

2026
edition

BLAIRSVILLE
19th ANNUAL
CHAMBER
MUSIC FESTIVAL

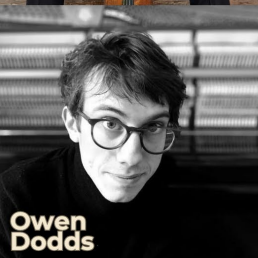


June 19-28, 2026
Downtown Blairsville

BLAIRSVILLE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 19-28, 2026

Downtown Blairsville





Welcome to the 2026 Blairsville Chamber Music Festival

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2026 Blairsville Chamber Music Festival! We are so grateful to have you with us for this celebration of world-class chamber music in the heart of Blairsville.

Since the festival began in 2022, it has continued to grow and take root in the Blairsville community. This past year, the festival expanded into the Blairsville Chamber Music Society, became a nonprofit organization, and presented a year-round concert series. We are so thankful to our audience members, donors, sponsors, volunteers, venues, and community partners who have helped make this growth possible.

This year's festival brings together an outstanding roster of artists for two weeks of music-making and four unique concerts, from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* under the summer sky to beloved works by Schubert, Mozart, Brahms, Dvořák, and Mendelssohn, alongside American voices and new music. As our biggest festival yet, it marks an exciting moment in our growth and points toward all that is still to come, including more concerts, deeper community connections, and a vibrant future for chamber music in Blairsville.

Thank you for being here, for supporting this year's festival, and for being part of what comes next. We hope you enjoy the music, the shared experience, and the community that make this festival so special.

With gratitude,

Sarah Marshall, Executive Director & Co-Founder

Avital Mazor, Artistic Director & Co-Founder

Blairsville Chamber Music Festival

June 19-28, 2026 · Downtown Blairsville

Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*: Free Outdoor Concert

Friday, June 19 · 6:30 pm
Veterans' Memorial Park Amphitheater
275 W. Market St. Blairsville

Viennese Afternoon: Mozart, Schubert & Brahms

+ reception
Sunday, June 21 · 3:00 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church · 36 W. Campbell St. Blairsville

America at 250

Thursday, June 25 · 7:00 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church · 36 W. Campbell St. Blairsville

Friends of the Festival Concert

Saturday, June 27 · 7:00 pm

Grand Finale

Mozart Grande Sestetto Concertante & Mendelssohn Octet

Sunday, June 28 · 3:00 pm
United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville · 137 N. Walnut St. Blairsville

details, tickets & passes at
blairvillecms.org
724.422.9933

Table of Contents

Vivaldi's <i>Four Seasons</i> Program.	6
Viennese Afternoon Program.	10
America at 250 Program.	14
Grand Finale Program.	18
Musician Biographies.	22
Avital Mazor	22
Ariel Horowitz.	23
Kevin Lawrence.	24
Hudson Ye-Hyung Chung.	25
Shiqi Yang.	26
Swana Chepaitis.	26
Kaleigh Acord.	27
Stanley Chepaitis.	28
Jorge Vera.	28
Jack Kessler.	29
Aidan Garrison.	30
Gabriel Martins.	31
Linda Jennings.	32
Sam Viguerie.	33
Sunmi Han.	34
Owen Dodds.	34
About Blairsville Chamber Music Society.	36
Festival Sponsors.	37
Supporters & Special Thanks.	38
2025-26 Season in Review.	42
Support Our Mission.	44
Leadership & Board of Directors.	47
2026-27 BCMS Season - Save the Dates.	back cover

Opening Night

Vivaldi's Four Seasons

Friday, June 19. 6:30 pm
Veterans' Memorial Park Amphitheater

Program

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1787)

From *Ouverture-Suite in B-flat Major, TWV 55:B11, "La Bourse"*

VI. *L'Espérance de Mississippi*

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

The Four Seasons, Op. 8

Concerto No. 1 in E Major, RV 269, "Spring"

Avital Mazor, violin

I. Allegro

II. Largo e pianissimo sempre

III. Allegro pastorale

Concerto No. 2 in G minor, RV 315, "Summer"

Kaleigh Acord, violin

I. Allegro non molto

II. Adagio e piano; Presto e forte

III. Presto

Concerto No. 3 in F Major, RV 293, "Autumn"

Shiqi Yang, violin

I. Allegro

II. Adagio molto

III. Allegro

Concerto No. 4 in F minor, RV 297, "Winter"

Hudson Ye-Hyuyng Chung, violin

I. Allegro non molto

II. Largo

III. Allegro

Festival Ensemble

Jorge Vera, violin

Jack Kessler, viola

Gabriel Martins, cello (continuo)

Owen Dodds, keyboard

Aidan Garrison, viola

Linda Jennings, cello

Georg Philipp Telemann

L'Espérance de Mississippi

Opening night begins with Telemann's *L'Espérance de Mississippi*, the final movement from his orchestral suite *La Bourse*, literally "The Stock Exchange" or "The Stock Market." Written around 1720, the suite reflects the world of financial speculation surrounding the Mississippi Company, the French investment scheme that promised enormous profits from colonial ventures in North America. As excitement grew, shares soared, fortunes seemed to appear overnight, and investors rushed to take part before the bubble collapsed.

Telemann's *La Bourse* turns this financial drama into a witty musical portrait. Across its movements, the suite suggests the turbulence of the marketplace: interrupted calm, conflict, reversals of fortune, uneasy solitude, and finally, *L'Espérance de Mississippi*, "The Hope of Mississippi." As the closing movement, it captures the optimism and illusion that surrounded the Mississippi scheme: the belief that wealth and opportunity were just within reach, even as the entire enterprise rested on speculation.

Antonio Vivaldi

The Four Seasons, Op. 8

The program continues with Vivaldi's beloved *Four Seasons*, a dazzling set of violin concertos that brings the natural world vividly to life. A concerto is, in many ways, a musical contest or conversation between a soloist and an ensemble. In this case, a single violinist steps forward against the sound and energy of the full group, displaying virtuosity, imagination, and expressive range while the ensemble provides both dramatic backdrop and powerful response.

In *The Four Seasons*, Vivaldi uses this interplay to depict birdsong, storms, harvest celebrations, icy winds, and the changing moods of the year. Each concerto was published with an accompanying sonnet, traditionally attributed to Vivaldi, describing the scenes heard in the music.

The Poems of *The Four Seasons*

Adapted from the sonnets published with Vivaldi's concertos

Spring

Spring has arrived with joy.
The birds greet it with happy song,
and streams flow gently
as soft breezes stir the air.

Thunder and lightning darken the sky,
but when the storm passes,
the birds return
to their cheerful singing.

In a meadow of flowers,
the goatherd sleeps beneath rustling leaves,
his faithful dog beside him.

Nymphs and shepherds dance
to the sound of rustic bagpipes,
celebrating the bright arrival of spring.

Summer

Under the harsh summer sun,
people and animals languish,
and the pine trees seem to burn in the heat.

The cuckoo calls,
then the turtledove and goldfinch sing.
A gentle breeze blows,
but suddenly the north wind rises.

The shepherd trembles,
fearful of the violent storm
and what it may bring.

His tired body cannot rest;
thunder and lightning disturb the air,
and swarms of insects fill the fields.

At last, the storm breaks open.
Hail cuts down the grain,
and the heavens roar.

Autumn

The peasants celebrate
with songs and dances,
rejoicing in the harvest.

Wine flows freely,
and joy gives way to sleep,
as the revelers grow still.

At dawn, the hunters set out
with horns, dogs, and guns.
The animal flees, wounded and frightened,
pursued through the fields.

Exhausted by fear and flight,
it can run no more,
and the hunt comes to an end.

Winter

To tremble in the icy snow,
in the biting wind,
stamping one's feet to keep warm,
teeth chattering from the cold.

To sit peacefully by the fire
while outside,
the rain falls on everything.

To walk across the ice
slowly and carefully,
afraid of slipping and falling.

To run, slip, and fall,
then rise and hurry onward
as the ice cracks beneath one's feet.

To hear the winds burst from their doors,
rushing and battling in the air:
such is winter,
but winter has its joys.

