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Seventy-fifth Season 2025–26

The Westchester Chamber Music Society



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The Westchester Chamber Music Society (WCMS)
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Sunday, October 12, 2025
Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester
2125 Westchester Avenue
Rye, New York

The Westchester Chamber Music Society
presents

THE LYSANDER PIANO TRIO

Itamar Zorman, *violin*

Liza Stepanova, *piano*

James Kim, *cello*



Enrique Granados, (1867-1916)

Intermezzo from Goyescas

(arranged by Gaspar Cassadó)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Piano Trio No. 39 in G Major, Hob. XV/25 ("Gypsy")

Andante

Poco adagio, cantabile

Rondo all'Ongarese: Presto

Intermission

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Piano Trio No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 8

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4

(arranged for piano trio by Eduard Steuermann)

*A wine & cheese reception with the musicians will follow the performance.
We thank Aries Fine Wines & Spirits for their generous donation of wine.*

About this Performance

The Lysander Piano Trio, whose name is inspired by the character in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was formed at The Juilliard School. The Trio studied with Ronald Copes of the Juilliard String Quartet, the late Joseph Kalichstein and Seymour Lipkin, and had a memorable masterclass with Alfred Brendel. Early in their career, Lysander became a standout at competitions, with top honors at the 2010 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the 2011 Coleman Chamber Ensemble Competition (Grand Prize), the 2011 J. C. Arriaga Chamber Music Competition (First Prize), and the 2012 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition.

The Lysander Piano Trio has been praised by The Strad for its “incredible ensemble, passionate playing, articulate and imaginative ideas and wide palette of colors” and by The Washington Post for “an uncommon degree of heart-on-the-sleeve emotional frankness” and “vivid engagement carried by soaring, ripely Romantic playing.” The group has developed a reputation for exciting programming, finding creative ways to connect well-known masterworks with pieces by lesser-known and underrepresented composers, discovering common threads across cultures and times.

Itamar Zorman, *violin*, is one of the most soulful, evocative artists of his generation, distinguished by his emotionally gripping performances and gift for musical storytelling. Since his emergence with the top prize at the 2011 International Tchaikovsky Competition, he has wowed audiences all over the world with breathtaking style, causing one critic to declare him a “young badass who’s not afraid of anything.” His “youthful intensity” and “achingly beautiful” sound shine through in every performance, earning him the title of the “virtuoso of emotions.”

Liza Stepanova, *piano*. Praised by The New York Times for her “thoughtful musicality” and “fleet-fingered panache,” Liza Stepanova has performed at the Berlin Philharmonie, and the Weill and Zankel recital halls at Carnegie Hall; Alice Tully, Merkin, David Geffen, and Steinway halls in New York City, and at the Kennedy Center. She has appeared as a soloist with the conductors James DePreist

and Nicholas McGegan and live on WQXR New York, WFMT Chicago, and WETA Washington. Among her most recent projects is *E Pluribus Unum* (Navona Records, 2020), which features piano music by contemporary immigrant composers, including three world-premiere recordings. Stepanova holds degrees from the “Hanns Eisler” Academy in Berlin, Germany (BM), and The Juilliard School (MM, DMA) where she studied with Joseph Kalichstein, Seymour Lipkin, Jerome Lowenthal, and George Sava.

James Kim, cello, has been praised as “a miracle” by Harris Goldsmith. He has soloed with the Boston Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, Wallonia Royal Chamber, and Juilliard Orchestras working with renowned conductors such as David Zinman, Michael Sanderling, Keith Lockhart, and Alexander Shelley. These engagements have led him to Carnegie Stern Auditorium, Boston Symphony Hall, Jordan Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and elsewhere. An advocator for new music, Kim premiered Shinuh Lee’s Cello Concerto and released an album of her works dedicated to him. He has also collaborated with Sejong Soloists and Ensemble DITTO, and served as guest principal cellist with the Seoul Philharmonic.

