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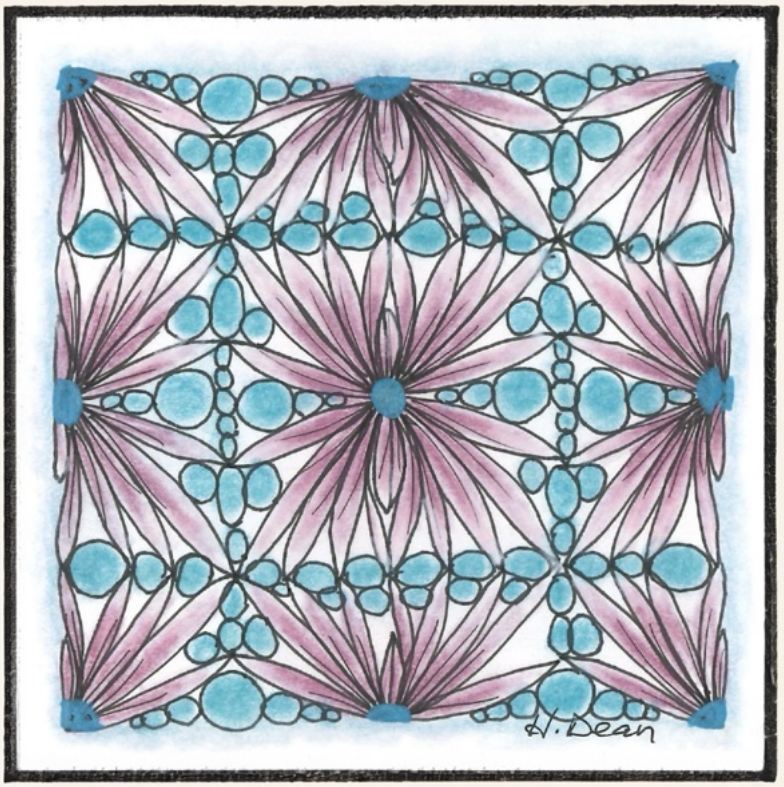
Chamber Music Amici

MASTER WORKS



Artwork by Hannah Dean
2025-2026 Season Artist

June 14, 2026 • 3:00 pm
June 15, 2026 • 7:30 pm

Richard E. Wildish Community Theater

Welcome, friends of Amici!

The first time I heard Ravel's Piano Trio performed by the Beaux Arts Trio was during my undergraduate years, and I could not stop replaying the CD. More accurately, I was deeply drawn to the exotic character of the second movement.

It was such an emotional experience that I still cannot fully explain — so vivid and colorful that I could almost see works of art floating in the air as the musical lines spread through my mind. The music gave me an overwhelming yet marvelous sense of the power of the sound of art.

Ravel's one and only Piano Trio, paired with a trio by Mozart, who had already demonstrated a masterful command of the genre, creates a program that I believe will offer not only listening pleasure, but also inspire you to explore more of the piano trio repertoire and the works of these remarkable composers.

Thank you for joining Chamber Music Amici throughout our 17th season. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support and love for chamber music. We hope you enjoy this season finale performance.

Eunhye Grace Choi, Artistic Director

Join us on the stage for treats after the concert.

Chamber Music Amici

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MASTER WORKS

Piano Trio No. 5 in C Major, K. 548 — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

I. Allegro
II. Andante Cantabile
III. Allegro

Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Tomás Cotik, violin; Steven Pologe, cello

Piano Trio in A Minor, M. 67 — Maurice Ravel

I. Modéré
II. Pantoum. Assez vif
III. Passacaille. Très large
IV. Final. Animé

Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Tomás Cotik, violin; Steven Pologe, cello

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We thank Ray and Cathie Staton for sponsoring this concert.

Today's concert is also made possible in part by the generous support of these sponsors. Thank you!

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Musicians

Eunhye Grace Choi, piano

Korean pianist Eunhye Grace Choi has been praised for her “nice touch and excellent technique” (American Record Guide) and “meticulous attention to detail” (Fanfare). Grace has recorded extensively for Naxos, MSR, Albany, Emeritus, and Origin Classical. As a sought-after collaborative pianist and chamber musician, she regularly performs with musicians and soloists from major symphony orchestras, including Cleveland, Philadelphia, Dallas, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Paul, and San Francisco Symphony, as well as many of the world’s most prestigious music institutions and conservatories. Grace served as Collaborative Piano Faculty for six years at Eastern Music Festival. She has also served as music faculty and collaborative pianist at Tennessee Tech University (2013–2017). Grace is Artistic Director of Chamber Music Amici as well as The Classical on Broadway Series in Eugene, Oregon.

