PROGRAM NOTES

String Sextet from *Capriccio*, Op. 85 (1942)

RICHARD STRAUSS

Born in Munich, Germany, June 11, 1864

Died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany,
September 8, 1949

Richard Strauss's father was a musician who ensured that his son had lessons in composition from a young age. Strauss learned the art of conducting from Hans von Bülow, an apprenticeship that launched him into a career directing orchestras and opera productions. As a young man, he composed small-scale works, instrumental solos, art songs and chamber music. His first genuinely significant compositions were the tone poems he wrote in the 1880s and 1890s, including *Don Juan* (1888), *Tod und Verklärung* (1889), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896) and *Don Quixote* (1897). Although he was a respected opera director, his first operatic composition failed. But in 1905, he found success with the scandalous *Salome*, which started his progression as an opera composer whose noteworthy works include *Elektra* (1909), *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912). He had an ambiguous relationship with the Nazi party. Strauss was appointed the head of the *Reichsmusikkammer* but was later removed for working with a Jewish writer, Stefan Zweig, on the opera *Die schweigsame Frau* (1935).

Capriccio was Strauss's last opera, and it focuses on a philosophical question: which is more important artistically, poetry or music? This debate takes the form of a series of discussions in the salon of the Countess Madeline, who must choose between her two lovers, the poet Olivier and the composer Flamand. The string sextet, presented as a work by Flamand, is featured as the opera's overture. The sextet premiered separately from the rest of the opera at the home of the Governor of Vienna. By pandering to Nazi authorities, Strauss was able to keep his Jewish daughter-in-law and grandchildren out of a concentration camp. The highly expressive, luscious string writing hearkens back to the late-romantic style of Strauss's youth. The piece gives audiences drama and intimacy with subtly balanced harmonies across the six instruments.

Piano Sonata in B Minor, Op. 1 (1909)

**ALBAN BERG, TRANSCRIBED BY HEIME
MÜLLER (B. 1970)**

Born in Vienna, Austria, February 9, 1885

Died in Vienna, Austria, December 24, 1935

Alban Berg is the most approachable of the composers of the second Viennese School, which consists of Arnold Schoenberg and his pupils, Anton Webern and Berg. This group of composers revolutionized conceptions of tonality, rejecting traditional harmony in favor of Schoenberg's 12-tone system, which is highly chromatic and dissonant. Berg came of age in Vienna when the city was at the center of everything new in the arts. His early interests centered more on literature than music. Indeed, when he began as Schoenberg's student in 1904, he had little musical training outside of some piano lessons from his sister's governess. During his first few years of study, Schoenberg assigned him harmony, counterpoint and music theory lessons; it was only in 1907 that he was permitted to work on original compositions. He progressed rapidly in his studies, and many aspects of his mature compositions are present in sketches from his student years. The piano sonata was in effect a graduation piece representing Berg's first independent work.

Originally, Berg had planned to write a three-movement sonata. However, after completing one movement he struggled to find the inspiration to write more. Turning to his teacher with this dilemma, Schoenberg suggested that Berg had said all there was to say, and Berg decided to let the single movement stand alone. While nominally in the key of B minor, Berg wanders tonally, fluctuating between stability and instability. Müller's transcription for string sextet brings out the lyrical qualities of the work while retaining its dark and intense flavor.

***Illuminating Arches* (2024)**

ALYSSA WEINBERG

Born 1988

Alyssa Weinberg began composing somewhat by chance. Weinberg was placed into a composition class at a summer camp, an experience that proved transformative. She continued pursuing composition, first at Vanderbilt University before returning to the Manhattan School of Music for her master's degree; she followed with time at the Curtis Institute of Music before earning a Ph.D. at Princeton University. Weinberg has written music for some of the nation's leading ensembles, including Eighth Blackbird, So Percussion, Aizuri Quartet, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra and the San Diego Symphony. She recently collaborated with poet J. Mae Barizo on a monodrama *ISOLA*, which considers time, mental health and isolation. Weinberg was awarded the 2022 Opera America Discovery Grant to support the development of a new opera with collaborator Barizo. In addition to her work as a composer, she works with young composers in the Juilliard Pre-college program, Mannes School of Music and Peabody Conservatory.

