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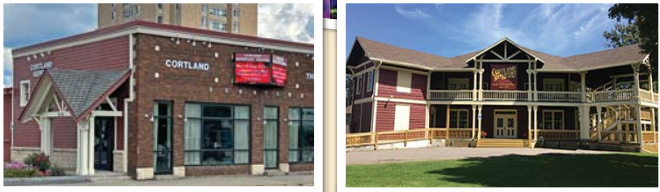

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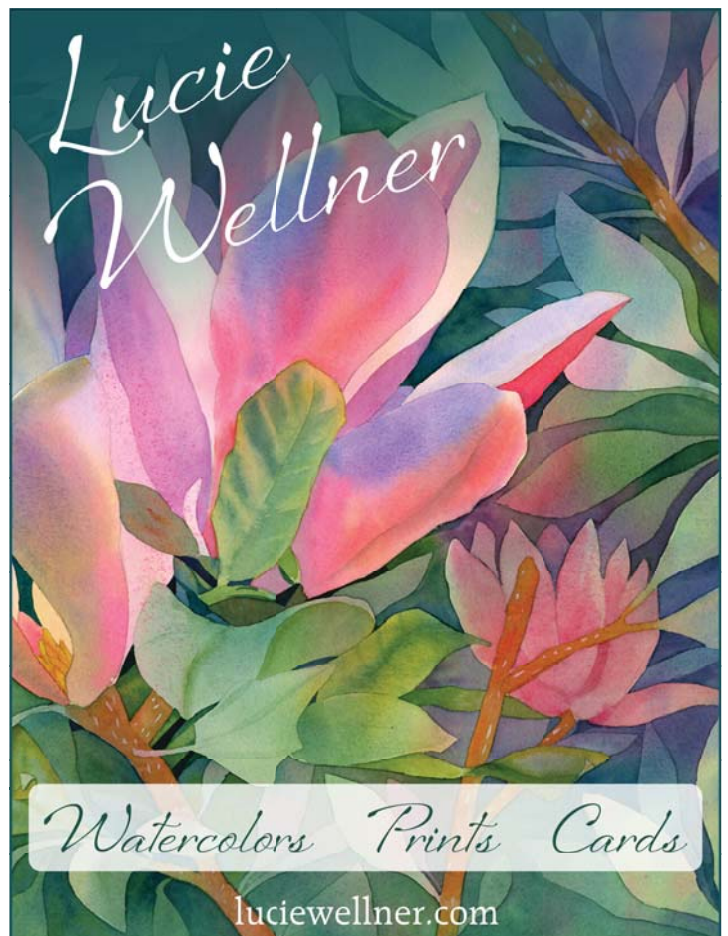
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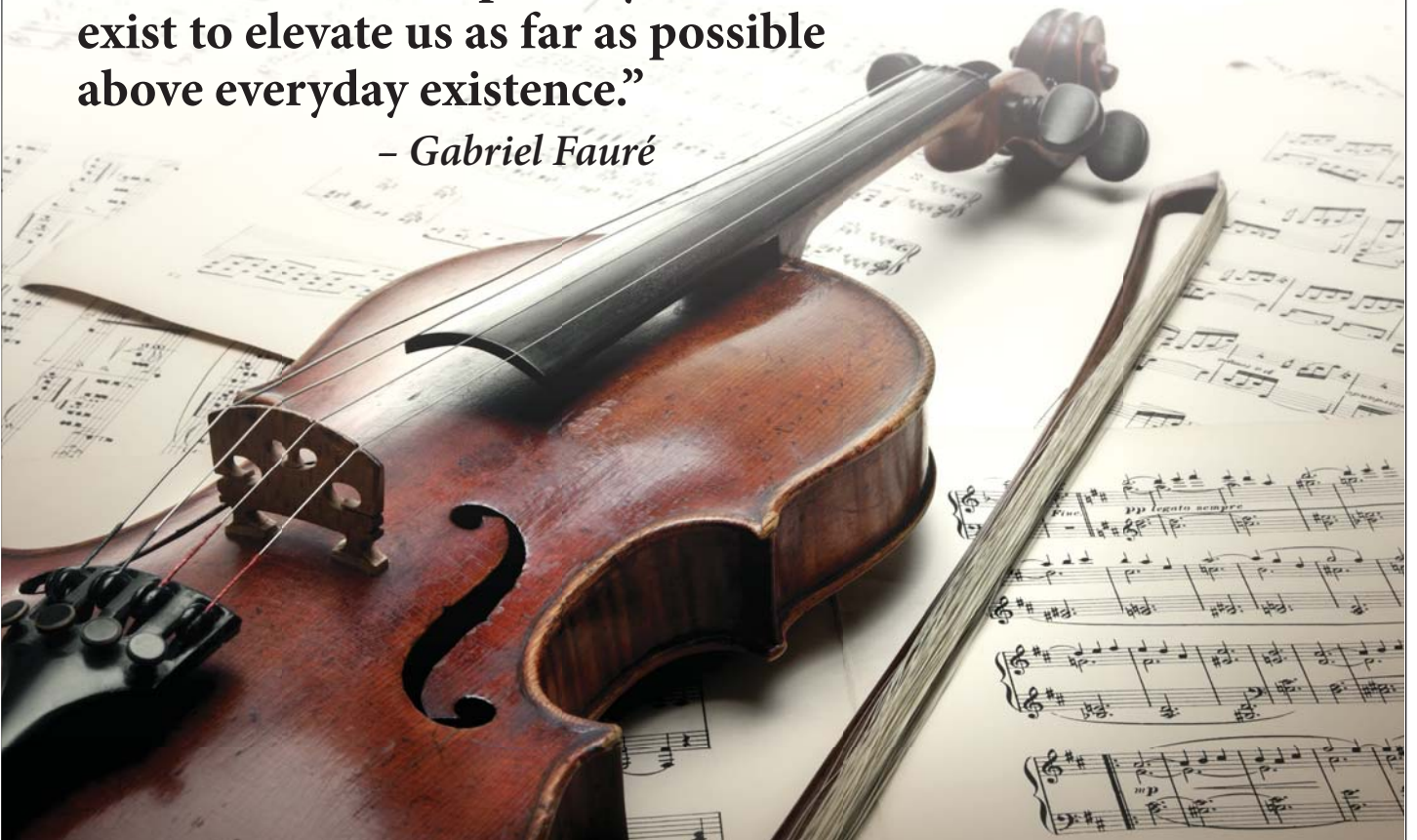


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– Gabriel Fauré



SYRACUSE FRIENDS *of* CHAMBER MUSIC

76th SEASON 2025-2026

Fall 2025

Contents

	Page
Our 76th Season at a Glance	6
President's Message	7
SFCM Executive Committee and Other Leaders	7
About Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music	8
Community Engagement	9
JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET	12
FRISSE ENSEMBLE	20
MODIGLIANI QUARTET	28
Music Terms Used in This Program	35
Krasner Memorial Fund and Award	38
Index of Advertisers	39
Our Contributors	40

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Our 76th Season at a Glance

JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET

September 27, 2025

The Juilliard Quartet first played for SFCM in 1962. The musicians we will hear are different now, but the group continues to inspire audiences around the world with its unparalleled artistry and enduring vigor. Michelle Ross's recent work, *Birds on the Moon*, is related to two other works to be performed with it, a Bach Prelude and Beethoven's magnificent String Quartet op. 132. And as a special treat in this 26th performance for SFCM, recently retired Quartet member Ronald Copes will play an additional viola part in Dvorák's third String Quintet! **Sponsored by Joseph W. Flanagan, M.D.**

FRISSON ENSEMBLE

October 25, 2025

A "frisson" is a shiver of pleasure. That's what we felt when the Frisson Ensemble played for us in the past. Their varied program this time includes works by Mozart and Robert Schumann that feature superb oboist Tom Gallant (the ensemble's Artistic Director) and luscious piano quartets by Brahms and Fauré. **Sponsored by RAV Properties.**

MODIGLIANI QUARTET

November 8, 2025

Since 2003, this French group has performed at prestigious international venues such as the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, London's Wigmore Hall, and the Saint-Petersburg Philharmonie. "The Modigliani Quartet clearly belongs to the world's greatest." *Le Monde*. In their previous concert for SFCM, we were impressed with the incredible unity and interpretive excellence of this quartet, perfect for a program of major string quartets by Haydn, Beethoven, and Brahms. **Sponsored by Martin Korn & Sylvia Betcher.**

FEATURING FLUTE

January 17, 2026

At our mid-winter concert, SFCM always presents excellent musicians from our own area. How lucky we are to have the fabulous flutist Xue Su as principal in The Syracuse Orchestra! Flute, harp and strings join for the Roussel Serenade and Debussy Sonata. The Turina trio for piano, violin, and cello is a great complement to those, and Xue Su returns for the closing Weber trio (flute, cello, piano).

