



28TH SEASON 2024-2025

*Concerts at the Point*

*presents ...*

**CLAREMONT  
TRIO**

**DECEMBER 8, 2024, 3:00 PM**

WESTPORT POINT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1912 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT POINT, MASSACHUSETTS

THE IMAGE ON THE COVER IS VIOLA DA GAMBA, BY DARTMOUTH, MASSACHUSETT, ARTIST IRIA DEVALLES-VIERA. Iria takes her inspiration from the colors she sees in clothing, fabrics, flowers, and anything that catches her interest. Presently, she is exploring abstract art with acrylic paint, mixed media, and collage. She enjoys portrait drawing and using watercolors to depict flowers, seascapes, and landscapes. Viola da Gamba is a Renaissance and Baroque six-string instrument that has gained recent popularity as the modern-day viol.

TODAY'S PERFORMANCE IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM BAYCOAST BANK.

# *Concerts at the Point*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

## **CLAREMONT TRIO**

*Emily Bruskin, violin*

*Julia Bruskin, cello*

*Sophiko Simsive, piano*

PIANO TRIO NO. 44 IN E MAJOR, HOB.XV:28

**FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN**

*Allegro moderato*

*Allegretto*

*Finale: Allegro*

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO

**REBECCA CLARKE**

*Moderato ma appassionato*

*Andante molto semplice*

*Allegro vigoroso*

**INTERMISSION . . .**

PIANO TRIO NO. 1 IN D MINOR, OP. 63

**ROBERT SCHUMANN**

*Mit Energie und Leidenschaft*

*Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch*

*Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung*

*Mit Feuer*

## THE PERFORMERS



## CLAREMONT TRIO

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 praised 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 recent seasons 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 premiered and recorded 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.

WEBSITE: [claremonttrio.com](http://claremonttrio.com)

### **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 concert 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 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 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, PIANO**

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.



## PROGRAM NOTES



**FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN** (1732 - 1809)

PIANO TRIO NO. 44 IN E MAJOR, HOB. XV:28 (1797?)

*Allegro moderato*

*Allegretto*

*Finale: Allegro*

Few composers have left more of a mark on the landscape of Western music than Franz Joseph Haydn. A genial Austrian with a pithy sense of humor, Haydn shaped and consolidated the emerging Classical music forms of symphony, concerto, piano sonata and string quartet. His work became the model and inspiration for the music of his younger contemporaries, Mozart and Beethoven, who studied under him. Haydn's output was so large that at the end of his life, he himself could not be sure how many works he had written.

Haydn had spent nearly 30 years serving as court musician for the wealthy Esterházy family when Prince Nikolaus I died in 1790. Nikolaus's successor released Haydn from his role as Kapellmeister,

allowing him to travel. Shortly after, Haydn was approached to conduct a series of lucrative subscription concerts in London where he received a tremendous welcome. During the two London visits of 1791-92 and 1794-95, Haydn produced more than a dozen piano trios, works for solo keyboard, and, most notably, his twelve “London” symphonies.

Haydn’s PIANO TRIO IN E MAJOR was published in 1797 but may have been written a few years earlier, while Haydn was still in London on his second visit. It is the second of a set of three piano trios dedicated to the eminent British pianist Therese Jansen Bartolozzi. Like others in the set, it is noted for an especially wide expressive range as well as its virtuosity.

The first movement opens with a delicate staccato bass in the piano beneath a tender melody, while the addition of pizzicato strings creates a harp-like effect. The harmonically adventurous and virtuosic development section revisits elements from the opening, including a chorale-like transformation of the main theme.

The *Allegretto*, a Baroque passacaglia (a form noted for its somber character and repeating bass line), contrasts sharply with the first movement. It opens with all three instruments playing the bass line in octaves before a solo piano passage. The strings provide harmonic support for the piano, which ends the movement with a short quasi-cadenza.

The finale is both warm and playful. Haydn inserts meandering measures that upset the sense of balance so prized in the Classical style (where one would expect the opening phrase to contain two four-bar sections, Haydn extends it for another four). After a stormy middle section, the movement concludes with a return to the sunny opening material, capped with two emphatic final chords.

*Sources and excerpts from: LA Philharmonic, Piano Trio No. 44, Joseph Haydn, webarchive; Wikipedia; London Symphony Orchestra, www.lso.co.uk, ‘What you should know about Joseph Haydn’, Wendy Thompson, 2023.*







**REBECCA CLARKE** (1886 - 1979)

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO (1921)

*Moderato ma appassionato*

*Andante molto semplice*

*Allegro vigoroso*

Born to a musical family in Harrow, England, Rebecca Clarke studied violin and entered the Royal College of Music in 1908, where she was encouraged to shift to the viola. While still a student, a rupture with her father forced her to support herself. She left the College and embarked on a groundbreaking professional career as a performer and composer.

This career features a host of firsts: one of the first female students of Sir Charles Stanford, the preeminent composition-teacher of her time; one of the first women to be made a regular member of a professional orchestra in London; one of the earliest performers of the viola as a solo instrument; and a star of the BBC, beginning soon after its founding in 1922. She worked throughout Britain, Europe, and the United States, and played with many of the greatest artists of the twentieth century, including Schnabel, Casals, Thibaud, Rubinstein, Grainger, Suggia, Hess, Monteux, Szell, and Heifetz.

