

VISION

July 27th, 2025

6pm

Glorya Kaufmann Community Center at the Wende Museum

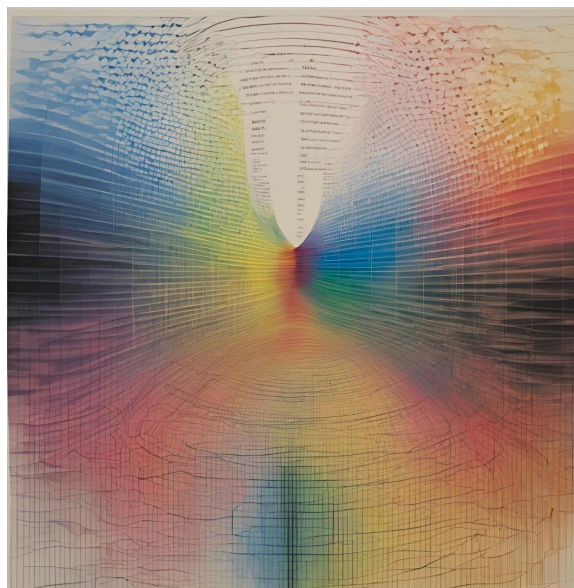
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Welcome to the inaugural season of Spectra, a chamber music series where programming is prismatic. Our programs turn a theme like a prism in the light, watch it refract into a spectrum of musical perspectives, and celebrate the unique conversation that emerges. Our mission is to illuminate resonant connections between the vast aesthetic currents and compositional practices of music old and new, to give emerging performers and composers a platform for sharing their voices, and to create an inclusive space for musicians and audiences to interface about the sounds that intrigue and inspire them.

This concert is presented at no cost to the public; however, donations are greatly appreciated to compensate the professional musicians performing, offset production costs, and support Spectra's future performance projects. Please consider giving what you can, either in person at the concert or through our [Venmo page](#) or [GoFundMe](#).

Finally, we would love to hear from you about your concert experience and stay connected. Please connect with us via [email](#) and/or [Instagram](#). Visit our [website](#) to explore future concerts and learn about our incredible artists. Visit our [YouTube channel](#) for recordings of previous concerts.

Thank you for being here. We hope you enjoy the concert and join us afterwards for refreshments.



The Sun (1909) (premiere)		Benjamin T. Martin (b. 1998)
Columba aspexit (The dove peered in)	Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)
	Yekaterina Lynch, soprano	
2 Poems, Op. 9		Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)
1.Yest' drugiye planeti (It Is of Other Planets)		
2.Otchalila lodka (The Drifting Boat)	Yekaterina Lynch, soprano Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	
Three Visions		William Grant Still (1895-1978)
1.Dark Horsemen		
2.Summerland		
3.Radiant Pinnacle		
The Celestial Railroad	Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	Charles Ives (1874-1954)
	Anna-Sofia Botti, piano	
Intermission		
Piano Quintet No. 1 in D minor		Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
I.Molto moderato		
Buddha		Julius Eastman (1940-1990)
	Nanki Chugh, violin Alisa Luera, violin Nicholas Lindell, viola Amy Jong, cello Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	
Morpheus		Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)
	Nicholas Lindell, viola Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	
13 Ways of Looking at A Blackbird		Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912-1990)
	Yekaterina Lynch, soprano Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	
Vers la flamme (Toward the flame)		Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)
	Alexandre Tchaykov, piano	

Program Notes

Creation and Destruction

Opening and closing the concert are pieces by **Benjamin T. Martin** and **Alexander Scriabin**, the former engaging with a symbol of visionary creation, and the latter with a symbol of visionary destruction.

Edvard Munch's luminous mural painting "**The Sun**" features the celestial body rising over the sea with a piercing brilliance as its rays project sharply towards us. The painting aptly captures the duality of vision as both sensory and spiritual: as we perceive the illuminated scene, the centralized, ocular sun looks back at us as a symbol of eternity and creation. Benjamin T. Martin's solo piano premiere that opens the concert is a musical response to Munch's painting, capturing both its power and mystique:

The Sun (1909) is named after an eponymous painting by the 20th-century Norwegian painter Edvard Munch. In this piece, I try to capture the experience of looking at this work of art for the first time and dissecting it into two parts. First, the experience of seeing the bright and wildly blazing sun central to the work, almost garish in its intensity. Next, zooming in on the sunbeams gently reflected on the water, while considering with some newfound distance the immersive first-person perspective the painting provides for its viewer. This piece was written for Alex Tchaykov and is dedicated to him and to Spectra with immense gratitude.

