Chamber Music Amici

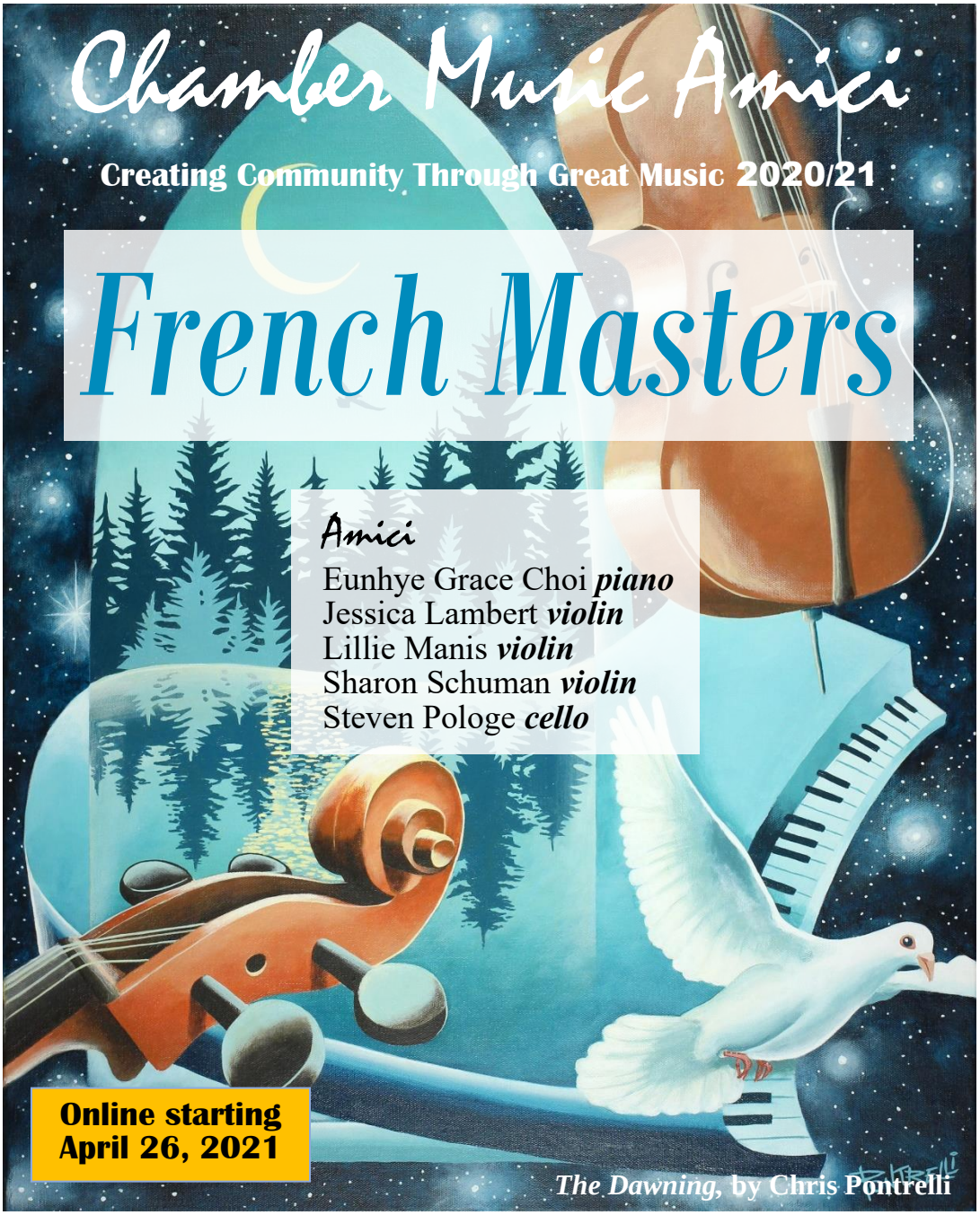
Creating Community Through Great Music 2020/21

French Masters

Amici

Eunhye Grace Choi ***piano***
Jessica Lambert ***violin***
Lillie Manis ***violin***
Sharon Schuman ***violin***
Steven Pologe ***cello***

Online starting April 26, 2021



The Dawning, by Chris Pontrelli

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Pre-Concert Talk

Abigail Fine

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Filmed and recorded in the Richard E. Wildish Community Theater in Springfield

Welcome!

