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WINTER/SPRING 2021



Welcome to the second half of our 2020-2021 Season! We are grateful to all of you who began this virtual journey with us—the WCMS audience is genuinely extraordinary. There is light at the end of the tunnel, but we have several months to get through before we are safely there.

Peter Sulski and Randall Hodgkinson are next up in our Spotlight Series with a fantastic program for viola and piano. New in 2021 is our “WCMS Talk” series.

These are “deep-dives” into musical topics that inspire our WCMS team of musicians. There is no cost to attend, and we hope you will tune in. And finally, what would a season be without our free community concerts? Both our Family concert and our Senior concert are happening virtually this spring.

Our winter/spring offerings were created to inspire, excite, and connect all of you as we make our way together. Stay strong, friends; we will see this through.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tracy Kraus". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping flourish at the end.

Tracy Kraus
Executive Director

ABOUT US

The experience of live classical music can be powerful and transformative. WCMS is committed to engaging audiences through the highest standard of performance and empowering youth through intensive education programs.

Our unique concert experiences are designed to appeal to diverse audiences. This season, we are offering an array of live-streamed concerts **performed live on stage**. Our new **Spotlight Concerts** are curated programs by the individual members of our core and shine a light on the world-class musicianship that embodies the essence of WCMS.

WCMS offers three educational programs. **Neighborhood Strings**, an award-winning community-based program that offers free music lessons in violin, viola, and cello to at-risk youth from Worcester's Main South and Downtown neighborhoods. **ChamberFest Music Camp** is an innovative, fun classical chamber music camp for strings, woodwinds and pianists age 12 through adult.

And finally, **Musician as Citizen**, connecting Neighborhood Strings and ChamberFest, seeks to develop mentorship skills that provide leadership opportunities and build community awareness.



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2020–2021 WINTER/SPRING CONCERTS

THE SPOTLIGHT CONCERTS

Peter Sulski, viola and Randall Hodgkinson, piano

Thursday, January 28 at 7:30 PM

Live Stream from Shapiro Hall at Joy of Music

Paul Hindemith, Johannes Brahms, and Rebecca Clarke

WCMS TALK SERIES – Thursdays at 7:30 PM | Zoom

February 11: David Russell

With Renewed Strength: Beethoven's Heiliger Dankesang in the Age of Covid

February 25: Rohan Gregory

A discussion of fiddle traditions from Appalachia to the Aegean.

March 11: Randall Hodgkinson

Reflections on Robert Schumann's Fantasie in C Major

March 25: Krista Buckland Reisner

Gut Reaction: What's the fuss about Baroque period performance?

HORIZONS – Sunday, April 18 at 4:00 PM

Live Stream from the Jean McDonough Arts Center/Brick Box

Limited in-person seating will be announced in March

With guest Aaron Engebret, baritone

Samuel Barber, Hilary Tann, and Ludwig van Beethoven

VIRTUAL FREE FAMILY CONCERT - Peter and the Wolf

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Recorded Live from Mechanics Hall

The Dr. Ted Conna Memorial Concert

ANNUAL FREE SENIOR CONCERT - Thursday, May 13 at 7:00 PM

Live-stream from Briarwood Retirement Community

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Full program information at worcesterchambermusic.org

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SPOTLIGHT:

Peter Sulski, viola and Randall Hodgkinson, piano

January 28 | Live-streamed from Shapiro Hall at Joy of Music

Program

Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

- I. Fantasie
- II. Thema mit Variationen
- III. Finale (mit Variationen)

**Sonata for Viola and Piano in E-flat Major
Op. 120, No. 2**

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

- I. Allegro amabile
- II. Allegro appassionato
- III. Andante con moto – Allegro

Viola Sonata

Rebecca Clarke
(1886-1979)

