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APRIL 5, 2017

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

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We never book musicians we'll be unhappy to hear, but we're especially looking forward to tonight's return engagement by Trio Solisti. This group has a particular verve, coupled with a sense of adventure—whether discovering something new in Haydn, or presenting something absolutely brand-new, as in tonight's world premiere. And although Solisti's regular pianist is not able to be with us this evening, his seat will be well taken by Orion Weiss, a superlative chamber musician who has performed with Maria and Alexis in the past. As for the world premiere, we'll hear the AFCM-commissioned Piano Trio No. 2 by Jennifer Higdon. That composer is a return engagement for us, too; she is one of the most-performed living composers in America, thanks to her ability to communicate directly to an audience through extremely well-crafted scores. As in-demand as she is, we are very fortunate that Jennifer could find the time to fulfill this commission.

It's the final concert in our Evening Series, but the season is not over! (Do you like that exclamation point? Some think it lends excitement to even the most mundane sentence, but it can be overbearing. Just think of Lionel Bart's inability to write a musical without using at least one exclamation point: Oliver! Blitz! And, lord help us, the double whammy of Twang!!) As I was saying before that parenthetical punctuation digression, we still have the last concert in our Piano & Friends series coming up: cellist Anna Litvinenko and pianist Luis Ortiz, in a program that culminates in Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata, which gives both players an equal workout. People tell me repeatedly—and I have to agree—that the Piano & Friends concerts operate at just as high a performance level as our Evening Series, so please don't pass this up.

That April 23 recital will be the last Piano & Friends concert, ever. We are not doing away with the concept of presenting the most superb young professional artists, but we are expanding the series to include presentations in different, more intimate venues and concerts by performers who are innovative regardless of youth. After a huge amount of argument, we decided to rechristen the series Now Music. Next season will be a transitional year for the series, and for the most part will be indistinguishable from Piano & Friends. You can see what we're up to in the season brochure, which will be out next week. Watch for the big expansion in 2018–19.



James Reel  
*President*

# TRIO SOLISTI

## APRIL 5, 2017

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### **Trio Solisti**

Maria Bachmann, *violin*  
Alexis Pia Gerlach, *cello*

with guest  
Orion Weiss, *piano*

Arts Management Group, Inc.  
130 W. 57th Street  
New York, NY 10019

### **TRIO SOLISTI**

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Trio Solisti has forged a reputation as “the most exciting piano trio in America” (*The New Yorker*), with a passionate performance style that combines exceptional virtuosity and musical insight. Possessing a repertoire that encompasses standard compositions and works by contemporary composers, rave reviews follow the trio throughout its concert tours. Noted *Wall Street Journal* critic Terry Teachout proclaimed that Trio Solisti is “the group that to my mind has now succeeded the Beaux Arts Trio as the outstanding chamber music ensemble of its kind.”

Founded in 2001, Trio Solisti—violinist Maria Bachmann, cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach, and pianist Fabio Bidini—has performed on major concert series such as the Great Performers at Lincoln Center, People’s Symphony Concerts at Town Hall NY, Washington Performing Arts Society at Kennedy Center, Seattle’s Meany Hall, and La Jolla’s Revelle Series. In 2015, the ensemble performed a three-concert series at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, presenting the complete piano chamber music of Johannes Brahms, with guest artists Anthony McGill (clarinet), Jesse Mills (violin), Richard O’Neill and Hsin-Yun Huang (viola), and Julie Landsman (horn).

Trio Solisti has also given the premieres of several newly commissioned works. At a previous AFCM concert, they gave the first performance of Lowell Liebermann’s Trio No. 3, and tonight we hear the premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s second piano trio. Other leading composers with whom the trio has collaborated are Philip Glass, Kevin Puts, and Paul Moravec, whose *Tempest Fantasy* written for the group won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize. The trio proudly marks its 12th year as ensemble-in-residence at Adelphi University in Garden City, New York.

