



The Music Department and
the Office of Special Programs present

Ensemble Connect

A program of Carnegie Hall,
The Juilliard School,
and the Weill Music Institute,
in partnership with the New York City
Department of Education.

*The fall residency is made possible by the generous support of Skidmore alumna
Beverly Sanders Payne, Class of 1959, and her late husband David B. Payne*

Friday, October 24th, 2025, 7:30PM
Arthur Zankel Music Center
Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall

Program

Da pacem Domine (2004)

Arvo Pärt
(b. 1935)

Coco Mi, violin
Laurel Gagnon, violin
Abby Smith, viola
Elena Ariza, cello

Quintettino (1964)

Arvo Pärt
(b. 1935)

Schnell
Langsam
Mäßig

Cameron Cullen, flute
JJ Silvey, oboe
Anoush Pogossian, clarinet
Marty Tung, bassoon (alum)
Will Sands, horn

Mládí (1924)

Leoš Janáček
(1854-1928)

Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Vivace
Allegro animato

Cameron Cullen, flute
JJ Silvey, oboe
Anoush Pogossian, clarinet
Nicole Martin, bass clarinet
Marty Tung, bassoon (alum)
Will Sands, horn

Intermission

Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57
(1940)

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

Prelude: Lento

Fugue: Adagio

Scherzo: Allegretto

Intermezzo: Lento

Finale: Allegretto

Joseph Vaz, piano
Laurel Gagnon, violin
Coco Mi, violin
Abby Smith, viola
Elena Ariza, cello

Program Notes

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)
Da pacem Domine (2004)

About the Composer

Of the sundry varieties of “new simplicity” that classical music spawned in the late 20th century, none was broader in its appeal, or more idiosyncratic in its conception, than that associated with the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. With his monkish tonsure and craggy, bearded visage, Pärt seems well cast as an apostle of minimalism. Although his output has slowed of late, the 90-year-old composer continues to explore the ramifications of the radically stripped-down musical language that grew out of his study of chant and early vocal polyphony. Despite his early interest in serialism, Pärt ultimately renounced the complexity embraced by the post-World War II avant-garde. As a young man, he dabbled in neoclassicism and other styles, but it wasn’t

until the mid-1970s that he found his voice in a short, hypnotically spare piano piece titled *Für Alina*.

About the Work

Da pacem Domine (Lord, give us peace) exemplifies Pärt's bell-like "tintinnabuli" style, characterized by back-to-basics harmonies, textures, and tempos, with independent lines hovering around triads or sustained pedal tones. The piece originated as a short choral prayer written in response to the 2004 terrorist attack on Madrid's commuter rail network. (It also exists in multiple instrumental versions, including this one for string quartet.) The music's multilayered textures and slowly shifting harmonies reflect Pärt's longstanding interest in Renaissance choral music. He sees composition as a process of distillation that invariably begins with a *tabula rasa*. "I cannot help it but start from scratch," he once told an interviewer. "I am tempted only when I experience something unknown, something new and meaningful for me. It seems, however, that this unknown territory is sooner reached by way of reduction than by growing complexity. Reduction certainly doesn't mean simplification, but it is the way—at least in an ideal scenario—to the most intense concentration on the essence of things."

Quintettino (1964)

About the Work

This diminutive wind quintet evinces a contrasting side of Pärt's artistic persona, at once more complex and more playful. It's one of a series of Bach-inspired works he wrote in the 1960s, a number of which incorporate the Baroque composer's musical "signature" as a theme. (In German musical notation, B-A-C-H is spelled with the notes B-flat, A, C, B-natural.)

Although the *Quintettino* is highly compressed—its three movements take five minutes to perform—there is more going on in the music than is apparent at first listen. The fanfare-like opening establishes an unambiguous G-major tonality that quickly dissolves into alternating groups of pounding chords organized in serial fashion. In the contemplative slow movement, the B-A-C-H motif is sounded by the horn while the other instruments enter one by one in descending stairsteps. A similar sequential scheme underlies the high-spirited finale, which culminates in a Haydnesque “surprise” ending.

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Mládí (1924)

About the Composer

Janáček was in a nostalgic frame of mind in the summer of 1924. Max Brod's newly published biography, for which the composer had painstakingly supplied a great deal of material, had released a flood of bittersweet memories. Moreover, the celebration of his 70th birthday, on July 3, had inevitably focused international attention on Brno's most celebrated citizen. That very day, Janáček quietly slipped away to Hukvaldy, his native village in the Moravian mountains. It was in this peaceful retreat, over the next three weeks, that he composed a four-movement wind sextet which he described to his paramour Kamila Stösslová as “a sort of memoir of youth.”

