

# Westchester Chamber Soloists

Visit us at: [www.WestchesterChamberSoloists.com](http://www.WestchesterChamberSoloists.com)

**Westchester Chamber Soloists (WCS)** is excited to present the 2nd of 5 Concert programs scheduled for the 2023-24 Season (Oct 1, Dec 3, Feb 11, April 7 and May 19) here at *Sarah Lawrence College*. WCS welcomed 2023 with *New Year's Day/Week* performances of the cycle of J.S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and its three Spring '23 programs here at SLC on March 5, April 2 and June 4 featured masterpieces of the Concerto, Symphonic and Chamber Music literature.

**WCS 2023-24 Season** features 3 returning Guest Conductors (Bernard Tamosaitis, Mina Kim and Ovidiu Marinescu) and Guest Concertmaster Calvin Wiersma, as well as a wealth of WCS member concerto soloists in diverse repertoire spanning the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20<sup>th</sup> Century and contemporary periods, including a World Premiere by composer Ovidiu Marinescu and a celebration of African-American composers with Yolanda Johnson (soprano). In addition, WCS April 7 Concert features an exciting collaboration with Sarah Lawrence College faculty and students in original and innovative works and multi-media presentations involving still art and dance, film, and other creative disciplines.

**WCS** was established in January 2020 as Westchester County's premier chamber orchestra and chamber ensemble network, and performs as both an orchestra and an integrated array of smaller ensembles across strings, winds, brass, percussion and mixed instruments, including voice. The ensemble brings a diverse repertoire to the stage, including the Concerto literature for piano and for other solo instruments and vocalists, as well as symphonic and choral works. WCS operates as a self-directed/governed enterprise, its musicians bringing their keen musical instincts and in-the-moment intra-group interpretive communication to guide performances. WCS' members appear as the ensemble's principal concerto soloists, enabling members to hone and share their talents as both solo performers and ensemble collaborators.

WCS 2023-24 Season program details can be found on the home page of our website, and our complete repertoire to date, including all live performances at SLC and elsewhere – as well as RiverArts' Annual Music Tour appearances, where WCS has since inception been the featured classical chamber music ensemble – can be found on the website's Performances tab. Season Subscription and individual Event tickets can be found at Eventbrite.com

**Alan Murray, WCS Founder, Executive & Artistic Director**

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# Westchester Chamber Soloists

**Guest Concertmaster & Violin Soloist:** Calvin Wiersma  
**Piano Soloist:** Alan Murray

## Violin

Calvin Wiersma (Concertmaster)  
Lori Horowitz (Asst. Concertmaster)  
Kate Ashby  
Karen Chow  
Joshua Daniels  
Samuel Glazman  
David Lane  
Laura Macbeth  
Lucie Onderwyzer  
Dana Villarreal

## Viola

Monica Gerard (principal)  
Katherine Branch  
Katie Callaghan

## Cello

Sachi Patitucci (principal)  
Jacqueline Bergson  
Seth Jacobs

## Bass

Gregory Hunter

## Percussion

Thomas Cobb

## Flute

Marjorie Hone  
Paul-Lucien Kulka

## Oboe

Justin Stewart  
Amy Wierenga

## Clarinet

Christopher Peña  
Jonathan Stark

## French Horn

Peter Huitzacia  
Marc Wager

## Bassoon

Rosemary Dellinger  
Amy Hall

## Trumpet

John Reid  
Russ Ebersole

## Trombone

Paul Giedel  
Robert Stattel

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# Westchester Chamber Soloists

**Sunday, December 3, 2023 (3:00pm)**  
**Sarah Lawrence College / Reisinger Auditorium**



**Masterpieces by Haydn, Grieg, Vaughan Williams & Wagner**

*with* Calvin Wiersma (Special Guest Concertmaster & Soloist)

and Alan Murray (Piano Soloist)



**WCS Website**



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**Our Performances**



# Westchester Chamber Soloists

Today's concert has been underwritten by generous contributions  
from **Frank & Christine Cowan**  
and from **Peter & Gila Acker**

