

Announcing the Roster for Our 2023-24 Season

For this exciting 70th season we will introduce you to ensembles and soloists who never have appeared with us previously. It will open on **Saturday, September 23, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.** with the innovative **Manhattan Chamber Players**, a collective of New-York-City-based musicians, all long-time friends and colleagues, who share the common goal of performing at the highest level the greatest works of the chamber repertoire. Said *Strings Magazine*: “A fascinating program concept. It felt like an auditory version of a virtual wine tasting.” They have been featured many times on NPR’s *Performance Today*.

Saturday, October 7, 2023, will find the **Trio Zimbalist** on our stage at 8:00 p.m. Members of the trio – violinist Josef Spaček, cellist Timotheos Gavriilidis-Petrin, and pianist George Xiaoyuan Fu – are all distinguished alumni of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The group has been lauded for its “liveliness and vigor of playing” and performances that were “pure enjoyment!”

On **Saturday, October 21, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.**, we welcome the **Escher String Quartet**, which has received acclaim for its profound musical insight and rare tonal beauty. Recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the group makes regular appearances at London’s Wigmore Hall. For their program for us they will be joined by **guitarist Jason Vieaux** as guest artist.

Crossing the pond for our final concert of the calendar year, on **Saturday, November 4, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.** will
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Join Us For A Thrilling Musical Adventure

In the soaring concert that opens our spring season, musicians from the Curtis Institute of Music, on tour from Philadelphia, will bring us a program highlighted by a performance of Igor Stravinsky’s *L’Histoire du*



Soldat. Narrated by acclaimed actor, director, and writer John de Lancie (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Breaking Bad*, *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*), instrumentation for the work will include violin, double bass, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, and percussion. The concert, on **Saturday, March 18, 2023, at 8:00 pm** at **White Plains High School**, also will include Eugène Ysaÿe’s *Sonata No. 6* in E Major; Francis Poulenc’s *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon*; Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Duo Concertante for Violin and Double Bass*; and *Darmok & Jalad*, a new work by Nicholas DiBerardino commissioned expressly for this tour.



For nearly a century, the Curtis Institute has educated and trained exceptionally gifted young musicians.

It keeps its student body small so that each budding performer receives free tuition and plenty of attention in the classroom. “Learning by doing” is central to its training philosophy. Thus, since 2008, its Curtis on Tour: The Nina von Maltzahn Global Touring Initiative has been an integral part of its graduates’ new and long-standing careers. Tours feature extraordinary emerging artists together with celebrated alumni and faculty. On March 18, the latter will include renowned clarinetist David Shifrin and violinist Soovin Kim.

Since its inception, Curtis on Tour ensembles have performed more than 375 concerts in over 100 cities in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. We are pleased to welcome them to our White Plains venue, and look forward to sharing this magical evening with you. 🎵

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be **Le Consort**, a major ensemble of the French Baroque scene. Comprised of two violinists, a cellist, and a harpsichordist, the group takes chamber music from the 17th and 18th centuries and interprets it with a personal, dynamic, and colorful language. They have performed extensively throughout Europe, and have been featured on numerous broadcasts of *France 3*, *France Musique*, *France Inter*, and *Radio Classique*.

We open our spring season with a matinee on **Sunday, March 10, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.**, and a recital by **bass-baritone William Socolof** who, as a winner of the Young Concert Artists International Competition, received our Performance Award. A native of White Plains, NY, he has been a vocal fellow at Tanglewood Music Festival, appearing in Sondheim on Sondheim with the Boston Pops. He holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Music from Juilliard, and is pursuing an Artist Diploma in Opera there.

On the evening of **Saturday, April 13, 2024**, we bring you the **pianist Michelle Cann**, praised as “technically fearless with an enormous, rich sound.” She made her orchestral debut at age fourteen and

since has performed with prominent orchestras such as the Atlanta and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras, the Cleveland Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony, the Seattle symphony, and the Utah symphony. A champion of the music of Florence B. Price, she is the recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by that organization, as well as of the 2022 Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award.

The final concert of our 70th season, a matinee on **Sunday, April 28, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.**, will be by the dynamic young **Isidore String Quartet**, winner of the 14th Banff International String Quartet Competition in 2022. Founded in 2019 as an ensemble at the Juilliard School, the group has toured extensively throughout North America and Europe and has been Ensemble-in-Residence at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Their recent concerts have included those at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and at the Mannes School of Music in New York.