Weinberg's music foregrounds gesture and shape to create emotionally evocative music that subverts expectations. Her compositions are timbrally rich, full of deep color and varied texture. *Illuminating Arches* was commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music for Curtis on Tour.

String Sextet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 36 (1864-1865)

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Scherzo. Allegro non troppo – Presto giocoso

III. Poco Adagio

IV. Poco Allegro

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born in Hamburg, Germany, May 7, 1833

Died in Vienna, Austria, April 3, 1897

Brahms greatly respected the composers who came before him, and part of his genius was his ability to balance the traditions of the past with innovative new ideas. Achieving this balance was difficult, and some of his contemporaries found him old-fashioned compared to artists such as Wagner and Liszt. Brahms's awareness of the works of the great masters, combined with his self-critical tendencies, was paralyzing. As a young composer, Brahms avoided writing in the genres where earlier artists had created masterpieces. As a result, he didn't complete any symphonies or string quartets until he was in his forties. The string sextet, however, proved less intimidating.

Brahms's first string sextet (1859-1860) represents his early mature period. His second Sextet is a far weightier composition in both length and innovation. The viola begins the first movement with a rocking theme, which is occasionally taken up by the other instruments as the first violin sings out over the top. The second theme of this movement inscribes the name of Brahms's former love interest, and a melancholy feeling of lovesickness lends the melody a bittersweet sentiment. Brahms places the *Scherzo* in the second, instead of the customary third movement, and flavors it with the folk music of Eastern Europe while also featuring the most complex part writing of the sextet. A beautifully expressive variation set slowly explores the different transformations of the theme, moving from dark to light in the third movement. The last movement is faster – but the melody is still broad and expansive with a full sound.

— ELIZABETH CAMPBELL was recently awarded a Ph.D. in musicology from University of California, Davis. She graduated from Indiana University in 2017 with master's degrees in musicology and library science after completing a bachelor's degree in music at Luther College in 2014. Her research interests include music in early twentieth-century America and Renaissance vocal polyphony. Her dissertation work was on Lillian Evanti (1890–1967), an African American opera singer who performed in Europe, the United States, and Latin America.

ABOUT CURTIS

The Curtis Institute of Music educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. Since 1924, Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty of world-class musicians and educators. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies and they enter the profession free from educational debt.

Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings each year in addition to collaborative projects within the community to provide arts access and education. This real-world training empowers these extraordinary young artists to become inspiring performers, composers, conductors, creators, and musical leaders, making a profound impact on music onstage and in their communities.

To learn more, visit **Curtis.edu**.



ABOUT CURTIS ON TOUR

Curtis on Tour is the Nina von Maltzahn global touring initiative of the Curtis Institute of Music. Embracing the school’s “learn by doing” philosophy, ensembles are infused with the energy and passion of extraordinary emerging artists performing alongside celebrated alumni and faculty. In addition to performances, musicians engage with local communities through educational and community engagement activities. For 15 years, Curtis on Tour has maintained a presence at top international concert halls, performing more than 450 concerts in over 120 cities, from New York to Berlin and Hong Kong to Santiago.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



BENJAMIN BEILMAN, VIOLIN

Benjamin Beilman has won international praise both for his passionate performances and deep rich tone which *The Washington Post* called “mightily impressive.” *The New York Times* has praised his “handsome technique, burnished sound, and quiet confidence,” and the *Strad* described his playing

as “pure poetry.” The *Boston Globe* remarked that Mr. Beilman’s “playing already has its own sure balance of technical command, intensity, and interpretive finesse.”

Highlights of Mr. Beilman’s 2021–22 season include performances of the Samuel Taylor Coleridge Violin Concerto with the Indianapolis, Toledo and Charlotte Symphonies, as well as the premiere of a new Violin Concerto by Chris Rogerson with the Kansas City Symphony and Gemma New. In Europe, highlights include performances with the Swedish Radio Symphony and Elim Chan, the Antwerp Symphony and Krzysztof Urbanski, the Toulouse Symphony and Tugan Sokhiev, and the Trondheim Symphony and Han-Na Chan. He will also return to the BBC Scottish Symphony, and the Tonkünstler Orchestra, with whom he has recorded a concerto by Thomas Larcher.

