



NEXUS Chamber Music

Alexander Hersh, cello • Stephanie Zyzak, violin
Evren Ozel, piano

October 1, 4:00 pm • First Presbyterian Church

Artists sponsored by Bruce Ensinger and Clark Denham

PROGRAM

Trio No. 39 in G major, Hob. XV/25 “Gypsy Trio”

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Andante
Poco adagio, cantabile
Rondo all’Ongarese: Presto

Trio in a minor

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Modéré
Pantoum
Passacaille
Final

INTERMISSION

Trio in B major, Op. 8

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Allegro con brio
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Adagio
Finale: Allegro

About the Artists



ALEXANDER HERSH, cello

Having already performed as soloist with the Houston Symphony and the Boston Pops, cellist Alexander Hersh has quickly established himself as one of the most exciting and versatile talents of his generation. He has received top prizes at competitions worldwide including the: 2019 Astral Artists National Auditions, National Federation of Music Clubs Biennial Young Artists Competition, New York International Artists Association

Competition, Friends of the Minnesota Orchestra, Ima Hogg, Schadt, Artist Series Concerts National String Competition, Luminarts Classical Music Fellowship, Borromeo String Quartet Guest Artist Award, Hellam Young Artist Competition, Boston Pops/New England Conservatory Competition, Jefferson Symphony International Young Artists Competition, Society of American Musicians, Saint Paul String Quartet, and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music competition.

The Musiq3 critics of the RTBF Belgian Radio company gave Hersh's performance at the inaugural Queen Elisabeth Cello Competition in Belgium in 2017 a rave review: "With his scenic presence and charm, Hersh has everything to become the darling of the public."

A passionate chamber musician, Hersh has performed the complete string quartets of Béla Bartok and Alban Berg and much of the rest of the chamber music canon at music festivals worldwide including: Marlboro, Caramoor, Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Music@Menlo, I-M-S Prussia Cove, Perlman Music Program Chamber Music Workshop, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, Amsterdam Cello Biennial, Kneisel Hall, Lucerne, New York String Orchestra Seminar, Domaine Forget, and the Meadowmount School of Music.

Hersh is co-artistic director of NEXUS Chamber Music, a collective of international artists committed to stimulating interest in serious chamber music. NEXUS presents a two week chamber music festival across the city of Chicago each August, featuring new and obscure works alongside standard works of the chamber music canon. NEXUS plays to unusual and intimate venues with the mission of breaking down the barriers that often separate performers from audience members.

A 4th generation string player, Alexander's parents, Stefan and Roberta, are both active professional violinists. His grandfather, Paul Hersh, is professor of viola and piano at San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and his great grandfather, Ralph Hersh, was a member of the WQXR and Stuyvesant String Quartets, and principal violist of the Dallas and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras.

Raised in Chicago, Alexander Hersh began playing the cello at the age of 5. He studied with Steve Balderston and Hans Jørgen Jensen, and attended the Academy at the Music Institute of Chicago. Hersh received his B.M. from New England Conservatory (with academic honors) where he was a student of Laurence Lesser and recipient of the Clara M. Friedlaender Scholarship. In May of 2017, he received his M.M. from New England Conservatory where he studied under the tutelage of Paul Katz and Kim Kashkashian. Hersh was

a recipient of the Frank Huntington Beebe fund for studies in Berlin during the 2017 - 2018 academic year where he studied with Nicolas Altstaedt at the Hanns Eisler Hochschule for Musik Berlin. He plays a G.B. Rogeri cello on generous loan from a sponsor through Darnton & Hersh Fine Violins in Chicago, IL.



STEPHANIE ZYZAK, violin

Praised for her sensitive musicianship and heartfelt playing, violinist Stephanie Zyzak is quickly gaining a reputation as one of the most soulful and profound musicians of her generation.

At the age of seven, Stephanie made her first solo appearance with the Starling Chamber Orchestra at the Aspen Music School and became the youngest recipient ever to be awarded the Aspen Music School New Horizon Fellowship. The following year, she performed in Germany as an invited guest of the Internationale Kunst - Akademie Liechtenstein (IKAL).