Previously AFCM has had Trio Solisti on our Evening Series concerts in October 2008 and January 2013.

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**ORION WEISS**

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Orion Weiss graduated from the Juilliard School in 2004, where he studied with Emanuel Ax. He won the 2005 William Petschek Recital Award at Juilliard and made his New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall that April. Also in 2005 he made his European debut in a recital at the Musée du Louvre in Paris. He was a member of the Chamber Music Society Two program of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center from 2002–2004, which included his appearance in the opening concert of the Society’s 2002–2003 season at Alice Tully Hall performing Ravel’s *La Valse* with pianist Shai Wosner. In September 2010 he was named the Classical Recording Foundation’s “Young Artist of the Year.”

Known for his affinity and enthusiasm for chamber music, Mr. Weiss performs regularly with his wife, pianist Anna Polonsky, violinists James Ehnes and Arnaud Sussman, and cellist Julie Albers, as well as ensembles including the Pacifica Quartet. As a recitalist and chamber musician, he has appeared across the U.S. at venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, the Ravinia Festival, Sheldon Concert Hall, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, Chamber Music Northwest, the Bard Music Festival, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, the Kennedy Center, and Spivey Hall.

Mr. Weiss last appeared for AFCM in a Piano & Friends concert of January 2004.

The World Premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s Piano Trio No. 2, “Color Through Notes,” is sponsored by Dagmar Cushing, Robert & Ursula Garrett, Dr. Henri Frischer & Alison Edwards, and Thomas Hanselmann & Mary Lonsdale Baker.

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**TONIGHT’S PROGRAM**

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**JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)**

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*Trio in C Major, Hob. XV:27*

Allegro  
Andante  
Finale: Presto

**JENNIFER HIGDON (b. 1962)**

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*Trio No. 2, “Color Through Notes” (World Premiere)*

Wondrous White  
Brilliant Blue

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**INTERMISSION**

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**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)**

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*Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8*

Allegro con brio  
Scherzo: Allegro molto  
Adagio  
Finale: Allegro

This evening’s concert is partially sponsored by the generous contribution of Jean-Paul Bierny and Chris Tanz.

# PROGRAM NOTES

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**AFTER HE RESIGNED** from his twenty-nine year tenure as Kapellmeister to the Esterházy family, Haydn enjoyed two extensive residencies in London at the invitation of the impresario Johann Peter Salomon. Time in this brilliant musical capital stylistically broadened Haydn, who now began to write with bolder harmonies and brighter sonorities. Since Haydn did much of his composing at the keyboard, he especially appreciated the resonance of the English grand piano, far more powerful than his thinly-strung Viennese instrument. Perhaps inspired by this new sonority, Haydn wrote the ten most esteemed of his thirty-one piano trios during and soon after his London sojourns.

Haydn returned to Vienna following his second London visit, at which time he composed three piano trios (1797) for Therese Jansen Bartolozzi, a talented amateur pianist and a close English friend. Although Therese, a favorite student of Muzio Clementi, did not perform publicly, she exemplified the high level of virtuosity achieved by non-professionals of the era. The C Major Trio, the first of the set, abounds with rapid octave passages that have been described as “wrist breaking,” numerous ornaments, and subtle changes of dynamics that demand the highest level of pianistic skill. Because Haydn wrote these trios to showcase the keyboard, the strings essentially support the piano part. Nevertheless, the violin contributes significant thematic statements throughout the work, and the cello both unifies and enriches the texture.

After an introductory fanfare, the opening Allegro unfolds in a leisurely sonata form with a profusion of thematic material that is enlivened by inventive rhythmic contrasts. An atmosphere of improvisation prevails as momentum builds but is punctuated by a dramatic pause—which, in late Haydn works, indicates preparation for intriguing development. The three-part Andante (A major) begins with a lyrical statement in the piano that is developed in dialogue with the strings. After a turbulent middle section (A minor) the opening idea returns with variations, and the movement concludes with a piano cadenza. The Presto is an exuberant rondo with unexpected harmonies and rhythmic accents.