- I. Impetuoso – ma non troppo Allegro
- II. Vivace
- III. Adagio

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PROGRAM NOTES

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4

Paul Hindemith composed 7 sonatas for the viola, his own instrument, over the course of his career, including 4 sonatas for viola alone, and 3 with piano. Anyone familiar with Hindemith's musical language might be taken aback upon hearing his youthful sonata, Op. 11 No. 4, which seems to inhabit a dreamy, late-romantic and occasionally impressionistic sound world far-removed from the thornier, modernist works for which he is well known. The composition of this sonata followed soon after the death of Debussy, whose work was well known and appreciated by Hindemith. During World War I, Hindemith had formed a string quartet while serving in the military. In 1918, his quartet was playing Debussy's string quartet when news of the composer's death came over the radio. Hindemith recalls, "We did not play to the end. It was as if our playing had been robbed of the breath of life. But we realized for the first time that music is more than style, technique and the expression of powerful feelings. Music reached out beyond political boundaries, national hatred and the horrors of war. On no other occasion have I seen so clearly what direction music must take."

This sonata is cast in 3 movements that are played without pause, and it is structured in an unusual way. Instead of the traditional dramatic sonata-form first movement, here Hindemith begins with a short, dreamy section that serves as a prelude to the final two movements. The next movement is a theme and variations which leads directly into the third movement, where the sonata form is finally present, only to unexpectedly return to more of the 2nd movement's variations in place of the development section. After the recapitulation, the variations return yet again to provide a coda to the sonata.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Sonata for Viola and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 120, No. 2 (1894)

Johannes Brahms, perhaps the most self-critical of all late-Romantic era composers, was notorious for his perfectionism, carefully considering and meticulously editing his works to ensure that everything published met only the highest possible standards of taste and craftsmanship (a complex he undoubtedly developed when, as a very young man with very few compositions under his belt, Schumann crowned him as heir to the throne of Beethoven). Brahms was especially conscious of his legacy in the rich, Viennese musical tradition, and by the early 1890's, felt that he had made his mark, essentially retiring from large-scale composition following his G major string quintet in 1890. Thankfully, in 1891, Brahms encountered Richard Mülfeld, the principal clarinetist of the Meiningen Court Orchestra and the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, performing a Weber concerto and the Mozart quintet and was so taken with his playing that

he responded with a burst of inspiration resulting in the four chamber music masterpieces for clarinet composed in the years 1891–1894.

The two sonatas for clarinet represent the final chamber music compositions of Brahms, and are rightly revered as among the greatest masterpieces of the entire duo sonata repertoire. The second of the two, in E-flat major, exhibits a particularly glowing warmth in tone, making it in many ways the more amiable sibling of the brooding F minor sonata. The first movement opens with a long melody of caressing tenderness, occasionally giving way to passionate outbursts, but for the most part, the musical language is one of consolation in this exceptionally beautiful movement. The middle movement is a passionate scherzo, with a typically noble chorale-like trio. The finale is a set of six variations on a simple, folk-like theme and is a masterclass in games of rhythmic and metric complexity, yet delivered in such a natural way that the listener is often simply swept away by the flow. Immediately upon completion of this sonata, Brahms made a version for viola, feeling the music's temperament and warmth would be ideally suited for the instrument.

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

Viola Sonata (1919)

Rebecca Clarke was born into a musical family just outside London in 1886. Showing great talent on violin at an early age, she was admitted to the Royal Academy of Music, where she began to study composition with Sir Charles Stanford (who also taught Vaughan-Williams and Holst). At Stanford's suggestion, Clarke also switched to the viola and went on to have a distinguished career, becoming one of the first women to play professionally in an orchestra before going on to tour the world as a soloist and chamber musician in the 1920's.

Clarke's Viola Sonata was composed in 1919 (the same year as the Hindemith heard earlier on the program) for a well-known, international competition sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Of the 79 anonymously submitted works, the jury was dead-locked on 2, with Mrs. Coolidge casting the deciding vote for Ernest Bloch's Suite for Viola and Piano. The judges, however, were so impressed by the runner-up that they demanded the identity be revealed. Mrs. Coolidge remarked, "You should have seen their faces when they saw it was by a woman!"

The sonata is in 3 movements—two large, dramatic outer movements flanking an impish scherzo. The sound world of this incredible sonata is well matched to a quote from Alfred de Musset's *La Nuit de Mai* which prefaces the score:

Poete, prends ton luth; le vin de la jeunesse
Fermente cette nuit dans les veines de Dieu.
(Poet, take up your lute; the wine of youth
This night is fermenting in the veins of God.)