Viennese Afternoon: Mozart, Schubert & Brahms

Sunday, June 21. 3:00 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Twelve Variations on "Ah vous dirai-je, Maman," K. 265/300e

Sunmi Han, piano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 99, D. 898

Owen Dodds, piano

Hudson Ye-Hyung Chung, violin

Gabriel Martins, cello

I. Allegro moderato

II. Andante un poco mosso

III. Scherzo. Allegro, Trio

IV. Rondo. Allegro vivace

Intermission, 15 minutes

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

Sunmi Han, piano

Avital Mazor, violin I

Shiqi Yang, violin II

Jack Kessler, viola

Linda Jennings, cello

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Andante, un poco adagio

III. Scherzo. Allegro, Trio

IV. Finale. Poco sostenuto, Allegro non troppo, Presto, non troppo

Viennese-themed reception to follow

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Twelve Variations on “Ah vous dirai-je, Maman,”

K. 265/300e

Mozart’s *Twelve Variations on “Ah vous dirai-je, Maman”* take as their starting point a simple French children’s song. English-speaking audiences know the melody best as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” though the tune has also been used for “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep” and the alphabet song. Mozart did not write the melody itself; rather, he used it as a familiar foundation for a brilliant set of variations.

A variation is a musical transformation. The basic tune remains recognizable, but each version changes something: rhythm, texture, mood, speed, accompaniment, register, or character. One variation may sparkle with rapid notes; another may become graceful and lyrical; another may move into a darker or more dramatic mode. For listeners, the pleasure comes from hearing how much imagination can grow from something so simple.

This work also gives us a glimpse of Mozart’s extraordinary ability to combine clarity with playfulness. The melody is never lost, but Mozart continually dresses it in new colors. What begins as a childlike song becomes a showcase of elegance, wit, and pianistic brilliance.

Franz Schubert

Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 99, D. 898

Schubert’s *Piano Trio in B-flat Major* is one of his most radiant chamber works. Written near the end of his short life, it belongs to the extraordinary final flowering of music he composed in his last years. Unlike some of Schubert’s darker late works, this trio often feels open-hearted, generous, and songful, filled with long melodies that seem to unfold naturally, as if they had always existed. Schubert is widely regarded as one of the greatest melodists who ever lived, and few works display his extraordinary gift for melody more abundantly than this trio.

The first movement, *Allegro moderato* (“lively, but moderate”), begins with a broad, confident theme, almost like a welcoming gesture. Schubert then allows the piano, violin, and cello to share and transform musical ideas, creating the feeling of an intimate conversation among equals.

The second movement, *Andante un poco mosso* (“at a walking pace, with a little motion”), gives us one of Schubert’s most sublime examples of lyricism: music that feels like a song without words. Its beauty comes

from restraint rather than display, and the movement unfolds with a gentle but steady motion. Performers, listeners, and scholars have often regarded its principal theme as one of the most perfect melodies ever written, remarkable for its simplicity, balance, and emotional depth. It invites the listener inward.

The third movement is a *Scherzo* (“joke” or “playful piece”). In classical music, a scherzo usually replaces the older minuet and tends to be lighter, quicker, and more energetic. Schubert’s scherzo is nimble and bright, with quick exchanges between the instruments. The contrasting middle section, called the Trio, provides a brief change of character before the scherzo returns.

The finale is marked *Rondo. Allegro vivace* (“round; lively and spirited”). A rondo is a form in which a principal theme returns again and again, alternating with contrasting episodes. Schubert’s main theme is playful and mischievous, delighting in leading the listener down unexpected paths. Throughout the movement, he dwells lovingly on short melodic ideas, repeating and subtly reshaping them to an almost meditative degree. Just when the music seems to have reached its destination, Schubert repeatedly withholds a final resolution, teasing the listener with a series of apparent conclusions before bringing the work to an unexpectedly abrupt and exhilarating close. The result is a finale whose good humor, spontaneity, and inexhaustible melodic invention leave an unforgettable impression.

Johannes Brahms

Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

Brahms’s *Piano Quintet in F minor* is one of the great monuments of Romantic chamber music. It combines the intimacy of chamber music with the power and drama of a symphony. The work went through several versions before reaching its final form: Brahms first conceived it as a string quintet, then recast it for two pianos, and finally transformed it into the piano quintet we hear today. That history helps explain the piece’s unusual richness. It has the weight of a large ensemble, the complexity of chamber music, and the force of a dramatic argument.

Significantly, this was the first massive, large-scale masterpiece Brahms wrestled with and finalized as a permanent resident of Vienna, having moved there right as the initial version was taking shape. The quintet was written during the years when Brahms was grappling with the overwhelming legacy of Beethoven. Ever since Robert Schumann had proclaimed him the composer destined to carry for-

ward the German symphonic tradition, Brahms felt the burden of comparison with his great predecessor. Although he would postpone completing his *First Symphony* for decades, the *Piano Quintet* already shows an orchestral scale of thought and a seriousness of argument that reflect that symphonic pressure.

The first movement, *Allegro non troppo* (“fast, but not too much”), begins with a powerful, tightly wound idea stated by the strings and piano together. From the beginning, the music feels serious and urgent, full of tension that Brahms develops with extraordinary concentration. Brahms often builds large structures from small musical cells, and this movement is a perfect example. Rather than presenting one broad melody and simply repeating it, he takes short motives and subjects them to constant transformation. They are passed among the instruments, expanded, compressed, interrupted, and reshaped. The result is music that feels continuously alive, as though every phrase grows inevitably from what came before.

The second movement, *Andante, un poco adagio* (“at a walking pace, somewhat slow”), offers contrast after the intensity of the opening. It is tender and intimate, with a warmth that feels almost like a private confession. The piano and strings trade lyrical lines, and the music unfolds with patience and restraint.

The third movement is a fast, driving section known as a *Scherzo*, though it subverts the traditional definition of the word - which means “joke” - by delivering an atmosphere of intense, shadowy drama. Even the central Trio section, which typically provides a lyrical and sunny contrast, functions here as a “dark Trio,” maintaining a tense and mysterious undercurrent that keeps the listener on edge. The movement’s defining feature is a powerful, recurring four-note rhythm that closely echoes the famous “da-da-da-DUM” opening of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*. By weaving this unmistakable musical reference into the fabric of his own work, Brahms directly engages with the legacy of his great predecessor, transforming that iconic, high-stakes energy into a relentless, driving heartbeat that powers the entire movement.

The finale begins *Poco sostenuto* (“somewhat sustained” or “held back”), making the listener feel suspended in time, before moving into *Allegro non troppo* (“fast, but not too much”) and eventually *Presto, non troppo* (“very fast, but not too much”). The slow introduction creates a sense of uncertainty before the main movement begins. From there, the finale becomes restless, searching, and increasingly intense. Instead of offering easy resolution, Brahms creates a conclusion that feels hard-won, full of struggle, brilliance, and emotional depth.

America at 250

Thursday, June 25. 7:00 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Program

Owen Dodds (b. 1995)

Piano Sonata: *American Dreams*

Owen Dodds, piano

I. Overture and Scherzo

II. Aria and Incantation

III. Fiddle Tune

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Piano Quintet in F-sharp minor, Op. 67

Kevin Lawrence, violin I

Avital Mazor, violin II

Jack Kessler, viola

Samuel Viguerie, cello

Owen Dodds, piano

I. Adagio; Allegro moderato

II. Adagio espressivo

III. Allegro agitato; Adagio come prima; Presto

Intermission, 15 minutes

Stanley Chepaitis (b. 1951)

Leliumoj Advent Song

Stanley Chepaitis, violin I

Swana Chepaitis, violin II

Jack Kessler, viola

Samuel Viguerie, cello

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96, "American"

Ariel Horowitz, violin I

Shiqi Yang, violin II

Aidan Garrison, viola

Gabriel Martins, cello

I. Allegro ma non troppo

II. Lento

III. Molto vivace

IV. Finale. Vivace ma non troppo

Ariel Horowitz (b. 1996)

Solitude

Ariel Horowitz, violin I

Shiqi Yang, violin II

Aidan Garrison, viola

Gabriel Martins, cello

Sunmi Han, piano

Owen Dodds

Piano Sonata: *American Dreams*

Piano Sonata: *American Dreams* was commissioned by my mentor Gilbert Kalish on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Gil is something of an American piano icon, having championed the works of George Crumb, Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, and many others. Long before I met Gil and became his piano student, I revered his recordings and played pieces bearing his name as the dedicatee. Composing a piece for Gil was beyond my wildest American dream.