ESCHER QUARTET

with guest BRANDON PATRICK GEORGE

February 7, 2026

The Escher Quartet is a regular guest at London's Wigmore Hall and serves as Season Artists of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. In fact, name a prestigious concert venue; chances are the Escher Quartet has been invited to perform there. Brandon Patrick George has played in SFCM concerts twice since he became the flutist of the Imani Winds, most recently in May, 2025. This program brings the five musicians together in multiple quartet and quintet combinations to bring us marvelous music of Mozart, Verdi, Beach, Barber, and Ginastera.

SALIX PIANO TRIO

March 28, 2026

Violinist Joanna Mauer, cellist Alberto Parrini, and pianist Anna Stoytcheva have been playing together in various combinations for a long time as part of the American Chamber Players. Just two years ago they decided to form a piano trio to explore that rich literature. We will hear great traditional trios by Beethoven and Mendelssohn and a not so traditional trio by Paul Schoenfeld, recalling Vienna cafés and a bit of early jazz. **Sponsored by FLX TAX.**

DOVER QUARTET

May 2, 2026

We end the season on a high note with the return of one of our favorite ensembles – the glorious Dover Quartet. This praise from BBC Music Magazine says it all: "One of the greatest quartets of the last 100 years." Enjoy lush quartets from Schubert and Mendelssohn as well as Polish composer Grażyna Bacewicz's rhapsodic Quartet no. 6. **Sponsored by David Abrams in memory of Cheryl Abrams.**

For more information, see SyrFCM.org

SYRACUSE FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Welcome to Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music's 76th Season! Thank you for being a member of this music community. We live in difficult times—wars, climate stress, economic uncertainty, and divisive politics occupy our thoughts. We are fortunate to be in this auditorium tonight; it's our opportunity to relax and connect with others through music.

We open this impressive concert season on September 27 with the brilliantly expressive Juilliard String Quartet—the group's 26th performance on our stage. To celebrate the new season, a reception for the entire audience will follow the concert in the school library. On October 25, the versatile Frisson Ensemble will showcase an oboe and piano as well as strings in their program. On November 8, the Paris-based Modigliani Quartet fulfills our commitment to bring critically acclaimed and dynamic ensembles to Syracuse.

We are grateful to our partners at the Syracuse City School District and Grant Middle School for their cooperation and generous support of our mission. To demonstrate our appreciation, the music program at Grant Middle is a significant focus of our community engagement efforts, as described on page 9.

We have been bringing beautifully arranged chamber music performances to Syracuse audiences for seventy-six years. This would not be possible without the efforts of our dedicated volunteers. They take care of everything, from contracting with musicians, to setting up the stage, to selling tickets. Nor could we survive without you, our audience members, subscribers, and donors. Thank you for your support. Our volunteer Board of Directors is comprised of community members who generously share their talents in roles that involve governance, finance, planning, and operations. If you would like to explore how you might help with our work or how to become a Board member, please let me know. We will find a good fit for your skills.

I extend our appreciation to the businesses that have chosen to sponsor our season. I urge you to look through this program and take note of them. By patronizing our sponsors and telling them you saw their ads in the SFCM program, you help us maintain low ticket and subscription prices.

One final note: to provide superb chamber music to new audiences, we offer free admission to all full-time students and holders of EBT/SNAP cards.

Enjoy this evening's performance!

Sincerely,
Ginny Robbins
President of SFCM

SFCM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER LEADERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Virginia Robbins
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Midwinter concert	Lindsay Groves, Tom McKay, Ida Tili-Trebicka

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About Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music . . .

SFCM's founder, virtuoso violinist Louis Krasner, was born in 1903 in the Ukraine and moved to the United States at age five. He studied violin at the New England Conservatory of Music, then returned to Europe for further studies and made his concert debut in Vienna. He was well known for his performances of 20th century music – in particular for his commission and first performance of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto, and for his world premiere of Schoenberg's Violin Concerto in 1940 with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski.

In 1949 Krasner left his position as concertmaster for the Minneapolis Symphony to join the Syracuse University music faculty, bringing with him a lifetime love of chamber music. He had performed chamber music and formed a chamber music organization in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Upon his arrival in Syracuse, he set about creating a chamber music society for his new community – with the moral support of his friend and director of the Minneapolis Symphony, Dmitri Metropoulos, who had moved to the New York Philharmonic. The result was the birth of Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music. In addition to his roles as chamber music advocate and university professor, Krasner served as Concertmaster for the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra from its inception in 1961 to 1968.

Krasner's initial vision for SFCM was to combine internationally known musicians with talented regional professional performers. He formed a string quartet which included his wife, violinist Adrienne Galimir Krasner. During the 1950s, the Krasner Quartet was the centerpiece of SFCM programs. In the 1960s, Krasner began to attract internationally known groups to Syracuse – for instance, he brought the Juilliard Quartet to Central New York for the first time. By the early 70s, SFCM focused on programming distinguished chamber music groups from all over the world, at the same time continuing to showcase professional artists from the local community. In addition, Krasner encouraged the performance of 20th century

chamber music and brought a number of its more prominent composers to Syracuse.

Louis Krasner left Syracuse for Boston in 1976. The next music director, Henry Palocz, continued the outstanding programming that had been a hallmark of SFCM from the beginning. In 2008, after 32 years of dedicated and distinguished service, Palocz became music director emeritus, and Richard Moseson was appointed SFCM's third music director. Jonathan Chai became programming director in 2013, and in 2017 Travis Newton took on that position. Travis guided us through the difficulties and uncertainties of pandemic programming, and Richard continued his great work as director of music operations through this challenging time. Stamatios Kyrkos stepped in as the next programming director in 2024.

For many years, Krasner Award-winning SFCM board member John Oberbrunner coordinated a mid-winter concert performed by outstanding regional musicians – in keeping with Louis Krasner's original vision. After the 2021 concert, John passed the baton to others who have continued this tradition.

Highlights of recent years

With the return to H. W. Smith's larger auditorium in 2014, SFCM adopted a policy of admitting full-time students free to its concerts, helping to build future audiences for chamber music. We continue that policy at Grant Middle School.

In 2016 we revived our youth chamber music competition. Impressive young ensembles have competed each year since then, and our audiences have heard inspiring performances from winning groups at concerts in the spring.

Our seventieth anniversary season (2019-2020) featured some of the finest music on the planet, although the pandemic shutdown meant that the last two concerts could not take place as planned. Both were rescheduled for September 2020 and presented as recordings that could be viewed online. We met the pandemic's continuing challenges with recorded concerts in 2020-21, transitioning back to live performances in subsequent seasons.

We started celebrating our 75th anniversary season in September 2024 with a gala dinner and performance by the Juilliard String Quartet. Five of our 2024-2025 subscription concerts featured favorite ensembles from recent seasons (based on an audience questionnaire), and we commissioned two new works to mark the anniversary. We also moved to Grant Middle School—Its auditorium is a wonderful new venue for our concerts. We expect that this beautifully renovated, acoustically marvelous space will continue to be our home base.

In our new home at Grant, we have supported students' musical activities by commissioning a new work for the band and orchestra to perform (presented at the spring band concert in May, 2025), by providing music folders and performance T-shirts for students, and by encouraging the school's staff, students, and families to come to our concerts.

We also sponsored a community-based classical music concert at Tucker Missionary Baptist Church in July. Three outstanding young artists were featured soloists, accompanied by a professional chamber orchestra. We are proud to have added our support to this wonderful event. Our community outreach efforts also include sending small professional ensembles to perform in local schools.



**Adrienne & Louis Krasner, founder of
Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

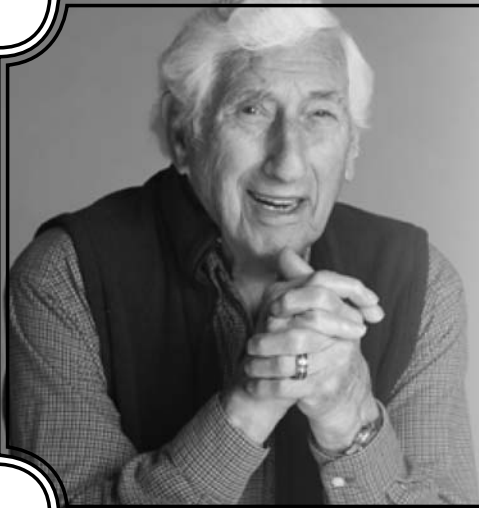
Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music fosters an appreciation for classical music, particularly chamber music, by promoting and producing concerts and presentations. This season, our efforts begin with a seven-concert series at Grant Middle School and extend to this host school.