**JENNIFER HIGDON'S PIANO TRIO NO. 2** “Color Through Notes” marks AFCM’s second commission of her work; the first, “An Exaltation of Larks,” was premiered by the Tokyo String Quartet during our 2006 Festival. Her music has been hailed by *Fanfare Magazine* as having “the distinction of being at once complex, sophisticated but readily accessible emotionally.” *The Times* of London praised it as “traditionally rooted, yet imbued with integrity and freshness.” Robert Spano, music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, describes her work as “expressive and beautiful and communicative and fresh and inventive,” and adds that he finds it “very representative of something that’s happened in American music with composers of her generation, a palpable aesthetic shift from the generation before them that I find very powerful.”

From the composer: “In my second piano trio, I continue to ponder the questions of my first piano trio—Can music reflect colors and can colors be reflected in music?”

“‘Wondrous White’: The symbolism of white ... religious, bright, hopeful. And the immense use of white in all art ... canvases start out as some form of white, in preparation for painting, and it is often used as a highlight, to lighten, and to create a glow. In fact, in scientific terms, white is the presence of all colors ... our eyes perceive the collection of all colors together as ‘white.’”

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“Brilliant Blue’: Represents so many different moods ... from the literal term of ‘feeling blue’ to the blue sky. The recent discovery of a new form of blue made me think about all of the different permutations a color has. And for me, the things that ‘blue’ represent...”

Jennifer Higdon’s Trio No. 2 was commissioned for Trio Solisti by the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and the Harvard Musical Association, and sponsored by Dagmar Cushing, Robert & Ursula Garrett, Dr. Henri Frischer & Alison Edwards, and Thomas Hanselmann & Mary Lonsdale Baker.

**AN UNUSUAL HISTORY** haunts Brahms’s Opus 8 Piano Trio, which premiered as two different versions in both 1855 and 1890. Before he published his first Opus 8 version at the urging of Schumann and their violinist friend Joachim, Brahms had already burned numerous efforts that did not meet his lofty standards. Soon after its publication he pronounced the Opus 8 “wild” and expressed strong regrets that he did not destroy it as well. While vacationing on Austria’s River Traun thirty-seven years later, Brahms recalled that Clara Schumann had objected to the trio’s many tempo changes. He then revisited the work and pared its length by a full third. Brahms deleted all thematic quotes from fellow Viennese composers—an elaborate and lengthy homage—and three movements were substantially recast with new secondary themes. Only the scherzo remained intact. Unfortunately, Brahms was dissatisfied with his revised trio also. He wrote to his publisher: “About the renewed trio, I must expressly state that while the old one is bad, I do not assert that the new one is good!” Friends received the revised trio with reserve. “You have no right to impose your masterly touch on this loveable, if sometimes vague, product of your youth,” wrote one. Nevertheless, Opus 8’s attractive early version was rarely performed after its published revision.

The second version of Opus 8, performed at tonight’s concert, is distinguished by its rich and masterful development of gorgeous themes. Brahms’s deep appreciation for Germany’s vast trove of lyrical song, much of it folk, permeates the work. The radiant opening theme of the first movement, introduced by the piano and cello, remained one of Brahms’s favorites throughout his life. The staccato Scherzo (very fast, B minor) is varied by a warmly songful trio section (B major); a soft and whimsical coda concludes the movement. Cast as a three-part song, the Adagio’s expressive center is a poignant cello statement that is developed by the violin. The cello introduces the restless opening theme of the finale, and the piano presents its forceful second theme, energized by syncopated accents in the cello. The coda, marked “a bit more animated,” reaffirms the movement’s opening idea.

Notes by Nancy Monsman

“Beethoven! Oh, to be able to have dinner and talk things through. Looking at his sketches, it’s obvious that composing was a struggle for him. I find this very comforting, because I don’t think composing is easy for anyone.”

