

Monday, May 1, 2023 • 7:30 PM

Westminster Hall at Westminster Presbyterian Church

ACCORDO

David Bowlin, violin • Maiya Papach, viola
Tony Ross, cello • Tim Lovelace, piano

Tocar, for Violin and Piano (2010)

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952)

Bowlin, Lovelace

String Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 3 (1792)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Allegro con brio

Andante

Minuet. Allegretto

Adagio

Minuet. Moderato

Finale. Allegro

Bowlin, Papach, Ross

Intermission

Piano Quartet No. 1, Op. 15 (1876–79)

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Allegro molto moderato

Scherzo: Allegro vivo

Adagio

Allegro molto

Bowlin, Papach, Ross, Lovelace

PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Tocar*, for Violin and Piano (2010)*Kaija Saariaho**

(b. Helsinki, Finland, 1952)

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952) is a prominent member of a group of Finnish composers and performers who are now, in mid-career, making a worldwide impact. Currently living in Paris, Saariaho's music is known for its characteristically luxuriant and mysterious textures, often created by combining live music and electronics. Although much of her catalogue comprises chamber works, from the mid-1990's she has turned increasingly to larger forces and broader structures, notably operas that have been staged at the Metropolitan Opera and Santa Fe Opera. "Only The Sound Remains", her most recent opera in collaboration with Director Peter Sellars, was premiered in Amsterdam in 2016.

According to an NPR interview, as a youngster, Kaija Saariaho laid down in bed at night and couldn't stop the music churning in her head. She'd ask her mother to "turn off" the pillow, thinking the sounds were emanating from there, but this music was her own invention, an early mark of a teeming imagination. She decided early on that life would be meaningless if she didn't pursue composing.

Saariaho has often talked about having a specific kind of *synesthesia*, an attribute that involves all of the senses, saying:

"... the visual and the musical world are one to me ... Different senses, shades of color, or textures and tones of light, even fragrances and sounds blend in my mind. They form a complete world in itself."

During her career, Saariaho has received commissions from Lincoln Center, the Kronos Quartet, Ensemble Intercontemporain, the BBC, the New York Philharmonic, the Salzburg Music Festival, the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, and the Finnish National Opera, among others.



Kaija Saariaho
© Maarit Kytöharju

On *Tocar*, for Violin & Piano:

"One of my first ideas for *Tocar* (Spanish for "to touch, to play") about the encounters of two instruments as different as the violin and the piano, was the question: how could they touch each other?"

"Whilst composing music, I always imagine the instrumentalist's fingers and their sensitivity. The violin sounds are created by the collaboration between the left hand, and the bow controlled by the right hand. On the piano, the pianist should be extremely precise in order to control the moment when the fingers touch the keys, afterwards the sounds can be colored only by the pedals. In spite of such different mechanisms, both instruments also have some common points, purely musical, noticeably they share some of the same register."

"In *Tocar*, both instruments move forward independently but also keep an eye on each other. I imagine a magnetism becoming stronger and stronger—the piano part becomes more mobile—which draws the violin texture towards the piano writing culminating in an encounter in unison. After this short moment of symbiosis, the violin line is released from the measured piano motion, continuing its own life outside the laws of gravity."

Tocar was commissioned by the International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition and was premiered in 2010.

String Trio in E-flat Major, Op.3 (1792)

Ludwig van Beethoven

(b. Bonn, 1770; d. Vienna, 1827)

Beethoven was 24 when he wrote the String Trio Op. 3, about two years into his ‘Viennese’ career, having moved from his provincial hometown of Bonn. String chamber music was in demand by the growing market of eager amateur players, and Beethoven, keen to get noticed and needing the income, was happy to oblige. While he certainly had some experience playing both violin and viola, by most accounts, he was undeniably mediocre, on a good day. Thankfully, he played a bit of piano too.

By now, he must have at least thought about writing string quartets, as familiar as he would have been with the hugely popular quartets by Haydn and Mozart. This wouldn’t happen for another three years (Op. 18), but his writing in this trio foreshadows many of the traits that emerge in his later string chamber music.

