

UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 6 **Dover Quartet**
5 p.m. - Amelia Baptist Church, 961167 Buccaneer Trail, FB (\$60)
- April 26 **Season Finale Celebration:**
Anne Akiko Meyers with Jason Vieaux
7:30 p.m. - Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island, 4750 Amelia Island Pkwy, FB, (\$65)
(Includes a Dessert Buffet)

Tickets: aicmf.com or call 904-261-1779

YOUNG PATRONS

The Young Patrons are a group of young adults with a love of music and a desire to mingle with other like-minded young adults. The program had a successful debut with a special pre-party before the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis concert.

For more information, please visit www.aicmf.com



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AMELIA ISLAND CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Presents



Christiania Piano Quartet

MARCH 31, 2019

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
2600 Atlantic Avenue, Amelia Island, Florida

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The support from the organizations and individuals listed below has made this concert possible. The Board of Directors and all of us at the Festival are most appreciative and very thankful for their commitment to bringing musical excellence to Amelia Island and its environs.

Jim and Jane Flynn

MISSION STATEMENT

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival's threefold mission is to:

1. Present the world's greatest musical artists in chamber music concerts of classical and alternative genres for diverse audiences;
2. Offer music education to concert attendees, students, and aspiring young musicians; and
3. Promote local businesses and tourism by attracting music lovers from Nassau County, Northeast Florida, and beyond.

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About the AICMF

Celebrating its eighteenth anniversary season, The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is nationally recognized as one of the foremost music events of its kind. The Festival is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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HELP KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING AT YOUR FESTIVAL

Presenting the world's greatest musical artists in chamber music concerts of classical and alternative genres for diverse audiences is the mission of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival. We have fulfilled our mission by gracing our stages with such music giants as Yo-Yo Ma, Jazz at Lincoln Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Itzhak Perlman, Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, the Balsam Range Bluegrass Band, the Dover Quartet, Anne Akiko Meyers, Chick Corea, and many others.

As you can well imagine, bringing such superstar talent to Amelia Island is extremely costly. The budget for our 2019 season is close to \$500,000. Ticket sale revenues typically cover approximately 30% of our expenses, which compares very favorably to the norm for non-profit arts organizations.

The bulk of the remaining amount comes from the generous financial support of music lovers like you. It is no exaggeration to say that your Festival could not exist in its present form without your financial support. You truly do keep the music playing, and we are grateful for your contributions.

Your individual donations are augmented by a variety of other sources. Corporate support is derived from such public-spirited organizations as Florida Public Utilities, First Federal Bank, the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council, WestRock, WJCT Public Broadcasting, the Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island and the Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort. We also receive grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Rayonier Advanced Materials Foundation and Rayonier Inc.

We need your support to continue building upon our success and maintaining our position as one of the nation's foremost chamber music festivals. If you have already donated, we offer our heartfelt thanks. But if you have not already done so, we ask you to make a contribution today.

For information on how to donate, please visit www.aicmf.com or call us at 904-261-1779.



All venues for Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival concerts are handicap accessible.

CHAMBER MUSIC: A PRIMER

Chamber music, which originated in Europe in the 16th century, involves a group of 10 or fewer musicians performing as an ensemble, usually in a small indoor setting (the chamber of a nobleman in old parlance) or even outdoors. The ensemble typically consists of strings and can include some combination of woodwinds and piano or the instrument's predecessor, the harpsichord.

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival presents traditional classical chamber music performed by internationally recognized musicians. Our programs typically include works by such giants as Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Schubert, and the musical styles vary from Baroque to Romantic. However, chamber music continues to be composed today, and we present Modern and even Post-Modern genres.

At the time of its inception, chamber music often was performed by amateurs, who played together in what might be called jam sessions! Remember, what we consider today as classical was the popular music at that time. And history repeats itself as amateurs today jam in small groups to rock, jazz, country or folk.

You will hear traditional classical chamber music at the Festival, but you will also experience classically-trained artists performing modern variations on classical themes and exciting renditions of contemporary music, as well as artists from other genres such as jazz, bluegrass, country, western and folk music. We hope you also will find these eclectic additions to our traditional chamber music repertoire appealing and entertaining.