The sonata is divided into three movements, connected without pause. Each new movement picks up where the previous movement leaves off, taking the same material but introducing a new flavor. Drawing many characteristics from American folk music, including blues and Appalachian fiddle music, *American Dreams* is a celebration of the plurality of the American identity.

Amy Beach

Piano Quintet in F-sharp minor, Op. 67

Amy Beach was one of the most important American composers of her generation and one of the first American women to achieve major recognition as a composer of large-scale concert music. Her Piano Quintet, written in 1907, belongs to the grand Romantic tradition, but it also speaks with a deeply personal voice. The work is passionate, richly textured, and emotionally intense.

The first movement, *Adagio; Allegro moderato* (“slow or at ease; moderately fast”), begins with a serious, searching introduction. The music feels suspended, as though gathering strength before stepping forward. When the *Allegro moderato* arrives, the music becomes more urgent, with the piano and strings entering into a dramatic dialogue.

Beach’s writing often gives the piano a powerful role without reducing the strings to accompaniment. Instead, the five instruments participate in a richly woven texture. Themes are shared, answered, and intensified. The movement has both sweep and intimacy, combining Romantic breadth with chamber-music detail.

The second movement, *Adagio espressivo* (“slow and expressive”), is the emotional heart of the quintet. The music unfolds in long, lyrical lines, often with a sense of inward reflection. The movement has the quality of a song, though one charged with longing and complexity.

The finale is marked *Allegro agitato; Adagio come prima; Presto* (“fast and agitated; slow, as before; very fast”). This sequence gives the movement a dramatic arc: agitation, reflection, and a final rush of energy. The result is a conclusion that feels both turbulent and triumphant.

Stanley Chopaitis

Leliumoj Advent Song

Leliumoj is an ancient folk story from the Lithuanian region known as Dzūkija. With a repeated chant-like melody, it tells the story of a young bride who is treated badly by her in-laws. My composition sets the original melody in a progression which follows the story from deep introspection to furious emotions and back again.

Antonín Dvořák

String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96, “American”

Dvořák’s “American” Quartet was written during his time in the United States, when he was serving as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. He composed the quartet in 1893 while spending the summer in Spillville, Iowa, a town with a Czech immigrant community. The work has become one of the most beloved

pieces in the chamber music repertoire, admired for its freshness, warmth, and open-air quality.

The title “*American*” was not Dvořák’s own in the same formal sense as the opus number, but it reflects the piece’s association with his American years. Dvořák was deeply interested in the question of what an American classical music might sound like. He believed composers should draw inspiration from the musical life around them, including African American spirituals and Indigenous musical traditions, though the quartet itself is not a direct quotation of those sources. Rather, it reflects Dvořák’s response to the atmosphere, rhythms, and impressions of his time in America.

The first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo* (“fast, but not too much”), opens with a warm viola melody that immediately gives the music a relaxed, spacious character. The movement has energy, but it does not feel rushed. Instead, it seems to breathe, balancing brightness with ease.

The second movement, *Lento* (“slow”), is one of Dvořák’s most beautiful lyrical inspirations. The melody has often been compared to a spiritual, though it is Dvořák’s own creation. Its simplicity is part of its power: the music sings directly, with a feeling of distance, longing, and quiet reflection.

The third movement, *Molto vivace* (“very lively”), is quick, rhythmic, and full of motion. It is often associated with birdsong, reflecting Dvořák’s own fascination with the natural world around him in Iowa. The music darts and dances, giving the quartet a burst of restless energy.

The finale, *Vivace ma non troppo* (“lively, but not too much”), brings the quartet to a joyful close, full of rhythmic vitality and forward motion. Like the first movement, it balances exuberance with clarity. The result is music that feels both grounded and free, a European composer’s affectionate and imaginative response to the American landscape.

Ariel Horowitz

Solitude

Solitude comes from Ariel Horowitz’s debut album *Hearth*, a project that brings together classical music, original compositions, voice, electronics, spoken word, and soundscapes. Placed at the close of *America at 250*, the work offers a contemporary and personal perspective within a program exploring American identity. After music shaped by national history, folk influence, and cultural memory, *Solitude* turns toward the inner life, reminding us that history is also experienced privately, through individual feeling, imagination, and reflection.

Grand Finale: Mozart & Mendelssohn

Sunday, June 28. 3:00 pm

United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Grande Sestetto Concertante

after the *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364*

Hudson Ye-Hyung Chung, violin I

Shiqi Yang, violin II

Jack Kessler, viola I

Aidan Garrison, viola II

Gabriel Martins, cello I

Samuel Viguerie, cello II

I. Allegro maestoso

II. Andante

III. Presto

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Adagio for Strings

Ariel Horowitz, violin I

Kevin Lawrence, violin I

Hudson Ye-Hyung Chung, violin I

Shiqi Yang, violin II

Avital Mazor, violin II

Aidan Garrison, viola

Jack Kessler, viola

Gabriel Martins, cello

Samuel Viguerie, cello

Intermission, 15 minutes

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Ariel Horowitz, violin I

Kevin Lawrence, violin II

Shiqi Yang, violin III

Avital Mazor, violin IV

Aidan Garrison, viola I

Jack Kessler, viola II

Gabriel Martins, cello I

Samuel Viguerie, cello II

I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco

II. Andante

III. Scherzo. Allegro leggierissimo

IV. Presto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Grande Sestetto Concertante

after the *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364*

Mozart's *Grande Sestetto Concertante* is a chamber arrangement based on his *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364*, one of his great works for violin, viola, and orchestra. The arrangement transforms music originally conceived for soloists and orchestra into a more intimate work for six string players. What was once a large-scale dialogue between solo instruments and orchestra becomes a conversation among chamber musicians.

The phrase *Sinfonia Concertante* points to a hybrid form. *Sinfonia* suggests a symphonic or orchestral work, while *concertante* indicates a prominent role for solo instruments. In the original version, violin and viola step forward as soloists against the larger orchestra. In the sextet arrangement, that contrast is reimaged: instead of soloists versus orchestra, the drama is distributed among six individual voices.

The first movement, *Allegro maestoso* ("fast and majestic"), has a noble character, but also a sense of motion and brilliance. In chamber form, the majesty becomes more personal. We hear not only the sweep of Mozart's ideas, but also the intricate way the parts respond to one another.

The second movement, *Andante* (“at a walking pace”), carries emotional depth beneath an apparently simple surface. This movement is lyrical and inward, with a sense of tenderness and vulnerability. The lines unfold like a conversation in which each voice listens carefully before answering.

The finale, *Presto* (“very fast”), brings brightness, wit, and momentum after the expressive depth of the slow movement. The music moves with quicksilver energy, passing ideas among the players with effortless grace. It closes the work with brilliance and charm.

Samuel Barber

Adagio for Strings

Samuel Barber’s *Adagio for Strings* is one of the most recognizable and emotionally powerful works in American music. Originally composed as the slow movement of his String Quartet, Op. 11, it later became famous in its arrangement for string orchestra. In either form, the music is built from a single, long-breathed line that rises gradually, gathering intensity as it unfolds.

Adagio (“slow” or “at ease”) does not mean still in this piece. The music is always moving, stretching upward phrase by phrase. Its power comes from patience. Barber allows the line to grow almost imperceptibly, increasing in emotional weight until it reaches a searing climax.

One reason *Adagio for Strings* speaks so directly is that it does not rely on complicated musical architecture for its effect. Its language is clear, but the emotional journey is profound. The listener can feel the music breathing: rising, straining, breaking open, and then returning to quiet.

Placed in the Grand Finale, *Adagio for Strings* offers a moment of reflection before the brilliance of Mendelssohn’s Octet. It creates space for stillness and remembrance, reminding us that a festival finale can contain not only celebration, but also depth, tenderness, and shared silence.

Felix Mendelssohn

Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Mendelssohn wrote his Octet when he was only sixteen years old, and it remains one of the most astonishing achievements of youthful genius in all of chamber music. Written for four violins, two violas, and two cellos, the Octet does not simply place two string quartets side by

side. Instead, Mendelssohn treats all eight players as a single, vibrant organism, capable of symphonic breadth and dazzling transparency.