We work with the teachers at Grant to determine how we can best support their music program through targeted funding. This past season we sponsored student assemblies at Grant featuring string and brass ensembles drawn from The Syracuse Orchestra. In May, we were especially thrilled to attend the school's spring concert where 70 band and orchestra students performed the world premiere of the rousing Grant March, a piece we had commissioned from local composer Sean O'Loughlin. This season, we continue to work with the school's music teachers to support program needs.

We held a successful Youth Competition on March 1, 2025, at which three string quartets, a piano trio, and a woodwind quintet – all made up of students from the Syracuse and Rochester areas – competed. The Wolfgang Trio from Syracuse won the Best Ensemble Award. We enjoyed their impressive performance for our SFCM audience before the April 5, 2025, Frautschi-Manasse-Nakamatsu Trio concert. Runner-up was the NAKA Quartet from Rochester.

We further supported young artists this summer by sponsoring the July 22 “Young Artists Concert with Orchestra” led by Music Director David Ross and featuring cellist Abby Feng who will attend The Juilliard School of Music this fall; soprano Ava Taylor who attends the Manhattan School of Music; and pianist Hudson Brenner, a senior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School. This was one of a series of concerts in Gregory Sheppard's “Festival of Music Series 2025,” all presented at Tucker Baptist Church in the heart of Syracuse's south side.

SFCM Executive Committee member Marina Artuso leads a volunteer group that will focus on community engagement efforts this season. We would like to extend collaboration to additional partners and to further strengthen opportunities to enrich musical life in Syracuse and the surrounding area. These community initiatives are possible because of the generous support of our donors, concert sponsors, and advertisers. Our efforts will benefit from your involvement. See our website at SyrFCM.org/in-the-community to link to a survey through which you can give us your thoughts about future community engagement projects.



In Memoriam **Sidney Manes** *1926-2025*

After serving in the South Pacific during World War II, Sidney Manes put himself through college and law school. He then practiced law in Syracuse for over 70 years, specializing in environmental law and in fighting for the underdog. He met his later-life partner Amy Zamkoff at an SFCM concert in 2016 and joined her in hosting receptions after concerts. A charismatic and generous man, Sidney was an example of how to live life to the full. We will miss him.

Congratulations to the SFCM on 76 years of fine chamber music!



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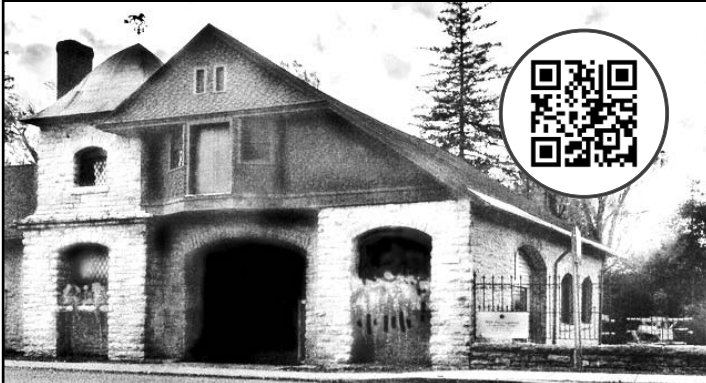


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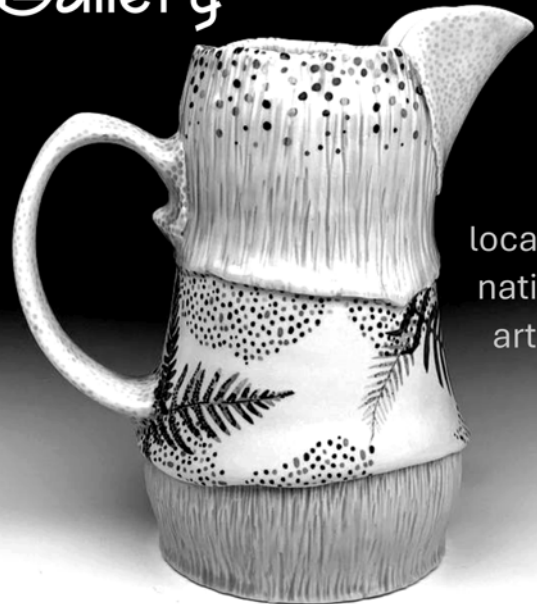
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76th Season – First Concert
Saturday, September 27, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Grant Middle School Auditorium

We thank Dr. Joseph W. Flanagan, M.D. for his generous sponsorship of this concert.

JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET

Areta Zhulla, violin
Leonard Fu, violin
Molly Carr, viola
Astrid Schween, cello
with
Ronald Copes, viola

PROGRAM

Prelude in E-flat Major, BWV 852 (1722)
arr. Michelle Barzel Ross

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Birds on the Moon (2024)
Prelude: with Cosmic Awe
Musette
Knocking
Beyond the Last Thought
The Palm at the End of the Mind

Michelle Barzel Ross
(b. 1987)

Quartet no. 15 in A-Minor, op. 132 (1825)
Assai sostenuto - Allegro
Allegro ma non tanto
Molto adagio
Alla marcia, assai vivace
Allegro appassionato

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

INTERMISSION

String Quintet no. 3, op. 97 (1893)
Allegro non tanto
Allegro vivo – Un poco meno mosso
Larghetto with 5 variations
Finale. Allegro giusto

Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)

SYRACUSE FRIENDS *of* **CHAMBER MUSIC**

Thanks

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Juilliard String Quartet



Concert Notes . . .

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Prelude in E-flat Major, BWV 852 (1722)
arr. Michelle Ross (2024)

Michelle Barzel Ross (b. 1987)
Birds on the Moon (2024)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Quartet no. 15 in A Minor, op. 132 (1825)

Michelle Ross was commissioned to compose a work for string quartet in memory of Roger Tapping, viola player for the Juilliard Quartet from 2013 until his death in 2022. She arranged Bach's keyboard prelude for the Juilliard in connection with this composition, *Birds on the Moon*, which we will hear after the Bach. The new work also references Beethoven's string quartet opus 132.

Bach wrote his first book of preludes and fugues for keyboard instruments, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, in 1722 "...for the profit and use of musical youth desirous of learning, and especially for the pastime of those already skilled in this study." Each of the 24 prelude/fugue combinations explores a different key in the well-tempered system. This prelude, number 7, starts with a short toccata followed by a chorale. Then a fully developed four-part fugue, still part of the prelude, combines elements of the first two sections.

Beethoven began writing his final five string quartets in the fall of 1824, immediately after finishing the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony. He sketched op. 132 that fall and completed it the following spring. Between those two events, however, he was desperately ill; in addition, he was nearing the culmination of a difficult custody battle concerning his 18-year-old nephew Karl. And he was profoundly deaf. That he could compose this remarkable quartet under those circumstances is something of a miracle.

Opus 132 has an unusual five movements. The third was inserted after Beethoven recovered from his illness, and is titled "*Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart*" (A Convalescent's Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity, in the Lydian Mode). The five sections of the movement alternate between increasingly complex treatments of the quasi-religious thanksgiving theme and joyful celebrations of his regained health, labeled "*Neue Kraft Fühlend*" (with a feeling of new strength.)

The work as a whole is full of contrasts: lightness vs. darkness, gravity vs. joy, anxiety vs. serenity, calmness vs. exhilaration. It startled his contemporary audience, but was an immediate success. As nephew Karl said, "Listeners were either enthusiastic, astonished, or questioning, yet all were so impressed that none condemned it."

— Beth Oddy

Here are Michelle's comments on her quartet and its relationships to the other two works:

About Bach 852:

Birds on the Moon begins with a distorted Bach fragment which I borrowed from Prelude 852 of *Well-Tempered Clavier*,

Book 1. As my quartet begins, however, Bach's counterpoint is unrecognizable because each player is rhythmically phased apart from each other. I fell in love with this Bach Prelude, and as I was composing my quartet, started each morning for almost a year playing this prelude as slowly as possible on my upright piano. To my delight, slow tempos heightened my attention to Bach's sensuous and ecstatic counterpoint: every rise and fall reverberated in my ears, in my dreams, blurring into other scores. While researching for my quartet, I began to see traces of this prelude, the warmth of its E flat major and its mesmerizing rising fourth, across late Beethoven piano sonatas and string quartets. I could not get the connection between this Prelude (which contains a double fugue...before the actual Fugue!) and Beethoven's Opus 110 Piano Sonata's last movement fugue out of my mind. In my obsession, I discovered that it was likely Beethoven knew this Prelude inside out because he was known to have performed the *Well-Tempered Clavier* as a young child and to have Bach's score on his desk. Subconsciously or not, I ultimately realized that Bach's rising fourth served as a mirror to the cello melody which sits within the heart of my quartet (Movement 4), as my melody begins with a rising 5th answered by a falling 4th. Bach's 852 subject weaves throughout my string quartet on a transformational path: the players begin with a feeling of awe and sadness in their sound as the counterpoint searches for itself, yearning to reach out across obscured time and colors to find its original alignment. This yearning culminates in the center of my work, when the viola meets my cello melody with a version of Bach's subject transposed into C major. At this union, I have written in the score: "LOVE LAID BARE."

