



Sunday, February 9, 2025, 3pm  
Hertz Hall

**Wu Han, *piano***  
**Arnaud Sussmann, *violin***  
**David Finckel, *cello***

**PROGRAM**

Joseph HAYDN (1732–1809) Trio in E major for Piano, Violin,  
and Cello, Hob. XV:28 (1796)  
Allegro moderato  
Allegretto  
Finale: Presto

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975) Trio in E minor for Piano, Violin,  
and Cello, Op. 67 (1944)  
Andante – Moderato – Poco piu mosso  
Allegro con brio  
Largo  
Allegretto

**INTERMISSION**

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) Trio in C minor for Piano, Violin,  
and Cello, Op. 66 (1845)  
Allegro energico e con fuoco  
Andante espressivo  
Scherzo: Molto allegro quasi presto  
Finale: Allegro appassionato

*This performance is made possible in part by Daniel Johnson and Herman Winkel.*

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**Joseph Haydn**  
**Trio in E major for Piano, Violin,**  
**and Cello, Hob. XV:28**

In the field of chamber music, Haydn is most renowned as the father of the string quartet medium, but he was nearly as prolific a composer of piano trios. More than 40 of them span four decades of his career, from the 1760s to the late 1790s. This afternoon, we will hear one of the final three, probably composed in 1796 shortly after Haydn had returned from his second triumphant period in London. They were all written for Therese Jansen, the wife of the musical engraver Bartolozzi, who must have been a remarkable pianist because Haydn also composed his last three piano sonatas for her.

Indeed, the piano is the star instrument in these trios, for Haydn conceived of the piano trio as being primarily a solo vehicle for the pianist, with the violinist only a secondary soloist and the cellist an accompanist chiefly reinforcing the piano's left-hand part. In his landmark book *The Classical Style*, Charles Rosen describes Haydn's piano trios as being "along with the Mozart concertos the most brilliant piano works before Beethoven."

Each of these three trios shows Haydn at his experimental best in terms of rhythmic play, harmonic daring, and flexible formal construction. However, the Trio in E major, Hob. XV:28 is the most astonishing of them all, as Haydn breaks the Classical models of how far afield a tonic key is permitted to wander, as well as what formal structure should be used for each movement. It is a work that never ceases to astonish—and to delight.

The first movement's opening sonorities come as a total surprise. Like a pointillistic pen-and-ink sketch, the piano etches in staccato the naive principal theme, while violin and cello playing in pizzicato intensify each stroke. Using another image, Robert Philip describes it as resembling "a folksong

in which the singer accompanies herself on the harp." The piano then takes over to transform the theme into a flowing rhapsody, embellished with ornaments and chromaticism. As was often the case, Haydn needed no second theme, but aided by the violin's soaring countermelody carries this theme through various modulations to an adventurous development section. Its most shocking feature is a lurch to the distant key of A-flat major for a forceful presentation of the principal theme, now enthusiastically joined by the strings. From the starkness of its opening, this music has steadily evolved into a witty display of piano brilliance.

In E minor, the Allegretto second movement also seizes our immediate attention with a mournful eighth-note pattern played by all the instruments in unison. Paying homage to J.S. Bach, Haydn adopts this as a passacaglia pattern repeating, with minor modifications, throughout the entire movement. Undergirded by this pattern in her left hand, the pianist launches a glorious *cantabile* melody, containing both delicate Baroque ornamentation and dramatic leaps and plunges. Later, violin and cello enter to take over the passacaglia pattern. The movement's peak is achieved in a passage of lavish counterpoint, with the passacaglia pattern rising on top in the violin and the pianist's right hand while the dramatic melodic theme descends to the cello and piano's left hand.

Back in E major, the insouciant finale is filled with tricks, notably in its rhythmically offbeat theme that meanders on beyond where it should rightfully stop. More surprises come in the middle section in E minor, where the violin tears into a melodramatic episode accompanied by piano turbulence; this eventually veers off course to another distant key: E-flat minor. The E-major theme ultimately comes to the rescue, but not without a few more wayward incidents.