The first movement, *Allegro moderato ma con fuoco* (“moderately fast, but with fire”), is controlled, elegant, and beautifully shaped, but also full of inner flame. The opening violin line seems to leap upward with excitement, launching the ensemble into music that glows with energy.

Throughout the movement, Mendelssohn creates the illusion of effortless motion. Themes fly from one instrument to another, textures expand and contract, and the music often feels larger than eight players. Yet even at its most brilliant, the writing remains clear. Every voice has a role in the unfolding drama.

The second movement, *Andante* (“at a walking pace”), turns inward after the fire of the opening. It is gentler, more lyrical, and more reflective. The motion is steady rather than hurried, allowing the listener to hear the warmth of the ensemble and the subtle shifting of colors among the instruments.

The third movement, *Scherzo. Allegro leggierrissimo* (“playful; fast and as light as possible”), is one of Mendelssohn’s magical, fairy-like movements, full of quick, delicate motion. The music seems almost weightless, as if it is flickering in and out of view. It is playful, but also incredibly precise.

The finale, *Presto* (“very fast”), begins with a burst of energy and never really lets go. Mendelssohn uses rapid imitation, with one instrument entering after another, to create a thrilling sense of chase and accumulation. The movement eventually brings back echoes of earlier material, making the whole piece feel unified.

There is no better way to wrap up the festival than with Mendelssohn’s Octet. It’s chamber music at its most exhilarating, and the perfect vehicle for us to express our deepest gratitude to you, our spectacular audience. We truly couldn’t have asked for a better crowd to share this music with. Consider this finale our musical hug goodbye for the summer, but not for long. We hope you’ll join us for BCMS concerts throughout the year to keep the momentum going. Thank you for listening, laughing, and breathing life into these performances. Safe travels home, and we’ll see you next year for the sequel!

AVITAL MAZOR violin



Avital Mazor, Artistic Director and co-founder of the Blairsville Chamber Music Society, is an Israeli-American violinist based in Pennsylvania and New York. Mazor maintains an active career spanning performance, teaching, and studio recording, with a primary focus on chamber music. He holds degrees from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, as well as an Artist Diploma from the Mannes School of Music. He has studied with Michael Gaisler, Kevin

Lawrence, and Lucy Robert. Mazor is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Stony Brook University under the guidance of Hagai Shaham and Philip Setzer of the Emerson String Quartet.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Mazor has performed on major stages including Carnegie Hall and David Geffen Hall, and has appeared throughout Germany, Israel, Hungary, Italy, Russia, and Spain. He has also collaborated in performance with renowned artists such as Shlomo Mintz, Ivry Gitlis, Shmuel Ashkenasi, and Hagai Shaham.

A laureate of multiple competitions and a long-time recipient of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation scholarship, Mazor has participated in festivals such as the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Keshet Eilon International String Mastercourse, Orford Musique, and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, among others. He currently plays on a contemporary violin and bow made by Markus Laine of NYC.

In 2022, he co-founded the Blairsville Chamber Music Festival with Blairsville native Sarah Marshall, inspired by the town's beauty and spirit. The festival has since evolved into the Blairsville Chamber Music Society, expanding to include year-round concerts and cultural events. The mission of the BCMS is to make classical music accessible to a wider audience, reach out to underserved communities, develop educational programs, and serve the local community.

ARIEL HOROWITZ violin



Hailed by *The Washington Post* as “sweetly lyrical,” violinist, composer/songwriter, and community organizer Ariel Horowitz maintains an active career as a soloist and chamber musician, performing classical masterworks alongside original compositions and improvisations for violin, voice, and electronics, as well as works by living composers and composers from historically underrepresented backgrounds. In 2025, Ariel signed with Bright Shiny Things for worldwide management following the 2024 release of the debut album *Hearth*. Ariel was previously represented by Concert Artists Guild as a

winner of the 2020 Victor Elmaleh Competition.

Recent appearances include Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Joe’s Pub, Merkin Hall, Mostly Music, the Kravis Center, Tertulia Chamber Music, Chamber Music Detroit, Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Frisson Ensemble, OrchestraQ, and Pegasus: The Orchestra. Concerto appearances include the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe ProMusica, Neue Philharmonie Westphalia, Kammerphilharmonie Hamburg, and the Manhattan School of Music Camerata. Ariel tours regularly with Vision Duo, formed with percussionist Britton-René Collins, and toured nationally with Sybarite5 during the 2025–26 season.

Ariel is a prizewinner of the Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition, Grumiaux International Competition, Klein Competition, and Stulberg Competition. Additional honors include a Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant and the Yale University Jefferson Award for public service. Festival appearances include Newport Classical, Music@Menlo, the Grand Canyon Music Festival/Native American Composers Apprenticeship Program, Caroga Lake Music Festival, and the Perlman Music Program.

Ariel is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Heartbeat Music Project, a tuition-free program providing music and Navajo/Diné cultural education and direct-aid resources for youth on the Navajo Nation. In 2022, the project received the Lewis Prize for Music Accelerator Award, a \$500,000 national prize for youth music organizations.

Ariel has served on the faculty of the Chamber Music Center of New York since 2023 and previously taught at Mount Holyoke College. A graduate of the Yale School of Music and The Juilliard School, Ariel studied with Itzhak Perlman, Catherine Cho, and Ani Kavafian.

KEVIN LAWRENCE violin



Praised for his “vibrant intensity,” (*The Times*, London) and playing “supremely convincing in its vitality,” (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*) violinist Kevin Lawrence has consistently elicited superlative responses for his performances throughout the United States and Europe—at Merkin Hall, Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in Houston, Chicago, London, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Rome, Prague, Bucharest, Sofia, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Amsterdam, where the Dutch press described him as “simply miraculous” (*Het Vaderland*).

A lifelong advocate of American music, Lawrence has premiered sonatas by contemporary American compositional voices Laura Kaminsky, Judith Shatin and Lawrence Dillon, and chamber works by Michael Rothkopf and Evan Chambers. His release of the complete violin works of the American composer Arthur Foote on the New World label was “highly recommended” as “beautifully played” by the *Washington Post*, featured on NPR’s Performance Today, and broadcast by PBS on the Ken Burns series “Not for Ourselves Alone.” His second recording of American violin sonatas on New World was hailed as “vital playing” and “a labor of love” by ClassicsToday.com. With renowned flutist Carol Wincenc he recorded American flute quintets for the Bridge label; this recording was named as Critics Choice by *American Record Guide*, which praised its “consummate virtuosity.”

Lawrence received his musical education at The Juilliard School as a student of Ivan Galamian and Margaret Pardee. While at Juilliard he also studied chamber music with Felix Galimir and continued his chamber music study with Josef Gingold at the Meadowmount School in Westport, New York. In 1980, Galamian appointed Lawrence to the Meadowmount faculty, where he taught for 14 summers. After serving as dean and then artistic director of the Killington Music Festival, he founded Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival in 2004; since retiring as festival director at the conclusion of the 2021 season, he serves as artistic director emeritus.

Lawrence is string chair at University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where he has been a faculty member since 1990. He has given master classes throughout the United States, and in Canada, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Israel, Costa Rica, Venezuela, China, Thailand and Korea. He has just completed a four-month residency in Romania as a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award.

HUDSON YE-HYUNG CHUNG violin



Acclaimed for his unique interpretation and warm, beautiful tone, Hudson Ye-Hyung Chung was born in Jerusalem, Israel, and began playing the violin at age six. Making his debut with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra at age eleven, he was commended by Israel's fifth president, Yitzhak Navon, who became his patron for his music studies in Israel. Since then, Mr. Chung has demonstrated his talents in venues around the world and has won competitions from a young age.

He received first-prize awards in the Israeli-American Foundation

Sharett Scholarship Program, Tel Aviv (2006); the Kukmin Daily News Competition, Seoul (2007); the Youngsan Young Artist Competition, Seoul (2008); the New York International Music Competition (2012); and the Bach International Music Competition (2024).

