

Lamont School of Music

Mendelssohn Trio

*Piano Trios by Cécile Chaminade,
Lera Auerbach, and Felix Mendelssohn*

Erik Peterson, violin

Barbara Thiem, cello

Bryan Wallick, piano

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

7:30 p.m.

Frederic C. Hamilton Family Recital Hall

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Program

Piano Trio No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 11

Cécile Chaminade

(1892–1974)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto
- IV. Allegro molto

Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 28

Lera Aurebach

(1892–1955)

- I. Prelude, Allegro moderato
- II. Andante lamentoso
- III. Presto

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49

Felix Mendelssohn

(1809–1847)

- I. Molto Allegro agitato
- II. Andante con moto tranquillo
- III. Scherzo, Leggiero e vivace
- IV. Finale, Allegro assai appassionato

Program Notes

Piano Trio No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 11

French composer Cécile Luise Stephanie Chaminade was born in August 8, 1857 in Batignolles, a village outside of Paris. Raised in a musical family, Chaminade showed an early talent for the piano and composing. At the age of 10 she was recommended for admittance to the Paris Conservatoire but her father forbid her to attend as he felt it was improper for a girl of her class. However, he did allow her to study privately with some of France's finest pianists and composers including Benjamin Goddard. Like many women of the time she suffered from the unfair prejudice against women composers. However, some composers such as opera composer Ambrose Tomas, recognized her talent at composition. Upon hearing an orchestral work of Chaminade's written when she was just 18 years old Ambrose remarked, "This is no woman composed, this is a composer who happens to be a woman." Although primarily a concert pianist, Chaminade wrote over 200 works for the piano and piano ensembles and toured the world to considerable acclaim performing them. In 1913 she was awarded the Legion d'Honneur, the highest and most prestigious French national merit of honor, a first for a female composer.

Chaminade's Piano Trio No. 1, Opus 11 was written in 1881 when she was 22 years old. The piece is written for piano, violin and cello and was Chaminade's first chamber music composition. The piece is composed in four movements. The piece begins with the flowing *Alllegro* movement that features singing melodic passages passed between the three instruments. The second movement, *Andante*, is a Schumannesque Lied. The third movement is a racing *Presto leggiero* in the manner of a *scherzo*. The opening theme in the *Presto* is very French followed by a contrasting lyrical second theme. The influence of Goddard can be heard in the finale, *Alllegro molto agitato*. The piece has a romanticism typical of the late 1800's and is beautifully crafted, virtuosic, full of charm, and is characteristic of the composers early period.

(Notes by Rachel Ellins)

Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 28

Lera Aurebach (b. 1973) is a Soviet-born virtuoso pianist, as well as a composer and conductor, award-winning poet, and visual artist. She was on a concert tour of the US in 1991 when she decided to stay as the Soviet Union collapsed; she later gained American, then Austrian, citizenship. While she thinks of composing, playing the piano, and literature as her artistic core, none of her other pursuits is ancillary to these; rather, she sees all of her endeavors as facets of an integrated artistic self.

As a composer, she is tremendously prolific. Unlike many contemporary composers, she writes in all the traditional genres as well as for unique,

bespoke combinations; thus, along with six symphonies, two requiems, many ballets, and an opera, her chamber music output includes 10 string quartets, sets of preludes for solo piano, sonatas for violin and for cello, and piano trios, of which we will hear the first of four thus far, written in 1992/1994.

Auerbach's music asks for and rewards deep and repeated listening; it is simultaneously both intimate and vast, equally of its time and unmistakably rooted in classical practices. The brief, brisk *Prelude* begins with what is clearly a fugue—contrary to Baroque and Classical precursors, though, even in its exposition the subject is stated in *stretto*, with the violin entering before the cello has restated the piano's entire subject. The exquisite *Andante lamentoso* seems at first to be woven from incompatible materials: a slow, steady series of widely-spaced notes in the piano underlies more melodic, and similar, ideas in the cello and violin. But there are occasional overlaps—a single pitch here, elsewhere a brief figure shared between players in ways the ear is unlikely to anticipate and yet that seem inevitable, briefly surfacing a deep connection that has been there all along. The *Presto* finale features both the work's most traditional relationships between instruments and a rare moment of humor (other of Auerbach's works are more overtly so). After a busy opening followed by a quiet interlude, the three instruments set up what is obviously the movement's climax — which leads to a major-mode cadence that would be *de rigueur* if the piece had been written in the 1800s. The cadence is jarring — shocking, even — as it is so tonally and gesturally remote from what precedes it; and in that lies its humor. Auerbach highlights the joke by immediately abandoning it, as if acknowledging a wrong turn. Instead she turns back to ideas familiar from the movement's opening, which build to a close that, this time, is entirely in keeping with the piece's aesthetic.

(Notes by Hali Fieldman, Ph.D.)

Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 49

Mendelssohn composed his *Piano Trio in D minor* while on a summer vacation in 1839, an interlude between arduous seasons of conducting and directing festivals and concert series at the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. The trio was premiered in February 1840 by violinist Ferdinand David, cellist Franz Karl Witmann, and Mendelssohn at the piano. This trio is among Mendelssohn's most popular chamber works.

Mendelssohn played many instruments as a child, but the piano was his main performing instrument. The year before he composed the trio, Mendelssohn wrote his friend Ferdinand Hiller:

(continued.)

“Piano pieces are not exactly the things I write with the greatest pleasure or even with real success, but I sometimes want a new thing to play... A very important branch of piano music which I am particularly fond of—trios, quartets, and other things with accompaniment—is quite forgotten now, and I greatly feel the want of something new in that line... and I am thinking of writing a couple of trios.”

Mendelssohn wrote the first version in 1839, but after he consulted with his friend Hiller, he was encouraged to re-work the piano part. The revised version was more Romantic in style and the piano part expanded to have a more important role. Schumann reviewed the trio and wrote that it was “the master trio of our day” and declared Mendelssohn to be

“the Mozart of the nineteenth century, the brightest musician, who most clearly understands the contradictions of the age and is the first to reconcile them.”

The first movement, *Molto allegro agitato*, is written in a relatively standard sonata form with the cello introducing the first theme. The *Andante con moto tranquillo* second movement is very reminiscent of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* with a lyrical melody passed between the piano and violin with the cello providing a countermelody. The third movement is a short and light *scherzo*. The *Finale* provides a rollicking and virtuosic conclusion to the work.

(Notes by Debra Throgmorton)

Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.

Classical Guitar Ensembles

Hamilton Recital Hall

Free admission, no ticket required

Sunday, March 15, 3:00 p.m.

Student Carillon Concert

Williams Carillon, Ritchie Center Lawn

Free admission, no weather cancellations

Masterclass: David Kim, violin

Monday, March 16, 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 17, 10:00 a.m.

Hamilton Recital Hall

Free admission to observe

Saturday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.

Faculty Recital Series: Basil Vendryes, viola & William David, piano

Hamilton Recital Hall

\$12, free for students & faculty

Tuesday, April 7, 7:30 p.m.

Trombone Studio Recital

Hamilton Recital Hall

Free admission, no ticket required

Friday, April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Faculty Recital Series: Richard Harris, trombone

Hamilton Recital Hall

\$12, free for students & faculty

Sunday, April 12, 5:00 p.m.

Guest Recital: Lynnli Wang, carillon

Williams Carillon, Ritchie Center Lawn

Free admission, no ticket required

Monday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.

Trumpet Studio Recital

Hamilton Recital Hall

Free admission, no ticket required



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