In 1919, Clarke entered her Viola Sonata in an anonymous competition at Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge's 1919 Berkshire Festival. The piece deadlocked for first with the Suite by Ernest Bloch, then at the height of his fame (Coolidge ultimately selected his work as the winner). When it was revealed that the Sonata had been written by a woman, it set off an international sensation. In 1921, Clarke submitted the Trio in the same competition, and again placed second.

The Trio was inspired by Clarke's association with Bloch and his work *Schelomo*, a portrait-in-sound of King Solomon. The Trio's motivic material derives from two themes that haunt the final episode of Bloch's work— a fragment of a Jewish liturgical chant and a related shofar-call (the latter rendered as repeated 16th notes). These themes appear throughout the piece, first as the forceful opening, then as the substance of a hypnotic, Debussy-esque slow movement, and then in profusion throughout the animated finale.

The Trio marks a shift in Clarke's language, from the lyricism of the Sonata to a more theatrical almost Beethovenian rhetoric. Early critics were enthusiastic: "Nothing can describe [the Trio's] passion or the soft beauty of the slow movement," wrote one reviewer. The piece has only grown in stature over time; in 1996 music critic Calum MacDonald wrote "this explosive and emotionally complex score is one of the outstanding utterances in British chamber music of the period."

Like many other eminent British and American composers in her cohort, Clarke suffered an eclipse during the post-World War II rise of atonal and twelve-tone music, but today her songs and chamber pieces are performed and recorded on an almost daily basis around the world.

*Material for these notes, as well as the Clarke portrait, were generously provided by Christopher Johnson, a great-nephew of Clarke's by marriage, who manages the rights to her work. Mr. Johnson worked closely with Clarke during her final decade. He has edited more than eighty of her compositions and arrangements for publication and is now completing a book on her life and times. Learn more about Clarke at her official website, [rebeccaclarkecomposer.com](http://rebeccaclarkecomposer.com).*





**ROBERT SCHUMANN** (1810 - 1856)

PIANO TRIO No. 1 IN D MINOR, OP. 63 (1847)

*Mit Energie und Leidenschaft (With energy and passion)*

*Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch (Lively, but not too quick)*

*Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung (Slowly, with inner feeling)*

*Mit Feuer (With fire)*

Robert Schumann was the quintessential German composer of the Romantic era (roughly 1830-1900). His music embodies the lyricism and emotion so characteristic of this period. His life, too, was stormy and dramatic. He aspired to become a concert pianist, studying with prominent Leipzig piano teacher Friedrich Wieck. When he later developed partial paralysis of his right hand, Schumann instead embarked on a career as a composer and music critic. Yet he retained an instinctive genius as a composer for the piano. Schumann's 1840 marriage to Wieck's daughter Clara, long opposed by her father, supported a remarkable partnership. Clara was herself a piano prodigy and formidable composer, and she acted as inspiration, critic and

confidante to her husband. Many of Robert's compositions were written with her in mind as pianist.

Schumann's mental disorder first manifested itself in 1833 with a serious depression. Such episodes alternated with phases of feverish productivity as a composer. Medical opinions vary from bipolar disorder to mercury poisoning, tertiary syphilis or a brain tumor. After Schumann attempted suicide in 1854 by throwing himself into the Rhine River, he voluntarily entered an asylum. Doctors prevented Clara from seeing him until a few days before his death in 1856. After his death, Clara continued to support the family as a concert pianist, and became the authoritative editor of her husband's collected works.

Schumann composed the D MINOR PIANO TRIO in a single burst of creative energy during the summer of 1847. It followed by a year Clara's anniversary gift to Robert of her own Trio for Piano and Strings in G Minor. Robert reciprocated by presenting his wife with his completed Trio for her 28th birthday on September 13, 1847. It was first performed that same evening with Clara on the piano alongside Dresden concertmaster Franz Schubert and cellist Friedrich Kummer, both family friends.

While there is a definite classical structure to the work, including a four-movement plan and a great deal of clever craftsmanship in the scherzo, the trio is quite individualistic. The musical language is brooding and emotional, with the entire ensemble sometimes swelling into symphonic proportions. Schumann wrote to a friend that the D Minor Trio belonged to a "time of gloomy moods." Notes indicate his choice of D Minor in homage to his friend Felix Mendelssohn's piano trio in the same key; Felix's beloved sister Fanny had also composed a Trio in D Minor shortly before her passing earlier in 1847.

The massive opening movement is built from a searching chromatic theme, restless and unresolved as it makes its way through canonic imitations, rumbling figurations and rhythmic feints. The energetic

scherzo is deceptively simple in its musical means, but captivating in its effect. The third, slow movement is the definite center of emotional gravity — lonely, vulnerable, a protracted lament ending with an unresolved cadence. The finale follows without a pause, breaking through with a jubilant conclusion of courage, triumph and orchestral textures. Musicologist Kai Christiansen comments that “The composite work is a definitive study in bi-polarity, perhaps a personal reflection of Schumann’s own soul.”

*Sources and excerpts from: Kai Christensen for Earsense; Wikipedia; Timothy Judd, thelistenersclub.com; hyperion-records.co.uk; thestrad.com/notes for schumanns piano trio no1 bought for six figure sum*



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