PROGRAM

CZECH MATES

Christiania Piano Quartet

David Coucheron, *violin*

Julianne Lee, *viola*

Christopher Rex, *cello*

Julie Coucheron, *piano*

Piano Quartet No. 2 in E Flat Major, Op. 87

Allegro con fuoco

Lento

Allegro moderato, grazioso

Finale. Allegro ma non troppo

ANTONIN DVORÁK

(1841-1904)

— Intermission —

Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 15

Moderato assai - Più animato

Allegro, ma no agitato

Finale. Presto

BEDRICH SMETANA

(1824-1884)



YAMAHA Grand piano generously provided by Keyboard Connection
Pianos & Organs

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Festival-favorite **Christiania Piano Quartet** is composed of cellist **Christopher Rex**, violinist **David Coucheron**, violinist/violist **Julianne Lee** and pianist **Julie Coucheron**.



Mr. Coucheron was the youngest concertmaster among any major U.S. orchestra at the time of his appointment at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 2010. He has worked with such conductors as ASO Music Director Robert Spano, Michael Tilson Thomas, Mstislav Rostropovich and Charles Dutoit. Mr. Coucheron has performed as a soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, in addition to playing solo recitals at Carnegie Hall, London's Wigmore Hall and the Kennedy Center.



Ms Lee has established a distinctive career as both a violinist and violist, appearing frequently as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player. She was assistant principal second violinist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra prior to joining the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra this season as its new principal second violinist.



Ms Coucheron, David's sister, has established an international career as a soloist and chamber musician. She has won first prize in all of the national competitions she has entered. Ms Coucheron has worked with Lazar Berman, Claude Frank, Emanuel Ax, Vladimir Feltsman, John O' Connor, Elton John and Christopher O'Riley. She has toured the world playing in such great venues as Verizon Hall, Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall.



Mr. Rex, general and artistic director of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, was principal cellist of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for 39 years before retiring in 2018. He has served in this capacity since 1979, the same year he became the first cellist ever to win the string prize in the Young Artists Competition of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Since then, he has appeared as recitalist and chamber musician across the nation. Prior to joining the Atlanta Symphony, Mr. Rex was a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy for seven seasons.



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PROGRAM NOTES

Antonin Dvorák (1841-1904)

Piano Quartet No. 2 in E Flat Major, Op. 87

In a letter written to Brahms' publisher Simrock:

"Decidedly he [Dvorák] is a very talented man.

Besides, he is poor. Please take this into consideration."

— **Johannes Brahms**

There are several famous friendships noted throughout classical music: Haydn and Mozart, Mahler and Strauss, Holst and Vaughan Williams, Copland and Bernstein, and Brahms and Dvorák.

Fortunately for Antonin Dvorák his unlikely friendship with Johannes Brahms began in 1874 when Brahms had reluctantly agreed to sit on a jury that awarded financial support within the Habsburg Empire to talented, needy composers. Brahms, who was not at all known for his encouragement of young, new talent, was said to have been "visibly overcome" by the "mastery and talent" of a young Czech composer who had submitted 2 symphonies, several overtures, and a song cycle. Brahms' support and endorsement allowed Dvorák to receive the stipend (as well as twice more in 1876 and 1877). Later in 1877, Brahms sent Dvorák's work to his personal publisher, Simrock. They not only accepted Dvorák's Moravian Duets, Op. 20 but Simrock commissioned the *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46*.

According to an article by Leon Botstein, music director of the American Symphony Orchestra, what impressed Brahms about Dvorák was "the seemingly unlimited inventiveness of Dvorák's melodic materials, his uncanny sense of time and duration, and the dazzling sense of musical line that the younger composer achieved. Brahms considered string quartets to be one of the most difficult forms of composition; he did not think well of his own efforts in this area. Though he criticized Dvorák as well, Dvorák was unique in Brahms's view for having produced worthy contributions to the genre." It was this admiration that helped to propel Dvorák's international breakthrough. At Brahms's urging critic Louis Ehlert wrote his famous critical essay in 1880 providing Dvorák with the coveted Germanic recognition needed to capture all of Europe's attention.