Concerts are scheduled to be held in the auditorium of Sleepy Hollow High School in Sleepy Hollow, NY. 🎵

Performance Award Recipients Continue Rise to Stardom

Part of our mission is to nurture the budding careers of newly-emerging artists. We love keeping our fingers on the pulse of the chamber music scene. So, for many seasons, we have attended the Young Concert Artists International Auditions down in New York City and, from among its winners, have selected one to join our concert series. It gives us particular joy when we can be among the first to share such promising new talent with our own community of classical music lovers.

Here's what some of them have been up to lately.

Jonathan Swenson, cello (2020-21 awardee)

After Swenson's concert for us in January 2022, an audience member was heard exclaiming, “Wow! Friends of Music does it again!” He was indeed extraordinary. Since then, he has been awarded the

prestigious 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant, and recently was featured as both Musical America's “New Artist of the Month” and “One to Watch” in Gramophone Magazine.

September 2022 saw the release of Swenson's debut recording, *Fantasia*, on Champs Hill Records, a collection of works for solo cello. The album includes Bent Sørensen's “Farewell Fantasia,” premiered in 2021 and specially composed for and dedicated to Swenson.

Upon its release, *Fantasia* received numerous rave reviews from notable publications such as Gramophone, BBC Music, and The Strad, which printed, “An exciting young talent emerges. I would gladly buy a ticket to see Swenson on the strength of this appealing calling card.”

Benjamin Beilman, violin (2012-13 awardee)

The world has its eye on Benjamin Beilman and can't seem to look away. He has won international praise both for his passionate performances and for his deep, rich tone, which the Washington Post called "mightily impressive," and The New York Times described as "muscular with a glint of violence." The Times also has applauded his "handsome technique, burnished sound, and quiet confidence," and the Strad has described his playing as "pure poetry."

Ten years after illuminating our Friends of Music Concerts stage, Beilman's 2022-23 season has been packed with glittering performances with the Trondheim Symphony, the Hamburg Symphoniker, the Oslo Philharmonic, the Taipei Symphony, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, just to name a few.

In April 2022, Beilman became one of the youngest artists to be appointed to the faculty of his alma mater, the Curtis Institute of Music.

Zlatomir Fung, cello (2019-20)

Since appearing with us, Bulgarian-Chinese Zlatomir Fung has gone on to be the first American in four decades and youngest musician ever to win First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division. He also has been a recipient of the 2022 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and a 2020 Avery Fisher Career Grant.

His 2022-23 season has included the world premiere of a new cello concerto by Katherine Balch with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and multiple appearances throughout North America. Tours of Europe and Asia include a recital at London's Wigmore Hall and two performances at Cello Biennale Amsterdam.

Charlie Albright, piano (2011-12)

One of our earliest awardees, Charlie Albright is quite a feather in our cap, having gone on to become "among the most gifted musicians of his generation," according to the Washington Post and the multitude of concert-goers he has dazzled from behind the keys.

During his concerts, Charlie Albright breaks the "classical" rules of music by connecting with audiences like no other. Through his music, speaking, and unique, enlivening improvisations, he crosses all genres and makes it fun.

In addition to performing, Albright is heavily sought after as a speaker, masterclass instructor, teacher, and competition judge. His 2011 debut commercial recording, *Vivace*, has sold thousands of copies world-wide; the first two parts of a three-part series of live, all-Schubert recordings were released in 2017 and 2020.

The world awaits the completion of that series, and his upcoming twenty-concert United States tour, with great anticipation. 🎵



Why Changes In Venue This Spring?

The conflicts in dates between our concerts and those of activities at Sleepy Hollow High School, such as its annual musical, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It brought us to **White Plains High School** for our March 18th concert, a place whose bigger stage and other resources can better accommodate the multiple instruments and

musicians of Curtis on Tour's exciting program. Both April concerts, on the 16th and 22nd, have us returning to the welcoming arms of **Ossining High School**, where we have presented so often in the past. All of them have the free parking and good handicapped access that we require. 🎵

Partnerships Remain Popular

Our grant-funded Partnership in Education program, through which we send a young professional ensemble into a local school district for a one-day residency that includes a performance and master classes for the school’s music students, remains one of our most sought-after initiatives. This spring our funds allowed us to accept applications from three school districts. In early February, the Tesla Quartet went to the Hendrick Hudson School District in



Montrose, marking the second time that district has partnered with us. In early March, the Balourdet String Quartet makes its second appearance in this program, this time at Sleepy Hollow High School, in Sleepy Hollow. In mid-March, Port Chester High School becomes a new participant in the program, with the Overlook String Quartet performing an interestingly diverse program and then coaching the school’s music students.

What Happens During These Residencies?