The ghost of Mozart lingers over Beethoven’s Op. 3 String Trio, because Op. 3 follows the model of Mozart’s famous Divertimento for String Trio (K. 563) from a decade earlier, also set in E-flat major. Mozart had died the year before Beethoven arrived in Bonn, making this String Trio a clear homage to Wolfgang. Consider that they share the same overall key of E-flat major and unfold in the same symmetrical six-movement plan:

- Fast movement
- Slow movement
- Dance movement I (minuet/trio)
- Slow Movement
- Dance movement II (minuet/trio)
- Fast Movement

Divertimentos of the Mozartian era were intended to be light entertainment works suitable for background music at court events. But Beethoven’s Op. 3 trio contains more serious stuff—music that demands the audience’s attention in return for higher rewards.



Color Lithograph of Ludwig van Beethoven
by Carl Schweninger the Younger (mid-1800s)

For example, the opening of the first movement removes any expectation that we that we might be listening to predictable background music. The violin’s bold opening statement snaps to life, supported by exuberant syncopations, before the music breaks off abruptly into silence. The music regathers itself and tries once again to get organized, as if the players are composing things on the spot. Far from being musical wallpaper, this music requires foreground attention, as it is full of the dramatic and revolutionary music we’ve come to expect from Beethoven.

A small digression here about the string trio genre writ large: String players will acknowledge that all trios—by any composer—are more difficult to play than quartets or larger ensembles in one crucial respect: they lack the more comfortable four-part harmony and richer sonority of a larger group. Playing trios feels naked by comparison, as there is simply nowhere to hide (and why there are no Barbershop Trios). To achieve “more from less”, composers of trios often add more chords (double-stopping) to try and replicate four-part harmony, resulting in individual parts that are technically very demanding, as is the case here.

A word about Beethoven’s choice of key: E-flat major. This not only matched Mozart’s example, but it was a key he often used when he had something special to say. For example, other important works in E-flat include the *Eroica* Symphony (#3), the Piano Concerto #5 (“Emperor”), and the String Quartet Op. 74 (“Harp”) among many others.

This trio is the first of five that Beethoven wrote—all early works, composed before any quartets, symphonies, or concertos—but they already show a composer who has outgrown his classical period clothes and is eager to try on new outfits.

Piano Quartet No. 1, Op. 15 (1876–79)**Gabriel Fauré**

(b. Pamiers, France, 1845; d. Paris, 1924)

“Perhaps no other composer has been so generally ignored outside his own country, while at the same time enjoying an unquestionably eminent reputation at home.”

— A young Aaron Copland, in 1924 while living in Paris, referring to Gabriel Fauré in the year of his death.

When talking about the greatest composers of the Romantic era, Fauré’s name isn’t likely to spring to mind. Yet audiences always respond to his music because Fauré presents such a complete package that satisfies completely. If one of the indicators of greatness is that a composer has his own individual sound, then Fauré belongs in the club. Perhaps he gets overlooked because of his small output — he wrote just six major works of chamber music — or maybe he gets slighted because he’s just a little too French (translation: *not* German. There was after all, a major bias in favor of composers with Austrian/German pedigrees.) Fauré’s music can be paradoxically, both transparent and very powerful, full of soaring, tuneful melodies. His works always have a dignified elegance, and in a way that is uniquely French, can sound intimate, while remaining aloof.

The backstory of this piano quartet begins with a tale of unrequited love. In 1872, Fauré’s teacher and friend Camille Saint-Saëns introduced him to a wealthy Paris family that was prominent in the world of French Grand opera. They had a famously gorgeous daughter Marianne, considered one of the most



Photo of Gabriel Fauré by De Jongh, Lausanne.

Date of publication: 1907

eligible bachelorettes in all of Paris. Before long, the 27-year-old Fauré was a regular visitor to their home, and they became an item. After a five-year courtship they finally married, but in just months, things unraveled, beginning with a proverbial “Dear Gabe” letter. Fauré was despondent and heartsick, literally a basket case for months. (In hindsight, she might have done him a huge favor, in that Marianne’s mother was always pressuring Fauré to write for the Grand Opera, a terrible idea that would surely have been a disaster for him.)

Here is the silver lining: when Fauré began composing again, it was to work out his grief for Marianne through this Piano Quartet, which today is his most popular work. Despite its almost instant popularity, his publisher didn’t pay him one dime for it.