JENNIFER HIGDON

# JENNIFER HIGDON

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Pulitzer Prize and Grammy-winner composer (b. Brooklyn, NY, December 31, 1962), Jennifer Higdon taught herself to play flute at the age of 15 and began formal musical studies at 18, with an even later start in composition at the age of 21. Despite this, she has become a major figure in contemporary classical music and makes her living from commissions. Her works represent a range of genres, from orchestral to chamber, to wind ensemble, as well as vocal, choral, and opera. Her music has been hailed by *Fanfare Magazine* as having “the distinction of being at once complex, sophisticated but readily accessible emotionally,” with *The Times* of London citing it as “traditionally rooted, yet imbued with integrity and freshness.” League of American Orchestras reports that she is one of America’s most frequently performed composers.

Dr. Higdon’s list of commissioners is extensive and includes The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Chicago Symphony, The Atlanta Symphony, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Minnesota Orchestra, The Pittsburgh Symphony, as well as such groups as the Tokyo String Quartet, eighth blackbird, and the President’s Own Marine Band. She has also written works for such artists as Thomas Hampson, Yuja Wang, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Jennifer Koh, and Hilary Hahn. Her first opera, *Cold Mountain*, was commissioned by the Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, and North Carolina Opera. The opera won the prestigious

International Opera Award for Best World Premiere in 2016, the first American opera to do so in the award’s history. It sold out its premiere run in Santa Fe, and during its second production, became the third highest selling opera in Opera Philadelphia’s history. Most recently, the recording was nominated for two Grammy Awards.

Among other accomplishments, Dr. Higdon received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, with the committee citing this work as “a deeply engaging piece that combines flowing lyricism with dazzling virtuosity.” She has also received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts & Letters, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, The Independence Foundation, the NEA, and ASCAP. A featured composer at many festivals, including Aspen, Tanglewood, Vail, Norfolk, Grand Teton, and Cabrillo, Dr. Higdon has served as Composer-in-Residence with half a dozen orchestras, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Fort Worth Symphony. She is currently the Barr Laureate Scholar at the University of Missouri Kansas City.

Dr. Higdon received a Bachelor’s Degree in Music from Bowling Green State University, an Artist Diploma from The Curtis Institute of Music, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She has been awarded honorary doctorates from the Hartt School and Bowling Green State University. Currently she holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.



*Cricket Song*

JOY HARJO

Tonight I catch a cricket song.  
Sung by a cricket that wants the attention of another—  
My thinking slides in the way of the cricket's sweet  
Longing. It's lit by the full moon as it makes a path  
Over the slick grass of the whitest dark,  
I doubt the cricket cares his singing is swinging starlight  
To the worry that has darkened my mind.  
It is mating season.  
They will find their way to each other by sound.  
*Time* and *how* are the mysterious elements of any life.  
I will find my way home to you.

MVSKOKE NATION, JUNE 23, 2013



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

**POETRY CENTER**

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Selected for tonight's concert by Tyler Meier,  
Executive Director of the University of Arizona  
Poetry Center.

CREDIT: "Cricket Song," from *Conflict Resolution  
for Holy Beings: Poems* by Joy Harjo. © 2015 by  
Joy Harjo. Used by permission of W.W. Norton  
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# BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: DAGMAR CUSHING

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**Q: How long have you been involved with AFCM?**

Dagmar Cushing: I can't even remember for sure but I think I have been on the board for about 26 years. I started attending the concerts when I first came to the U of A in 1969, when they were being held at Crowder Hall.

**Q: What is your current role?**

DC: I have had numerous roles, but right now I am primarily the “piano queen” which is a glamorous title for being in charge of anything relating to pianos (and taking the blame if anything goes wrong). I am also on the Now Music committee—formerly Piano and Friends—always scouting for talented young performers who are at the beginning of very promising careers. It is amazing how many highly talented young musicians there are all over the world! During the Festival we usually host a musician at home, which is so much fun.