Tomás Cotik, violin

Tomás is internationally recognized as a soloist, chamber musician, and professor. A highly sought-after recording artist, he has released 20 albums for Naxos and Centaur Records, accumulating over 6 million streams. Fanfare Magazine praises him, writing: “Cotik never indulges in violinistic brilliance at the expense of music, but he sounds consistently brilliant nevertheless.” Tomás’ thoughtful research on historical performance and in-depth interpretations have repeatedly earned him favorable comparisons to some of the world’s most famous musicians. As Professor of Violin at Portland State University, Tomás has received numerous prestigious awards, including First Prize in The American Prize for String Performance and the Dean’s Council Award for Research. His discography includes complete works by Bach, Telemann, Mozart, and Schubert, as well as his own arrangements of music by his countryman Astor Piazzolla.

Steven Pologe, cello

Steven Pologe has performed throughout the United States and in Italy, Sweden, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, and Canada. His recordings include All That Jazz and quartets by William Grant Still with the Oregon String Quartet, as well as works by Jon Deak and Lev Abeliovich. He is Professor of Cello at the University of Oregon and has appeared with the Oregon Bach Festival, Aspen Music Festival, and more. In 2006, he received a grant from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences to support research on string player movement. He was formerly principal cellist with the Honolulu Symphony.

This season is dedicated to

Sharon Johnson Schuman (1946-2025)

Co-Founder of Chamber Music Amici

Sharon was a visionary musician, educator, and community leader whose joyful spirit and fearless creativity helped shape the very heart of Amici. Her passion for making chamber music accessible, welcoming, and deeply personal trans-formed the concert experience for audiences of all ages.

Sharon touched countless lives through her performances, mentorship, and civic engagement. Chamber Music Amici honors her extraordinary legacy and the enduring community she helped to build. Sharon's music lives on in all of us.

Program Notes by Dr. Terry McQuilkin

In this final program of our 2025-26 Wildish Theater series, Chamber Music Amici presents two masterpieces for the combination of violin, cello and piano. We'll first hear Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Trio in C major, K. 548, composed in 1788. It is a first-generation example of a true piano trio – a piece in which each of the three instruments has a distinctive voice. Then we'll hear how Maurice Ravel, a century and a quarter later, used the intimate chamber music medium to produce dazzling orchestral timbres in his Piano Trio.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Piano Trio in C major, K. 548

Emerging later than the string quartet, the piano trio is a product of the First Viennese School. The genre's progenitor is not the Baroque trio sonata (which featured two high instruments and basso continuo) but the early-classical keyboard sonata. Such sonatas, usually crafted to meet the needs and limitations of amateur musicians, were often published with optional parts for violin and cello: The violin part might add extra texture or interesting but nonessential counterpoint to the keyboard melody line, while the cello would mostly double the bass line. These sonatas would sound complete with the harpsichord or fortepiano alone. Mozart himself, at the age of eight, wrote a set of keyboard sonatas with optional violin and cello parts provided.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, composers began writing trios in which the violin and cello were no longer optional but essential instruments, with the word "trio," rather than "sonata" typically appearing on the printed music. Piano trios by Johann Baptist Wanhal, Ignaz Pleyel and others sold very well. These works were not intended for the concert hall, but for domestic use; they were generally light in character, with modest technical demands. The piano dominated, with the violin and cello in supporting roles.

Mozart produced six works for piano trio: one in 1776 (the Divertimento, K. 254), two in 1786, and three during his phenomenally productive summer of 1778, including the C-major trio that we hear today. (That summer, the composer also penned his last, and greatest, three symphonies). In Mozart's five "mature" piano trios, the piano retains its centrality in the ensemble, but the violin and the cello are each assigned a distinct musical line.

The Piano Trio in C major, K. 548 begins with a rising unison figure built on a C major chord, a gesture rather similar to the bugle call-like motive in Figaro's aria, "Non più andrai" from *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Comparisons can also be made with the composer's "Jupiter" Symphony, which also begins with a clarion call of sorts. After that opening statement, the piano introduces the main subject, and the violin soon joins in. The movement's development, which begins in G minor, is marked by anguished chromaticism and intricate counterpoint.

