



70th Concert Series 2023-24



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

Escher Quartet

Adam Barnett-Hart, violin

Brendan Speltz, violin

Pierre Lapointe, viola

Brook Speltz, cello

with guest artist

Jason Vieaux, guitar

Saturday, October 21, 2023. 8:00 pm.

Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York

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Who We Are

Friends of Music Concerts, Inc. is an award-winning, non-profit, volunteer organization now in its 70th season of showcasing, right here in Westchester, artists chosen from among the finest in today's diverse world of chamber music. Additionally, our Partnership in Education program in the public schools and free student admission to our concerts give young people enhanced exposure to and appreciation of classical music.

In order to help sustain what one of our artists called this “legendary series,” we would welcome people who can join the volunteers listed above. People we are seeking include, but are not limited to, those with writing/publishing production and/or fund development/grant writing skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the possibilities together.

Acknowledgments

We are proud to be a grantee of ArtsWestchester with funding made possible by Westchester County government with the support of County Executive George Latimer. Additional support has been received from many friends of Friends of Music, including subscribers and other ticket holders listed in this program.* If you, too, can contribute in this way, please send your gifts to Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546.

Program

Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5 “Lark”

Allegro moderato

Adagio cantabile

Menuet: Allegretto

Finale: Vivace

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Quintet for Guitar and Strings, Op. 143

Allegro, vivo e schietto

Andante mesto

Scherzo: Allegro con spirito, alla Marcia

Finale: Allegro con fuoco

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco
(1895-1968)

Intermission

Siciliano and Presto (from Violin Sonata No.1 in G minor, BWV 1001) J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)
(arr. Vieaux)

Four Paths of Light, Movement II Pat Metheny
(b. 1954)

A Felicidade Antonio Carlos Jobim
(1927-1994)
(arr. Roland Dyens)

Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet, G. 448 “Fandango” Luigi Boccherini
(1743-1805)

Pastorale

Allegro maestoso

Grave assai – Fandango

The Escher Quartet appears by arrangement with the Arts Management Group, Inc., 130 W. 57th St., New York, NY. 10019.

Jason Vieaux appears by arrangement with Jonathan Wentworth Associates, Ltd. 6118 40th Ave., # 208, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

Next concert

Saturday, at November 4, 2023 at 8:00 pm. Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

Le Consort

Program: With harpsichord, two violins, and cello, the ensemble will perform music from Europe’s 17th and 18th centuries, including works by J.S. Bach, Antonio Vivaldi, Arcangelo Corelli, Henry Purcell, Jean-Phillipe Rameau, and others.

Program notes

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5, Hob. III: 63 (The Lark)

Joseph Haydn

In 1790, when Haydn's thirty-year tenure as composer and conductor for the princely Esterházy family concluded with the Prince's death, he became an enormously successful freelance musician. In effect, he became a touring celebrity; by 1795, he had become quite wealthy. Even before that, however, Haydn was widely admired as the most formidable composer of his time because Mozart, his only equal, still was relatively obscure outside Austria.

The six quartets of Haydn's Op. 64, written in 1790, were dedicated to a bourgeois named Johann Tost, who probably had been a violinist in the Esterházy orchestra. Tost had become a businessman, had made a fortune as a wholesale merchant, and had become wealthy enough to commission chamber music from both Haydn and Mozart. Haydn took the Op. 64 quartets to London in 1791, where they were featured in concerts that helped him make his own fortune. These highly original, even daringly advanced works had great appeal for that time's penchant for the new, and they were quickly published in Amsterdam, Paris, London, and Vienna. Each of the six has a different style, character, and construction, and each offers novelty in form and substance.

The first movement of this **String Quartet No. 5**, *Allegro moderato*, opens with a low, quiet phrase that becomes the accompaniment to a high, warbling theme that gave the quartet its nickname. This theme is so distinctive a melody that Haydn never subjects it to a conventional development, but simply repeats it at appropriate moments during the piece. Haydn introduces two other themes, one a sharply syncopated modulating theme and the other made up of descending triplets.

The *Adagio cantabile*, a contemplative, slow second movement in three-part form, includes beautiful solo writing for first violin, testimony to Tost's technical skill and expressive powers on the instrument. The outer major key sections frame a minor key central section. The same relationship of keys recurs in the third movement, *Minuet: Allegretto*, with the minuet in a major tonality, playful in mood, framing a minor trio, chromatic and based on the musical material of the minuet.

The quartet ends with a *Finale: Vivace*, a brilliant tour-de-force that sparkles with a rapid moto perpetuo in which even a fugal middle section in a minor key has persistent, perpetual motion figuration.