**Q: What role does music play in your life?**

DC: There was always classical music when I was growing up. My parents played the piano and were avid music lovers. The radio or record player was always on and I got to attend many wonderful concerts through school and my family. Growing up in Germany, this was considered a vital part of public education.

**Q: Did you play an instrument or perform as a child?**

DC: I started playing the piano, and later the clarinet, both of which I still play, as an amateur. I have played in lay orchestras and chamber music groups and even went to “adult band camp” last year (for the first time in my life). Naturally, music was also a big part of raising my daughters.

**Q: How did you first become interested in the chamber music form?**

DC: Playing it started in high school, for me. We had great school programs and I continued in college and after.

**Q: What other kinds of music do you enjoy?**

DC: I love all kinds of music, especially the blues and gospel, world music, etc.

**Q: What do you do when you're not working on AFCM?**

DC: I have been a social worker in various settings. My longest stint was as a hospital social worker at UMC (now Banner), mostly in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. I loved my job until retirement last year. I also love retirement, which has allowed me to travel extensively, visit with my children more often, spend time with the grandkids, and do volunteer work for environmental and charitable causes.

**Q: Tell us about your other interests.**

DC: There are definitely too many: travel, lots of outdoor activities like hiking, kayaking, skiing, mushrooming (I am still alive!), music, pottery, spending time with my doggie, and reading, to name a few. Unfortunately, my bucket list is getting longer as I age. It should be the other way around!

**Q: What's the best part of an AFCM concert?**

DC: They are such superbly high-level performances, and there is a great variety of programming. It is the best anti-depressant I can imagine. Also, our audience is so appreciative and supportive.

**Q: What's a little known fact about AFCM?**

DC: That's a hard one. As far as I know, no major family crises have resulted from such intense volunteer work done by our board. That's an accomplishment in my book and must have something to do with the uplifting nature of music.

# SUMMERTIME EVENINGS

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For many years, AFCM fans have lamented the absence of concerts during the long summer months, a gap between the end of one season and beginning of the next. Last summer, for the first time, we presented a few informal concerts in the summer to see if there was interest.

There was!

This summer, beginning in May, we are pleased to present our Summertime Evenings, a series of three casual concerts to bridge the gap for fans and provide a relaxed and enjoyable chamber music experience for those who brave the Tucson heat.

Summertime Evenings concerts enable us to fulfill a second perennial desire, which is to find a way to present local artists. Our Evening Series, the Festival, and Piano & Friends (soon to be “Now Music”) are comprised of accomplished, world-renown, professional musicians—many of them highly-acclaimed and winners of international awards. They are simply, the best in the world.

But in Tucson, thanks to a robust arts community and the Fred Fox School of Music at the University of Arizona we have many talented chamber musicians who you might never have had an opportunity to hear. Summertime Evenings is your chance.

The concerts will be in a casual setting at the Sea of Glass Center for the Arts, a flexible venue that hosts music performances and other arts events. It’s located at 330 E. 7th Street, just to the west of 4th Avenue near Antigone Books. Concerts will feature food and drink from 7:00 to 8:00 pm, then music from 8:00 to 9:00 pm, and your \$25 ticket includes it all. Parking is easy in a large adjacent lot.

We hope you’ll join us—try one or more of the concerts, and then let us know what you think. We strive to continually improve the chamber music concerts we present to you, and welcome your feedback.

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## WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2017 7:00 PM

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University of Arizona  
Graduate String Quartet

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## WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2017 7:00 PM

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Alexander Tentser, *piano*

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## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017 7:00 PM

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Tim Kantor, *violin*, and friends  
Tannis Gibson, *piano*, Jackie Glazier, *clarinet*,  
and Michelle Abraham, *violin*

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*Listed are current plans and  
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