I am thrilled that you are joining us for the final performance of our virtual concert series. It has been a strange and arduous journey since we began our first virtual performance last November under a multitude of challenges. However, I am deeply grateful to my colleague musicians for their resilience and perseverance that kept us inspired to play chamber music at its best. As we repeatedly played the great masterworks in the vacant hall, during recording, I could feel that our intrinsic musical communication was being propelled beyond the confines of the space. Everything, from the introspective phrases of Faure's Trio to the incendiary energy from the finale of Saint-Saëns' violin sonata, has been masterfully recorded so that it can be vividly experienced in your own home. Enjoy the concert, and I hope to see you at our inaugural outdoor concert at Mt. Pisgah Arboretum this summer.

Grace Choi Eunhye Grace Choi, Artistic Director

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Program

Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 120 **Gabriel Fauré**

I. *Allegro, ma non troppo*
II. *Andantino*
III. *Allegro vivo*

Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Lillie Manis, violin; Steven Pologe, cello

Duets for Violin & Cello, Op. 39 **Reinhold Glière**

I. *Prelude*
II. *Gavotte*
III. *Cradle Song*
IV. *Intermezzo*
V. *Impromptu*
VI. *Scherzo*

Steven Pologe, cello; Sharon Schuman, violin

Sonata for Violin & Piano No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 75 **Camille Saint-Saëns**

I. *Allegro agitato*
II. *Adagio*
III. *Allegro moderato*
IV. *Allegro molto*

Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Jessica Lambert, violin

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for over 11 seasons. We look forward to serving your desserts in seasons ahead.

Program Notes

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) was undoubtedly one of the most influential French composers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Born in Pamiers May 12, 1845, Gabriel's first "foray" into music performance involved dabbling with the harmonium at his school in Foix. In 1854 he was sent to the Ecole de Musique Classique et Religieuse (later Ecole Niedermeyer) which had recently been established in Paris. Students there were expected to become choir directors and/or organists for the church and, as a result, Fauré primarily studied plainsong, polyphonic Renaissance music, and modality but also received instruction in organ, harmony, counterpoint, fugal writing, and composition. Camille Saint-Saëns took over piano instruction when the Ecole's founder passed away in 1861 and his classes included the music of Schumann, Wagner, and Liszt, and occasionally composition as well. Fauré graduated in 1865 and began a string of religious posts as organist and choir master (a line only broken by his enlistment in the Imperial Guard during WWI) that lasted until his appointment as composition professor at the Paris Conservatoire in 1896. He went on to become its director by 1905 and counted amongst his students Ravel, Enescu, and Nadia Boulanger.

Fauré wrote the ***Piano Trio in d minor, op. 120*** in August 1922. The piece was originally conceived as a clarinet-cello-piano grouping before being reworked more traditionally. It premiered in 1923 (on his 78th birthday) at the National Music Society in Paris. Fauré had been dealing with hearing issues that initially took away his ability to pick up low-lying and high-range notes. Works from his later period show this by their predilection for textures that dominate the middle register. Sadly, by the time he wrote this piece he was completely deaf. The second movement is essentially a double Meditation bookended by a sonata form, first movement, and a brisk finale, which is basically in rondo form. His chord progressions are difficult to predict but, paradoxically, are not jarring to the ear. Fauré displays a love for octaves throughout the piece. The moments when the voices finally diverge can seem heartbreaking after having worked in tandem for such long stretches. This work was Fauré's penultimate offering and is truly a chamber music masterpiece.

