

68<sup>th</sup> Concert Series 2021-22



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

# **The PUBLIQuartet**

**Curtis Stewart, violin**

**Jannina Norpoth, violin**

**Nick Revel, viola**

**Hamilton Berry, cello**

Sunday, September 12, 2021. 4:00 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 celebrating its 68th season of showcasing, right here in Westchester, artists chosen from among the finest in today's diverse world of chamber music. Additionally, our Partners 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, either as Board members or equally valued off-Board committee members. Specifics we are looking for include, but are not limited to, people with networking, writing/publishing production, and/or fund development skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the range 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, as well as the REM Foundation. 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

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## **Dig the Say (2012)**

- I. carry the ball*
- IIa. this thing together*
- IIb. up from the ground*
- IIc. to live tomorrow*

Vijay Iyer  
(b. 1971)

## **Pavement Pounding Rose (2019)**

*improvisations on Fats Waller's  
"Honeysuckle Rose"*

PUBLIQuartet – MIND | THE | GAP

## **Free Radicals (2021)**

*improvisations on "Law Years" and  
"Street Woman" by Ornette Coleman*

PUBLIQuartet – MIND | THE | GAP

## **Wild Women Don't Get the Blues (2021)**

*improvisations on music by Tina Turner,  
Betty Davis, Alice Coltrane, and Ida Cox*

PUBLIQuartet – MIND | THE | GAP

## **What is American? (2016)**

- improvisations on Antonín Dvořák's  
"American" Quartet (Op. 96)*
- I. Allegro ma non troppo*
  - II. Lento*
  - III. Molto vivace*
  - IV. Finale. Vivace ma non troppo*

PUBLIQuartet – MIND | THE | GAP

Next concert

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Saturday, September 25, 2021, 8:00 pm at Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

**Wu Han/Philip Setzer/David Finckel Trio**

Program: Haydn's Piano Trio No. 37 in D minor, Op. 71, No. 3; Beethoven's Piano Trio in D Major, Op 70, No. 1 "Ghost"; Dvořák's Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65.

# Program notes

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## **Dig The Say (2012)**

Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)

Commissioned by Brooklyn Rider in 2012, Vijay Iyer's **Dig The Say** is an homage to the "Godfather of Soul," James Brown. Describing his inspiration by Brown's music, Iyer says "[...] of course it's best to enjoy it with your body and soul, but there is also much to learn from analyzing his music's interlocking bass, drums, guitar, horn, and vocal parts. As a composer and band leader I have strived for years to put some of his tactics into practice. He brought a lot of ideas to the table about groove, communication, form, and space. Each song has its own vivid and distinct identity, beginning with the intricacies in the rhythm section."

Much of the excitement, and challenge, of Iyer's quartet lies in his distribution of such intricate, driving rhythmic textures among multiple players; there even are moments where the score asks a single player to stomp or tap one rhythm while playing another. The titles of the work's four continuous movements refer to lyrics delivered emphatically by Brown in his 1969 song "I Don't Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing (Open Up the Door I'll Get it Myself)."

## **MIND I THE I GAP: Pavement Pounding Rose (2019)**

Improvisations on Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose"

"Pavement Pounding Rose" is an excerpt from our project *Reflections On Beauty*, which celebrates the life of Madam C.J. Walker, the first Black American multi-millionaire and an eventual resident of Irvington, NY. It aims to capture the spirit of Madam Walker's time in NYC in the early 1900's, as she hustled amid the city's bustle to maintain and expand her hair care empire. We rework material from Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose," as well as the intros of many other rags that permeated the upper echelons of urban culture at the time, while adding in some obligatory stomping and jamming along the way! While the lyrics of the original tune objectify a woman walking down the street, the words attached to this piece are attributed to Walker herself, illustrating her unmatched work ethic and desire to empower others.

"As I bent over the washboard, and looked at my arms buried in soapsuds, I said to myself: 'What are you going to do when you grow old and your back gets stiff? Who is going to take care of your little girl?' This set me to thinking...."

"I want to live to help my race."

"Apt to look to other races for their types of beauty and character...What our girls and women have a right to demand from the best men is that they cease to imitate the artificial standards of other people and create a race standard of their own."

"I am in the business world, not for myself alone, but to do al the good I can to uplift my race, saving black men's bodies and white men's souls."

"Unlike your white friends who have waited until they were rich and then help, I have in proportion to my success...reached out helping others. Don't sit down and wait for

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the opportunities to come, but get up and make them!”

### **MIND I THE I GAP: Free Radicals (2021)**

Improvisations on “Law Years” and “Street Woman” by Ornette Colman

This work marks the latest iteration of our MIND I THE I GAP project, in which we use improvisation and group composition to make connections across genres and among musical voices. Here, we drew inspiration from two tracks from Ornette Coleman’s 1971 album *Science Fiction*: “Law Years” and “Street Woman.” In the process of putting together these improvisations, we sought to collage Coleman’s motives in a way that balances structure and freedom, and which recalls the joyfully chaotic energy of the original recordings. This reflection on Coleman’s music also finds resonance between his philosophy of Harmolodics – in which “harmony, melody, speed, rhythm, time and phrases all have equal position in the results that come from the placing and spacing of ideas” – and the contrapuntal style of J.S. Bach.