Birds on the Moon

Birds on the Moon is a poetic labyrinth which weaves across mediums, musical dialogue, time, and color. The work is in five attacca movements, mirrored on Beethoven's op. 132. The powerful emotional structure of 132's third movement, "*Heiliger Dankgesang*," inspired me to juxtapose ancient and new sounds and thread a path of transformation and return in *Birds on the Moon*. My quartet begins in extreme emotional vulnerability: a musical paradox where time, rhythm, and the bare bones of musical counterpoint itself are stretched and juxtaposed. The music searches and evolves through fantastical invented string techniques (all born from improvisation) as accelerating lines of tension and contrasting musical forms propel the piece forward. My *Musette* is inspired from the alluring drone in Beethoven's op. 132 second movement, and is filled with fantastical and whimsical bird calls, pizzicato, tapping, and knocking. The third movement begins with wide, searching intervals, with an exponential growth in tension. The quartet accelerates towards a cluster, from which emerges a tender cello melody. This is met by the Bach fragment in the viola, and the full string quartet finally sings with loving counterpoint as the music rises like *Murmuration*: gestures joyously spill out like birds in flight, lines swirl, rise, expand and contract, culminating in a final bird fluttering in the violin. While the violin is knocking at the height of its register, the rest of the quartet falls downwards, the joyous counterpoint turns inward again, and time phases like the opening.

Unconscious design and synchronicity guided my compositional process. Often, I would fall in love with an obscure color while improvising. Slowly, signs would emerge from the recess of my mind, like a compass to understand and attempt to translate the material. Two Wallace Stevens poems came to me from long stored memories, and finally birds emerged like an anchor, as I attempted to notate my wild, imaginative improvisational language into a tangible medium. I became obsessed with the idea of time phasing with itself and envisioned gravity affecting

each players' counterpoint differently: the phrase "birds on the moon" appeared in my mind. To my delight, this phrase revealed itself to be equal parts riddle and poetry: throughout history, philosophers, poets, and amateur astronomers as early as the 17th century questioned whether birds indeed migrated to the moon in winter? And so, the title of my quartet *Birds on the Moon* alludes to a metaphysical and impossible journey, contains multitudes of the cosmically huge and improbably small, and alludes to the beautiful expanse which can be found within one sliver of Bach counterpoint.

My hope is that this work might capture even an ounce of the profound humanity, love, curiosity, and magical spirit contained within our beloved Roger. Thank you to John Kongsgaard and Chamber Music in Napa Valley for the honor of composing this quartet for JSQ and celebrating Roger.

– Michelle Barzel Ross

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) ***String Quintet no. 3, op. 97 (1893)***

Dvořák lived in the United States from 1892 to 1895 while he directed the recently created National Conservatory of Music in New York City. But it was hard being so far from home. He found the crowds and noise of New York City somewhat alien, and he missed his large family desperately. During the summer of 1893, he headed out to Spillville, Iowa, a small farming community made up of people of Czech heritage. His whole family (wife and six kids!) joined him there, and he thrived. It was a productive period for the composer – in a few short weeks he wrote two of his most beloved chamber works, the "American" String Quartet and the String Quintet we hear tonight.

There has long been a debate among musicologists about the extent to which Dvořák deliberately incorporated "American" influences in his work, particularly the pentatonic scale and Native-American drumming motifs. But Dvořák himself said, "Omit that nonsense about my having made use of 'Indian' and 'American' themes – that is a lie. I tried to write only in the spirit of these national American melodies." That spirit delighted in melody and rhythm, uncomplicated by the constraints and complications of the compositional orthodoxy of the day.

Hartmut Schick, an authority on Dvořák's chamber music, describes his "American" works like this: "It is music which often enough restricts itself to only four or five different notes, instead of dealing with the whole chromatic scale; music which discovers rhythm as an autonomous element that was almost lost in late Romanticism; music which re-discovers the one-line melody as a phenomenon in itself...; music which introduces material from nature and so-called primitive music into the sacred halls of the chamber genre; music which wants to be easily playable and entertaining, instead of becoming more of a strain for the listener and increasingly more strenuous for the player." Not surprisingly, musicians and audiences loved it!

The first movement opens with a solo from the "extra" member of the quintet, the second viola. Listen for the two contrasting themes in this classic sonata design; both are pentatonic melodies. A repeated dotted rhythm underlies the second theme and continues through the rest of the movement. This rhythmic pattern will reappear in the final rondo.

The very rhythmic second movement again begins with the second viola and incorporates a pentatonic melody. In the middle

section, the first viola sings a slower and more melancholy song. (Can you guess that Dvořák played the viola himself? He gives wonderful lines to viola players.)

The theme for the third movement comes in two parts, the first half in melancholy A-flat minor, and the rest switched into more cheerful major. Five imaginative variations follow before the ending coda repeats the theme.

The quintet ends with a joyful rondo in an A-B-A-C-A-B-A structure. The main A theme, incorporating a dotted rhythmic pattern introduced in the first movement, surrounds two energetic melodic interludes, themes B and C.

– Beth Oddy

ABOUT THE ARTISTS . . .

With unparalleled artistry and enduring vigor, the Juilliard String Quartet (JSQ) continues to inspire audiences around the world. Founded in 1946 and hailed by *The Boston Globe* as "the most important American quartet in history," the ensemble draws on a deep and vital engagement to the classics while embracing the mission of championing new works, a vibrant combination of the familiar and the daring. Each performance of the Juilliard String Quartet is a unique experience, bringing together the four members' profound understanding, total commitment, and unceasing curiosity in sharing the wonders of the string quartet literature.

The Juilliard String Quartet continues to honor its rich legacy of innovative commissions with *Letters to Ludwig*, a deeply personal, multi-year commissioning project that invites living composers to engage with Beethoven's late quartets. The first chapter featured two evocative new works by German composer Jörg Widmann, inspired by Opus 130, including its original ending, the Grosse Fuge. In the 2025-26 season, the journey continues with a new quartet by Iraqi-American composer Michelle Barzel Ross, reflecting on the profound spirit of Opus 132. These commissions were made possible with the generous support of The Juilliard School, Chamber Music in Napa Valley, and Arizona Friends of Chamber Music.

As part of a new collaboration with Deutsche Grammophon's STAGE+ platform, the Juilliard String Quartet plans to present live-streamed performances of each chapter of *Letters to Ludwig*, offering global audiences an immersive experience of this evolving artistic journey. The first chapter was live-streamed in January 2025 and is now archived on the platform for on-demand viewing.

Performance highlights of the Juilliard String Quartet's 2024-25 season included ongoing collaborations with violinist Itzhak Perlman and pianists Emanuel Ax and Jean-Yves Thibaudet as well as appearances at major venues including Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco. The season also featured distinguished collaborations with soprano Tony Arnold and clarinetist Daniel Ottensamer. The Quartet's extensive touring included performances at London's Wigmore Hall and BBC Radio, Berlin's Pierre Boulez Saal, Salzburg's Mozarteum Grosse Saal, Chicago's Ravinia Festival, as well as New York's Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

A facet of the JSQ's decades-old legacy is a prolific and celebrated discography, with landmark recordings that continue to be rereleased by Sony Masterworks. The Quartet's latest album on Sony (2021), featuring works by Beethoven, Bartók,



and Dvořák, was released to international acclaim, with *Strings Magazine* calling it a “miracle of contrasting color.” Other notable releases include an album featuring the world premiere recording of Davidovsky’s *Fragments* (2018) alongside Beethoven’s op. 95 quartet and Bartók’s Quartet no. 1. The JSQ’s recordings of the Bartók and Schoenberg quartets as well as those of Debussy, Ravel, Dutilleul, and Beethoven have won Grammy Awards, and in 2011 the JSQ became the first classical music ensemble to receive

a lifetime achievement award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

The JSQ is string quartet in residence at The Juilliard School in New York City, and its members – Areta Zhulla, Leonard Fu, Molly Carr, and Astrid Schween – are all sought-after teachers on the string and chamber music faculties. The Quartet regularly offers classes and open rehearsals while on tour and hosts the internationally recognized Juilliard String Quartet Seminar each May at The Juilliard School.



In Memoriam
Deborah Pellow
 1945-2025

A seminal figure in her field, Deborah taught anthropology at Syracuse University for more than 40 years. She approached people with intense curiosity and compassion, whether they were colleagues, students, people she met in Ghana, Nigeria, Japan, or China while doing fieldwork, or fellow attendees at chamber music concerts. As a Board member, she led SFCM’s recent efforts to engage with the local community. We will sorely miss her enthusiasm and zest for life.