An active chamber musician, Mr. Chung is a member of the Mozze Trio alongside pianist Owen Dodds and cellist Gustavo Antoniacomi, with whom he will make a debut concert appearance at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall this coming November. He has also collaborated with renowned artists including Gil Shaham, Yura Lee, Paul Huang, Ani Kavafian, Jennifer Frautschi, and the Emerson Quartet. His festival appearances include the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, Great Mountains Festival, and Keshet Eilon.

An alumnus of The Juilliard School, the Yale School of Music, and the New England Conservatory, Mr. Chung has studied with distinguished pedagogues including Hyo Kang, Miriam Fried, Paul Biss, and Peter Zazofsky. He currently studies with Jennifer Frautschi, Phil Setzer, and Haggai Shaham at Stony Brook University on a full-merit scholarship.

Also a dedicated educator who believes that music should serve the community and children, Mr. Chung serves on the violin faculty at the Buckley Country Day School, a distinguished private school in Roslyn. Furthermore, he is a proud Co-Founder of The Great Melody, an active non-profit organization dedicated to healing communities through music and bringing light and encouragement to Long Island and New York City. Additionally, he has served as the praise team leader at The Life Presbyterian Church in Flushing, NY, since 2024.

SHIQI YANG violin



Violinist Shiqi Yang is a collaborative musician whose work spans chamber music and orchestral performance. Originally from Sichuan, China, she is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Stony Brook University.

As a chamber musician, she has worked closely with members of the Emerson String Quartet through the ESQ Institute. Recent highlights include performances alongside members of the Emerson String Quartet and soprano Christine Goerke. She has also participated in the Encore Chamber Music Festival and the Josef Gingold Chamber Music Festival.

A returning member of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, Ms. Yang has also performed with the Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra, Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra, and Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. She previously served as Concertmaster of the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic Orchestra and has appeared in venues including Carnegie Hall and Seiji Ozawa Hall.

SWANA CHEPAITIS violin



Swana Chepaitis is an accomplished violinist and private studio teacher in Indiana, PA. She earned her degree in Violin Pedagogy and Performance in 1995 from the Conservatory for the Arts in Bremen, in her native Germany. She then studied historic performance praxis and played with the baroque orchestra L'Arco for many years.

In 1997, Swana moved to Indiana PA. She has maintained an active violin studio in Indiana for over 25 years, passing on the art of playing the violin to students of all ages. Along with her violinist husband Stanley, Swana co-founded and plays with Philly Street Strings, a string orchestra based in Indiana PA. They also perform together

with their professional string quartet, the Kalnas Ensemble. In the region, Swana regularly plays with the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra and the Altoona Symphony Orchestra.

KALEIGH ACORD violin



Kaleigh Acord is a violinist, violist, and passionate chamber musician whose performances reflect a deep commitment to collaboration, contemporary music, and musical storytelling. She has appeared as a guest artist with the LunArt Festival, Willy Street Chamber Players, and Caroga Lake Music Festival, and in 2023 was part of the first fully funded fellowship cohort at Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival. In March 2014, she made her radio debut on WQXR's *McGraw Hill Financial Young Artist Showcase*, performing Schoenfield's "Souvenirs for

Violin and Piano."

Dedicated to cultivating relationships with living composers, Acord's debut album, *Twenty-First Century American Storytellers*, features six American works written from 2000 to 2019, two of which were composed specifically for her. She is also featured on violinist and arts advocate Ava Shadmani's 2024 release, *I Will Greet the Sun Again*, a compilation of modern classical chamber music inspired by Persian folk music.

In addition to her performing career, Kaleigh is a devoted educator with fifteen years of teaching experience. In August 2024, she was appointed Professor of Violin and Viola at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her previous teaching positions include UW-Madison's Community Music School, Lyricafest Chamber Music Festival, Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra's Music Makers, and Madison Conservatory, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing access barriers in music education. In June 2024, she coordinated the first Madison Conservatory and Friends Chamber Music Workshop, bringing together 20 local students for six days of rehearsals and a final benefit concert.

Acord completed her Doctoral studies in Violin Performance at the University of Wisconsin–Madison's Mead Witter School of Music, where she studied with Soh-Hyun Park Altino and held the Paul Collins Fellowship. She earned a Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Institute and holds both a Master of Music and an Undergraduate Diploma from the Longy School of Music of Bard College. Her other primary teachers include Violaine Melancon, Laura Bossert, and James Batts.

STANLEY CHEPAITIS violin



Dr. Chepaitis holds a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree and a Master of Music, as well as a Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. He is a versatile performing and recording artist who is at home in a classical string quartet, a jazz band, and anything in between. His career spans fifty years in which time he has performed nationally and internationally, composed and premiered his own works, and recorded seven albums of primarily original music. Dr. Chepaitis has been at the forefront of the Alternative Styles Movement having had a leading role in the ASTA Conferences in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

JORGE VERA violin



Jorge Vera is a violinist, educator, and composer recognized for his dynamic performance career and commitment to music education. He currently serves as Musician-in-Residence with the Allentown Symphony Association and performs regularly with orchestras across the United States. He debuted as a soloist in his native Paraguay with the Orquesta Sinfónica del Paraguay and has collaborated with ensembles throughout Europe, South America, and the U.S.

A prizewinner of the International Golden State Music Competition in Los Angeles

and recipient of the Gindroz Prize in Pittsburgh, Jorge has participated in major international festivals, including the Salzburg Festival in Austria. In 2024, he was a member of the Honors String Quartet in residence at Carnegie Mellon University, where he completed his Master of Music Performance. He has also contributed to recordings of South American Baroque repertoire.

Passionate about music education, Jorge has taught for over a decade and now works with the El Sistema Lehigh Valley String Program, focusing on artistic excellence, community engagement, and the transformative impact of music.

JACK KESSLER viola



Jack Kessler, a violist from Miami, Florida has performed internationally and across the United States with a deep commitment to cultural memory and civic engagement. He recently toured Ernest Bloch's Fourth String Quartet throughout Central Europe, was a fellow at the Colorado Music Festival and is an alumnus of the Verbier Festival Academy. The Perlman Music Program regularly invites him to appear in its Neue Galerie concert series in New York, and he was a recent

participant in the 2025 Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition in Newcastle, England. At the Fontainebleau Conservatory, his transcription of Ravel's *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* was awarded by the Ravel Foundation and will be published.

Jack has appeared on NPR's *From the Top* with pianist Jeremy Denk and performed on the Curtis Presents series with Noah Bendix-Balgley of the Berlin Philharmonic. While serving as chamber music coordinator at the Curtis Institute, he organized a program honoring Eastern European composers such as Hans Krasa and Pal Hermann who perished in the Holocaust. Continuing this passion, he performed in *Awake in the Dark* (2023 and 2024, Brooklyn and Manhattan), a concert theater work by Shira Nayman exploring memory and survival during the Nazi reign.

Jack is fascinated with the intricacies of conducting and was mentored by Jonathan Coopersmith. He worked at Yale's Oral History of American Music, transcribing interviews with leading musical voices including Gabriela Lena Frank and David Harrington of the Kronos Quartet. Beyond music, he is an advocate for sustainable cities and is writing an op-ed for the Philadelphia Inquirer urging New Jersey Transit to allow bicycles on peak trains. He studied with Michael Klotz in Miami, Ettore Causa at Yale University and with Roberto Diaz and Ed Gazouleas at the Curtis Institute of Music.

AIDAN GARRISON *viola*



As avid chamber musician, Aidan Garrison has collaborated with members of the St. Lawrence string quartet, and Rosemary Elliot, and performed for artists such as Ani Kavafian, Dimitri Murrath, and Christian Colberg, as well as members of the Emerson, Shanghai, and Pacifica string quartets. He has attended the Aspen, Bowdoin, Banff, and Heifetz international music festivals, and was a fellow at the Napa Valley Blackburn academy.

Aidan is currently pursuing his Doctoral degree at Stony Brook University, studying with Lawrence Dutton and Matthew Lipman. He completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at the New England Conservatory, studying with Mai Motobuchi and Nicholas Cords.

During his studies at the New England Conservatory, his string quartet was chosen for the Community Performances and Partnerships Ensemble Fellowship, where they developed educational programs designed to bring chamber music to audiences beyond the scope of a formal concert setting. This has led to engagements across the US, including notably a teaching residency as part of the Virginia Arts Festival.

