

# Concerts at the Point

26TH SEASON 2022-2023



"ARRAKIS" BY BRUCE BAILEY

*presents ...*

## CLAREMONT TRIO

DECEMBER 4, 2022, 3:00 PM

1912 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT POINT, MASSACHUSETTS

THE IMAGE ON THE COVER, titled "Arrakis" (Arabic for "The Dancer"), is a mixed media painting on watercolor paper by SouthCoast artist Bruce Bailey.

Bruce is a retired software engineer residing in South Dartmouth with his wife, Susan. He attended the Boston University School of Fine Arts as a painting major for two years in the 1970s and continued painting and printmaking as time permitted.

Since 2015, he has returned to his first passions of painting, printmaking, and sculpture. He has been engaged in studio arts studies at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where he has reestablished and advanced his practice, as well as reconnected with the work he was doing in the 1970s.

This image is one of a series of paintings based on three literary sources: Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darling Thrush," William Butler Yeats's poem "Byzantium," and William Gibson's science fiction short story "Hinterlands."

"These have haunted me for years, and I have tried to realize and give form to the feelings that they evoke. In the series I have used Arabic names for stars as titles. These pieces were completed between May and September of 2017."

BRUCE BAILEY  
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The *Boston Globe* has said that the Claremont Trio plays "with passion and precision." We feel that Bruce Bailey's beautiful "Arrakis" is a passionate and precise complement to their music.

# *Concerts at the Point*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2022

## **CLAREMONT TRIO**

Emily Bruskin, violin  
Julia Bruskin, cello  
Sophiko Simsive, piano

PIANO TRIO IN D MINOR, OP. 11      **MENDELSSOHN HENSEL**

*Allegro molto vivace*

*Andante espressivo*

*Lied: Allegretto*

*Finale: Allegretto moderato*

QUEEN OF HEARTS

**AGÓCS**

(2017, COMMISSIONED FOR THE CLAREMONT TRIO)

**INTERMISSION . . .**

TRIO NO. 1 IN B MAJOR, OP. 8

**BRAHMS**

*Allegro con brio*

*Scherzo: Allegro molto*

*Adagio*

*Finale: Allegro*



Lauded as “one of America’s finest young chamber groups” by *Strad Magazine*, the CLAREMONT TRIO is sought after for its thrillingly virtuosic and richly communicative performances. First winners of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award and the only piano trio ever to win the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the Claremonts are consistently lauded for their “aesthetic maturity, interpretive depth, and exuberance” (*Palm Beach Daily News*).

In 2022, the CLAREMONT TRIO released *Queen of Hearts*, an album of music composed especially for the trio by six of today’s leading composers

– Gabriela Lena Frank, Sean Shepherd, Judd Greenstein, Helen Grime, Nico Muhly and Kati Agócs. Highlights of their 2022-23 season include return engagements at Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, New York’s Music Mondays, and the Polinger Artists of Excellence Series at the Bender JCC of Greater Washington. They will debut and record Robert Beaser’s new *Triple Concerto* (2021), commissioned for them with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project.

The Claremont Trio was formed in 1999 at the Juilliard School. Twin sisters Emily Bruskin and Julia Bruskin grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and they both play old French instruments. Emily’s violin is a Lupot from 1795; Julia’s cello is a J.B. Vuillaume from 1849. Sophiko Simsvive grew up in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Claremonts are all now based in New York City near their namesake: Claremont Avenue.

#### **EMILY BRUSKIN, VIOLIN**

Emily Bruskin has performed as soloist with the Virginia, Pacific, San Francisco Ballets, the Utah, Nashville, and Wichita Symphonies, and has given recitals across the country and around the world. As violinist of the Claremont Trio she has made critically acclaimed recordings on the Arabesque, Bridge, BMOP/Sound, American Modern, Tria, and Ongaku labels.. Ms. Bruskin has served as Guest Concertmaster of the American Ballet Theater Orchestra. She can also be heard performing with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. A graduate of the Columbia-Juilliard program, she holds degrees in Neuroscience and Music.