—Janet E. Bedell

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
**Trio in E minor for Piano, Violin,**  
**and Cello, Op. 67**

Shostakovich dedicated his Second Piano Trio to the memory of Ivan Sollertinsky, a prominent Russian music critic and cultural commentator, as well as one of the composer's closest friends and staunchest supporters. Shostakovich biographer Solomon Volkov writes, "His legendary erudition... made Sollertinsky an irreplaceable advisor and mentor. The composer could speak frankly to him about everything under the sun, from sex to Schoenberg." Shostakovich regarded Sollertinsky with devoted affection, once writing to his friend: "I consider you the only musician, and, besides that, a personal friend, and in any situation of life I will always and in every way support you." Such a promise of support was not an insignificant one during Stalin's reign: any prominent cultural figures who displeased the dictator were marked men, as were all those who allied themselves with them.

This, in fact, would be Sollertinsky's fate for championing Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. With its unflinching perspective on sexuality and violence combined with the poised craftsmanship of Shostakovich's score, *Lady Macbeth* was quickly hailed as a classic of Russian opera. It received its premiere in 1934 and met with universal acclaim. Two years later, however, Stalin attended a performance of the opera and, scandalized by both the subject matter and Shostakovich's bold score, walked out before the final act. Two days later, a now-legendary editorial appeared in *Pravda*, the national newspaper and unofficial Stalinist mouthpiece, entitled "Muddle Instead of Music." The editorial, which offered a scathing attack on Shostakovich's opera, ran unsigned but was understood to represent the official view of the Communist Party; many, including Shostakovich, suspected with good reason that Stalin authored the editorial himself.

Despite his denunciation of *Lady Macbeth*, Stalin nevertheless recognized the importance of the arts to the cultivation of a powerful Russian civilization as well as Shostakovich's immense value to Russia's cultural life. For this reason, Shostakovich—though never safe—was ultimately spared the worst of Stalin's wrath. Sollertinsky, however, did not hold the same value for Stalin, and became a public scapegoat. For supporting *Lady Macbeth*, Sollertinsky was labeled by *Pravda* as a "defender of bourgeois perversion in music" and as an "ideologue of the movement that crippled Shostakovich's music." Around this time, Shostakovich received a recommendation on Stalin's behalf from the chairman of the Committee on Arts Affairs that he "free himself from the influence of some servile critics, like Sollertinsky, who promote the worst of his writing."

While mounting pressure made complete and open support of Sollertinsky impossible, Shostakovich nevertheless remained loyal to his friend. After the critic died suddenly from a heart spasm in February 1944, Shostakovich commemorated their bond with his Piano Trio in E minor. In 1946, somewhat ironically, the work received the prestigious Stalin Prize, an honor awarded by the government each year to what the Communist Party deemed seminal works of Russian art.

The work features one of chamber music's most memorable beginnings: Shostakovich sets the opening theme (which soon evolves into the subject of a fugue), not where it would sit comfortably in the violin's alto register, but with haunting artificial harmonics in the cello. Following a signature Shostakovich scherzo—combining wit, ferocity, and daring virtuosity—comes the devastating Largo, on whose loud, fateful, introductory chords the spirit of the piece pivots dramatically. The finale opens with a theme demonstrating a politically dangerous solidarity with the Jewish community in the face of

the Soviet regime. This theme would reappear in Shostakovich's semi-autobiographical String Quartet No. 8, which the composer dedicated "to the victims of fascism and war."

—Patrick Castillo

**Felix Mendelssohn**  
**Trio in C minor for Piano, Violin,**  
**and Cello, Op. 66**

Mendelssohn completed this, the second of his two piano trios, in 1845, six years after the first. Though he presented the work as a birthday present to his sister Fanny, the published score bears a dedication to Mendelssohn's friend and colleague Louis Spohr. In addition to his compositional renown, Spohr was known as one of the leading violinists of the day and took part himself in numerous performances of this composition with the composer at the piano.