Program notes by Mark Berger

SEASON 15 GUEST ARTISTS



Aaron Engebret, baritone, enjoys a varied solo career in opera, oratorio, recital and devotes considerable energy to the performance of established music and contemporary premieres, frequently collaborating with many of today's preeminent composers. He has been featured as a guest soloist on stages from Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and Boston's Symphony Hall, to international appearances from Sapporo Japan's Kitara Hall

to Le Theatre de la Ville in Paris and the AmBul festival in Bulgaria. He has been a guest of the Tanglewood, Ravinia, Rockport and Monadnock Music Festivals as well as many of the country's fine symphonies, among them Portland, Virginia, San Diego, Charlotte and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mr. Engebret's work with composer and conductor Lukas Foss cultivated a passion for premiering new works: he has since collaborated with composers Harbison, Larsen, Musgrave, Rorem and Pinkham, among many others.

As an interpreter of early music, he is a frequent soloist with organizations including American Bach Soloists, Handel and Haydn Society, Miami Bach Society, Boston Baroque, Boston Camerata and Santa Fe Pro Musica. Nominated for two Grammy Awards for Best Operatic Recording for his work with the Boston Early Music Festival and Radio Bremen (*Thésée* and *Psyché*, by Lully), he is in high demand as a recording artist.

He produced and recorded *The Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson* with Florestan Recital Project and New World Records, which is garnering international acclaim. With Gil Rose and BMOP and Odyssey Opera, Mr. Engebret is featured on numerous recordings, among them Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* and Argento's *A Waterbird Talk*.



Mark Mummert, harpsichord, is Cantor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Worcester and Assistant Director / Accompanist for the Worcester Chorus. He was Director of Worship at Christ the King Lutheran Church (Houston), the home of *Bach Society Houston* (2008-2015) and Seminary Musician at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1990-2008). His many musical compositions for worship are published by *Augsburg*

Fortress. Mark was the resident continuo artist at *Bach Society Houston*, playing in seven years all of the major passions and oratorios and many cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach. Mark performs on his Zeidler & Quagliata harpsichord, built on a Portuguese model. Mark serves on the faculty at the Hanover Theater and Conservatory for the Performing Arts.

MUSICIANS OF THE WORCESTER CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY



Violist and composer **Mark Berger** has toured throughout the United States and internationally as a member of the Lydian String Quartet. In addition to his work with the quartet, Berger frequently performs with many of Boston's finest orchestras and chamber ensembles including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, Emmanuel Music, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Worcester Chamber Music Society, and

Music at Eden's Edge. He has recently appeared as a guest artist with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Boston Musica Viva, Chameleon Arts ensemble, and Radius Ensemble. Strongly devoted to the performance of new music, Berger has performed with many of Boston's new music ensembles including Sound Icon, Dinosaur Annex, Ludovico Ensemble, and ALEA III. He has recorded solo and chamber works for Albany, Bridge and Innova records. An acclaimed composer, Berger's works have been presented by many of the leading contemporary ensembles in the Boston area. His compositions have received awards and recognition from the League of Composers/ISCM, ASCAP, and the Rapido! Composition Competition. Berger is currently chair of the music department at Brandeis University, where he is also Associate Professor of the Practice.



"Things done right.."(Boston Globe), "...Excellent left hand.."(Toronto Star), and "...lovely tonal bloom..."(LeDROIT), describe performances of violinist **Krista Buckland Reisner**. Over the past 25 years, she has performed with well-known and diverse musicians from Leonard Bernstein to John Williams, Anton Kuerti, Plácido Domingo, Brian Wilson, Smokey Robinson, and Diana Krall. Krista has performed across North

America, Europe, Russian and New Zealand, including performances at Carnegie Hall, La Scala, and the Boston Esplanade on July 4th with the Boston Pops. Krista's early career was opera-focused; she served as Principal Second Violin of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra, Concertmaster of Opera Boston, performed Wagner's "Ring Cycle" with the Arizona Opera and played in the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra. Also an early music aficionado, Krista performed with Canada's Aradia, Boston Baroque, and is currently a tenured member of the Handel and Haydn Society. Krista's love of chamber music led her to join WCMS nine years ago, after playing in the QX string quartet for many years prior with fellow WCMSers Peter Sulski and Rohan Gregory. Her commitment to bringing this art form to the Worcester community also included taking on administrative roles within WCMS as the organization grew. These included acting as General Manager and managing the Summer Festival and Music Camp for six years.