Throughout his career, Russian composer Alexander Scriabin developed a deeply personal musical language that reflected his mystical visions and beliefs, including a harmonic collection known as the "mystic chord" that serves as the foundation for many of his works. "**Vers la flamme**" (Toward the Flame) realizes one of Scriabin's terrifying visions, depicting an apocalyptic fire storm that consumes the earth in a burst of ecstatic energy. The piece begins in the quiet darkness of sustained, tense, irresolvable chords and gradually intensifies its rhythmic fervor and delirium to an astounding climactic apotheosis.

Notating Spirituality

Separated by nearly a millennium of musical history, **Julius Eastman** and **Hildegard of Bingen** represent two fascinating musical visionaries who pushed the boundaries of notational practices to create works of stunning spiritual resonance.

Julius Eastman was an American composer who faced criticism during his life for the courageous expression of his identity as "Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, and a homosexual to the fullest." Many of his controversial works from the 1970s raise questions about racism and homophobia through their intentionally provocative titles featuring offensive slurs. He described his experimental style as "organic music," where repetitive, additive processes gradually accumulate into massive soundscapes. "**Buddha**," a late work written just years before his tragic early death, is a score that depicts a collection of cumulative pitch fragments floating in a series of vibrating concentric circles, as

if the notation itself were alive and meditating. Realizing this revolutionary score remains a conversation that produces a different result in every performance.

A German abbess who was also a composer, philosopher, poet, mystic, and scientist, **Hildegard of Bingen** regularly had powerful visions that she transcribed and shared. Her spiritual philosophy was one that embraced the five senses as access points to “the light of God,” highlighting the sensory/spiritual duality of “vision.” Her music exists in the context of the monophonic, rhythmically free chant style of monks in the medieval church, but her highly individual, florid melodies, evocative texts, and formal tinkering differ from the standard practices of the time. Both the text and music of “**Columba aspexit**” were written by Hildegard to honor the local saint St. Maximus; note the sensual, revelatory images in the poem and the boundless, ecstatic quality of the melody.

Dream and Reality

Russian composer **Sergei Prokofiev** and American composer **Rebecca Clarke** both offer works that explore the boundaries between seeing in reality and seeing in dream.

Sergei Prokofiev’s **2 Poems, Op. 9** are like mirrors of each other. In the first song, “Yest’ drugiye planeti” (It Is of Other Planets), the poem is envisioning a distant dream world that is beyond the troubles of earth and death, while in the second, “Otchalila lodka” (The Drifting Boat), the poem realizes that the indescribable, otherworldly beauty of the sea at dawn is not a dream at all but in fact a seemingly impossible reality. Both songs feature harmonically breathtaking refrains that capture the poetic situations, oscillating between mysterious chords that float somewhere between the eye and the mind’s eye.

In “**Morpheus**,” Rebecca Clarke paints a vivid, tender portrait of the Ancient Greek god of sleep and dreams who appeared in the dreams of humans to deliver messages from the gods. Throughout the piece, the viola and piano are constantly echoing each other, creating an ethereal world of shadows and fleeting images that unfold like the unpredictability of a dream sequence. Some of these dreams remain in our consciousness when we wake, and others float away, never to be seen again.

American Allegories

In their virtuosic pieces for solo piano, **William Grant Still** and **Charles Ives** relate stories that speculate about what happens to a human soul after death.

From the frightening gallop of “Dark Horsemen,” to the lyrical oasis of “Summerland,” to the perpetual motion of “Radiant Pinnacle,” William Grant Still’s “**Three Visions**” suite creates three highly contrasting snapshots of the unknown. His daughter, Judith Anne Still, describes the spiritual trajectory of the work as follows:

The three segments of the suite, *Dark Horsemen*, *Summerland*, and *Radiant Pinnacle*, tell the story of the human soul after death: the body expires, and the soul goes on to an

apocalyptic judgment. If it is seen that the past life has been a good one, the soul may enter “heaven,” or “Summerland”. After a period of time, the soul may reincarnate to learn additional earthly lessons on the human plane. Some souls reincarnate many times in a constant circular progress toward Godly perfection.