Comfortable in more than just classical music, Aidan has collaborated with artists from a variety of disciplines. He has performed with the Scottish fiddle duo Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, took part in the premiere of luminary jazz musician Wayne Shorter's opera *Iphigenia* (co-written by Esperanza Spaulding), and performed as part of the backup string quartet for Jazz/Pop artist Laufey.

At Stony Brook, he is taking part in the Emerson String Quartet Institute as part of the Velaris String Quartet, a group that has already been a finalist for several competitions, as well as winning Stony Brook's Ackerman Prize.

GABRIEL MARTINS cello



Gabriel Martins (b. 1998) is an American concert cellist. He gained recognition after winning both the Sphinx Competition and the Concert Artists Guild Competition in 2020. In 2022, he was invited to make his New York recital debut on short notice, stepping in for Steven Isserlis in a program of Johann Sebastian Bach's Cello Suites at the 92nd Street Y. The performance was praised by *The Strad Magazine* as "flawlessly played" and "a deeply moving experience". Since then, his career has continued to grow, with debuts at Carnegie Hall, Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), Maison Symphonique (Montréal), Wigmore Hall (London), and with the

Alabama, Allentown, Arkansas, Auburn, Augusta, Duluth-Superior, DuPage, Elgin, Houston, Indianapolis, Greensboro, Memphis, Mid-Atlantic, Omaha, Pacific, Phoenix, Santa Fe, São Paulo, Sedona, South Florida, Tallahassee, and Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestras. In 2025, he gave his first tour of Asia, with recitals in Bangkok, Chiayi, Manila, Taipei, and Tokyo.

Martins' musical approach has been described as "a rare combination of intellectual clarity, emotional depth, and genuine humility," and as that of "an artist grounded not in performance bravado, but in an unwavering commitment to honoring the music itself" (*Cultural Attaché*). His focus on the music of Bach culminated in his 2024 debut recording of the complete Cello Suites, followed in 2025 by the Violin Sonatas and Partitas in his own arrangements for cello. His performances have been broadcast on NPR, WQXR, KUSC, and WFMT, and his festival appearances include Aspen, Bard, Blairsville, Brevard, ChamberFest Cleveland, Four Seasons, La Jolla, Mainly Mozart, Ravinia, Sitka, and Yellow Barn. Among his additional honors are prizes at the David Popper International Cello Competition, the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, the Prague Spring International Music Competition, the Schadt String Competition, the Orford Music Award, and the American Recital Debut Award. In 2022 he was named to *Classic FM's* "30 under 30" list.

Born to Brazilian and American parents, Martins grew up in Bloomington, Indiana. He began studying the cello at age five with Susan Moses at the Indiana University String Academy. He earned his Bachelor of Music as a Presidential Scholar at the USC Thornton School of Music, studying with Ralph Kirshbaum, and won both the school's concerto and Bach competitions in his freshman year. He completed his Master of Music at the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Laurence Lesser. Martins now resides in Charleston, South Carolina. In addition to performing, he composes and teaches. He performs on a composite Francesco Ruggieri cello made in Cremona, c. 1690, and a François Nicolas Voirin bow made in Paris, c. 1880.

LINDA JENNINGS cello



Linda Jennings is Professor of Music at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where she leads the Cello and Bass studios, teaches chamber music, and directs the IUP String Project. She received her Bachelor of Music at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a Master of Music from the University of Southern California, and a Doctorate of Music from the University of Texas at Austin. She has studied with cellists Geraldine Jennings, Janet Grieve, Parry Karp, Eleonore Schoenfeld, Uri Vardi, and Phyllis Young.

Linda Jennings is an active solo, chamber, and orchestral performer. She has played in

orchestras throughout Texas, the Midwest, and Alaska and served as principal cellist for the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, the Arctic Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of the Alleghenies, and the Philly Street Strings. In the summer of 2002, she was invited to serve as guest principal cellist of the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra in Thailand for the 70th Birthday celebration of Thailand's Queen Sirikit. She currently serves as principal cellist of the Philly Street Strings Chamber Orchestra.

She also appeared as soloist and chamber musician in concerts and festivals in the U.S., Mexico, Europe, Thailand, Indonesia, and Haiti. Linda Jennings served as a member of the Litton String Quartet and Gorell Piano Trio, Indiana University of Pennsylvania's faculty chamber ensembles-in-residence. She was also the cellist in the Arcadi Piano Trio and Herbert Steet Trio. Dr. Jennings has also been invited to present master classes nationally in Wisconsin, Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, and Oklahoma as well as internationally in Mexico, Croatia, Thailand, and Haiti. From 2020-2024 she provided monthly master classes for Chiang Rai Youth Orchestra Oversea Online Class Project in Thailand.

In addition to her performing and teaching career, Linda Jennings is a strong proponent for string music education. From 1997-1999 she served as the Director of the prestigious UT String Project, an internationally acclaimed teacher-training program. Currently, she directs a similar program, the IUP String Project which she founded in 2004. Linda Jennings was invited to teach and provide pedagogy training for music teachers in Haiti and Thailand. She served as Artistic Director and Guest Artist for the 2025 Chiang Rai Youth Orchestra Festival, and for the 2014 Bangkok Symphony Cello Festival and Chiang Rai Youth Orchestra Cello Festivals, the first festivals of this kind in Thailand.

SAM VIGUERIE cello



Sam Viguerie, a native of Atlanta, joined the Indianapolis Symphony in 2022. As a chamber musician, he has shared the stage with former members of the Cleveland, Emerson, and Juilliard String Quartets, and collaborated with critically-acclaimed composers such as Joan Tower, David Roche, and Michael Gandolfi. Sam has served as principal cello under conductors such as Andris Nelsons, Larry Rachleff, Stefan Asbury, and Hugh Wolff, and spent summers at Tanglewood, the Music Academy of

the West, Meadowmount, and the Heifetz Institute. He's spent the past three summers performing at the Missouri River Festival of the Arts with members of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

He won the grand prize at the 2016 MTNA Young Artist Competition and took first prize at the 2015 Schubert Club Competition, subsequently giving full recitals in San Antonio, St. Paul, and Minneapolis. He has had the privilege to play in masterclasses for some of the world's most celebrated cellists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Steven Isserlis, and Lynn Harrel. A proud alumnus of St. Olaf College, he took part in four domestic tours with the St. Olaf Orchestra under Steven Amundson, performing the Dvorak and Schuman concertos. In 2019, he performed Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo* with Carl Topilow and the National Repertory Orchestra in the season's opening concert.

An active educator, Sam maintains a private studio of eleven students in the Indianapolis and Carmel area and has taught masterclasses at the International Cello Institute. He holds a B.A. from St. Olaf College, an M.M. from New England Conservatory, and pursued further studies at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. His primary teachers include Desmond Hoebig, Paul Katz, Christopher French, David Carter, Daniel Laufer, and Roy Harran.

SUNMI HAN piano



Marked by poetic lyricism in solo performance and vibrant imagination in chamber music collaborations, pianist Sunmi Han has appeared in major venues across Europe, the U.S., and Asia—including Munich’s Herkulessaal and Prague’s Smetana Hall—and has performed as soloist with the North Czech Philharmonic, Karlovy Vary Symphony, Kharkiv Philharmonic, Moravian Symphony, and Seoul Philharmonic. A devoted chamber musician, she has collaborated with artists such as Ar-

naud Sussmann, Jörg Widmann, Colin Carr, Denis Várjon, Matthew Lipman, Nicholas Mann, Alan Kay, Pauline Sachse, Seth Knopp, and members of the Emerson Quartet. An alumna of The Juilliard School, she also holds degrees from Tel Aviv University and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München, and is currently completing her DMA at Stony Brook University. Upcoming projects include Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations and Copland’s Piano Variations.

OWEN DODDS piano



American pianist and composer Owen Dodds leads a diverse and stimulating musical life, driven by his urge to share the music he enjoys. A native of North Carolina, Owen currently resides in New York City, where he performs as classical soloist, chamber musician, song writer, and composer. He has appeared in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall, Lincoln Center’s Clark Studio Theatre, and Rockwood Music Hall.