The lyrical F-major second movement, in 3/4 time, is marked "Andante cantabile" (another parallel with the "Jupiter" Symphony). Here the cello writing is more liberated from the piano's left-hand line than it is in any of Mozart's earlier piano trios. The instrument delivers several expressive opera-like passages, sometimes duetting with the violin.

The finale, a jaunty rondo in 6/8 meter, exudes the joie de vivre one hears in the rondos of the composer's horn concertos. An episode in C minor leads into a mini-development, and when the refrain theme returns, it is ornamented with the pianist's grace notes and the violinist's florid contrapuntal lines.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937): Piano Trio

In July 1914, Maurice Ravel was enjoying the beach and salty air at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, a coastal town not far from his birthplace in France's Basque region, where he often spent the summer months. It was an extraordinarily happy month for him. In his letters, he spoke of swimming, sunbathing and relaxing with friends. The composer had intended to continue work on his piano trio – he'd finished the first movement in March – but with plenty to distract him, he made only modest progress.

The news that Archduke Francis Ferdinand heir presumptive to the Austrian throne, had been assassinated a few days before the beaches opened for the season does not seem to have troubled Ravel greatly. That all changed when Germany declared war on France on August 3. Reports of German advancement into France and Belgium caused him considerable anguish. Ravel made attempts to join the military, but due to his slight stature and a heart condition, he was rejected repeatedly. Instead, he volunteered to attend to wounded soldiers in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, all the while attempting to leverage any connections that he had to find a way to enlist.

Meanwhile, he felt an intense urgency to complete the Piano Trio that he'd begun

a half year earlier. Writing to his friend Alexis Roland-Manuel on September 26, he declared that he "did five months' work in five weeks: I wanted to finish my trio before enlisting." (In March of the following year, Ravel eventually did find a way to enlist, serving as a truck driver.) The first performance of the Trio took place in January 1915, under the aegis of the Societé musicale indépendante. It was published later that year.

The piano opens the work with a theme in the Dorian mode that moves in parallel triads over a pedal tone, a melody that is, according to Ravel, "Basque in color." One could argue that the whole movement has a Basque tincture: The meter is 8/8 (3+2+3) throughout, suggestive of the Basque *zortzico,* and the gentle second theme is also in Dorian. Calm at times, tempestuous at others, the movement has no fewer than ten separate tempo changes.

The second movement, structured in ABA form, is titled "Pantoum" and unlike the first movement, its rapid tempo remains unchanged throughout. The title comes from a Malaysian poetic form in which two distinct themes are expressed in alternation. Thus, two poems result, interwoven with one another. Ravel met the challenge of adapting this literary form to wordless music by alternating two musical ideas: The first is a fluttering staccato theme, the second a dancelike melody with the flavor of Spain. This alternation continues even into the middle section, in which a richly harmonized melody in longer note values (introduced by the piano) overlays the two scherzo-like themes.

Perhaps as a nod to his counterpoint teacher (the work's dedicatee), André Gédalge, Ravel used an old contrapuntal form, the passacaglia, as the structure for the third movement. The piano introduces the somber theme in its low register, and from there, the musical material builds in pitch, volume and intensity. The passacaglia ends much as it had begun, with the piano returning to its lowest register to recapitulate the ostinato line.

Like the first movement, the *Final* is cast in a loose sonata form, and it is highly episodic. Two themes are developed, the first one lyrical and the second built on thick chords. Ravel's colorful instrumental writing throughout the Trio suggests an orchestral conception, and nowhere is this truer than in this movement, where harmonics, trills and other effects are employed to maximum effect. As the movement progresses, the spirit becomes more frenzied, leading to an exhilarating conclusion.

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We welcome **Cindy Ingram**, our **2026-27 Art Commission Winner.**

A longtime leader in Eugene's arts community and the recent recipient of the "Hult Center Community Award" at the 2026 Eugene Mayor's Art Show, Cindy has created new art works for Amici to use in our publications.

Concert I - Shall we Dance: Violin, Saxophone, and Piano
with Guest Artist Idit Shner, Saxophone
Tuesday, September 1, 6:45 pm

Concert II - Schubertiade: Piano Trio and Lieder by Schubert
with Guest Artist Harry Baechtel, Baritone
Wednesday, September 2, 6:45 pm

Chamber Music Amici

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