Like its elder sibling, this trio exudes Romantic pathos immediately from its opening strains. A serpentine piano melody rises to a forceful cadence, only to return to a nervous whisper in the strings. Mendelssohn extends this theme to another upward arching musical idea in the violin and cello; a frenzy of sixteenth notes in the piano underneath inverts the contour of the theme, quietly sinking lower and lower. The movement's second theme, introduced by the violin, could be the doppelgänger of the first: the heroic counterpart to the tortured opening measures.

The *Andante espressivo*, analogous to the *Andante* movement of the Op. 49 trio, is a vintage *Lied ohne worte* (song without words): this music encapsulates Romanticism at its most deeply heartfelt. Of the quicksilver third movement, Mendelssohn

admitted that the perilously fast tempo might be "a trifle nasty to play."

Among the compelling narrative threads of Mendelssohn's life and legacy is his complicated relationship with religion. He was born into a prominent Jewish family—his grandfather was the distinguished Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn—but Felix's father, Abraham, insisted that the family convert to Christianity as a means of assimilating into contemporary German society. The hyphenated surname often used in reference to the composer, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, was likewise insisted upon by Abraham Mendelssohn, on the premise that "there can no more be a Christian Mendelssohn than there can be a Jewish Confucius."

Though it does not bear any explicit program, the Op. 66 finale might nevertheless be heard to reflect somewhat the nuanced role that religion played in Mendelssohn's life and artistry. The movement begins with a dance-like theme whose shape and articulation (and opening melodic interval of a minor ninth) suggest Jewish folk music. Later in the movement, Mendelssohn unexpectedly introduces the Lutheran hymn "Gelobet seist Du, Jesu Christ." While the piano offers the hymn, the strings play fragments of the opening theme. Music scholar Robert Philip has likened this juxtaposition to "two diminutive figures speaking in hushed tones as they enter a great cathedral." Extending this juxtaposition of musical ideas—indeed, ultimately reconciling the two—the movement escalates to an ecstatic climax. A radiantly transfigured version of the opening dance-like melody gets the last word, propelling the trio to a riveting final cadence.

—Patrick Castillo

Pianist **Wu Han**, recipient of *Musical America's* Musician of the Year award, the highest honor bestowed by the organization, enjoys a multifaceted musical life that encompasses performing, recording, and artistic direction at the highest levels. Her recent concert activities have taken her from stages at New York's Lincoln Center to the most important concert halls in the United States, Europe, and Asia. In addition to countless performances of virtually the entire chamber repertoire, her recent concerto performances include appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, and the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

She is the founder and Artistic Director of ArtistLed, classical music's first artist-directed, internet-based recording label (1997), which has released her performances of the staples of the cello-piano duo repertoire with cellist David Finckel. Her more than 80 releases on the ArtistLed, CMS Live, and Music@Menlo LIVE labels include masterworks of the chamber repertoire with numerous distinguished musicians, the latest being Schubert's *Winterreise* with baritone Nikolay Borchev. During the pandemic seasons, Wu Han designed and produced more than 270 digital media projects, including concerts and innovative educational programs, which helped sustain the art of chamber music in dozens of communities across the United States.

Currently Artistic Co-Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and Music@Menlo, Silicon Valley's innovative chamber music festival, she also serves as Artistic Advisor for Wolf Trap's Chamber Music at the Barns series and for Palm Beach's Society of the Four Arts, and in 2022 was named Artistic Director of La Musica in Sarasota, Florida. Passionately dedicated to education for musicians of all ages and experience, Wu Han guides the CMS Bowers Program, which admits stellar young musicians to the CMS roster for a term of three seasons.

Wu Han also oversees the Chamber Music Institute at Music@Menlo, which immerses some 40 young musicians every summer in the multifaceted fabric of the festival. Wu Han was also privileged to serve on multiple occasions as a faculty member of Isaac Stern's Chamber Music Encounters in Israel, New York, and Japan.