~ \* ~ \* ~

**Calvin Wiersma, Guest Concertmaster & Soloist**

~\*~\*~

## **Symphony No. 39 in G minor ("Tempest at Sea") F. Haydn**

*Allegro assai*  
*Andante*  
*Menuet & Trio*  
*Finale: Allegro di molto*

## **Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16 E. Grieg**

*Allegro molto moderato*  
*Adagio*  
*Finale: Allegro moderato molto e marcato – quasi Presto*

*Alan Murray, piano*

~ **Intermission** ~

## **The Lark Ascending R. Vaughan Williams**

*Calvin Wiersma, violin*

## **Siegfried Idyll (a Symphonic Poem) R. Wagner**

## Notes on Today's Program

**Franz Josef Haydn: Symphony No. 39 ("Tempest at Sea")** takes us on a wildly exhilarating and tempestuous ride. It's no wonder that this symphony, written in 1767 around the time Haydn became *Kapellmeister* for Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, earned the poetic nickname. Set in a turbulent G minor, it's an early example of *Sturm und Drang* ("storm and drive"), an artistic movement that swept through music and literature from the 1760s through the 1780s. *Sturm und Drang* threw off the shackles of Enlightenment rationalism and allowed primal Powers to run wild. This music is filled with edginess and sudden, wild twists and turns which throw all caution to the wind. Mozart's Symphony No. 25, Haydn's Symphony No. 45 ("Farewell") and the symphonies of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach also fall into this category. In many ways, *Sturm und Drang* feels like a precursor to the revolutionary sounds of Beethoven and Romanticism.

The first movement begins with a sense of hushed, breathless, nervous energy. The suspense builds as the music breaks off unexpectedly into strange moments of silence. Then, suddenly, the gears kick in and all of this pent up energy erupts into high-flying B-flat major. Exuberant scales in the violins fly like fiery sonic volleys. Oboes, bassoon, and horns add a celebratory punch to the sound. Amazingly, this single opening theme dominates the entire first movement. It modulates, evolves, and develops but it remains a constant, persistent, even haunting presence.

In contrast to the first movement's raw tension, the second movement, scored only for strings, retreats to the light and charming elegance of the well-behaved *galant* style. The third movement moves back to G minor, with the trio section -dominated by the wind voices - providing a cheerful B-flat major contrast.

The Finale arrives with stern ferocity. In the opening bars, notice the contrapuntal dialogue between the violins, oboes, and the low strings, amid trembling inner voices. A few moments later, the violins unleash a torrent of dazzling, virtuosic fireworks. Speeding toward its final cadence, this movement returns to the world of *Sturm und Drang*, with Haydn bringing his *Symphony No. 39* to a thrillingly tumultuous conclusion.

**Edvard Grieg: Piano Concerto in A minor** was composed 1868, was the composer's only Concerto, yet it is one of his most popular works, and is among the most popular of the genre. Grieg, only 20 at the time of its completion, had taken inspiration from Robert Schumann's only concerto, also being in the key of A minor. Grieg had heard Schumann's concerto played by Clara Schumann (nee Wieck) in Leipzig in 1858, and was greatly influenced by Schumann's style generally, having been taught the piano by Schumann's friend Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel.

Grieg's concerto provides ample evidence of his interest in Norwegian folk music; the opening flourish is based on the motif of a falling minor second followed by a falling major third, which is typical of the folk music of Grieg's native country. This specific motif occurs in other works by Grieg, including his String Quartet No. 1. In the last movement of the concerto, similarities to the "Halling" (a Norwegian folk dance) and imitations of the Hardanger fiddle (the Norwegian folk fiddle) are detected.