Owen’s recent performance highlights included a performance of Bartok’s 3rd Piano with the Stony Brook Symphony

Orchestra conducted by Xian Zhang, a performance of John Cage's *Credo in US* with percussionist Eduardo Leandro, and an all Vaughan Williams program featuring University of North Carolina School of the Arts faculty members Paul Sharpe, Brooks Whitehouse, Jordan Bak, and Glenn Siebert.

An active collaborator and chamber musician, Owen is a member of multiple award-winning ensembles including the Mozze Trio, scheduled to make their Carnegie Hall debut in Fall 2026, and the Béla Trio, recipients of the Donald Spieth Award for chamber music. Owen's modern-folk duo, Early Gray, with guitarist Drake Duffer, has released two albums of original music, has collaborated with artists including Gabriel Kahane and Tanner Porter, and were featured on PBS North Carolina.

Owen has been described as a "highly gifted composer with a very personal style." He recently premiered his piano sonata, *American Dreams*, at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Canada. His *Fantasy* for flute and string quartet will premier later this summer at Manchester Music Festival. His works have been featured as a part of Stony Brook's Contemporary Chamber Players, The New School's Tech Forward concert series, Blairsville Chamber Music Festival, and the Weekend of Chamber Music Festival in the Catskills of NY. Owen's upcoming commissions include a percussion-piano piece for the Concurrent Duo.

Owen has received awards in solo piano competitions including Music Teachers National Association, the Baltimore International Piano Festival Competition, the Malaysian International Music Competition, and the Stony Brook Concerto Competition. He has appeared as a concerto soloist with the Stony Brook University Symphony Orchestra, UNC School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra, and the National Academic Orchestra of Ukraine.

Owen began his official music studies at UNC School of the Arts, receiving instruction from Clifton Matthews and Dmitri Shteinberg for his high school diploma and bachelor's degree. His other primary teachers have included Gila Goldstein at BU and Vladimir Valjarević at Mannes. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Stony Brook University, where he studies piano with Gilbert Kalish and composition with Perry Goldstein. He has been fortunate to receive chamber music coaching from members of the Emerson String Quartet and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Owen currently serves as a member of the piano faculty at Hoff-Barthelson Music School and as an artist staff member at Manhattan School of Music.

About the Blairsville Chamber Music Society

World-class chamber music in the heart of Blairsville



The Blairsville Chamber Music Society brings world-class musicians to Blairsville, Pennsylvania, offering exceptional performances that celebrate the beauty, intimacy, and power of chamber music. What began in 2022 as the Blairsville Chamber Music Festival quickly became a highlight of the town's cultural calendar. Founded by violinist Avital Mazor and Blairsville native Sarah Marshall, the organization

reflects a shared vision of bringing extraordinary music to an intimate and welcoming community. In 2025, the organization, now established as a nonprofit, expanded beyond the summer festival to present a year-round concert series. With growing community engagement and artistic recognition, the Blairsville Chamber Music Society continues to create meaningful musical experiences, foster connection, and enrich the region's cultural life.

Mission Statement

The Blairsville Chamber Music Society is dedicated to enriching the cultural life of Blairsville, PA and surrounding communities by hosting engaging events, fostering artistic expression, and providing accessible opportunities for music education. We strive to inspire creativity, connect residents and visitors of all ages through the arts, and cultivate a vibrant community where music and creativity thrive.

Vision Statement

The Blairsville Chamber Music Society envisions creating a world-class chamber music festival and year-round concert series that enrich the cultural and musical life of Blairsville and the surrounding region, fostering an inclusive and vibrant artistic community. By making music accessible to people of all backgrounds, we seek to attract new audiences, strengthen Blairsville's cultural presence, and reinvigorate and establish the town as a destination for experiencing artistic excellence.

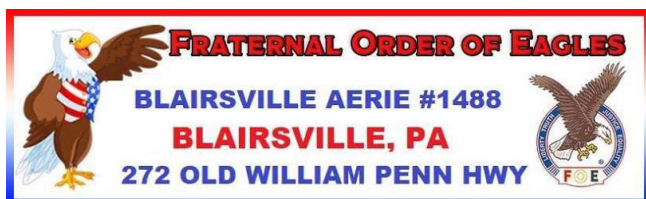
With Gratitude to Our Festival Sponsors

The 2026 Blairsville Chamber Music Festival is made possible in part through the generous support of our sponsors, donors, and community partners. Thank you for believing in our mission and for helping us build a vibrant future for the arts in our community.

Presenting Sponsors (\$2500)



Concert Sponsor (\$1000)



Supporting Sponsor (\$500)



Community Sponsors (\$250)

Friends of
Senator Joe Pittman



With Gratitude to Our 2025–26 Blairsville Chamber Music Society Annual Fund Supporters

We would like to thank the following supporters for their charitable contributions. Our programming would not be possible without your extreme generosity.

Investor's Circle (\$5000+)

Anonymous

Anonymous

Concert Sponsor (\$2500-\$4999)

The Jockel & Ferdowsi Families

Benefactor (\$1000-\$2499)

Daniel Kelley

Lyn Thomas-McRorie

Jeff & Rebecca Marshall

Nora Maynard & Chester Jankowski

Anna & Daniel Sterrett

Patron (\$500-\$999)

David & MaryAnn Clark

Joy & Bob Fairbanks

Friends of Blairsville Communities

Karin & Drew Miller

James Resh

Kay Smith

Supporter (\$250-\$499)

Louisa Fordyce

Linda Gwinn

Linda Jennings

Michael & Aimee Kakos

Nii Osae

Contributor (\$50-\$249)

Albert Dettorre

Robert & Shoshana Halden

Patricia Klahr

Hank Knerr

Helen Lichtenfels

Nancy Ross

Kaitlyn Sagely

Debra Simko

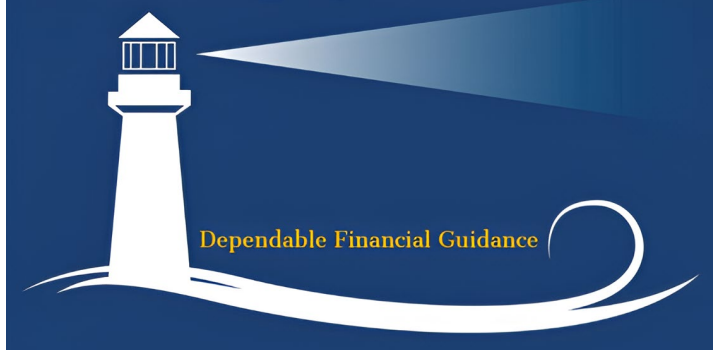
Judith Sturges

Natalia Sturges

Robert & Kathy Watson

Special Thanks: Joy & Bob Fairbanks, Helen & Charles Kennedy, Howard Goldfarb, Karin & Drew Miller, Anna Sterrett, Jeff & Rebecca Marshall, Sameer Apte, Tom Fitzpatrick, Cis Ottie, Sue & Joe Soltis, David Janusek, Blairsville Borough, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, and United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville

Beacon Legacy Planners, LLC



Retirement

Pursuing retirement dreams in the future requires a strong foundation now.



Taxes

We work with your tax professionals regarding your specific tax situation.



Money

Wealth management is one of the most overlooked parts of a successful retirement strategy. We can help.



Lifestyle

From budgeting to cash flow analysis, we'll work to help you live your dream life.



Estate

With sensitivity and care, we'll help create an estate strategy for your family's situation.



Investment

We know how to create a portfolio that designed around your needs.

Beacon Legacy Planners, LLC

949 Philadelphia Street, Indiana, PA 15701

Office: (724) 349-3006; Mobile: (724) 840-8370

www.beaconlegacyplanners.com

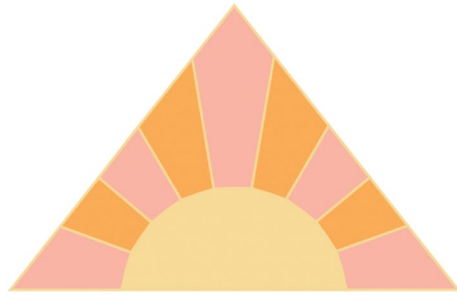
Investment and insurance products and services are offered through Osaic Institutions, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. Osaic Institutions, Inc. and Beacon Legacy Planners, LLC are not affiliated. Investment products offered are: Not FDIC Insured, Not Guaranteed by the Bank, not a Deposit, not insured by Any Federal Government Agency, May Lose Value Including Loss of Principal.