The Hen Hud schedule was typical. The day began with a workshop for the school’s chamber orchestra. Then the Tesla’s performance of several brief works that ranged from Mozart to Jessie Montgomery was followed by a Q & A session. Next was a small group workshop, dealing with (for instance) cellos and violins separately. A workshop for the school’s concert orchestra followed the lunch break. The day ended with a workshop for the school’s unique United Sound program, in which special ed students learn string instruments from some of the orchestra students. During all the workshops the Tesla dealt with bowing techniques, changing rhythms, the importance of solos but also ensemble techniques

and, in the latter, the importance of really listening while performing. There were about 50 students involved, but additional band students and other teachers came in during their free periods just to listen to the quartet.



What Are Some Outcomes?

Said one observer about the Hen Hud residency, “It was so exciting to see! The difference between the first time the orchestra played and the next time after coaching from the quartet was remarkable.” And



orchestra teacher Lauren Morabito enthused, “My students learned so much. The Tesla Quartet provided them with such a memorable, educational experience.

Feeling inspired, several students came back to my room after school to practice.” Through its performance, the quartet had provided a role model. Through its coaching, the quartet had given tips that gave students many ways to improve their own skills, building toward their futures as musicians.

We have been so pleased to be able to continue this Partnership in Education program. We will be seeking additional grants to sustain it, hoping to get enough targeted funding to expand it to more school districts during our 70th season. 🎵



Piano for a Sunday Afternoon



The award-winning Spanish-Dutch pianist **Albert Cano Smit** will be gracing the stage of **Ossining High School** with a challenging, eclectic program on **Sunday, April 16, at 3:00 pm**. Included will be selected Preludes and Fugues from J.S. Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, Books I and II; W.A. Mozart's Sonata No 14 in C minor; Oliver Messiaen's *Le Baiser de l'Enfant Jésus*, No. 15 from *Vingt Regards*; Isaac Albéniz's *Iberia*, Book I; and Alberto Ginastera's *Danzas Argentinas*, Op. 2.

Praised as “a moving young poet” and “a great romantic” by Christophe Huss of *Le Devoir*, Cano Smit's shining star continues to rise as he enjoys a growing international presence in orchestral, recital, and chamber music concerts.

Noted for his captivating performances, storytelling quality, and nuanced musicality, this first prize winner of the 2019 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and recipient of our very own Performance Award has appeared as a soloist with the San Diego, Montreal, Las Vegas, Manchester, and Barcelona symphony orchestras, among many others.

We are very proud to introduce Cano Smit to you. We're sure you will walk away with a sense that you have witnessed the development of a very special musical career.

To read about some past Friends of Music Concerts Performance Awardees and what they've done since they were with us, see page 2. 🎵

Winds Waft To Us This Spring

Our 69th season will close on Saturday, **April 22, at 8:00 p.m** at **Ossining High School** with the **Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Wind Ensemble**, joined by pianist **Caroline Parker** as guest artist. Their beautiful, varied program will include Carl Reineke's Trio for Oboe, Horn, and Piano; W.A. Mozart's Quintet for Winds and Piano in E-flat Major; Erwin Schulhoff's *Divertissement* for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon; and Ludwig van Beethoven's Quintet for Winds and Piano in E-flat Major.

Founded in 1958 by Sir Neville Marriner and now led by renowned violinist Joshua Bell, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields is one of the world's finest chamber orchestras, known for its fresh, brilliant interpretations of classical works. Members of the Wind Ensemble are drawn from its principal players; on the 27th they will include oboist John Roberts, clarinetist Fiona Cross, bassoonist Julie Price, and hornist Stephen Stirling.

The *Chicago Classical Review* described it as an “impressively seamless ensemble.” *Seen and Heard*

International noted its: “...impressive sophistication and complexity of phrasing, elegant articulation, and an impeccable sense of balance.” Said the *Dallas Morning News*, “...an ensemble of first-rate musicians, technically superb, generously expressive, and obviously enjoying themselves.”

We look forward with pleasure to this unusual concert, and hope to see you there. 🎵



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At White Plains High School

Curtis on Tour

March 18, 2023 – 8 pm

At Ossining High School

Albert Cano Smit, piano

April 16, 2023 – 3 pm

Academy of St. Martin in the Field

Wind Ensemble

April 22, 2023 – 8 pm

Save the Date!

There will be food, a little music, and lots of good camaraderie as friends of Friends of Music Concerts gather on the evening of **Wednesday, April 26, 2023**, for a “Trivia” night to celebrate the completion of the 69th season and to look forward with great anticipation to the upcoming 70th. The event will be held in the inviting surroundings of The Briarcliff Manor in Briarcliff Manor, NY. Stay tuned as more details become available on our website, www.friendsofmusicconcerts.org.



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Pianos by Steinway