Charles Ives’ “**The Celestial Railroad**” is a musical rendering of a satirical short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne about a speedy train that takes passengers from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. An allegory about going from earth to heaven, the story describes an encounter between the narrator and Mr. Smooth-it-away, who encourages residents of the City of Destruction to board the train for an easier, comfortable ride to the gates of the Celestial City as opposed to arduously walking there. Unfortunately, the train makes several stops at places representing temptation and vanity; it ends up being not only slower than those who chose to walk, but also a hoax entirely when Mr. Smooth-it-away is revealed to be a devil in disguise. Then, the narrator wakes up and realizes the entire thing was a dream.

In the music, Ives puts us on the frantic, runaway train, highlights the deceptively sweet character of Mr. Smooth-it-away and Vanity Fair, and hints at the distant, pure sound of the Celestial City. At the end, we wake up from the dream to grandiose Fourth of July celebrations in Concord, MA, a final distinctly American twist on the original story.

Perception

Australian composer **Peggy Glanville-Hicks** and French composer **Gabriel Fauré** both play with the idea of visual perception in their music, constantly shifting the listener’s expectations and frame of reference.

“**13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird**” is a miniature song cycle by Peggy Glanville-Hicks that sets Wallace Stevens’ poem of the same name. An exercise in variation and vision, the poem is composed of 13 short stanzas that each present the image of the blackbird in different contexts, illustrating the near infinite potential of a single image. Hicks’ settings of these thirteen fragments are as focused, colorful, and sensitive as the poem itself; in the blink of an eye, the music shifts and takes us on a journey through the poetry’s subtle registers.

The **Piano Quintet No. 1** by Gabriel Fauré opens with an extraordinary passage that sounds like a vision being born; over rippling, electric arpeggios in the piano, the four strings enter one by one on the same floating melody, and the picture gradually becomes richer and fuller. Through this staggering, Fauré calls attention to the individual perspective of each instrument; their counterpoint is like a conversation steered by the interaction of their various viewpoints. As the movement continues, different instrumental voices imitate and respond to each other, constantly shifting our perception of the larger picture. The full emotional possibility of the opening melody is realized, ranging from awestruck wonder, to intense passion, to lyrical nostalgia.

Artist Bios

Alexandre Tchaykov

Alexandre Tchaykov is a Bulgarian pianist and poet devoted to the exploration of contemporary musical idioms and interdisciplinary discourses. He holds degrees from UCLA (DMA), Northwestern University (MM), and UGA (BM and BA English). A passionate teacher, he leads a private piano studio and has served as an instructor for college courses in musicianship, music history, and music appreciation. His dissertation and recent recital program, ["LYRIC: An Ode to Poetry and Song,"](#) assess the conceptual overlap between poetic and musical expression. Over the years, he has held fellowships at several renowned music festivals, including Tanglewood, New Music on the Point, and Kneisel Hall. When he isn't practicing, teaching, or writing, you can find him baking in the kitchen or wandering in nature.

Yekaterina Lynch

Yekaterina Lynch is a California-based soprano currently completing her undergraduate degree at UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music. She spent several years at San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Pre-College Program, and studied at the prestigious Odessa Conservatory in Ukraine. Having received both the Elaine Krown Klein and Mimi Alpert Feldman scholarships at UCLA, she covered the principal role of Maria in Richard Danielpour's 2024 premiere of *The Grand Hotel Tartarus*. In 2023, she took on the role of Echo in Kay Rhie's *Quake* premier, as well as Damon in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. Partial roles include Meg from Verdi's *Falstaff*, Mère Marie from Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and Rosalinda from *Die Fledermaus*. An avid new-music vocalist, Yekaterina most-recently performed *Pierrot lunaire* in full for Schoenberg's 150th anniversary in Schoenberg Hall. In addition to opera, Yekaterina is currently the music director of Con Brio, one of UCLA's student-led string orchestras.

Nicholas Lindell

Nicholas Lindell studied both violin and viola under Michael Heald and Maggie Snyder at the University of Georgia and is presently pursuing a doctorate at The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University under Ivo-Jan van der Werff. He served as principal violist and soloist at the National Repertory Orchestra in Breckenridge in 2021 and regularly plays with the Houston Symphony, the Houston Grand Opera, and the Houston Ballet. The American Viola Society invited him as an Emerging Artist to present a lecture recital at the society's 2024 Festival in Los Angeles, CA.

A man of many hats, Nicholas is also quite passionate about jazz and folk music, and he loves composing, arranging, and performing cross-genre styles. He picked up the Celtic fiddle tradition while training as a competitive Irish dancer and has fiddled and recorded with several bands. In parallel with all this music, he spent a summer researching classified cryptographic problems for the National Security Agency and earned a graduate degree in mathematics with a thesis on mathematical music theory. When not playing his instruments, teaching music theory, or studying, Nicholas loves bicycling, frisbee, soccer, and tennis.