Quintet for Guitar and Strings, Op 143

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Born in Florence into a prosperous Jewish-Italian mercantile family, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco studied piano and composition at the Istituto Musicale Cherubini and later at the Liceo Musicale of Bologna. He was a published composer by the age of twenty and enjoyed a successful European career until 1939 when, because of Mussolini's anti-Jewish edicts, he emigrated to the United States. After a year in Larchmont, NY, he settled in Beverly Hills, CA, where he taught theory and composition and wrote two operas, two oratorios, many concert works, and a large number of film scores. While on the faculty of the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, Henry Mancini, Nelson Riddle, Andre Previn, and John Williams were among his students.

The three principal external influences on his music are Hebrew chants, Shakespeare, and Mediterranean folklore. Among his compositions are a liturgical sacred service, settings of Biblical subjects, and thirty-three songs and two operas based on Shakespearean texts. His interest in the music of Spain began to appear in his earliest published works, reaching its highest expression in some of his guitar works. His interest in writing for the guitar began when he met Andrés Segovia, who had traveled to Italy in 1932 with Manuel de Falla for the Venice International Festival. Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed more than one hundred works for the instrument, including concertos, chamber music, many solos, and some of the finest pieces for two guitars, inspired by the French duo Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya.

This **Quintet for Guitar and Strings** is one of those inspired by his friendship with Segovia, written in response to a request for a chamber work for the guitarist to play for the Music Guild of Los Angeles. Segovia also performed the Quintet in 1951 at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana of Siena, Italy, where he was teaching in its famous summer school. In a letter to the composer, Segovia said it was "listened to with delight by a packed and enthusiastic hall."

The composer himself said: "This work was composed in less than a month (between 7 February and 5 March 1950). It is a melodious and serene work, partly neo-Classic and partly neo-Romantic (like

most of my works). I would say it is written almost in a Schubertian vein – Schubert has always been one of my favorite composers. The first of the four movements is in the regular sonata-allegro form. The second movement is of a lyrical character, with Spanish undertones (the second theme is marked *Souvenir d’Espagne*). The third movement is a scherzo with two trios. The last movement is in rondo form, very brilliant and contrapuntal; again, the second theme is in a Spanish mood – what could be more appropriate for Andrés Segovia?”

This quintet includes a successful merging of plucked and bowed sonorities for the guitar. The guitar does not have a distinctly solo role as it does in some other ensemble works in which the guitar is featured, but rather is integrated with the string quartet. Castelnuovo-Tedesco uses the full range on tone color available to the group and gives each of the instruments technically demanding passages as well as those demonstrating their musicality. He creates many moods with differing tempi and inventive lyrical lines in all the movements.

In the first movement, *Allegro, vivo e schietto*, the strings articulate the main theme in parallel motion; the second, gentler theme features chromatic downward movement. The second movement, *Andante mesto*, has a lyrical character with Spanish flavor. The primary theme is introduced by the viola, muted; the strings are muted for the whole movement. The third movement, *Allegro con spirito alla Marcia*, a spirited Scherzo, begins with the viola articulating chromatic trills. Syncopations preceded the trio section, marked *grazioso e burlesco*. The finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, features both the guitar and solo violin. In the movement’s center is an expressive section that is notated as “like a popular song”; the guitar introduces the main theme far into the middle of the movement; the cello then repeats it. Toward the conclusion, the main theme and the “popular song” are combined. A coda ends the work “impetuously and wildly.”

Siciliano & Presto from Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001

Johann Sebastian Bach (arr. Vieaux)

In 1717, Bach was appointed composer and musical director to Prince Leopold, ruler of the tiny German state of Anhalt-Cöthen and an accomplished musician with a great appetite for instrumental music. Sometime during his six years there, Bach wrote a set of six pieces, three sonatas and three suites of dances called partitas, for violin without accompaniment. As a young man, Bach was a formidable violinist; these six compositions are clearly the work of a composer with a profound knowledge of the instrument and its potential.

Bach’s works for solo violin unquestionably stand at the summit of the violin repertoire. Here Bach expresses complex polyphonic music with an essentially monophonic instrument, creating harmonies in the listener’s ear through his subtle counterpoint and the nuances of his phrasing.

The three sonatas are all based on the four-movement Italian model (slow-fast-slow-fast) and follow the model of Arcangelo Corelli. This included a slow lyrical introductory movement, followed by a fugue, then a rather slow contrapuntal movement, and a quick finale that included rapid passagework.