Highlights in recent seasons include debuts with the Budapest Festival Orchestra; return engagements with the Philadelphia Orchestra, both at home, and at Carnegie Hall; and his return to the London Chamber Orchestra to play-direct. In early 2018 he premiered a new work dedicated to the political activist Angela Davis written by Frederic Rzewski and commissioned by Music Accord which he has performed extensively across the U.S.

Mr. Beilman studied at the Music Institute of Chicago, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Kronberg Academy, and has received many prestigious accolades including a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a London Music Masters Award. He has an exclusive recording contract with Warner Classics and released his first disc *Spectrum* for the label in 2016. Mr. Beilman plays the “Engleman” Stradivarius from 1709 generously on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.

Mr. Beilman joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in 2022.



NA HYUN DELLA KYUN, VIOLIN

Na Hyun Della Kyun, from Seoul, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2022 and studies violin with Shmuel Ashkenasi and Benjamin Beilman. All students at Curtis receive merit-based, full-tuition scholarships, and Ms. Kyun is the Dorothy Richard Starling Foundation Fellow.

Ms. Kyun has received numerous awards, including second place in the Sungjung Competition, winner of Group B at the 2020 Singapore Violin Festival Online Competition, first place in the Seoul Youth Chamber Music Competition, and second place in the Ewha and Kyunghyang Music Competition. She participated in the 2014 Peabody Preparatory String Ensemble winner's concert and performed in the 2013 Asian-American Music Society International String Competition winner's concert at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Kyun has performed as a soloist with the Mostly Philharmonic Orchestra and was featured in the 2021 House Concert July Festival and the 2019 Kumho Prodigy Concert. She has been a member of the Korea National Institute for the Gifted in Arts Ensemble, the Seoul Arts High School Ensemble, the Korea National Institute for the Gifted in Arts Symphony Orchestra, and the Yewon School Orchestra and its chamber ensemble.

Ms. Kyun has attended Music Academy of the West in 2023, the Gifu International Summer Camp, the MusicAlp Festival in France, the Belgium International Academy of Arts Summer Festival, and recently participated in a master class with Glenn Dicterow. She studied with Matthew Horwitz-Lee at Peabody Preparatory and Sung-Ju Lee at the Korean National Institute for the Gifted Arts. When Ms. Kyun is not performing, she is an avid reader and enjoys playing sports.



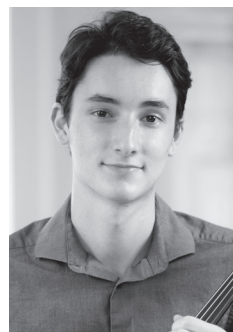
MILENA PAJARO-VAN DE STADT, VIOLA

Violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, the founding violist of the Dover Quartet, performed with the Grammy-nominated string quartet until 2022. She has appeared as a soloist with the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Jacksonville Symphony and the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra; has performed

in recitals and chamber music concerts throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia including an acclaimed 2011 debut recital at London's Wigmore Hall; and has served on the juries of the Sphinx Competition and the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

With the Dover Quartet she won first prize and every special award at the Banff International String Quartet Competition in 2013, and the gold medal and grand prize in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition in 2010. Her numerous awards also include first prize at the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition, and top prizes at the Tokyo International Viola Competition and the Sphinx Competition.

A violin student of Sergiu Schwartz and Melissa Pierson-Barrett for several years, she began studying viola with Michael Klotz at the Bowdoin International Music Festival in 2005. Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Roberto Díaz, Michael Tree, Misha Amory and Joseph de Pasquale. She received a master's degree in string quartet performance from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where she studied with James Dunham as a member of the Dover Quartet.



EMAD ZOLFAGHARI, VIOLA

Emad Zolfaghari, from Oakville, Ontario, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2021 and studies viola with Hsin-Yun Huang and Misha Amory. All students at Curtis receive merit-based, full-tuition scholarships, and Mr. Zolfaghari is the Elaine W. Camarda and A. Morris Williams Jr. Fellow.