Benjamin T. Martin

Benjamin Martin (b.1998) is a Chicago-based composer and musical collaborator. While interested in all manner of expressive media, his love of the human voice and the written word is often the center of his compositional orbit. Martin's works have been commissioned and premiered by the VIVO Music Festival, the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, and University Theatre at the University of Chicago. He was also the recipient of the 2021 VIVO Innovation Grant. He has composed for New Music on the Point, Brevard Summer Music festival, the EAMA Institute in Paris, and the Cortona Sessions for New Music. Benjamin received a BM from Oberlin Conservatory in Composition with a minor in Vocal Performance. While attending, he was the recipient of the 2022 Walter E. Aschaffenburg prize in Composition. He is currently pursuing his PhD at the University of Chicago, where he studies with Augusta Read Thomas.

Anna-Sofia Botti

Houston-based pianist Anna-Sofia Botti earned her MM and is pursuing her DMA at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University with Brian Connelly. She holds bachelor's degrees from Bard Conservatory of Music studying with Benjamin Hochman. Previous awards include winning the Vermont Philharmonic Concerto Competition and the Vermont All-State Piano Scholarship; a multi-faceted performer, she also won the Bard College Concerto Competition as a mezzo-soprano. In addition to her BM in Piano, she holds a BA in Historical Studies, completing a thesis on newspapers and dissent in WWII Japanese-American incarceration camps. Current research interests include 20th century American music and its relationship with Black American culture. An avid performer of contemporary music, she has appeared frequently with the Shepherd School's Contemporary Ensemble, and has premiered works by composers Pierre Jalbert, Oliver Dubon, Ethan Soledad, and Tian Qin. Anna-Sofia is a passionate teacher and certified Suzuki instructor who has enjoyed a decade-long teaching career as a private instructor and chamber coach. She holds a faculty position at Berkshire Summer Music.

Nanki Chugh

Nanki Chugh is a violinist and writer passionate about the intersection of music, art, and science, and its impact on education and society. Nanki is Creative Education Director of Musiqa, a Houston-based music collective. She recently created and performed "Discovery Series: The Science of Sound" with DACAMERA at the Hobby Center, and premiered the musical adaptation of her upcoming children's book "Symba and the Lobster" with Harris County Public Libraries. A versatile violinist, Nanki is an alumni of the DACAMERA Young Artist Program, performs new works with Musiqa, and has attended festivals including Orford Musique and Valdres Academy. She was awarded first prize at the 2024 Emerging Researchers National Conference for her research on the effects of collaborative music-making on the brain. Nanki earned a B.S. in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry from Yale University and a M.M. in Violin Performance from the Shepherd School of Music.

Alisa Luera

Alisa Ikeza Luera is an active violinist, violist, and music instructor based in Los Angeles. Ms. Alisa has performed widely in Austria, Czech-Republic, Hungary, Italy, and across the United States as a chamber and orchestral musician. As a former member of JCM's Artist Program, her quartet has been called "a fierce, plush, ensemble sound that would be the envy of many a mature professional groups" by the New York Concert Review Inc. and was selected to perform in masterclasses at Longy's School of Music, New England Conservatory, Juilliard School of Music, and performed in the Carnegie Weill Recital Hall.

Ms. Alisa recently received her Master's Degree at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, studying under Moses Pogossian and Varty Manouelian, with a focus on new music and orchestral studies. Alongside her teaching at several schools and orchestras across Los Angeles, she is an active freelance musician, performing with ensembles such as the Debut Orchestra, American Youth Symphony, California Youth American Symphony, Civic Orchestra of Los Angeles, and the Golden State Pops Orchestra. Her collaborations extend to working with Disney XD, Shari Sutcliffe, the Foo Fighters, Tony Visconti, La Marisoul, and Grammy-winning composer Cheche Alara.

Amy Jong

19-year old cellist Amy Jong studies at the Thornton School of Music under Professor Ralph Kirshbaum. As an avid soloist and orchestral musician, she was selected as a Classical Music Finalist in 2022 by the National YoungArts Foundation and was chosen to be a part of Carnegie Hall's NYO-USA European Tour in 2022.

Fueled by a passion for storytelling, Amy hosts an ongoing series of YouTube videos in which she has interviewed over 50 professional and aspiring musicians, documenting their favorite musical memories, experiences in the classical music industry, and more.