Not only was Brahms a mentor and friend to the young Czech composer providing advice and support but he was also Dvorák's copy editor and proofreader. The older composer did this in order to facilitate the timely publication of Dvorák's submissions to Simrock while Dvorák was touring America. Dvorák remarked that he was confounded that Brahms would

Continued on following page

“take on the very tedious job of proofreading. I don’t believe there is another musician of his stature in the whole world who would do such a thing.”

It was Brahms’ publisher Simrock that requested a new chamber work from Dvorák in 1885. Preoccupied with other projects, the now internationally acclaimed composer allowed the commission to lay dormant for four years. On several occasions Simrock wrote persuading letters: “I should like to receive a piano quartet from you at last -you promised me this a long time ago! Well? How is [it] faring?” In the summer months of 1889 while at his country residence in Vysoka the composer turned his attention to this request. The *Quartet for Piano and Strings in E-flat Major, Op. 87* was sketched out in three days. The final score was completed a few weeks later with the composer saying the “melodies just surged upon me.” In an excerpt from a letter written to his friend Alois Göbl on August 10, 1889 Dvorák wrote:

“Do you know what I’m doing? My head is full of it. If only one could write it immediately! But it’s no use, I have to go slowly, only what the hand can manage and the Lord God will grant the rest of it. Now I have again already three movements of a new quartet with piano completely ready and the final will be finished in several days. It’s going unexpectedly easily and melodies are coming to me in droves. Thanks be to God.”

Simrock published the work in 1890 and the first documented performance was in October in Frankfurt. Other performances followed in Munich, Prague, and Manchester.

Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884)

Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 15

“I am not ashamed to reply to you in my mother tongue, however imperfectly, and am glad to be able to show that my fatherland means more to me than anything else.”

— **Bedrich Smetana**

Czech musicologist Vladimir Helfert said: “Smetana is more than a mere musician: he is one of the chief builders of a modern Czech civilization, one of the chief creators of Czech culture.” Composer Franz Liszt said of him: “Here is a composer with a genuine Czech heart, an artist by the Grace of God.” Known as the father of Bohemian national music Bedrich Smetana was the first to use Bohemian folk songs as the basis for “art music.” The young Smetana was a formidable prodigy. At age five he was proficient enough to perform as a violinist in a Haydn quartet and at age six he publicly performed

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as a pianist. He began composing at age eight but did not receive any academic training until the age of nineteen. Smetana wrote to Liszt in 1848: "When I was 17 years old I did not know C-sharp from D-flat. The theory of harmony was a closed book to me. Though ignorant of this, yet I wrote music." His "music" includes 8 operas, orchestral music, chamber music and keyboard works as well as choral music and songs.

His *Trio in G Minor* was written in 1855 between September and November and is flanked on both sides by the orchestral tone poems of Nationalist-political content: *Wallenstein's Camp Op. 14* and *Haakon Jarl Op. 16*. *The Trio in G Minor* was written in memory of the composer's daughter who died from scarlet fever. Tragically, this loss was only one year after her younger sister's death from the same disease. Smetana was devastated and threw himself into his work. In a catalog of his works, he wrote: "Written in memory of my first child, *Bedriska*, who enchanted us with her extraordinary musical talent, and yet was snatched away from us by death, aged four and a half years." In one of his letters, Smetana penned these words: "The loss of my eldest daughter, that extraordinarily gifted child, inspired me to write the *Trio in G Minor* in 1855. In the winter of the same year, in December, it was performed in public in Prague, with myself at the piano, [Otto] Königlow, violin, and [Julius] Goltermann, cello. Success-nil. The critics condemned it of one accord...a year later we played it to Liszt at my home; he fell round my neck and congratulated my wife on the work."

In 1870 the composer's health began to deteriorate and by 1874 he was deaf in one ear. His E Minor String Quartet subtitled "From My Life" mimicked the permanent shrill whistling sound that he constantly heard as a result of his deafness. The last movement's coda is dominated with a sustained high note. His physical and emotional health continued to decline. His last opera *The Devil's Wall* (1882) took three years to compose. Describing his state of mind he said it was as if he was "standing under a huge waterfall." His Second String Quartet was completed in 1883 but a year later he was hospitalized in Prague. It was there his death occurred on May 12, 1884.

— Emma Mills Bledsoe 2019



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 Emma Mills Bledsoe – *In honor of Anne Coonrod and Bill Hensley*
 Sarah Borns
 Jesse Michael Bowling

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