There are two highlights worth noting, both in the middle movements. First, if there is such a thing as 19th century “cool” music, it’s the *Scherzo*. Imagine it is the soundtrack to an elegant and dapper boulevardier, strolling down a Parisian Street, circa 1890. Secondly, the *Largo*—the emotional centerpiece of the entire quartet—is quite intense and demands a lot of attention from the listener. It’s easy to imagine Fauré working out his anguish over losing Marianne here. It is alternately serene, then powerful and full of despair. Notice how several times, the long, drawn-out melody is played in unison by the string players, a technique that reinforces the intensity of the gesture. The last movement races to the finish in a breathless, brilliant, tour-de-force that is nonetheless always elegant, always “French.”

Program notes ©2023 by Michael Adams

David Bowlin has led a wide-ranging career as a both a soloist and chamber musician, garnering critical acclaim for his performances of a broad repertoire. First prize winner of the Washington International Competition, he has performed as a soloist across the United States, Europe, and Asia. Among his dozens of premieres are violin concerti written for him by Marcos Balter, Alexandra Hermentin, and Donald Crockett, with performances at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, and at the Aspen Music Festival.

Bowlin is a member of the Oberlin Trio and the Bowlin-Cho Duo. He is also a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble and was formerly of the Naumburg award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players. Chamber music collaborations include performances as a guest with the Juilliard Quartet, with pianists Mitsuko Uchida, Richard Goode, Robert McDonald, Jonathan Biss, and Jeremy Denk, and with members of the Emerson and Brentano quartets. He has made several tours with Musicians from Marlboro and has been a guest artist with many organizations, including the Banff Centre, the Boston Chamber Music Society, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, ChamberFest Cleveland, Chamber Music Chicago, the Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival, the Four Seasons festival, Ojai, and SongFest at the Colburn School. He has performed as guest concertmaster with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the IRIS Orchestra, the Marlboro Festival Orchestra, and as guest principal with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Bowlin's solo and chamber music recordings can be found on the Naxos, Bridge, New Focus, Nonesuch, Arsis, Mode, Tundra, Austrian National Radio, and Oberlin Music labels, with further recording credits including work with Chick Corea for his album "The Continents" and a number of tracks with Lenny Kravitz.

Bowlin joined the Oberlin Conservatory faculty in 2007 and currently serves as Professor of Violin and Chair of String Studies. In the summer he teaches on the faculties of the Kneisel Chamber Music Festival and has been on the faculty at the Bowdoin International Music Festival, ARIA, and at the Banff Centre. Former students have won positions with the Chicago Lyric Opera, the Milwaukee Symphony, the Berlin Radio Symphony, Ensemble Modern, the Komische Oper Berlin, the San Diego Symphony, and the New World Symphony, and Orchestra NOW, among others.

Bowlin is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, The Juilliard School, and Stony Brook University, where he studied with Pamela Frank, Ronald Copes, Philip Setzer, Ani Kavafian, and Roland and Almita Vamos.

Maiya Papach is the principal violist of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. A member of the orchestra since 2008, she has made solo appearances with the SPCO in Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with concertmaster Steven Copes, solo directed Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae* and as soloist in Woolrich's *Ulysses Awakes*.

Papach has made frequent national and international appearances as a chamber musician, with a versatile profile in her performances of both traditional and contemporary repertoire. She is a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), with whom she has performed frequently at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, New York's Le Poisson Rouge, Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and dozens of experimental venues. She has toured extensively in the former Soviet Union with the Da Capo Chamber Players, across North America with Musicians from Marlboro, and has made appearances at Prussia Cove (UK), the Boston Chamber Music Society, the Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival, the Chattanooga Chamber Music Festival and Chamber Music Quad Cities. She is also currently a member of Accordo, a Twin Cities-based chamber music group.

Papach is a 2013 recipient of the McKnight Fellowship for Performing Musicians administered by the MacPhail Center for Music. Through this fellowship and in collaboration with ICE, she co-commissioned a viola concerto by Anthony Cheung, performed at the Mostly Mozart Festival to critical acclaim by the New York Times. She is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory and the Juilliard School, and her principal teachers include Roland Vamos, Karen Tuttle, Benny Kim and Hsin-Yun Huang. She performs on a 19th century Turinese viola by Annibale Fagnola.