Mr. Zolfaghari has received many prestigious awards, including first prize at the 2023 Irving M. Klein International String Competition, the François Schubert Grand Prize at the 2022 OMNI Music Competition, second prize at the 2022 Johansen International String Competition, and in 2023 was the first violist to receive first prize at the International Morningside Music Bridge Competition. His other accolades include second prize at the 2021 Ronald Sachs International Music Competition, fourth prize and the Paul J. Bourret Memorial Award for Best Performance of the Test Piece at the 2021 Shean Strings Competition and first prize at the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra Competition.

Mr. Zolfaghari has appeared as a soloist with several major symphony orchestras, including l'Orchestre Métropolitain at the Maison Symphonique in Montréal under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in Roy Thomson Hall, the National Philharmonic in Strathmore Hall, the Oakville Chamber Orchestra and the National Metropolitan Philharmonic.

Mr. Zolfaghari was member of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, often performing as principal viola, and a member of the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists where he studied with Theresa Rudolph, assistant principal viola of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In May

2023, Mr. Zolfaghari served as principal viola for the Curtis Symphony Orchestra during its West Coast Tour. He has attended summer festivals including the Perlman Music Program, Morningside Music Bridge, Center Stage Strings and Music from Angel Fire. He currently plays a 1785 Lorenzo Storioni viola on generous loan from Reuning & Sons Violins, Brookline.



OLIVER HERBERT, CELLO

Cellist Oliver Herbert is quickly building a reputation as an artist with a distinct voice and individual style, admired by audiences for his communicative and connective performances. The recipient of a 2021 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Oliver has been praised by San Francisco Classical Voice for his “expansive tone, virtuosity, and musical

instincts.” Recent appearances include debuts with world renowned ensembles including the San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic and Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony.

As a chamber musician, Oliver is frequently invited to participate in top music festivals including Caramoor, ChamberFest Cleveland, Krzyżowa Music, La Jolla Summerfest, Marlboro Music, Music in the Vineyards, Nevada Chamber Music Festival, Ravinia and Verbier. In 2021, Oliver’s trio ensemble with pianist Eric Lu and violinist Alexi Kenney made their debut at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. In addition, Oliver frequently collaborates with pianist Xiaohui Yang as a recital duo. Together they have performed on tours in both the United States and Greece, and in 2020 released a debut recording featuring the music of Fauré and Janáček. Oliver’s additional recording highlights include a release of Haydn’s D Major Cello Concerto with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony.

Oliver’s awards include a top prize and special prize in the XI Lutoslawski International Cello Competition, first prize and Pablo Casals prize in the 2015 Irving M. Klein International String Competition, and the Prix Jean-Nicolas Firmenich at the 2017 Verbier Festival. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and the Colburn School, Oliver studied cello performance with Carter Brey, Peter Wiley and Clive Greensmith. He currently plays on a 1769 Guadagnini cello that belonged to the great Italian cellist Antonio Janigro, on generous loan from the Janigro family.



FRANCIS CARR, CELLO

English cellist Frankie Carr was born into a family of string players. Following studies at the Yehudi Menuhin School, he performed at festivals across Europe and North America, including Kneisel Hall, Music from Angel Fire, Four Seasons Chamber Music, Loon Lake Live, Stichting Kamermusiek Amsterdam,

YPF Amsterdam, the Menuhin Festival Gstaad and Greenwood.

Mr. Carr’s principal teachers include Colin Carr, Melissa Phelps, Thomas Carroll, Darrett Adkins, Carter Brey and Peter Wiley. He has also worked with Johannes Goritsky, Joel Krosnick, and members of the Chiara, Emerson and Juilliard string quartets. Mr. Carr is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music (Cello ’21 and Community Artist Fellow ’23) and from 2023 to 2025 he will participate in Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect Fellowship program. In his free time, he enjoys long walks and bird watching.

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Annual donations to the Mondavi Center directly support our operating budget and are an essential source of revenue. Please join us in thanking our loyal donors whose philanthropic support ensures our future ability to bring great artists and speakers to our region and to provide nationally recognized arts education programs for students and teachers.

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"The Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts represents an important lifestyle that defines the Davis Community. I am so impressed with the talented and versatile programs they bring to our community from all over the world that create truly exciting performances.

I am so grateful to give back through 'The Nancy and Hank Fisher Family Fund.' Please join me in attending the many programs of your choice and making your own financial gift supporting our treasured performing arts center. Thank you."

- Nancy Fisher

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