#### **JULIA BRUSKIN, CELLO**

Since her concerto debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at age seventeen, cellist Julia Bruskin has established herself as one of the premiere cellists of her generation. Her recent CD of music by Beethoven, Brahms, and Dohnányi was praised by *Fanfare Magazine* for its “exquisite beauty of sound and expression.” A founding member of the critically acclaimed Claremont Trio, Ms. Bruskin won first prize in the 2001 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and was awarded the first ever Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award. She plays frequent solo recitals with her husband, Aaron Wunsch, including both national and international tours. The two are in their seventh season as joint artistic directors of the Skaneateles Festival in the Finger Lakes region of New York, presenting artists

such as Gil Shaham, Hilary Hahn, and the Dover, Miro and Catalyst Quartets. Ms. Bruskin began cello lessons at age four. She completed the five-year double degree program at Juilliard and Columbia University. Ms. Bruskin has been a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra since 2014, where she also helps to curate the orchestra's chamber music series at Carnegie's Weill Hall and serves on the orchestra's Artistic Advisory Committee.

### **SOPHIKO SIMSIVE**

Hailed as an “exceptional musician of rare talent who promises to become one of the leading pianists of her generation” by pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Georgian-born Sophiko Simsive began her piano studies at the age of three. She has won numerous awards and accolades, including first prize at the Yamaha Piano Competition in Amsterdam and first prize at Music Academy of the West. Sophiko has a passion for sharing music with larger audiences; she has given recitals at retirement homes and hospitals and has taught at community music schools. Recently she became a member of Vision Collective, a New York-based ensemble that builds meaningful relationships with refugees and new Americans by sharing and exchanging music among diverse communities. Sophiko currently serves as a senior teaching assistant at Yale College, coaching the chamber music performance seminar along with violinist Wendy Sharp. She is also pursuing her doctoral degree at the Manhattan School of Music, where she studies with Dr. Solomon Mikowsky.



*Arts28*



## **FANNY MENDELSSOHN HENSEL** (1805 - 1847)

PIANO TRIO IN D MINOR, op. 11 (1846)

*Allegro molto vivace*

*Andante espressivo*

*Lied: Allegretto*

*Finale: Allegretto moderato*

A musical prodigy often considered as talented as her younger brother Felix, Fanny Mendelssohn (later Hensel) was a woman of her time and class. Born in Hamburg to a wealthy Jewish family that later converted to Christianity, she was the oldest of four children. She received the same rigorous musical and general education as Felix, and by 1818 both children were composing and performing before private audiences at their new home in Berlin. Drawn together by their shared love of music and exceptional talents, the siblings developed a close relationship that endured throughout their lives. Brother and sister consulted each other regularly about their music, and Felix allowed several of Fanny's songs to be published under his name.

Societal constraints at the time precluded Fanny's hopes of becoming a performer and composer. Her father Abraham wrote in an 1820 letter

to her, "Music will perhaps become his [i.e. Felix's] profession, while for you it can and must be only an ornament." Felix, while privately supportive of her music, was cautious of her publishing her works under her own name. This resulted in an embarrassing moment, when Queen Victoria, receiving Felix at Buckingham Palace, expressed her intention of singing to the composer her favorite song, "Italien," which Felix confessed was by Fanny.

In 1829, after a courtship of several years, Fanny married the artist Wilhelm Hensel, and gave birth to their only child Sebastian the following year. Like Felix, Wilhelm was supportive of her composing. Unlike many others, he was also in favor of her seeking publication of her works. In 1846, without consulting Felix, she decided to publish a collection of her songs under her married name. After publication, Felix wrote to her, "[I] send you professional blessing on becoming a member of the craft. ... May you taste only the sweets and none of the bitterness of authorship." Fanny wrote in her journal, "I know that he is not quite satisfied in his heart of hearts, but I am glad he has said a kind word to me."