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In Memoriam
Dr. Darvin J. Varon
1955-2025

Psychiatrist Darvin Varon knew how to listen to people, how to comfort them, and how to fill a room with laughter. His early work as an actor and his return to school as an "adult student" informed his career as a psychiatrist at Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse. He and his partner, Dr. Elinor Spring-Mills, were members of the SFCM Board. They served on the Programming Committee and sponsored concerts for many years.

Thank you Darvin and Elinor.

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Fifi Zhang, piano

PROGRAM

Quartet in F Major for Oboe and Strings, K. 370 (1781)

W.A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro
Adagio
Rondeau. Allegro

**Quartet no. 3 in C minor for Piano and Strings,
op. 60 (1855-1875)**

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo
Scherzo. Allegro
Andante
Finale. Allegro comodo

INTERMISSION

Three Romances for Oboe and Piano, op. 94 (1849)

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Nicht schnell
Einfach, innig
Nicht schnell

**Quartet no. 1 in C Minor for Piano and Strings,
op. 15 (1879, 1883)**

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Allegro molto moderato
Scherzo: Allegro vivo
Adagio
Allegro molto

*SFCM acknowledges and thanks Civic Morning Musicals
for providing the Steinway grand piano for this performance.*

Concert Notes . . .

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Quartet in F Major for Oboe and Strings, K. 370 (1781)

Mozart wrote his Oboe Quartet in 1781 while he was composing the opera *Idomeneo* for the carnival celebration at the invitation of Elector Carl Theodor. He was eager to take a break from his post as violinist and organist to the Archbishop Colloredo in Salzburg, who often treated him poorly and whom Mozart despised. While in Munich, he worked with the Mannheim Court Orchestra. It was considered one of the best in Europe and included Mozart's friend and oboist Friedrich Ramm. Mr. Ramm was one of the few oboe virtuosos of the time. In those days, the oboe was a very simple instrument and had only a few keys. Friedrich Ramm must have been an astonishing player – even with today's oboes, the work is one of the most demanding ever written for the instrument.

It begins with a light-hearted and sparkling theme played by the oboe, later imitated by the strings. The brief second movement is much like an opera, including a brief cadenza, with the oboe singing the leading role. Although short, the movement has extraordinary emotional range. The final movement contains one of the first instances of polyrhythm – the strings play in 6/8 meter while the oboe plays in 4/4. The quartet contains many florid and very difficult passages for the oboe, encompassing the entire range of the instrument and frequently using notes rarely heard at the time.

– Tom Gallant

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Quartet no. 3 in C minor for Piano and Strings, op. 60 (1855-1875)

The first version of Brahms' Piano Quartet no. 3 was drafted in 1855 before his other two piano quartets. Brahms set it aside for revision and did not complete it until 1875, after the others.

This quartet is sometimes called the *Werther Quartet*, after Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In the novel, young Werther commits suicide after falling in love with a married woman whose husband he admires. Famously, Brahms was in love with Clara Schumann, the wife of Robert Schumann. Robert Schumann had died in 1856, and although Brahms maintained a very close relationship with Clara, his love for the older woman was never fully requited. The connection to Goethe's novel was made explicitly, even if perhaps facetiously, when Brahms submitted the manuscript to his publisher (in 1875) with this message: "On the cover you must have a picture, namely a head with a pistol to it. Now you can form some conception of the music! I'll send you my photograph for the purpose."

Right at its opening, the first movement has two elements that have been associated with this unfulfilled love. The first element is evident two-note sighs from the strings in their first notes of the work. Are they sighing "Clara"? This two-note motif recurs throughout the movement, often more like a desperate cry than a sigh. The second element follows immediately on those opening sighs: a motif from Robert Schumann that was associated with Clara and reused in several of Robert Schumann's works. In C minor it is E♭–D–C–B–C, the notes in the first violin right after the initial sustained piano note and the two "sighs" from the strings.

The whole first movement is very unsettled in its mood. The dramatic opening is followed by passages that might be described variously as gentle, strong, delicate, uncertain, firm, tentative, dramatic, and tender, with several changes of key. Further reflections of a complicated relationship?

The second movement is more definite in its mood and in its musical elements; it is a vigorously animated *scherzo* in C minor (ending with a C major cadence).

The romantic *Andante* movement opens with cello and piano, with the violin soon entering, tenderly intertwining its counter-melody with the cello's. The melodies are gorgeously Brahmsian instrumental lines, including wide intervals and luscious resonance. The movement is in the surprising, unrelated key of E major, taking us to another universe.

Violin and piano begin the last movement. The theme builds from a motif that is based on Clara Schumann's theme from the first movement. The violin notes B–C–D–E♭–F–E♭ begin with notes from Clara's theme in reverse, and the contour of this new motif (after the first note) is an inversion of Clara's theme. The other string themes are often chorale-like, and throughout the pianist energizes the proceedings. The quiet, resigned closing section in C minor concludes abruptly with a strong cadence in C major.

The premiere took place in Vienna on November 18, 1875. Richard Wagner and his wife Cosima were in attendance.

– Tom McKay

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Three Romances for Oboe and Piano, op. 94 (1849)

Early in 1849 Robert Schumann wrote two well-received and still well-known works featuring wind instruments, his *Adagio and Allegro* for French horn and piano (op.70) and the *Fantasy Pieces* for clarinet and piano (op. 73). In December of 1849 he added the *Three Romances* for oboe and piano, presenting them to his wife, Clara, as a Christmas gift.

From the first publication, the Romances were presented as being for oboe, clarinet, or violin with piano, with alternate parts provided. For the publisher, this was a sales-enhancement. Schumann allowed it, but he said, "If I had originally written the work for violin or clarinet, it would have become a completely different piece." He wrote these Romances with the delicate sound of the oboe in mind, and the pieces often have the feeling of a gentle yet vigorous voice in a conversation, or perhaps a poetry reading, that suits the oboe well.

1849 was a very productive year for Schumann, but his mental health was declining. In the next year, Robert, Clara, and their children moved from Dresden to Düsseldorf, where Robert became the city's music director. But presiding over the city's orchestra was not a job that suited his increasing instability, and in 1854 he entered an asylum where he died in 1856.

– Tom McKay

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Quartet no. 1 in C Minor for Piano and Strings, op. 15 (1879, 1883)

Gabriel Fauré's Piano Quartet no. 1 is the first of two works for the combination of piano, violin, viola and cello. He began composition in 1876, completed the first version in 1879, and revised it, completely rewriting the finale, in 1883.

In his personal life, Fauré succeeded in becoming engaged to Marianne Viardot in 1877, after several years of trying. Unfortunately for him, she broke off the engagement after a few months. He was working on the quartet at this time, and many have linked the somber tone of the third movement *Adagio* to his disappointment in love.

Much later in his life (1922), Fauré himself notes a very practical consideration in the genesis of the quartet. “The fact of the matter is that before 1870 I would not have dreamt of composing a sonata or a quartet. At that time, a young musician had no chance of getting such works performed. It was only after Saint-Saëns had founded the National Music Society in 1871, the chief function of which was to perform the works of young composers, that I set to work.”

The work is generally conventional in its form, except that the lively *Scherzo* precedes the slow movement and is in a duple meter rather than the usual triple meter of a *scherzo* movement.

Despite being predominantly in a minor key, the over-all tone of the quartet is very positive, with a bright C major finish to the finale. Adrian Corleoni (*AllMusic*) describes the quartet as “the combination of a highly refined personal style with compelling high spirits,” based in strong melodic material, sparkling dialogue in the parts, and consistently adept writing for piano.

Some things to notice:

In the second movement, the *Scherzo*, the three string instruments lay out a steady two-beat rhythm that carries through the movement, sometimes in the strings, more often in the piano. This steady beat brings rhythmic unity through the juxtaposition of 6/8 and 2/4 time (i.e., juxtaposing division of the beat into triplets, in 6/8, with the division of each beat into two eighth notes and four sixteenths). The rhythmic complexity produced by this juxtaposition provides propulsion throughout.

The somber tone of the majestic third movement provides a base for ethereal ascent in the piano, especially towards the movement’s close.

Through most of the fourth movement, the piano provides a background of rapidly flowing triplets. As in the *Scherzo*, the frequent juxtaposition of triplet divisions of the beat with duple divisions provides significant impetus.

– Tom McKay

ABOUT THE ARTISTS . . .

Frisson brings together the best and brightest of classical music’s rising stars and in just a few seasons has emerged as one of the most popular classical ensembles in America. Showcasing both exceptional young artists and seasoned professionals, its members have appeared at prestigious festivals such as Marlboro, Verbier, Spoleto, and Mostly Mozart, as well as on the stages of Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Several musicians have been selected for Carnegie Hall’s prestigious Ensemble Connect program, and many now hold principal positions in ensembles including the Cleveland Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

Hailed as “the classical group that does it all,” Frisson offers engaging programs for winds, piano trio, piano quartet, octets, and nonets, alongside popular programs featuring the music of Gershwin, Cole Porter, John Williams, and Astor Piazzolla. The ensemble performs in more than 25 cities each year, with recent and upcoming appearances at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York, the Da Camera Society in Los Angeles, Sarasota Opera House, Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Bermuda Festival.