The third movement of **Sonata No. 1**, a *Siciliano*, is a quiet, pastoral dance that sometimes was included in sonatas. In Bach’s version, there is more complex figuration than was then traditional, but he retains the *Siciliano*’s traditional lilting rhythm. A fleet, spirited *Presto* brings the music to a close.

Four Paths of Light, Movement II (composed for and dedicated to Mr. Vieaux)

Pat Metheny

Born into a musical family in Kansas City, Pat Metheny began to study trumpet at the age of eight, but switched to guitar at twelve. By fifteen he was working regularly with the best jazz musicians in Kansas City, receiving valuable on-the-bandstand experience. By 1974, during a stint with vibraphone great Gary Burton, he displayed his soon-to-be trademarked playing style, blending the loose and flexible articulation traditionally reserved for horn players with an advance rhythmic and harmonic sensibility, a way of playing and improvising that was modern in conception but grounded in the jazz tradition of melody, swing, and the blues. Throughout his career, Metheny has continued to redefine the genre by utilizing new technology and constantly working to evolve the improvisational and sonic potential of his instrument.

Over the years, Metheny has performed with artists as diverse as Steve Reich, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Hancock, Jim Hall, Milton Nascimento, and David Bowie. His body of work includes compositions for solo guitar, small ensembles, electric and acoustic instruments, large orchestras, and ballet pieces, with settings ranging from modern jazz to rock to classical. He was a pioneer in the world of electronic music

and was one of the first jazz musicians to treat the synthesizer as a serious musical instrument. He also has developed several new kinds of guitars. Among his many awards is the 2018 Jazz Master Fellowship award from the National Endowment for the Arts. He also has won twenty Grammys in twelve different categories.

Vieaux and Metheny met in 2005 after Metheny's trio played a concert in Richmond, VA. "I gave him my Naxos album [Guitar Recital: Jason Vieaux], and my Albeniz album [Sevilla]," Vieaux said. That same year Vieaux put out an exquisite album called Images of Metheny that included solo guitar versions of several well-known Metheny compositions. The two became friends and began attending each other's concerts. "His Bach playing is absolutely spectacular," Metheny has said, "and planted the seed that I wanted to write something for him."

Road To The Sun, composed in 2021, marks Metheny's embarkation into new territory as a classical composer; it's a collection of two substantial multi-movement classical suites. Included is his four-movement solo guitar suite **Four Paths of Light**, composed for Jason Vieaux and dedicated to him. In collaborating with Vieaux, Metheny joins with a guitarist who, he says, "excels in playing passages that border on being technically impossible." For his part, Vieaux has said "whenever an artist of Pat's significance writes not only a substantial work but a piece that requires real virtuosity to perform it, with his musical imprint all over it, it's a big moment for classical guitar."

Speaking about **Four Paths of Light**, Vieaux says, "I wanted something edgy." He compares Part II to the type of tune Metheny would write for his group or combo projects. The abstract nature of Part I gives way to a pleasing tonality in this segment. "You get glimpses in reverse of some of the melodic content and chordal stuff from Part I," Vieaux explains. "This movement is the heart of the piece and ends with material derived directly from measure five of Part I."

A Felicidade

Antonio Carlos Jobim (arr. Roland Dyens)

Jobim, a Brazilian composer, pianist, songwriter, arranger, and singer, was one of the primary forces in the creation of *bossa nova* style. Although he originally planned a career as an architect, he ultimately transitioned to a life in music, beginning by playing piano in nightclubs and working in recording studios.

Sometimes thought of as the George Gershwin of Brazil, Jobim has written works performed by an international roster of singers and instrumentalists. Full of sensuous melodies and harmonies, his music is rooted in jazz, influenced by many West Coast jazz artists such as Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker. Jobim reflected that the music of Debussy was very influential in his own use of harmony, and that the Brazilian samba was what gave his creations their rhythmic roots. Unquestionably, the music of Pixinguinha, a legendary musician and composer who was a great modernizer of Brazilian music in the 1930s, as well as that of Villa-Lobos, another of his countrymen, had an enormous effect on his work. Jobim was an innovator in his use of sophisticated harmonic structures in his popular songs. In the late 1950s, the then-unknown singer João Gilberto recorded some of Jobim's songs, launching *bossa nova*.

In 1956 the producer of the film *Orfeo Negro (Black Orpheus)* asked Jobim and the poet/diplomat Vinicius de Moraes to write a score for it. Because Moraes was in Uruguay working for the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he and Jobim were able to write only three songs, collaborating on them over the telephone; **A Felicidade** was one of them. The modern take on the classic tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice is set in Brazil and opens with **A Felicidade** and the line that sets the tone of the plot: "Sadness has no end; happiness does."