Reinhold Glière (1875-1956) was born sometime in late 1874 or early 1875 in Kiev. He studied violin with Otakar Ševčík and Jan Hřímalý—whose etude books are still widely in use—as well as composition with Anton Arensky and Alexander Taneyev. Directly after graduation (1901) until 1919—save a three-year period (1905-1908) where he studied conducting in Berlin— Glière taught composition at the Gnesin Institute in Moscow, where his students included Sergei Prokofiev. From 1920-1941, he served as composition professor at his alma mater. In his lifetime he received the Order of Lenin, People's Artist of the USSR award, and the Stalin Prize. Despite that, he was conspicuously uninterested in political activities and had been criticized for that stance numerous times. After having retired some eight years earlier, he passed away in 1956 at the age of 81.

Glière's wrote *Eight Pieces for Violin & Cello, Op. 39* just after returning from Berlin and dedicated the piece to Boris Kaliushno. There is something deliciously nefarious—or at the very least, anticipatory—about the opening section, which is clearly the intent of this "Prelude." The "Gavotte" is a light-hearted dance in A major that could easily have been written during the Baroque Era. The change to A minor in the middle third draws inspiration from a time even more ancient, as the double stop writing is reminiscent of the Renaissance hurdy gurdy. There is a timeless—albeit melancholy—quality to the "Berceuse." This cradle song's melody is shouldered exclusively by the violin and set against an undulating cello accompaniment. Despite the Italianized title, the "Canzonetta" draws on the Russian Romantic tradition of his musical forefathers and is pure heart-on-the-sleeve indulgence. The "Intermezzo" is waltz-like in character and brings to mind a scene in which our heroine can't find her footing and is constantly questioning her place in the world. The "Impromptu" is angst-ridden and tortured (especially in the middle section where the mode switches to B-flat minor). The "Scherzo" movement is mostly joyful (particularly when compared to the previous) and contains a slew of double stops and lots of hemiola figures. Perhaps giving us a glimpse into this work's original motivation, the final movement (titled "Etude") is a fitting, virtuosic, and ultimately gentle ending to this musical gem.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was born October 9, 1835 in Paris and was raised by his mother and great-aunt, who were both widowed. He received piano lessons from his great-aunt and made his startling debut at the age of ten. Henceforth he would be justifiably compared to Mozart as a child prodigy. He began studying organ with François Benoist and composition/orchestration with Fromental Halévy at the Paris Conservatoire in 1848. Although he

won the *Premier Prix* in organ by 1851, he failed to acquire the coveted *Prix de Rome* for composition. He only had a short stint as a teacher—a post at Ecole Niedermeyer from 1861 to ’65 --but he could count among his students Gabriel Fauré and Eugène Gigout. A failed marriage, his great-aunt’s passing, the untimely deaths of his only two children, and his mother’s passing furthered his personal tragedies. He looked to Fauré as a target for his paternal tendencies and Fauré’s children, in particular, received the “Uncle Camille” treatment. Professionally, Saint-Saëns enjoyed a sustained period of renown as a great technician and unparalleled virtuoso.

Saint-Saëns wrote the *Sonata for Violin & Piano No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 75* in the autumn of 1885. “Allegro agitato” is a telling tempo indicator to the short opening theme for it is uneasy and almost immediately developed by the composer. The handing off of lightning quick sixteenth-notes between the two players announce the high level of virtuosity called for by the composer. The second section (“Adagio”) begins without pause (“attacca”). This leads some to question the number of movements present—two or four. The “Allegretto moderato” 3rd movement (or second?) starts off as an innocent, though lively waltz-like dance. The movement’s second theme will lull you into a state of comfort but don’t let the opening, elegant figurations fool you, there is fire to come. The “Allegro molto” section is, at times, a moto perpetuo with a plethora of sixteenth notes. Saint-Saëns masterfully varies the accompaniment here whilst playing with everything from sparse textures to furious thundering and many things in between. Finger-tangling passages and face-melting runs characterize the movement as a whole. If ever there was a justifiable moment for “guitar face” to make an appearance in the concert hall, the final minute of this work would be it.