About the Work

Mládí (*Youth*) is scored for a standard wind-quintet ensemble (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and French horn), fortified by the stentorian voice of a bass clarinet. Contemporary with Janáček's opera *The Makropoulos Affair*, the work exhibits many of the traits

of his mature style, in particular the insistent repetition of short melodic motives and irregular, speech-like rhythmic patterns. The first performance of *Mládí*, which took place in Brno on October 21, 1924, was marred by a memorable mishap. Janáček's wife recalled that when the clarinetist brought his instrument into the concert hall from the cold, "one of the keys got damaged somehow so that it didn't give out a sound. And it was unfortunately just that note that was the most prominent in my husband's piece." The clarinetist was unaware of the problem until after the performance got under way. He did the best he could under the circumstances, playing his part as if nothing was amiss while calmly omitting the defective note. Janáček, however, flew into a rage. Rushing backstage after the concert, he chewed the hapless man out, then announced to the startled audience that the piece they had just enthusiastically applauded was not his composition after all.

A Closer Listen

The autobiographical content in *Mládí* is largely implicit. According to an anonymous program note published in a local Brno newspaper, which may or may not have been sanctioned by the composer, the jaunty opening *Allegro* expresses Janáček's reminiscences of "childhood in his native school in Hukvaldy," while the wistful lyricism of the *Andante sostenuto* recalls "the sad scenes of parting from his mother at the station in Brno," where he studied as a chorister in the Augustinian monastery. The third movement, a perky double-time march, is derived from a duet for piccolo and piano that Janáček had written several weeks earlier and presented as a token of appreciation to his hard-working copyist, a member of Brno's National Theater Orchestra. That piece, in turn, evoked images of the town square in Old Brno, which the composer remembered as being "gray and red with Prussian soldiers in the summer of 1866. It resounded with the banging of the tin drums and the screeching of the piccolos." The "wild music" of the military band, he wrote in 1923, "continues ringing in my ears to this day." This is an apt description of the *Vivace*, in which the strutting

piccolo confidently prepares the way for the composer's "courageous leap into life" as embodied in the final Allegro animato.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 (1940)

About the Composer

Shostakovich occupies a special niche in the annals of 20th-century Russian music. Unlike Stravinsky and Prokofiev, he didn't come of age before the Bolshevik Revolution and immerse himself in Western culture. And unlike younger composers such as Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina, he didn't live to see the fall of the regime that had muzzled artistic expression under the banner of socialist realism. Outwardly a loyal Soviet citizen, he played an elaborate game of feint and attack with the authorities, cannily balancing his more abrasive, cutting-edge music with a stream of reassuringly patriotic and artistically conservative works. His output veers wildly between mordant satire (the opera *The Nose* and the ballet *The Age of Gold*), patriotic bombast (the Second Symphony and the symphonic poem *October*, both eulogizing the 1917 Revolution), and stark alienation (almost any of his 15 string quartets). Fundamentally tonal, but imbued with dissonant harmonies and kinetic energy, Shostakovich's music epitomizes the turbulent, existentialist spirit of W. H. Auden's *The Age of Anxiety*.

About the Work

The premier of the Piano Quintet took place in Moscow on November 23, 1940, with Shostakovich performing alongside the Beethoven Quartet. Although the work won the coveted Stalin Prize, the dictator was reportedly irked by the public's enthusiastic response. Even the composer seemed bemused by his success, joking that he had written a piano quintet merely to "have the chance to perform myself and thereby travel on concert tours." (In

fact, not until after Stalin died in 1953 would Shostakovich be permitted to go abroad and establish contacts with Benjamin Britten and other Western composers.) Yet the contradictions embodied in the Piano Quintet would never—perhaps could never—be resolved. A cellist who performed the work with Shostakovich in later years recalled that “we, the string players, wanted to ‘sing,’ to play with more emotion,” whereas the intensely private composer aimed for “emotional restraint” and accentuated the music’s “constructive, motor elements.”

A Closer Listen

The dichotomy between Classical discipline and raw, often discomfiting emotion is intrinsic to much of Shostakovich’s music. The very circumstances that gave birth to his Piano Quintet in the summer of 1940 were fraught with tension. Although the Soviet Union had signed a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany a year earlier, the Great Terror of the late 1930s had taken an appalling toll on Russian artists and intelligentsia in particular. Whether or not covert criticism of Stalin’s murderous regime is embedded in Shostakovich’s Quintet, as some scholars once believed, the music’s pervasive mood of bleakness and angst belies its blandly traditional movement titles. The opening pairing of Prelude and Fugue displays Shostakovich’s love of Bachian counterpoint, which provided a spiritual anchorage amid the cultural and political storms that raged around him. The joviality of the central Scherzo is more than a little crude, with its pounding rhythms, graceless swoops, and slippery tonality. The Intermezzo is characterized by a relentlessly tolling quarter-note pulse first plucked out by the pizzicato cello—a musical emblem of fate, perhaps— followed by a light, rhapsodic Finale that hints at consolation but offers no real closure.