The group takes its name from the French word *frisson*, meaning “a sudden shiver or thrill” — a perfect description of the excitement and energy they bring to the stage.

Fifi Zhang, piano



NYC-based pianist and educator **Fifi Zhang** has performed in venues throughout New York City, including Carnegie Hall, Park Avenue Armory, Miller Theatre, Joyce Theater, and Steinway Hall, as well as concert halls in Germany, Finland, Spain, South Korea, and Poland. She has a keen interest in contemporary classical music and has worked closely with numerous composers, including Meredith Monk, Frederic Rzewski, John Harbison, Gabriela Lena Frank, and Robert Sirote. She especially enjoys collaborating with dancers

and has performed solo and chamber music alongside members of the Malpas Dance Company and School of American Ballet.

At age eleven, Fifi made her debut with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic playing the Saint-Saëns G minor concerto, as the national grand prize winner of the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Concerto Competition, and is one of a few musicians to have won both the Junior (2008) and Senior (2010) divisions of the MTNA (Music Teachers National Association) high school piano competition. In 2016, she was a finalist in the Juilliard Concerto Competition. Fifi has spent summers studying and performing at Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Tanglewood Music Festival, the Banff Centre, Sarasota Music Festival, Chautauqua Institute, and New Paltz Piano Summer.

An alumnus of the Columbia-Juilliard Exchange, Fifi holds a BA in History from Columbia University and an MM in Piano Performance from Juilliard. She is also a graduate of Mannes School of Music. Her teachers have included Ursula Oppens, Pavlina Dokovska, Matti Raekallio, Julian Martin, and Marjorie Lee.

Fifi is currently a doctoral candidate at CUNY Graduate Center, where she is working on a critical examination of classical music performance through a phenomenological lens. As a recipient of the Graduate Center Fellowship, she is on the music history faculty at Hunter College.

Mitch Lyon, cello



Cellist **Mitchell Lyon** approaches music making with a zeal for harnessing the unique power of musical experience. At home with audiences of all types, he has performed in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall to intimate private homes. Mitch is a founding member of Empire Wild, a genre-bending crossover trio and Ambassador Prize Winner of the 2020 Concert Artist Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition. Last season the trio delighted audiences with their signature mix of original songwriting and unique

arrangements at venues across the country including a stop at South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center and a concert on the Harriman-Jewell concert series in Kansas City. This fall will feature a Midwest tour through ten states along with educational workshops in Iowa and Ohio.

Passionate about community engagement and education, Mitch has been on the Teaching Artist Faculty of the New York Philharmonic since 2014, visiting schools across all five boroughs

of NYC and scripting and performing interactive concerts for thousands of students. He frequently leads workshops for students of all ages and abilities, most recently at The Juilliard School Extension Division and the Preucil School Chamberfest (IA). An alumnus of Juilliard (B.M., M.M.), Mitch was the recipient of several fellowships and led a multidisciplinary team of performing artists—actors, dancers, and musicians—to New Orleans in 2012 and 2013 to help rebuild the city after Hurricane Katrina.

Mitch regularly spends summers as an artist faculty member at Omaha Conservatory of Music's Soundwaves Festival and the Charles Ives Music Festival at WCYO. In past summers, Mitch has performed at the Caroga Lake Music Festival, the Fontainebleau School in France, Finchcocks Museum of Keyboard Instruments in Kent, UK, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and at the Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School in Santa Cruz, CA.

Mitch's primary teachers have included Bonnie Hampton and Timothy Eddy along with masterclasses with Steven Isserlis, Mark Kosower and Andres Diaz. He also spent four summers at the Meadowmount School of Music working with Melissa Kraut and Hans Jensen, as well as time at the Castleman Quartet Program and Montecito Summer Music Festival.

Tom Gallant, oboe



Considered by many to be the most difficult of all musical instruments, the oboe is often called the "ill wind that no one blows good." **Tom Gallant** is a First Prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild International New York Competition and one of very few musicians ever to win this competition as an oboe soloist. His solo and chamber music performances have taken him to David Geffen Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and the Frick Collection in New York City, as well as to Washington, DC, Los Angeles, Chicago, the Spoleto

Festival in Italy, and the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. He has appeared as a guest soloist with the Kronos Quartet at the Ravinia Festival and has collaborated with flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, Cuarteto Casals from Spain, the Calder, Tesla, and Lark Quartets, Cuarteto Latinoamericano from Mexico, and the Adaskin String Trio. Tom has appeared in over 500 venues around the world.

Tom Gallant has always worn many hats as a professional musician, concert producer, host, and artist manager. Over the years, he has been involved in managing several summer music festivals and producing concerts in a wide variety of venues, from Carnegie Hall in New York City to Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. Tom produced his first concerts in his backyard as a child at the age of 12. He lives in New York City.

Suliman Tekalli, violin

Violinist **Suliman Tekalli** has established his voice as an exciting and versatile concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. As the top-prize winner of the Seoul International Music Competition and prize winner in the Sendai International Music Competition, International Violin Competition "Rudolfo Lipizer Prize," and the Henryk Szeryng International Competition, Suliman has performed throughout the U.S., Canada, Central America, Europe, and Asia, appearing on the stages of Carnegie Hall, Seoul Arts Center, Wigmore Hall, and the Kennedy Center among others. His performances have been broadcast on KBS World TV in Korea, CBC Radio 3 in Canada, and WQXR and NPR in the U.S.



An exponent of chamber music, Suliman has made appearances at numerous festivals, including Music@Menlo, Yellow Barn, and the Banff Centre. He has collaborated and performed with eminent musicians such as Gil Shaham, Miriam Fried, Cho-Liang Lin, Donald Weilerstein, Paul Watkins, Wu Han, David Shifrin, and Robert McDonald. Suliman has also served as concertmaster of numerous critically acclaimed conductorless ensembles including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Sphinx Virtuosi, and the International Sejong Soloists of which he is currently a principal member.

As a composer, arranger, and performer, Suliman has transcribed and orchestrated classical and contemporary works for groups such as the Grammy Award-winning Catalyst String Quartet, Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, and Sejong. In 2013, he gave the world premiere of his composition "Mephistocata" from his solo violin suite "Fables" at the Montreal International Music Competition, receiving the Maurice and Judith Kaplow Prize for Uncommon Creativity from the Cleveland Institute of Music that same year.

As an alumnus of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, Mr. Tekalli is a strong advocate of teaching artistry and bringing classical music to underserved communities. He served as a Teaching Artist at the Edward R. Murrow High School in Brooklyn, and also performed and taught at numerous Title I schools throughout the NYC area. Through the auspices of the Center of Musical Excellence, he served as Artist in Residence at the State Theatre New Jersey where he brought interactive performances to grade schools of all levels, rehabilitation centers, senior homes, and homeless shelters. He continues his work through his support of projects like Chime for Children which bring musical performances to children in hospitals.

Colin Brookes, viola



Praised as "master of the strong lines", concert violist **Colin Brookes** is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he made his solo debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony at the age of 17. A founding member of the award-winning Ulysses Quartet, Colin has taught in the Pre-College Division of the Juilliard School and the undergraduate programs of Yale University and SUNY Stony Brook.

Colin has performed regularly with A Far Cry, The Knights, and other critically acclaimed ensembles. Festival appearances include

Kneisel Hall, Appalachian Chamber Music Festival, Geneva Music Festival, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Manchester Summer Chamber Music, and Tanglewood. In June 2013 he gave a solo recital with pianist Euntaek Kim for the St. Gaudens Concert Series in Cornish, NH.

Traveling and performing allow for many unexpected opportunities to capture moments in time. Colin is an avid photographer, both film and digital, and exhibits of his work have been featured at the Castleton Festival, Virginia, and the Art Gallery at Valley Cottage Library, New York.



Jennifer Frautschi, Jon Manasse, and Jon Nakamatsu performing for SFCM in April 2025. Photo credit: John Herr





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In Memoriam
Sarah Bailey
1933-2025

Sarah Bailey was an active volunteer with several local organizations including Syracuse Stage, the Junior League, and the Syracuse Vassar Club. She was the founder of the Metropolitan School for the Arts and served on its Board of Directors for 12 years. With her husband, SFCM Board member Holmes Bailey, she sponsored several SFCM concerts, thus helping the organization to stay in good financial health. Thank you Sarah and Holmes.



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76th Season – Third Concert
Saturday, November 8, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Grant Middle School Auditorium

We thank Martin Korn and Sylvia Betcher for their generous sponsorship of this concert.