### **MIND I THE I GAP: Wild Women Don’t Get the Blues (2021)**

Improvisations on music by Tina Turner, Betty Davis, Alice Coltrane, and Ida Cox

Inspired by Ida Cox’s 194 blues standard “Wild Women Don’t Get the Blues,” this MIND I THE I GAP also spotlights the work of Tina Turner (“Black Coffee”), Betty Davis (“They Say I’m Different”), and Alice Coltrane (“Er Ra”). In the spirit of Ida’s lyrics, this set celebrates the legacy of independent women who hold their own.

### **MIND I THE I GAP: What Is American? (2016)**

Improvisations on Antonín Dvořák’s “American” Quartet (Op. 90)

Antonín Dvořák wrote his “American” Quartet during the summer of 1893 in the Czech enclave of Spillville, Iowa, following his first year directing the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City. One of Dvořák’s students at the Conservatory was the baritone and composer Harry T. Burleigh, who introduced him to Black spirituals, leading Dvořák to conclude that “The future of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States.”

This MIND I THE I GAP project weaves together excerpts of Dvořák’s original score with improvisation in various styles, with the aim of connecting the Black and Indigenous musics that inspired Dvořák to the blues, jazz, rock, and hip hop styles that these traditions would ultimately inform. Incorporating various extended techniques, the work’s opening also evokes the prairie soundscape that might have surrounded Dvořák as he composed.

# About the Artists

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In the eleven years since it was founded, **PUBLIQuartet** has received several honors: a 2013 Concert Artists Guild's New Music/New Places Award; a 2019 Chamber Music America's prestigious Visionary Award for outstanding and innovative approaches to contemporary classical, jazz, and world chamber music; a 2019 Grammy nomination for its Freedom and Faith album, which had debuted atop Billboard Classical Charts that May. All these were a result of genre-bending programs such as the one you will hear this afternoon. They range from 20th century masterworks to newly commissioned pieces, together with re-imaginings of classical works featuring open-form improvisations that expand traditional techniques and aesthetics. They reflect the group's commitment to supporting emerging composers, thus presenting under-represented music for string quartet.

**PUBLIQuartet** has served as artist-in-residence at major institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and has appeared at a wide variety of venues and festivals, from Carnegie Hall and the Newport Jazz Festival to The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. For Friends of Music Concerts, the quartet has been the most frequent and popular participant in our acclaimed Partnership in Education program, wherein it has had one-day residencies in several public schools in Westchester, first performing and then giving master classes to music students.

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A New York City native and graduate of the Eastman School of Music, **Curtis Stewart** has performed as a soloist with the National Repertory Orchestra, in Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall. He has made chamber music appearances at Zankel Hall and the Rochester International Jazz Festival. His eclectic background has led him to concerts in many different realms of music. An avid teacher, he currently teaches at the LaGuardia High School for Music & Art and Performing Arts.

**Jannina Norpoth** made her debut as a soloist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at age 14. Her international performances have included appearances on the Lincoln Center "Great Performers" Series, Mostly Mozart Festival, Women of the World Festival at the Apollo Theater, the Ecstatic Music Festival, HV1's Save the Music, and Saturday Night Live. She is a sought-after arranger in both classical and non-classical worlds; recent commissions include an adaptation of Scott Joplin's "Treemonisha" for the Volcano Theatre Company in Toronto.

**Nick Revel** is the founding violist of PUBLIQuartet. He has performed all over the world, including in Berlin, Tokyo, Banff, and across the US. He's collaborated with Benjamin Millepied and the LA Dance Project, Björk, Paquito D'Rivera, Billy Childs, JACK Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Jessie

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Montgomery, and tuba legend Bob Stewart. For three years he was commissioned to write pieces for mixed student ensembles at the Talent Education Suzuki School; one of them was premiered in Spring 2014 at the 10th Anniversary of the founding of that school before an audience that included the Mayor of Norwalk (CT) and others. He and his wife Nora Krohn founded the New York String Studio, located in Sunnyside, Queens, that draws on several different methods of practice and self-awareness.

A Nashville native, cellist **Hamilton Berry** received his Master of Music from Juilliard. During his fellowship with Ensemble Connect – a program of Carnegie Hall, Juilliard, and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the NYC Department of Education – he was a visiting teaching artist at IS61 on Staten Island. He has pursued a variety of performing, arranging, and composing projects in the New York area and beyond. A member of the Toomai String Quartet, Founders, DeCoda, and The Con Brio Ensemble, he also has performed with Ensemble Connect, The Orchestra of St. Luke's, and others. He is Assistant Program Director of the Musicambia program at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, where he teaches string students.



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