The Artists

Ensemble Connect

Artistry. Education. Advocacy. Entrepreneurship.

Ensemble Connect was created in 2007 by Carnegie Hall's Executive and Artistic Director Clive Gillinson and The Juilliard School's President Joseph W. Polisi. Ensemble Connect is a two-year fellowship program for extraordinary young professional classical musicians residing in the US that prepares them for careers combining musical excellence with teaching, community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership. It offers top-quality performance opportunities, intensive professional development, and partnerships throughout the fellowship with New York City public schools.

Ensemble Connect fellows—chosen for their musicianship, but also for their leadership qualities and commitment to music education—have come from some of the best music schools in the country, including the Colburn Conservatory of Music, Curtis Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, Peabody Institute, Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, Stony Brook University, University of Southern California, and Yale School of Music.

Ensemble Connect has earned accolades from critics and audiences alike for the quality of its performances, as well as its fresh and open-minded approach, performing a wide range of music—from centuries past to works written days before an event—in a variety of venues. The group performs its own series at Carnegie Hall and has regularly appeared at The Juilliard School's Paul Hall and other venues throughout New York City. As part of a partnership with Skidmore College that began in 2007, Ensemble Connect gives master classes for university students and performs for the Saratoga Springs community both in concert halls and informal settings around town. Committed

to providing the fellows with exceptional opportunities to work with contemporary music, composers, and artists, Carnegie Hall has commissioned 35 composers on behalf of Ensemble Connect since 2007. These composers and the fellows have worked closely during the creative process to present a total of 40 world-premiere performances of works, some of which have been featured in Ensemble Connect's Up Close concert series. Along with performance opportunities at premier venues in New York City and beyond, Ensemble Connect fellows partner with instrumental music teachers at New York City public schools to share artistry with—and become central resources for—music classrooms in the five boroughs. Ensemble Connect fellows also take part in community work, performing at many unconventional music venues across New York City, including correctional facilities, homeless shelters, senior community centers, and organizations serving special needs populations. Throughout the two-year fellowship, Ensemble Connect fellows participate in rigorous, ongoing professional development to ensure that they gain the necessary skills to be successful in all areas of the program and to give them the tools to shape purposeful, personally rewarding career paths that give back to their communities. Areas of emphasis include artistic excellence, on- and off-stage engagement strategies, advocacy, professional skills, and preparation for their in-school work.

Moving on to the next stage of their careers, Ensemble Connect's 144 alums are now making an impact on the national and international musical landscape in a wide variety of artistic and educational arenas. Continuing the strong bonds formed through the program, in 2011 alums formed the chamber music collective Decoda, which has been named an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall. Exemplary performers, dedicated teachers, and passionate advocates of music throughout the community, the forward-looking musicians of Ensemble Connect are redefining what it means to be a musician in the 21st century.

Visit ensembleconnect.org to learn more.

Ensemble Connect celebrates its 19th year at Skidmore College!

Since the inception of Skidmore's biannual weeklong residencies with Ensemble Connect in 2007, these talented musicians have engaged with over 53,000 students and audience members through Skidmore class visits, lessons and coaching, local school and community outreach, and premiere performances.

The fall Ensemble Connect residency and performance at Skidmore are made possible through the generous support of Beverly Sanders Payne, Class of 1959, and her family. We especially honor the memory of her husband, Dave Payne, who passed away earlier this year. Dave was Bev's close partner in supporting the Ensemble Connect residency and shared Bev's love of music and of Skidmore.

The spring residency is made possible through the generous support of the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation.

Upcoming Events

Skidmore & Bennington Folk Festival
Saturday, November 8, 7:30pm

SURROUND: Julie Doiron
Saturday, November 9, 4:00pm

Tenzin Choegyal w/Attacca Quartet &
Alex Ring Gray: Be the Sky
Friday, November 14, 7:30pm

SKIDMANIA '75
Friday, November 21, 8:00pm
Saturday, November 22, 8:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Brass & Woodwind Ensembles
Saturday, November 22, 5:30pm

Skidmore in Concert: Orchestra
Tuesday, December 2, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
VCE + Chorus Outreach Concert
Thursday, December 4, 10:00am

Skidmore in Concert:
Concert Band
Friday, December 5, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Global Music Showcase (String Band,
Indian, Mongolian, + West African
Ensembles)
Saturday, December 6, 2:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Big Band + Cuban Music Ensemble
Saturday, December 6, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Small Jazz Ensembles + Guitar
Sunday, December 7, 1:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Guitar Ensemble
Sunday, December 7, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: String
Ensembles
Monday, December 8, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Vocal Chamber
Ensemble + Chorus
Wednesday, December 10, 7:00pm