Ariana Falk, cello, serves as Education Director for the Worcester Chamber Music Society, and is a founding director of Neighborhood Strings, an intensive music and social justice program for youth from Worcester's underserved communities. She serves on the faculty of Clark University, and is a former faculty coach at Boston University Tanglewood Institute and Brown University. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Germany,

where she performed with the Heidelberger Symphoniker, and now serves as music director of the Massachusetts Fulbright Association. She appeared as a guest artist on the Marlboro College and Longy Faculty Artist series, live on WGBH Boston, and at Al Kamanjaddi festival in the West Bank. She has appeared as soloist with the Columbia and Olympia Symphonies, and is an alumna Fellow at Community MusicWorks in Providence. Ariana has performed at the Juilliard, Norfolk, Banff, Great Lakes, and Deer Valley summer festivals, and collaborated with artists including Menahem Pressler and Paul Katz. She received her doctorate from Boston University and M.M. and Artist Diploma degrees from the Yale School of Music, where she was recipient of the Aldo Parisot Prize, and played with the Grammy-nominated Yale Cellos, including performances at Weill Hall, Europe, and Asia.



WCMS cellist **Joshua Gordon** is equally at home whether performing on stage in famous concert halls around the world, in an Australian limestone arch cave, or with dancers on a Boston housing project basketball court. He joined the Lydian String Quartet and the music faculty of Brandeis University in 2002, and has been resident cellist at the annual Wellesley Composers Conference since 1989. He has been a guest of many ensembles

including the Apple Hill, Cassatt, DaPonte, Juilliard, and Ying Quartets, Boston Baroque, Boston Chamber Music Society, Chameleon Arts Ensemble, Emmanuel Music, Fromm Players at Harvard University, North Country Chamber Players, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Portland Chamber Music Festival, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and Speculum Musicae. Joshua Gordon's duo with pianist Randall Hodgkinson has been described as "insightful and impassioned" by *The New Yorker*, and their New World recording Leo Ornstein: Complete Works For Cello and Piano was named one of the top 10 classical recordings of 2007 by the *All Music Guide*.



Rohan Gregory is a violinist that has cultivated wide-ranging expertise in chamber music, new music, and world music. He has played with the Apple Hill Chamber Players, the Ancora Ensemble and award-winning Boccherini Ensemble and was also a founding member for ten years of the Arden String Quartet, performing new music concerts in New York, Boston, Amsterdam and St. Petersburg, Russia. On the world music scene, Rohan

has toured extensively. His travels have taken him to Europe with the Klezmatics, to Thailand with multi-ethnic flute player Abbie Rabinowitz, to India with the Indo-jazz group Natraj and to the U.S. west coast with Sophia Bilides Greek Folk Ensemble. Recently he has played nationally and internationally with the flamenco guitarist Juanito Pascual. Locally, Rohan is a member of the Lyric Opera Company and the Pedroia Quartet.



“The finest performance I have ever heard of this very difficult piece. It was as if he was reading my mind...” Aaron Copland on hearing pianist **Randall Hodgkinson** performing his Piano Fantasy in Jordan Hall. While a student at the New England Conservatory Hodgkinson became grand prizewinner of the International American Music Competition sponsored by Carnegie Hall and the Rockefeller Foundation. He has performed

with orchestras in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Boston, Cleveland and abroad in Italy and Iceland, and also numerous recital programs spanning the repertoire from J.S. Bach to Mark Berger. A frequent guest of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, he also performs the four-hand and two-piano repertoire with his wife, Leslie Amper. Festival appearances include Ravinia, Bargemusic, Chestnut Hill Concerts in Madison Connecticut, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, and Chamber Music Northwest (Portland, OR). Solo recordings on the Ongaku, New World, and Albany labels have garnered much critical acclaim. Mr. Hodgkinson is on the faculties of the New England Conservatory of Music and Wellesley College and is currently studying to become a certified Feldenkrais Practitioner™.