MODIGLIANI QUARTET

Amaury Coeytaux, violin
Loïc Rio, violin
Laurent Marfaing, viola
François Kieffer, cello

PROGRAM

Quartet in F Major, op. 77, no. 2, “Lobkowitz” (1799)

Allegro moderato

Menuet. Presto

Andante

Finale. Vivace assai

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Quartet in G Major, op. 18, no. 2 (1799)

Allegro

Adagio cantabile; Allegro

Scherzo. Allegro

Allegro molto, quasi presto

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

INTERMISSION

Quartet in A Minor, op. 51, no. 2 (1873)

Allegro non troppo

Andante moderato

Quasi minuetto, moderato

Finale. Allegro non assai

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)



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Le Quatuor Modigliani



Concert Notes . . .

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Quartet in F Major, op. 77, no. 2, “Lobkowitz” (1799)

Joseph Haydn is generally considered the father of the string quartet. In his works, one can see a progression from delightful but relatively lightweight “divertimento” to full-bodied, serious string quartet. Instead of focusing on one primary instrument, Haydn made the four members of the ensemble equal partners. He codified what became the standard four-movement format for a string quartet: a fast opening movement in sonata form, a slow movement – often theme and variations – in a contrasting key, a minuet and trio movement usually in triple meter, and a lively final movement. The two Opus 77 string quartets were the last of the 68 Haydn completed. He wrote them in 1799 while he was working on his great oratorio *The Seasons*.

Prince Franz Joseph Lobkowitz, a music loving nobleman and excellent amateur violinist, commissioned both Haydn and the young Beethoven to write sets of six new quartets concurrently in the late 1790s. Beethoven’s commission resulted in his innovative set of Opus 18 quartets, received with enthusiasm by the musical establishment. Haydn, however, completed only the two quartets of Opus 77. Many have speculated on why he did not finish his set. Advancing age and ill health were probably factors – he was in his late 60s after all. But there may have been another reason: Beethoven’s early quartets were popular and they changed the rules of the game. Haydn may have decided to avoid further comparison with Beethoven in that arena.

The quartet we hear tonight displays both youthful vigor and the craft of an experienced and confident composer. The first movement *Allegro* introduces a graceful and simple theme that Haydn unhurriedly develops. The two inner movements are in reverse order: the *Minuet* – too speedy for dancing – is played first. With its irregular and unexpected accents, it keeps us guessing about the meter. The third movement, *Andante*, begins with a stately theme played by the first violin and accompanied by the cello. In the following variations, the instruments take turns with the theme as the material surrounding it becomes more complicated. The more orchestral final movement, *Vivace*, borrows its spirit from a fast and fiery folk dance.

– Beth Oddy

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Quartet in G Major, op. 18, no.2 (1799)

With the sounds of the Haydn quartet still in your mind, listen now to one of Beethoven’s responses to his parallel commission from Prince Lobkowitz. Haydn and Mozart were strong influences on the young Beethoven. His work reflected the classical traditions his predecessors established. But as you might expect, he pushed the boundaries, adding emotional depth, unexpected key changes, and complex interactions among the players. He was eager to enhance his prospects by composing something new and exciting for the Prince, especially at a time when the deafness that he knew would curtail his performing career was coming on.

In this set of six string quartets, the genial style and grace of opus 18 number 2 reflect the spirit of Haydn’s work most strongly. The first movement *Allegro* sets the tone with its courtly conversation between lyricism and playfulness, earning the quartet its nickname “Komplimentier-Quartett” or “quartet of

bows and curtsies.” Don’t be lulled by the introspective and expressive tune the violin plays in the *Adagio cantabile*. What may seem like a final cadence morphs suddenly into a speedy *Allegro* for a breathless 40 seconds. Then the opening theme returns, now more ornately decorated.

The third movement *Scherzo* is lively and light, while echoing the elegance of Haydn’s and Mozart’s classical minuets. The cello introduces the exuberant final movement – one Beethoven himself characterized as “aufgenöpft” or “unbuttoned.” A more lyrical second theme provides periodic respite, but joyous enthusiasm wins the day as the work comes to a sparkling close.

– Beth Oddy

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Quartet in A Minor, op. 51, no. 2 (1873)

In 1853, Robert Schumann famously hailed the 20-year-old unpublished Brahms as a worthy successor to Beethoven. But that ringing endorsement was problematic for the young composer. As he said in 1872, “You can’t have any idea what it is like to hear such a giant marching behind you.” Brahms was especially slow to produce string quartets and symphonies, musical forms at which Beethoven excelled. He is said to have written and destroyed as many as 20 string quartets before publishing his first two as Opus 51. A version of the first one may have been written as early as 1865. The Florentine Quartet read through both of the Opus 51 quartets in the summer of 1869, but Brahms was not satisfied and continued to revise them. On a summer holiday in 1873, and at the age of 40, he finally put finishing touches on Opus 51 and prepared the two quartets for publication. Both are dedicated to his friend, the surgeon and musician Theodor Billroth. Joseph Joachim’s string quartet played the premiere of this work in October 1873.

String Quartet no. 2 in A Minor is thematically unified and quite lyrical, although dramatic and some think rather dark. All of the movements are in A minor or A major. Rhythms are complex, often pitting two counts against three at the same time. In his customary way, Brahms fills the work with skillful polyphonic writing in which melodies are imitated, turned upside down, and played backwards. Listeners may be unaware of this embedded structure – that was Brahms’s genius. What you hear is beautiful music, but underlying it is an intricate theoretical scaffold.

The first movement’s theme pays homage to Joseph Joachim, the famous violinist and Brahms’s good friend. Joachim’s personal motto was *Frei, aber einsam* (“free, but lonely”). Brahms takes the notes F-A-E and incorporates them into the opening theme. After a complex development section, the viola brings in Brahms’s own theme, based on his motto: F-A-F, *Frei, aber froh* (“Free, but glad”). At the end of the movement, the two themes overlap.

The lyrical second movement begins calmly, full of space and beauty. In the central *marcato* passage, Brahms breaks that mood as the first violin and cello chase each other in a strongly accented canon. But then the initial tranquility recurs and the movement ends in lyricism.

The *Quasi minuetto* evokes a ghostly ceremonial formal dance in its opening. Note the two interruptions: these are complex and technically brilliant. The first violin and viola play the interlude theme in canon while the second violin and cello play the *minuetto* theme in canon at the same time.

The dramatic *Finale* is modeled on the *czárdás*, a fast Hungarian folk dance. Notice the two against three rhythms here. The movement is structured as a rondo, with the Hungarian theme as a recurring refrain alternating with lyrical segments. Listen for canons here too.

– Beth Oddy

ABOUT THE ARTISTS . . .

“One of today’s best quartets in the world...Balance, transparency, symphonic comprehension, confident style, their performance reached a very high and inspiring level” – Harald Eggbrecht in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

Founded in 2003, the Modigliani Quartet is recognized as one of today’s most sought-after string quartets, featuring regularly in prominent international series and on the world’s most prestigious stages.

In addition to annual tours in the United States and in Asia, the Quartet’s numerous European tours have brought them to Wigmore Hall, the Paris Philharmonie, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Saint-Petersburg Philharmonia, and the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg.

After reviving the *Rencontres Musicales Evian* in 2014, of which they assured the artistic direction for 8 years, the Quartet was entrusted with the artistic direction of the *Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition* in 2020. The Quartet counts some of the greatest quartets and chamber music ensembles among the guest artists at their festival “Vibre!” Through masterclasses and workshops, the festival provides an ideal environment to work

with and mentor the young generation, a mission at the heart of the Quartet’s activities. The Quartet is also the founder of the *Saint-Paul-de-Vence Festival* and the *Arcachon Chamber Music Festival*, both created in 2011.

The Modigliani Quartet’s rich collaboration with the record label *Mirare* has led to 15 recordings representative of their vast repertoire (Schubert, Mozart, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Bartok...), winning numerous awards in France and abroad (*Choc de Classica*, *Diapason d’Or* . . .). On the occasion of their last recording release, the prestigious British magazine *The Strad* selected the Quartet as their cover feature.

The Modigliani Quartet also performs and commissions a wide range of contemporary works from composers including Marc-Antony Turnage, Philippe Hersant, Peter Vasks, Kaija Saariaho, and Evgeny Kissin.

A year after their founding, the Modigliani Quartet won three First Prizes successively at the *Eindhoven International Competition* (2004), the *Vittorio Rimbotti* in Florence (2005), and the prestigious *Young Concert Artists Auditions* in New York (2006). Following studies with the *Ysaÿe Quartet* and masterclasses with *Walter Levin* and *Gyorgy Kurtag*, the Modigliani Quartet was invited to work with the *Artemis Quartet* at the *Berlin Universität der Künste*.