The PIANO TRIO IN D MINOR, written for her younger sister Rebecka's birthday, premiered in 1847 at the long-running Sunday musical salon at the Mendelssohn home in Berlin. This was a time of great political unrest and food riots in the city. Fanny died in May 1847, after collapsing from a stroke, a fate that had claimed her grandfather and father, and would claim Felix six months later.

It was ironic that Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's family took her Piano Trio in D Minor to the publishers Breitkopf and Härtel after her death, for they had all but forbidden her to publish works while she was alive. The Trio begins beings softly, but with great energy and passion and the whirling piano figures that drive much of the first movement, *Allegro molto vivace*. The lyrical second theme reminds us of her talent for song, as do the middle movements. The second movement, *Andante espressivo*, opens with a delicate piano solo, like one of her brother's "songs without words," and the third movement, *Allegretto*, is actually labeled "Lied" (song in German). The dramatic finale, *Allegro moderato*, also leads with a piano solo as an almost improvisatory introduction, and later recalls the lyrical second theme of the first movement.

Fanny's musical creativity as a composer produced more than five hundred musical works, consisting mostly of smaller scale genres of keyboard pieces, songs, chamber music and choral works. From the 1980s onward, there has been renewed interest in Fanny Mendelssohn and her compositions. The Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn Museum, which is dedicated to the siblings' lives and work, opened in 2018 in Hamburg, Germany.

*Sources: Excerpted from Wikipedia; Library of Congress Biographies loc.gov/item/ihas.200156440/; Edition Silvertrust editionsilvertrust.com/Hensel-Mendelssohn-piano-trio.htm; Program notes, Los Angeles Philharmonic laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/2860/piano-trio-in-d-minor-op-11*



**KATI AGÓCS** (b. 1975)

QUEEN OF HEARTS (2017, Commissioned for the Claremont Trio)

Born in 1975 in Canada to Hungarian and American parents, Kati Agócs (KAH-tee AH-goach) earned master's and doctoral degrees from the Juilliard School, studying with Milton Babbitt. She has served on the composition faculty at the New England Conservatory in Boston since 2008. Kati is an alumna of the Aspen Music School, Tanglewood Music

Festival, Sarah Lawrence College, and Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific (United World Colleges), where she represented the province of Ontario. She studied voice in New York and Budapest. Kati Agócs is a citizen of the United States, Canada, and Hungary (European Union).

Hailed as “a composer of imposing artistic gifts” (*Gramophone Magazine*) and “one of the brightest stars in her generation of composers” (*Audiophile Audition*), Kati Agócs writes “sublime music of fluidity and austere beauty” (*Boston Globe*), that is “simmering... lucid ... and demands to be heard” (*New York Times*). A recent Guggenheim Fellow, she is also a winner of the prestigious Arts and Letters Award, the lifetime achievement award in music composition from The American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a two-time nominee for Classical Composition of the Year in the Juno Awards, the Canadian Grammy Awards.

Kati Agócs’s *QUEEN OF HEARTS*, composed in 2017, was commissioned by Chamber Music Northwest for the Claremont Trio. It is the title piece of a 2022 album of music written especially for Claremont by six leading contemporary composers. Agócs describes the piece as being about the idea of resilience. She writes, “A life fully lived may see challenges that can seem insurmountable. The work’s variation structure, by representing tenaciousness and ingenuity - continuously finding new ways to respond - ultimately reveals an inner strength and an emotional core that hold steadfast and unshaken no matter how they are tested. The title *Queen of Hearts* is a whimsical reference to the ‘mother of higher love’ card in a deck of playing cards. This card symbolizes resilience, magnetism, nobility, empathy, decorum, a flair for the dramatic, and a distinctly feminine power.”