A winner of the David Popper International Cello Competition and Salon de Virtuosi’s Sony Career Grant, Kim is also a laureate of the Isang Yun and Naumburg Cello Competitions. He performed on a Matteo Goffriller cello on loan from the Samsung Cultural Foundation and Stradivari Society. Kim currently serves on the faculty at University of Georgia’s Hugh Hodgson School of Music.



Program Notes
by Joshua Berrett, Ph.D.

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)
Intermezzo from Goyescas
(arranged by Gaspar Cassadó)

Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922) is not exactly a household name, but as a composer and prolific musicologist he had a profound influence on the big three pioneering figures identified with modern Spanish music—in chronological order, Isaac Albeniz, Enrique Granados, and Manuel de Falla. In the course of his many publications and teaching career in Barcelona and Madrid, Pedrell drew attention to the richness of the country's folk music—something analogous to what Bela Bartok was to later achieve with Hungarian and other music. For Granados, in particular, the years of study in Barcelona under Pedrell from 1883 to 1887 were vital to his growth as a composer.

The piece on this afternoon's program is among Granados's most popular. Originally written for orchestra, it was meant to cover a scene change in Granados's opera *Goyescas*, a work premiered at the New York Metropolitan Opera, January 28, 1916, in the presence of the composer himself. The opera is essentially an adaptation of the 1911 piano suite of the same name that was inspired by the paintings and etchings of Goya, specifically his depictions of *Majos* and *Majas*, colorful lower-class characters.

Ironically, the passionate *Intermezzo* was a last-minute addition to an ill-conceived rather static opera strongly influenced by the *tableaux vivants* in vogue at the time—those elaborate scenes with live costumed people posing motionless, where showmen like Florenz Ziegfeld excelled.

Granados had a lifelong fear of sailing and was very nervous about making the trip to New York. As fate would have it, on his return voyage he drowned in the English Channel, March 24, 1916, when his ship was torpedoed by a German submarine.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
Piano Trio No. 39 in G Major, Hob. XV/25 ("Gypsy")

The death in 1790 of his long-standing patron Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, led to a transformation in Haydn's life.

With the son Paul Anton now at the helm, the estate's orchestra was disbanded and Haydn, supported by an annuity, took up residence in Vienna. That same year he was approached by the enterprising impresario Johann Peter Salomon, who persuaded Haydn to come to London for a series of concerts. Two highly successful extended visits were the result, the first starting in January 1791, the second in February 1794. It was during these periods that Haydn composed the 12 so-called Salomon Symphonies, many of them with subtitles like "Surprise," "Military" and "Clock." Included in the group is also the "Oxford" Symphony associated with his receiving the honorary degree of Mus.D. from Oxford University.

It was in the summer of 1795, during the final weeks of his second visit, that Haydn composed the *Piano Trio No. 39* on this afternoon's program. It is one of a set three dedicated to Rebecca Schroeter, a love interest of Haydn. In fact, there is a cache of some two dozen letters written by Schroeter to Haydn. When later interviewed about them, Haydn remarked: "These letters are from an English widow in London who loved me; although she was getting on in age, she was still a beautiful and charming woman and I would have married her very easily if I had been free at the time."

Piano Trio No. 39 offers an irresistible combination of charm and grace in its first two movements, followed by a sense of gypsy abandon in the finale. The opening *G-major Andante* consists of a theme and four variations, working from a template of elegant matching phrases. Embellishment of the melody coupled with brief digressions to closely related keys like G minor, B-flat major, and E minor color the variations. The third and fourth variations, in particular, are showpieces for violin and piano respectively.

True to its tempo marking, the *E-major Adagio* conveys a sense of breadth and space. Essentially an A-B-A form, the movement features the piano in the A section followed by the violin in the midsection. An affecting transition carries us back to the reprise of the A melody, now heard with the piano and violin an octave apart.