Principal Cello **Anthony Ross** joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 1988 and assumed the principal cello post in 1991. He has been a soloist many times with the Orchestra, performing concertos by Schumann, Dvořák, Victor Herbert, James MacMillan, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Bloch and Shostakovich, as well as many chamber works.

In recent seasons Ross has performed Prokofiev's Sinfonia concertante for Cello and Orchestra, the Walton Cello Concerto and the Brahms Double Concerto, the latter alongside former First Associate Concertmaster Sarah Kwak. In April 2014 he was soloist in performances of Eric Whitacre's *The River Cam*, with the composer conducting. At Sommerfest 2014 he performed Prokofiev's Sonata for Cello and Piano with Sommerfest Artistic Director Andrew Litton.

Before joining the Minnesota Orchestra, Ross was principal cello of the Rochester Philharmonic. Away from

Orchestra Hall, he is active as a chamber musician, festival performer and educator. He is a member of *Accordo*, a chamber group made up of principal string players from the Minnesota Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. He also performs with the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota. He has appeared in the Mostly Mozart, Music in the Vineyards, Cactus Pear (San Antonio), Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society (Madison) and Orcas Island festivals, and has performed on stages from Pensacola, Florida, to Rhodes, Greece. He has taught at the Eastman School of Music, the Aspen Festival, the Grand Teton orchestra seminar and Madeline Island Chamber Music

Head of the Collaborative Piano program at the University of Minnesota, pianist and conductor **Timothy Lovelace** has performed on four continents and has been featured at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, New York's Merkin Concert Hall, Philadelphia's Trinity Center, Columbia University's Miller Theatre, Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts and on chamber music series sponsored by the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Minnesota, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. The roster of internationally-known artists with whom Lovelace has appeared includes Miriam Fried, Alban Gerhardt, Nobuko Imai, Robert Mann, Charles Neidich, Paul Neubauer, Ayano Ninomiya, Paquito D'Rivera, and Dawn Upshaw. He has also concertized with the Bergen Woodwind Quintet and the Pacifica String Quartet. As a soloist, he performed Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques* on subscription series concerts of the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vänskä.

For thirteen years, Lovelace was a staff pianist at the Ravinia Festival's Steans Institute, where he played in the classes of Barbara Bonney, Christoph Eschenbach, Thomas Hampson, Christa Ludwig and Yo-Yo Ma, among others. Other professional staff pianist engagements include two International Double Reed Society conferences, two International Viola Congresses, the ClarinetFest of The International Clarinet Association, and The Wideman International Piano Competition.

A proponent of new music, Lovelace has performed under the supervision of composers Elliott Carter, John Corigliano, Steve Heitzeg, Andrew Imbrie, Leon Kirchner, Libby Larsen, Lowell Liebermann, Thea Musgrave, Gunther Schuller, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, David Evan Thomas, Dan Welcher, and Judith Zaimont, and he presented the world premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's *Third World*.

"The superb collaborations of pianist Timothy Lovelace can't be understated," wrote Gramophone magazine in praise of *Forgotten Romance*, one of two Lovelace recordings on the Albany label. *The American Record*

Guide declared his performance of Loeffler's Rhapsodies on the Boston Records CD ...is but a dream "the very best I have ever heard. Anyone wanting a definitive modern recording of this work need look no further." Lovelace has received similarly positive reviews in recent recordings on the Blue Griffin and MSR labels.

As a conductor, Lovelace has led numerous operatic and symphonic ensembles. At the University of Minnesota, he has conducted productions of *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Suor Angelica*, and *La Voix humaine*.

Timothy Lovelace holds the Ethel Alice Hitchcock Chair in Collaborative Piano and Coaching at the University of Minnesota. He previously taught at The University of Texas at Austin, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, the Green Lake Chamber Music Camp, and The Madeline Island Music Camp. His principal teachers were Pat Curtis, Harold Evans, Clifford Herzer, Gilbert Kalish, Donna Loewy, and Frank Weinstock. He studied at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Stony Brook University, and the Aspen and Eastern Music Festivals.

Remaining ACCORDO Concerts

Tuesday, May 2 • 7:30 PM
Icehouse MPLS

Monday, June 5 • 7:30 PM
Westminster Hall

Tuesday, June 6 • 7:30 PM
Icehouse MPLS

For more information about *Accordo* and upcoming concerts, please visit schubert.org/accordo



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