The Quartet enjoys cultivating close friendships with their chamber music partners, amongst them artists such as *Sabine Meyer*, *Renaud* and *Gauthier Capuçon*, *Jean-Frédéric Neuberger*, *Beatrice Rana*, *Michel Dalberto*, *Fazil Say*, *Augustin Dumay*, *Amihai Grosz*, *Gary Hoffman*, *Paul Meyer*, *Michel Portal*, and *Daniel Müller-Schott*.



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Music Terms Used in This Program

Adagio: slow (at ease)

Adagio cantabile: *adagio* in a smooth, singing style

Molto adagio: very slow

Alla marcia: in march style

Allegro: lively, fast

Allegro appassionato: passionate and fast

Allegro comodo: comfortably *allegro*

Allegro giusto: fast, with a steady, even movement

Allegro molto: very fast

Allegro molto moderato: very moderate *allegro*

Allegro non troppo, Allegro ma non tanto, Allegro non tanto, Allegro non assai: fast, but not too fast

Allegro vivo: lively *allegro*

Andante: moving along, flowing, at a walking pace, faster than *adagio* but slower than *allegretto*

Andante moderato: moderately *andante*

Attacca: a directive to performers at the end of a movement or section, instructing them to start the next section without a pause or break

BWV number: the number for a work in the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (Bach Works Catalogue)

Cadence: a melodic or harmonic configuration that creates a sense of resolution or completion at the end of a phrase, section, or piece

Canon: a contrapuntal compositional technique with a melody played by one voice and then imitated by another voice or voices (for example, simple canons *Row, row, row your boat* and *Frère Jacques*)

Cantabile: in a smooth, singing style

Chromatic: using all the notes, including the semi-tones; i.e., using the notes corresponding to both the black and the white keys of the piano

Contrapuntal: using counterpoint

Counterpoint: the relationship between voices that are harmonically interdependent yet independent in rhythm and contour; most common in the European classical tradition and strongly developed during the Baroque period. From Latin *punctus contra punctum* meaning “point against point.” Fugues and canons are forms of counterpoint.

Czárdás: a fast Hungarian folk dance

Divertimento: a light-hearted, secular instrumental work, usually with several movements

Dotted rhythm: a rhythmic pattern based on notes of different lengths, such as a dotted eighth note and a sixteenth note. (A dotted eighth note is three times as long as a sixteenth note.)

Einfach: simple

Fugue, Fuge (German): a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase is introduced by one part and successively taken up and developed by others

Innig: intimate

K: the number for a work in the Köchel catalogue of Mozart’s works compiled by Ludwig Ritter von Köchel

Larghetto: slightly slow

Lydian mode: a traditional scale that differs from a standard major scale by having a raised fourth note. (A Lydian scale starting on C would have an F-sharp instead of an F-natural.)

Marcato: this term applies to notes that are emphasized and separated

Minuetto, Menuet, Minuet: a stately ballroom dance in 3/4 time, popular especially in the 18th century; see “Minuet-trio form”

Minuet-trio form: This is the form for minuets and most scherzos. Based on the minuet dance form, it consists of an opening section, followed by a contrasting “trio” section in a related key, then returning to a shorter presentation of the opening section. (ABA’) (The trio section is so-called because minuets in the seventeenth century often featured a trio of instruments in this middle section. Lully (1632–1687), for example, often featured two oboes and bassoon.)

Meno mosso: less motion (slower)

Un poco meno mosso: a little slower

Motif: a brief melodic or rhythmic element (that can be developed in longer passages)

Murmuration: the act of murmuring, emitting low sounds; also, a flock (a murmuration) of starlings

Musette: French dance with a moderate tempo, characterized by a pastoral melody often imitating the sound of a bagpipe. (This term is also used for several different musical instruments: small bagpipes, a piccolo oboe, and a type of accordion.)

Nicht schnell: not fast

Opus number (op.): *Opus* or the shortened form *op.* after the title of a piece of music means “work”. The number that follows, assigned by the composer or by someone cataloging the composer’s works, usually indicates the approximate chronological position of the work in the composer’s output. Sometimes an abbreviation standing for a particular catalogue replaces the more general opus indication: **BWV** (*Bach Werke Verzeichnis*, Bach works catalogue), **K** (for Köchel, cataloguer of Mozart’s music), etc.

Pentatonic scale: a five-note scale. (If you use just the black keys on the piano to span an octave, you will play a pentatonic scale. You can play five different pentatonic scales, depending on which note you pick as your starting point.)

Pizzicato: plucking the string to produce sound (rather than bowing)

Presto: very fast

Rondeau: rondo

Rondo form: often used for the final movement of a symphony or chamber work. A principal theme is repeated between subsidiary sections. Thus we might describe the succession of themes as ABABA, or ABACA, or ABACADA, for example. A rondo ordinarily involves vivacious melodies performed at quick tempos, with performers (or composer) sometimes adding embellishments, especially in the return of the principal (A) theme.

Scherzo: a light, quick, playful musical form, originally and usually in fast triple meter. In the late classical and romantic periods, a *scherzo* often replaces the more traditional *minuet*

movement in symphonies, sonatas, string quartets, etc. The Italian word *scherzo* means joke.

Schnell: Fast

Nicht schnell: not fast

Sonata form: the form for the first movement, and sometimes other movements, in almost all symphonies, string quartets, sonatas, and other multi-movement works of the classical and romantic eras. This normally consists of an exposition with two or more themes, a development section that elaborates and interweaves elements of these themes, and then a recapitulation of the themes, perhaps with a coda to bring the movement to a close.

Sostenuto: sustained

Assai sostenuto: very sustained

Toccata: a virtuoso piece of music emphasizing the performers' dexterity, originally applied to pieces for keyboard but extended to pieces for other instruments

Vivace: lively

Assai vivace, vivace assai: very vivace

SFCM Youth Chamber Music Competition

Each spring, SFCM sponsors a chamber music competition for young people in grades 6-12. The primary purpose is to encourage students in the Central New York area to discover the joy of preparing chamber music for performance under the guidance of a coach. Participating ensembles perform before two judges and receive written evaluations. The students in one or two of the ensembles are selected to receive prize money. There is no entry fee. Usually, a winning group plays at the beginning of one of our spring SFCM concerts.

The 2025 event was held at Park Central Church in downtown Syracuse on March 1. Three string quartets, a piano trio, and a woodwind quintet participated. The students were from the Syracuse and Rochester areas.

The Wolfgang Trio, coached by Laura Smith from The Syracuse Orchestra, won the Best Ensemble Award. They performed the Allegro from Beethoven's Trio in E-flat Major, op. 1, no. 1 before the SFCM April 5, 2025 concert. Runner-up was the NAKA Quartet from the Hochstein School in Rochester.



The Wolfgang Trio

Eric Lee, violin; Daniel Yang, piano; Christian Lee, cello

Please check our website, SyrFCM.org, for information about the 2026 competition.



In Memoriam
Gloria Sage
 1936-2025

Gloria Sage was a chemist who spent many years as a scientist at SRC, Inc. in Syracuse. She earned her PhD at Harvard in 1963, the first year they awarded graduate degrees to women. Her major interests included environmental conservation and community development. She led the Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association for 15 years and was one of the founders of the local Sierra Club chapter. In addition, she was a member of the SFCM Board for many years. Thank you, Gloria.



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Edgewood Gallery	42
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Hamilton College Performing Arts	25
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Hosmer Violins	26
Lee Piano Services	25
Midgley Printing	42
MoPro	37
NYS Baroque	18
Robert Oddy Stained Glass Artist	1
RAV Properties	4
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Schola Cantorum	27
Sisskind Funeral Service	32
Skaneateles Festival	33
Smith Contemporary Furniture	11
Upstate Radiotherapy Treatment	17
Dr. James M. Vlassis	24
WCNY Classic FM	44
Jules Wellner	27
Lucie Wellner Watercolors	2
Wells Fargo Advisors	42
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**The Juilliard Quartet performed
at SFCM's big 75th Anniversary
Celebration in September 2024.**





Linda sits at her piano at the Oneida Lake Arts & Heritage Center.

I had long envisioned creating a central gathering place for artists and people of all ages to learn, share and grow together. Founding the Oneida Lake Arts & Heritage Center allowed me to tap into my history and passions while achieving my dream.

CENTERED GIVING: LINDA VERNI WILLIAMS

I believe you can do a lot with a little. From teaching music in Utica, to leading a community chorus in Madison County, to volunteering for local arts and music organizations in Syracuse, teaching and giving back has always been my key.

I want my impact to keep going and growing. That's why I chose to partner with the Community Foundation – to endow a continuing legacy for the arts in Central New York. The Linda Verni Williams Fund will provide annual support to my chosen charities, including the center, to ensure my dream lives on.



Read more of Linda's story
by scanning the QR code or visiting
cnycf.org/verniwilliams



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