The finale is a *Presto* rondo romp gypsy-style. Three statements of the G-major refrain are contrasted with digressions colored by the *verbunkos*, a Hungarian recruiting dance, marked by shifts to the minor, sudden

slow-downs, and more. This is joyous music harking back to Haydn's days working on the Esterházy estate, where he was exposed to much Hungarian folk music.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
Piano Trio No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 8

Shostakovich's *Piano Trio No. 1* is an early work dating from 1923, when he was still a student at the Leningrad Conservatory. Originally titled *Poème*, it is a mercurial work in one movement, marked by over a dozen tempo changes, not to mention changes of key, timbre, and texture. Yet there is an underlying unity in that all the themes derive from a chromatic descending motif F#, F, E. This is a motif hinting at a snippet of the languorous opening measures of the Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. In short, what we hear in this work is music with an unmistakable Romantic sensibility, offering virtually no hints of what was to come in Shostakovich's mature style.

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)
Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4

(arranged for piano trio by Eduard Steuermann)

Like the Shostakovich *Piano Trio*, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* ("Transfigured Night") is an early work. Completed in 1899, it was originally composed for string sextet—two violins, two violas, two cellos; there is also an arrangement for string orchestra he subsequently made. Steuermann's arrangement dates from 1932. A cherished colleague of Schoenberg and a highly accomplished pianist, he performed in several world premieres of his works. As pedagogue, he taught such major performers as Alfred Brendel, and Menahem Pressler of Beaux Arts Trio fame.

Verklärte Nacht is by far Schoenberg's most popular work—written in a passionate late Romantic style on the cusp of his involvement in some of modernism's most disruptive movements—Expressionism and atonal 12-tone music. And it is most telling that he and painters like Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) were kindred spirits. With his "Method of Composing with Twelve Tones which are related only with one another"—unlike tonal music, no one pitch has primacy—Schoenberg found common cause with the abstractionist painter.

Hostility on the part of “the establishment” initially greeted even *Verklärte Nacht*. In the words of one critic, “Why, that sounds as if someone had taken the score of Tristan with the ink still wet and smudged it over.” That said, *Verklärte Nacht* is essentially program music. It was deeply inspired by the poetry of Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), in particular, the opening poem in an 1896 set of lyrics entitled *Weib und Welt* (“Woman and World”). Like the poem, Schoenberg’s piece is organized in five interconnected sections of unequal length. What follows is a prose synopsis.

1) Two mortals walk through bare, cold woods. The moon above sails with them and they gaze into its light. The moon sails above lofty oaks. Black jagged peaks reach up into the cloudless heaven. A woman’s voice speaks:

2) I bear a child, and not from you. I walk in sin beside you. I have wronged myself profoundly. I had lost faith in happiness and yet felt such longing for meaning in life. For the joys and tasks of motherhood, I brazenly, shudderingly gave myself to a stranger’s embrace, and thought myself blessed. Now life has taken revenge; now I have met you.

3) With ungainly gait she stares aloft; the moon sails with them. Her dark glance drowns in moonlight. A man’s voice speaks:

4) The child you have conceived must be no burden to your soul. See how brightly all creation shimmers in the moonlight, as if embraced in one aureole. You and I are adrift together on a cold ocean, but a special warmth reaches from you to me, from me to you. That warmth will transfigure the child. You will bear the child to me—from me. You have brought glory into my soul.

5) He embraces her sturdy hips. Their breaths kiss in the air. Two mortals walk through the exalted brightness of the night.

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Coming Up



The remainder of the 2025-2026 season

Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Final World Tour

November 9, 2025

*Program includes Villa-Lobos,
Gershwin, Piazzolla, Barber, and Dvořák*

Ivalas Quartet

December 7, 2025

*Program includes Haydn,
Yuasa, Coleridge-Taylor, and Debussy*

Ying Quartet

March 15, 2026

*Program includes
Haydn, Childs, and Beethoven*

The Amerigo Trio with Lisa Eunsoo Kim

May 17, 2026

*Program includes
Beethoven, Dvořák, and Golijov*