Since making her debut in 2004 with the Louisville Orchestra, Stephanie has performed as soloist throughout Germany, Russia, Austria, Sweden, Spain, Italy, France, and with orchestras including the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic, Southeast Missouri Symphony, and the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra. Recent and upcoming season highlights include performances at Caramoor, Carnegie Hall, the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert series, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the Phillips Collection, among others.

A deeply passionate chamber musician, Stephanie has had the privilege of collaborating with renowned musicians including Jonathan Biss, Kim Kashkashian, Ida Kavafian, Alice Neary, Danny Phillips, Marcy Rosen, and Mitsuko Uchida. She has also performed at the Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, Caramoor, the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival, as well as on tour with Musicians From Marlboro.

Born in South Carolina, Stephanie is a graduate of New England Conservatory where she studied with Miriam Fried. Currently, she is studying at CUNY The Graduate Center with Mark Steinberg. She is also a founding member of ensemble132, a roster-based chamber music collective and was a 2020-22 Ensemble Connect fellow at Carnegie Hall.

Stephanie performs on a 1778 Joseph and Antonio Gagliano violin, generously on loan from Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, and a bow by François-Nicolas Voirin.



EVREN OZEL, piano

American pianist Evren Ozel began his musical studies at age 3 in his hometown of Minneapolis, MN. He has won numerous honors and awards including scholarships from the U.S Chopin Foundation and Young Arts Foundation, first prize at the 2016 Boston Symphony Concerto Competition, second prize at the 2016 Thomas and Evon Cooper International Competition, and second prize as well as Mozart and Chopin special prizes at the 2018 Dublin International Piano Competition. Most recently, he received second prize and special prizes for Best Mazurka and Best Polonaise at the 2020 U.S. National Chopin Competition securing the honor of representing the U.S.A in the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, Poland in October 2021, where he was a quarter-finalist.

Ozel has performed with orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, RTE National Symphony and Boston Pops among others. In 2018, as a freshman at New England Conservatory, Evren won both the Honors Piano Competition and the NEC Chamber Concerto Competition which garnered him an opportunity to play on the Jordan Hall stage with the school's conductor-less orchestra.

An avid chamber musician, Ozel was selected by Mitsuko Uchida to participate in the prestigious Marlboro Music Festival. There he performed with Jonathan Biss, Alice Neary, Marcy Rosen and Joseph Lin, among others. Three of his performances at the festival have already been featured in the archived Historic Recordings from Marlboro. In 2019, he participated in Chamber Fest Cleveland, featured in their Rising Star program, performing alongside artists such as Franklin Cohen, Peter Wiley and Hsin-Yun Huang. Of his performance of Franck Sonata with Nathan Meltzer, Cleveland Classical wrote "Meltzer and Ozel attended to every contour of the music with care, crafting a longform melodic idea that flowed effortlessly from phrase to phrase and movement to movement. It was a privilege to witness."

Other chamber experiences include invitations to play with Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players and Chamber Music Live! at Queen's College. He was also a member of Gruppetto Trio which was selected as a New England Conservatory Honors Ensemble in the 2018/2019 school year.

Other summer festival experiences include the International Mendelssohn Akademie Leipzig in 2018 as a Mendelssohn Fellow, taking masterclasses with Pavel Gililov and Matti Raekallio, and the Oxford Philomusica Piano Festival in 2015, where he had masterclasses with Ferenc Rados, Menahem Pressler, and Andras Schiff. He has also been selected to perform in masterclasses for Richard Goode, Paul Lewis, Mitsuko Uchida, Garrick Ohlsson, Robert Levin, Hugh Wolff, Lang Lang and others.

His 2022/2023 season included solo recitals for Chamber Music Detroit and the Asheville Symphony Recital Series, as well as Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Midland Symphony Orchestra, and duo recitals for Washington Performing Arts and Philadelphia Chamber Music Society with violinist Geneva Lewis.

Ozel is currently in the Master of Music program at New England Conservatory in Boston, MA where he has been studying with Wha Kyung Byun since 2014. He is represented by Concert Artists Guild, as one of the Ambassador Prize winners of their 2021 Victor Elmaleh Virtual Competition.