—Dr. M. Brent Williams

Amici

Eunhye Grace Choi joined Chamber Music Amici as a core musician in 2019 and became Artistic Director in 2020. She has performed extensively throughout the United States, France, Belgium, the UK, and South Korea, and has recorded for Naxos, Emeritus, and Origin Classical. Her performances have also been broadcast on NPR's Performance Today.

A versatile keyboardist, she was harpsichord soloist for J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto cycle and collaborated with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg in Vivaldi's Four Seasons at the Eastern Music Festival. She is frequently invited as a resident pianist at competitions and conventions, including the International Clarinet Association's ClarinetFest and the Meg Quigley Vivaldi Competition and Bassoon Symposium.

Grace served as Collaborative Piano Faculty for six years at Eastern Music Festival, where she was the principal keyboardist of the Festival Orchestra with conductor Gerard Schwarz. She has also served as music faculty and collaborative pianist at The University of Oregon (2017-2018) and Tennessee Tech University (2013-2017). Here in Oregon, in addition to Amici, Grace performs regularly with the Oregon Bach Festival and Eugene Symphony.

Jessica Lambert has played with Chamber Music Amici for five years and has just completed her tenure as Artistic Director. She is a graduate of The Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Zvi Zeitlin and members of the Cleveland Quartet. Other major teachers include Alice Schoenfeld and Alexander Treger. Concertmaster of the Corvallis Symphony Orchestra since 2007, she is also the Artistic Director of the OSU Chamber Music Workshop, an intensive quartet program held in Corvallis in July.

Jessica is widely recognized as a teacher and maintains a private studio in Corvallis. Her students have won regional and national competitions and have matriculated to the nation's most prestigious conservatories and summer programs. She has played viola with the Oregon Symphony and violin with the El Paso Symphony. She was concertmaster of the El Paso Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, for which she was a featured soloist in the New Music series. A frequent guest of the Chintimini Music Festival since 2004, she performs as a soloist and chamber player throughout the Northwest.

Lillie Manis is widely recognized for her work as a Suzuki educator and is currently completing her doctorate at Teachers College, Columbia University, where her research focuses on studio teachers' holistic strategies for cultivating expressive performance in young violinists. From 2009-2020, she was a faculty member at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, where she mentored graduate violin and viola pedagogy students and served as the Assistant Director of the Community Music Institute. Lillie is currently on the faculty at the Willamette Violin Academy in Eugene.

In the first decade of her teaching career, both the members of her vibrant pre-college studio and her graduate student mentees have achieved noteworthy musical and professional success, including competition wins, full scholarships to major music schools and summer programs, and college teaching appointments. Active as a clinician, master class presenter, adjudicator, and conference presenter at both the regional and national levels, she enjoys performing chamber music alongside some of the Northwest's finest players, and recently joined the editorial committee of the American String Teacher.

Steven Pologe has performed throughout the United States, and in Italy, Sweden, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, and Canada. His CDs include quartets by William Grant Still and All That Jazz (both with the Oregon String Quartet), works by Jon Deak for solo cello and piano trio, and the piano trio of Lev Abeliovich.

Steven is professor of Cello at the University of Oregon. He has performed frequently with the Oregon Bach Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Rome Festival Orchestra, and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival. In 2006, Pologe and a colleague in neuroscience won a grant from the organization behind the coveted Grammy awards, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. The award supported his research and publications documenting the precise movements of string players. Prior to moving to Oregon, Pologe was principal cellist with the Honolulu Symphony and faculty member at the University of Hawaii. To keep up with all Steven's activities, find him here, on his website, www.stevenpologe-cello.com/.