A recipient of the prestigious Andrew Wolf Award, Wu Han was mentored by an elite selection of some of the greatest pianists of our time, including Lilian Kallir, Rudolf Serkin, and Menahem Pressler. Married to cellist David Finckel since 1985, Wu Han divides her time between concert touring and residences in New York City and Westchester County.

Winner of a 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant, violinist **Arnaud Sussmann** has distinguished himself with his unique sound, brilliant style, and profound musicianship. Minnesota's *Pioneer Press* writes, "Sussmann has an old-school sound reminiscent of what you'll hear on vintage recordings by Jascha Heifetz or Fritz Kreisler, a rare combination of sweet and smooth that can hypnotize a listener."

A thrilling musician who has captured the attention of music critics and audiences around the world, he has recently appeared as a soloist with the Mariinsky Orchestra under Valery Gergiev, the Vancouver Symphony, and the New World Symphony. As a chamber musician, Sussmann has performed at the Tel Aviv Museum in Israel, London's Wigmore Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the White Nights Festival in Saint Petersburg, the Dresden Music Festival in Germany, and the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC.

He has been presented in recital in Omaha on the Tuesday Musical Club series, New Orleans by the Friends of Music, and at the Louvre Museum in Paris. Sussmann has also given concerts at the OK Mozart, Moritzburg, Caramoor, Music@Menlo, La

Jolla SummerFest, Mainly Mozart, Seattle Chamber Music, Chamber Music Northwest, and Moab music festivals. He has performed with many of today's leading artists, including Itzhak Perlman, Menahem Pressler, Gary Hoffman, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Wu Han, David Finckel, and Jan Vogler.

Cellist David Finckel's dynamic musical career has included performances around the world in the roles of recitalist, chamber artist, and orchestral soloist. The first American student of Mstislav Rostropovich, he was winner of the Philadelphia Orchestra's junior and senior divisions, resulting in two performances with the orchestra. He joined the Emerson String Quartet in 1979, with whom—over 34 seasons—he garnered nine Grammy Awards and the Avery Fisher Prize. Finckel's quartet performances and recordings include quartet cycles of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Dvořák, Brahms, Bartók, and Shostakovich, as well as collaborative masterpieces and commissioned works.

In 1997, Finckel and Wu Han founded ArtistLed, the first internet-based, artist-controlled classical recording label. ArtistLed's catalog of more than 20 releases includes the standard literature for cello and piano, plus works composed for the duo by composers including George Tsontakis, Gabriela Lena Frank, Bruce Adolphe, Lera Auerbach, Edwin Finckel, Augusta Read Thomas, and Pierre Jalbert, and Finckel's orchestral recordings include both the Dvořák and Harbison concertos.

Artistic Co-Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Finckel also co-founded Music@Menlo in 2003, an innovative summer chamber music festival in Silicon Valley.

Finckel taught extensively with the late Isaac Stern in America, Israel, and Japan. He is currently a professor at both the Juilliard School and Stony Brook University, and oversees both CMS' Bowers Program and Music@Menlo's Chamber Music Institute. Passionately dedicated to education for musicians of all ages and experience, he has developed a special Resource section of his website ([davidfinckelandwuhan.com/resource](http://davidfinckelandwuhan.com/resource)) to provide, at no cost, a wealth of guidance for students on both music study and careers, as well as invaluable information for arts organizations and individuals on every aspect of concert presenting. Finckel's Cello Talks—100 online lessons on cello technique—are viewed by an international audience of musicians ([cello-talks.com](http://cello-talks.com)).

Along with pianist Wu Han, Finckel was the recipient of *Musical America's* 2012 Musicians of the Year Award.

Wu Han, David Finckel, and Arnaud Sussmann appear by arrangement with David Rowe Artists.

Public Relations and Press Representative:  
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David Finckel and Wu Han recordings are available exclusively on ArtistLed ([www.ArtistLed.com](http://www.ArtistLed.com)).

Wu Han performs on the Steinway Piano.