The work was premiered on 3 April 1869, in Copenhagen. Some sources say that Grieg himself, an excellent pianist, was the intended soloist, but he was unable to attend the premiere owing to commitments with an orchestra in Christiania (now Oslo). Among those who did attend the premiere were the Danish composer Niels Gade (to whom Grieg dedicated one of his Lyric Pieces) and the Russian pianist Anton Rubinstein, who provided his piano for the occasion. At Grieg's visit to Franz Liszt in Rome in 1870, Liszt played the work and declared of Grieg: "Hats off, gentlemen, a genius". The concerto is also the first piano concerto ever recorded, by pianist Wilhelm Backhaus, in 1909. Grieg revised the work at least

seven times, and the final version of the concerto was completed only a few weeks before Grieg's death.

**Ralph Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending** is a single-movement work inspired by 1881 poem of the same name by the English writer George Meredith. Originally for violin and piano and completed in 1914 the composer reworked it for solo violin and orchestra and this version, by which the work is chiefly known, was first performed in 1921. It is subtitled "A Romance", a term that Vaughan Williams favored for contemplative slow music. Among Vaughan Williams enthusiasms were poetry and the violin. He had trained as a violinist as a boy, and his literary tastes were wide-ranging. Before the composition of *The Lark Ascending*, Vaughan Williams had inscribed a verse by Meredith above an early score, now lost. The composer's second wife, Ursula, herself a poet, wrote that in *The Lark Ascending* Vaughan Williams had "taken a literary idea on which to build his musical thought ... and had made the violin become both the bird's song and its flight, actually being the incarnation of – rather than merely illustrating – the poem from which the title was taken". At the head of the score, Vaughan Williams wrote out twelve lines from Meredith's poem:

He rises and begins to round, He drops the silver chain of sound,  
Of many links without a break, In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.

For singing till his heaven fills, 'Tis love of earth that he instils,  
And ever winging up and up, Our valley is his golden cup  
And he the wine which overflows To lift us with him as he goes.

Till lost on his aerial rings In light, and then the fancy sings.

In a recent poll of BBC listeners to choose Britain's 'Desert Island Discs', the work was the chosen favorite, and for multiple years the piece was voted number one in the Classic FM annual "Hall of Fame" poll. In 2011, on the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a radio poll of New Yorkers for preferences of music to commemorate the event, *The Lark Ascending* ranked in the top 3 works.

**Richard Wagner: Siegfried Idyll** was composed as a birthday present to his second wife, Cosima, after the birth of their son Siegfried in 1869. It was first performed on Christmas morning, 25 December 1870 by a small ensemble of the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich on the stairs of their villa at Tribschen (today part of Lucerne), Switzerland. Cosima awoke to its opening melody. Conductor Hans Richter learned to play the trumpet sufficiently in order to play the brief trumpet part, which lasts just 13 measures, in that private performance, reportedly having sailed out to the center of Lake Lucerne to practice, so as not to be heard. The original title was "*Tribschen Idyll with Fidi's Birdsong and the Orange Sunrise, as Symphonic Birthday Greeting*" Presented to his Cosima by her Richard. "Fidi" was the family's nickname for their son Siegfried. It is thought that the birdsong and the sunrise refer to incidents of personal significance to the couple. Wagner's opera *Siegfried*, which was premiered in 1876, incorporates music from the *Idyll*. Wagner adapted the material from an unfinished chamber piece into the *Idyll* before giving the theme in the opera's final scene as love duet between Brünnhilde and Siegfried. The work also uses a theme based on the German lullaby "*Sleep, Little Child, Sleep*", which was jotted down by Wagner on New Year's Eve 1868, and which was linked to the Wagners' older daughter Eva. This and other musical references, whose meaning remained unknown to the outside world for many years, reveal the *idyll*'s levels of personal significance for both Wagner and Cosima. Wagner originally intended the *Siegfried Idyll* to remain a private piece. However, due to financial pressures, he decided to sell the score to publisher B. Schott in 1878. In doing so, Wagner expanded the orchestration to make the piece more marketable, as the original piece was scored for a small chamber orchestra of just 13 players. *Notes: Wikipedia (Grieg, Vaughan Williams, Wagner) / The Listener's Club – Timothy Judd (Haydn)*