“Supple and riveting.... elegant and adroit playing...dazzling” (Worcester Telegram) eloquently describes the playing of Executive Director and flutist **Tracy Kraus**. She has performed throughout Europe and the United States, at the Tanglewood and Aspen Music Festivals, at Carnegie Hall, and appeared live on WGBH radio. Her love of the Northern California coast led her to her current orchestral tenure with the Mendocino Music

Festival. In 1982, Ms. Kraus founded the Abbot Chamber Players and quickly discovered her passion for the genre as well as for organization. Ms. Kraus is a co-founder, and the Executive Director of the Worcester Chamber Music Society, leading the organization through a significant stage of growth and success. Ms. Kraus is a recent Katherine Erskine Award recipient, presented by the YWCA, for her leadership and significant contribution to the community.



Hailed as “superb”, “incisive” and “sonorous and panoramic” (Boston Globe), **David Russell** maintains a vigorous schedule both as a soloist and as a collaborator in the U.S. and Europe. He was appointed to the teaching faculty of Wellesley College in 2005 and currently serves as Lecturer and Director of Chamber Music. He has served as Principal cello of the orchestras of Odyssey Opera and Opera Boston since 2010 and performs

regularly with many ensembles based in New England such as Cantata Singers and Ensemble, the Worcester Chamber Music Society and Emmanuel Music. A strong advocate of new music, Russell has performed and recorded with contemporary ensembles such as Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Firebird Ensemble, Ludovico Ensemble, Callithumpian Consort, Music on the Edge, Dinosaur Annex, Collage, the Fromm Players at Harvard, and entelechron. Recent projects include recordings of cello concertos by Chen Yi and Lukas Foss, recordings of solo and chamber works by Lee Hyla, Eric Moe, Tamar Diesendruck, Donald Crockett, Andrew Rindfleisch and Roger Zahab as well as premieres of music by David Lang, Barbara White, Marti Epstein, Daron Hagen, José-Luis Hurtado, Robert Carl, Gilda Lyons, and Jorge Martin. Russell has also recently premiered works for cello and orchestra by Laurie San Martin and Samuel Nichols, as well as works for solo cello by Tamar Diesendruck, Andrew Rindfleisch, and John Mallia. Russell has recorded for the Tzaddik, Albany, BMOPSound, CRI, Centaur and New World Records labels.



Peter Sulski, viola, has performed in over 30 countries as a member of the Apple Hill Chamber Players, London Symphony Orchestra, Academy of St.-Martin-in-the-Fields, Cyprus Chamber Orchestra, and Al Kamandjati Baroque Ensemble (Palestine). He returned to his native Worcester in 2002, after holding the position of Head of Strings of the Edward Said National Palestinian Conservatory. Mr. Sulski is a co-founder

of the Worcester Chamber Music Society and an educator with the society's Neighborhood Strings, a free program for disadvantaged youth. He currently appears as principal violist with Odyssey Opera, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and the Orchestra of Indian Hill. Other chamber music activities include the Pedroia quartet, duo partnerships with pianists Randall Hodgkinson and Yelena Beriyeva, Clark 2021 Contemporary Ensemble, and the Al Kamandjati Baroque Ensemble. Mr. Sulski is a United States Cultural Envoy to Jerusalem for his work bringing music to young Palestinians living in refugee camps. He is also a solo recording artist for Parma Records.



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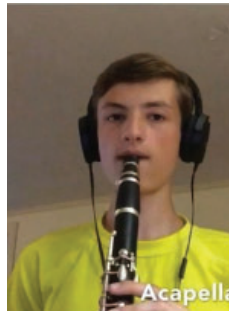
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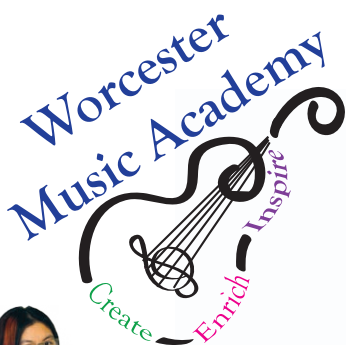
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