Sources: [www.katiagocs.com/katiagocs-biography](http://www.katiagocs.com/katiagocs-biography); *New England Conservatory Faculty biography*; [musicalamerica.com](http://musicalamerica.com): press release for Claremont Trio’s *Queen of Hearts* album, 1/24/22





**JOHANNES BRAHMS** (1833-1897)

TRIO NO. 1 IN B MAJOR, op. 8 (1854, revised 1889)

*Allegro con brio*

*Scherzo: Allegro molto*

*Adagio*

*Finale: Allegro*

Born in Hamburg in 1833, Johannes Brahms spent much of his professional life in Vienna. He composed for symphony orchestra, chamber ensembles, piano, organ, voice, and chorus. A virtuoso pianist, Brahms premiered many of his own works. His career as a composer received a jump-start when, with a letter of introduction from violinist Joseph Joachim, he was welcomed into the Düsseldorf home of Robert and Clara Schumann in October 1853. Their friendship deepened rapidly. Robert, greatly impressed by the twenty-year-old's talent, wrote an article in a music journal praising Brahms as one who was "fated to give expression to the times in the highest and most ideal manner." Throughout his career, Brahms attempted to live up to Schumann's accolades. He was a self-critical perfectionist who destroyed many of his early works and revised the TRIO NO. 1 IN B MAJOR extensively thirty-five years after its initial publication.

Brahms embarked on the Trio in B Major early in 1854. He was interrupted in late February by Robert Schumann's dramatic suicide attempt and subsequent removal (at his own request) to an asylum near Bonn. Brahms rushed to Düsseldorf and spent many months supporting the Schumann household and dealing with business matters on Clara's behalf. Clara and Brahms developed a close artistic and personal relationship that lasted until Clara's death in 1896. A brilliant composer and performer in her own right, Clara heard the work-in-progress and initially thought it a perplexing piece. But as it progressed, she wrote a letter to the publishers of the Schumanns' compositions urging them to add Brahms' new Trio to their catalog.

The initial version of the Trio is rarely heard today. Now a mature musician, Brahms wrote to Clara in the summer of 1889: "I have rewritten my B Major Trio. ... It will not be so wild as it was before -- but whether it will be better --?" The revision is two-thirds the length of the original and is widely viewed as an improvement. The first movement was revised radically, and major changes were also made to the third and fourth movements.

The first movement (*Allegro con brio*) opens in B Major with a theme that is warmhearted and stately, growing from deep in the piano into a full-throated expression for all three instruments. In his revision, Brahms does away with some of the fugues in the development section, instead inserting an intricate interlacing of rhythms and melodies. The *Scherzo* (*Allegro molto*) and its central trio section remained essentially unaltered, except for a brief coda in which the strings slip away toward silence. The slow movement, an *Adagio*, opens with a hushed, hymn-like melody. An entirely new second theme was introduced in the revision to provide for greater variety in the development of material. The *Allegro* movement returns to B Minor in an agitated, onward-rushing drama to the finale. Unusual in the nineteenth century, this initially major-key Trio ends firmly in a very dark minor key, which some commentators see as a memorial to an important but unfulfilled relationship.

Brahms has been considered both a traditionalist and an innovator by his Romantic-era contemporaries and by later writers. He venerated Beethoven and Mozart, and was profoundly admired by subsequent

composers such as Antonin Dvořák, Edward Elgar, and Arnold Schoenberg. His music is rooted in the structures and compositional techniques of the Classical masters, but embedded within those structures are deeply Romantic motifs. Many of his works have become staples of the modern concert repertoire, including his four symphonies, the Academic Festival Overture, the Double Concerto for violin and cello, many of his chamber works, and his large choral masterpiece, A German Requiem.

*Sources: James M. Keller, Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide (2011); Wikipedia; Stephen Johnson, recording notes for "Musical Remembrances," Neave Trio (2022).*



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OUR HEARTFELT THANKS.





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