Casual Dining at its Finest!

Enjoy great food, cold drinks, and a welcoming atmosphere at The Villa Pub & Grill. With an **extensive menu** featuring something for everyone, **18 beers on tap**, and a **scenic deck**, The Villa Pub & Grill is a favorite spot for casual dining and good times.

931 Old William Penn Hwy, Blairsville, PA
villapubandgrill.com 724-459-8816



MARKET STREET PASTRIES

bakery & café
est. 2011

freshly baked sweet & savory pastries
artisan gelato by Mercurio's • sandwiches
salads • soups • breakfast • specialty coffee & tea
hand-crafted food made with
pure ingredients

We're now open later!
Wed-Fri: 7 - 7 • Sat 8 - 7 • Sun 8 - 5

Home of the Maple Roll
A Blairsville classic since 1921

44 E. Market St. Blairsville, PA
marketstreetpastries.com

Our 2025-26 Season in Review

This past year marked an exciting new chapter for the Blairsville Chamber Music Society. In addition to the summer festival, BCMS presented its first year-round seasonal concert series, bringing six chamber music performances to Blairsville and building deeper connections with audiences throughout the year. These concerts reflected the heart of our mission: to share world-class artistry in an intimate community setting, create meaningful musical experiences, and continue growing a vibrant home for chamber music in Blairsville.

Celebrating 500 Years of Violin: A Musical Afternoon

Sunday, November 2, 2025

Celebrating 500 Years of Violin opened our first year of seasonal concerts to a full house at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, with an afternoon devoted to the history and expressive range of the violin. The concert marked 500 years since the first known depiction of a violin, which appeared in a church fresco in Saronno, Italy, in 1525. The event began with a pre-concert talk by Artistic Director and violinist Avital Mazor, with local luthier Robert Gordon III also speaking about the instrument's history and craftsmanship. The concert featured Avital Mazor and pianist Ksenia Kurenysheva in



works by Fontana, Bach, Beethoven, Paganini, Schumann, Ysaÿe, Bartók, and a new composition by local composer James Krom, tracing the violin's voice across five centuries. The afternoon concluded with a festive reception featuring Italian-themed treats, a nod to the violin's origins in Italy.

Two Voices: One Song

Sunday, November 30, 2025

Two Voices, One Song brought violinist Roni Shitrit and pianist Izem Gürer to the intimate and historic setting of St. Peter's Episcopal Church for an afternoon of expressive dialogue between violin and piano. The program featured works by Mozart, Brahms, Saint-Saëns, and Rachmaninov,

moving between emotional depth, virtuosity, and songful lyricism.



New Year's Nocturne

New Year's Eve Concert:

Wednesday, December 31, 2025

New Year's Day Concert:

Thursday, January 1, 2026

New Year's Nocturne welcomed 2026 with two special performances at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, featuring pianist Ksenia Kurenysheva, Artistic Director and violinist Avital Mazor, and cellist Noah Koh. The

program included Chopin's *Nocturne in E-flat major*, Op. 9, No. 2, Beethoven's *Piano Trio in D Major*, Op. 70 No. 1, Schoenfield's *Café Music*, and *Auld Lang Syne*.

The New Year's Eve performance offered a warm candlelit setting, while the New Year's Day concert brought the same luminous program to an afternoon audience. Even in the midst of a snowstorm, *New Year's Nocturne* brought us together for a truly special experience, creating a meaningful sense of gathering and community as we welcomed the New Year through music.

Emergence

Sunday, April 26, 2026

Emergence welcomed spring with another full house at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, filling the room with energy, joy, and unforgettable music. The concert marked the debut of the Blairsville Chamber Players, featuring Avital Mazor, Izem Güler, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra musicians Rimbo Wong and Yun-Ya Lo.

Centered around *Brahms's Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor*, Op. 25, the program reflected the renewal and

momentum of the season with music of sweeping intensity, lyrical beauty, and exhilarating energy. As BCMS emerged into spring and looked ahead to the summer festival, the afternoon offered a powerful reminder of the growing community gathering around chamber music in Blairsville.



Trialogue: Mozze Trio

Sunday, May 24, 2026

Trialogue brought the 2025–26 seasonal concert series to a memorable close with a vibrant performance by the Mozze Trio, featuring three returning BCMF artists: Owen Dodds, piano; Hudson Ye-Hyung Chung, violin; and Gustavo Antoniacomi, cello. Their program offered a rich journey through music by Marais, Arensky, Debussy, and Piazzolla, moving from Baroque elegance to Romantic intensity, French color, and the rhythmic energy of tango nuevo.



As the final concert of the season, *Trialogue* was a fitting culmination of an extraordinary year of music in downtown Blairsville. With precision, energy, and expressive depth, the Mozze Trio reminded us of the power of chamber music as conversation: three distinct voices listening, responding, and creating something larger together.

Support BCMS

Thank you for joining us for the 2026 Blairsville Chamber Music Festival. Your presence, enthusiasm, and support help make this growing musical community possible.

The Blairsville Chamber Music Society relies on private donations, sponsorships, and local grants to continue bringing exceptional performances, educational programs, and meaningful artistic experiences to Blairsville and the surrounding region. Every gift, large or small, helps sustain our annual fund and supports the musicians, concerts, and community connections at the heart of our mission.

If this festival has inspired you, we invite you to help keep the music going. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to support the future of BCMS.

To donate online, visit **blairvillecms.org/support**



Blairsville Chamber Music Society Donation Form

Support Our Annual Fund

Keep the Music Thriving All Year!

Thank you for joining us! Ticket sales cover only a small part of our costs. Please consider supporting our Annual Fund. Your tax-deductible gift helps keep the music accessible and sustains our concerts, education, and outreach year-round.

Donation Levels

Contributor \$50-\$249: Recognition in program & website

Supporter \$250-\$499: Above plus two premium tickets to one seasonal concert.

Patron \$500-\$999: Above plus two reserved seats to all concerts & festival.

Benefactor \$1,000-\$2,499: Above plus private *Friends of the Festival* concert & rehearsal access.

Concert Sponsor \$2500-\$4999: Above plus recognition in printed materials and from the stage.

Investor's Circle \$5000-\$9999: Above plus season poster recognition.

Artistic Visionary \$10000+: Above plus private concert or commissioned work, VIP premiere seating, and permanent recognition.

Corporate Sponsorships

Contact us at info@blairsvillemcs.org for sponsorship opportunities.

How to Donate

Give online at **blairsvillecms.org** or by mail to:

Blairsville Chamber Music Society

80 South Stewart Street

Blairsville, PA 15717

Donations should be made payable to:

Blairsville Music Society, our registered
501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Prefer to help in other ways? Volunteer with us!

☐ Yes, I'd like to help! (Please provide your info
below.)

Donor/Volunteer Information

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Donation Amount \$_____

☐ I wish to remain anonymous

☐ Sign up for our mailing list

Thank you!

Leadership & Board of Directors

Sarah Marshall.....	Executive Director
Avital Mazor.....	Artistic Director
Sameer Apte.....	Festival Music Director
Helen Kennedy.....	President
Karin Miller.....	Secretary
Howard Goldfarb.....	Treasurer
Anna Sterrett.....	Director of Public Relations

Contact us

Blairsville Chamber Music Society
80 S. Stewart St.
Blairsville, PA 15717
info@blairvillecms.org
724.422.9933

Stay in touch!

Sign up for our mailing list
at **blairvillecms.org**
to stay informed about
our upcoming events.



Cover artwork: *Patterns of Conversational Conflict* by local artist Andrew Miller. Program designed by Sarah Marshall.



save the dates!

2026-27 Season

Recital: One Before Many

Sunday, October 18, 2026 · 3:00 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Rite at the Table

Valentine's Day Concert
Sunday, February 14 · 3:00 pm
Shulick Building

Father Frost & the Turning Year

Thurs., December 31, 2026 · 10:30 pm
Fri., January 1, 2027 · 3:00 pm
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Embers

Outdoor Concert
Sunday, April 25 · 3:00 pm
Amphitheater

blairsvillecms.org