La Felicidade has been arranged and recorded by many artists. The arrangement performed tonight was created by French guitarist Roland Dyens. It has become popular because it gives flashy flourishes and a new sense of urgency to this originally gentle ballade while retaining the catchy lyrical nature of the original song.

Quintet No. 4 in D Major for Guitar and String Quartet, G. 448, "Fandango"

Luigi Boccherini

Luigi Boccherini was a cellist and composer whose brilliant career as a young touring virtuoso took him from Italy to Germany, France, and Spain, where he settled in 1769 and spent most of the rest of his life. In 1770, he was appointed to the service of the Infante Don Luis, brother of the King of Spain, as his exclusive composer and performer, living in Arenas de San Pedro. His creative output was colossal: hundreds of pieces of chamber music, dozens of symphonies and concertos, two operas, and many other vocal and choral works.

In the 1780s he returned to Madrid a widower, bringing with him around a hundred chamber works he had written over the years. Within the next few months he was appointed cellist to King Charles III, who granted him a significant monthly stipend; he also secured two new patrons, one of whom was Friedrich Wilhelm, the future king of Prussia; by 1787 he had married his second wife, Maria Joaquina Porreti, the daughter of another great cellist.

In the 1770s Boccherini began to compose string quintets, works for string quartet with an additional cello. He also wrote piano quintets. It is from those that he arranged his twelve guitar quintets at the century's end. Each of them was either a transcription of an earlier work or an arrangement for different instruments of a piece he just composed. Eight survive.

In 1798, Boccherini took two movements from two different works, joining them to create this extraordinary and very popular **Quintet No. 4 in D Major for Guitar and String Quartet, G. 448**. Much of his music, including this quintet, is an expression of Classicism in a Mediterranean musical context. At the time, authorities frequently banned the fandango, which originated as an Andalusian gypsy courtship dance performed by a couple with castanets accompanied by guitars. But Boccherini was attracted to this native Spanish form and its traditional giddy dance rhythms.

The woven-together work is completely unified in key and mood. The first movement, *Pastorale*, has “the mood of a Baroque Christmas concerto.” Its muted strings play a delicate, mellifluous line with the guitar. The second movement, *Allegro maestoso*, is more spirited and gives the guitar a secondary role while the cello, Boccherini's instrument, takes the lead, displaying lyrical passages. The rest of the quintet is not really two separate movements, but an introduction, *Grave assai*, followed by a *Fandango*, from which the quintet takes its nickname. The introduction is slow and somber, beginning in the major mode but ending in the minor, which the lively final fandango shares, in a fairly fast triple meter. When the Spanish dance's rhythm repeats, the instruments each have a chance to express some of the melody. As the complexity intensifies, the speed increases to the end.

--- Notes provided by Susan Halpern

About the Artists

Since its founding in 2005, the **Escher String Quartet** has received acclaim for its profound musical insight and rare tonal beauty. A former BBC New Generation Artist and recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the quartet has performed in London at the BBC Proms at Cadogan Hall and is a regular guest at Wigmore Hall. In its home town of New York, the ensemble serves as season artists of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

This season the Escher Quartet has embarked upon a major project - performances of the complete cycle of quartets by Béla Bartók, culminating in a single concert performance of all six at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Beyond that, the group has been returning to many other music centers and organizations across the United States. The quartet also has made a distinctive impression throughout Europe, with recent debuts in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and elsewhere.

Beyond the concert hall, the Escher Quartet has announced the creation of a new non-profit, ESQYRE (Escher String Quartet Youth Residency Education), whose mission is to provide a comprehensive educational program through music performance and instruction for people of all ages. The Escher Quartet takes its name from the Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, inspired by Escher's method of interplay between individual components working together to form a whole.

Grammy-winner **Jason Vieaux**, “among the elite of today's classical guitarists” (Gramophone), is described by NPR as “perhaps the most precise and soulful classical guitarist of his generation.” In appearances from New York's Lincoln Center to Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Seoul Arts Center, he has cemented his reputation as an artist of brilliance and uncompromised mastery.

Sought after for his extensive concerto repertoire, Vieaux has performed with a long list of orchestras, including Cleveland, Toronto, St. Louis, and Columbus. A busy touring performer, he enjoys repeated invitations from distinguished series, including San Francisco Performances, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the 92nd Street Y, among others. He has appeared at music festivals around the world.

In 2011 Vieaux co-founded the guitar department at the Curtis Institute of Music. He has taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music for 25 years. His online Guitar School for Artistworks Inc. has hundreds of subscribers from all over the world. He plays a guitar by Gernot Wagner, 2013, made in Frankfurt.

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