Sharon Schuman is co-founder of Chamber Music Amici and served as Artistic Director for the first six years. As a child, she studied violin with Carol Weston, a student of Leopold Auer. After receiving a summer grant to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, she won a full scholarship in music to Stanford University, where she performed on a resident Strad. After she graduated with a degree in English, she earned a Ph.D. in that discipline at the University of Chicago.

Sharon has performed in a master class for Vladimir Spivakov and as a concerto soloist with Oregon Mozart Players and the Salem Chamber Orchestra. She has also performed with the Oregon Bach Festival and Eugene Symphony Orchestra, and she has served as concertmaster for Eugene Opera, Eugene Ballet, Eugene Concert Choir, and Oregon Mozart Players. She is now Assistant Concertmaster of the Eugene Opera Orchestra. Her book, *Freedom and Dialogue in a Polarized World* (U. Delaware, 2014), was published in paperback in 2016.

Guest speaker

Abigail Fine Abigail Fine is a music historian specializing in nineteenth-century music culture.

She received her PhD from the University of Chicago in 2017. Prior to her appointment at UO in 2019, she served on the faculty at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. She teaches survey courses in nineteenth- and twentieth-century music and opera history, as well as cultural-historical seminars on material studies, canon-formation, the ethics of staging, and celebrity.

Fine's research focuses on reception and materiality in Germany and Austria, with a current monograph project that explores art-religion in practice, as late nineteenth-century devotees coveted the earthly traces of composers (relics, shrines, pilgrimage sites) to cultivate new forms of intimacy with the absent celebrity body. Fine is the author of "Beethoven's Mask and the Physiognomy of Late Style" in the journal *19th-Century Music*. Further article projects revolve around Beethoven's eccentricity read through a social history of manners, kitsch in the musical Albumblatt, and art-religion in the writings of Edgar Zilsel.

Featured Artist **Chris Pontrelli**, ***The Dawning***

"Music was my first love. I was playing guitar and performing in bands long before I ever picked up a paintbrush. As a boy and young man, music was my driving force. As I got older, I felt something was missing from my creative endeavors. It was tangibility. All those years of making music and yet I had nothing concrete to show for it. I started painting. Although I had no formal training, I was always sketching and thinking visually. Often times when I played or listened to music, I would see colors and patterns and even imagined entire scenes. Like many artists and musicians throughout history, I'm fascinated by the comparison of the two genres – hearing colors, painting sounds? Artists deal with constriction of space and musicians are limited by time."

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Part II – 2020-2021

White Oak Pavilion at Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Tuesday, June 22 • Thursday, June 24

Chamber Voices

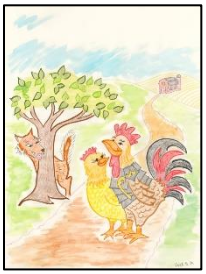
Guillaume Lekeu Pleinte d'Andromeda
Ernest Chausson Chanson Perpetuelle, Op. 37
Virgil Thomson Stabat Mater
John Corigliano Snapshot, Circa 1909
Ildebrando Pizzetti Tre Canzone

Eunhye Grace Choi ***piano***, Lillie Manis ***viola***, Steven Pologe ***cello***, Sharon Schuman ***violin***

Guests Tyler Abbott ***bass***, Pilar Bradshaw ***violin***, Erika Rauer ***soprano***

Tuesday, August 31 • Wednesday, September 1

Once Upon a Time



Colin Pip Dixon Chaucer's *The Rooster and the Fox*, Sextet for Bassoon, Piano, String Quartet & Narrator
Ernst von Dohnanyi Piano Quintet No. 2 in E-flat Minor, Op. 26

Amici Steven Pologe ***cello***, Sharon Schuman ***violin***
Guests MacIntyer Dixon ***narrator***, Nathalie Fortin ***piano***, Hal Grossman ***violin***, Steve Vacchi ***bassoon***

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