



*String Theory*  
AT THE HUNTER

---

SEASON  
XVII

---

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
LEE UNIVERSITY AND  
THE HUNTER MUSEUM  
OF AMERICAN ART

TWENTY 25  
26

---



# WELCOME to String Theory Season Seventeen! XVII

Dear Friends,

Welcome to **Season Seventeen** of String Theory—a celebration and a homecoming! This season, as we continue to present our signature concerts featuring extraordinary artists and cherished masterpieces, we also celebrate the musical collaborations and meaningful connections that make our community so vibrant and unique!

The **Chien-Kim-Watkins Trio** - violinist, **Soovin Kim**, cellist **Paul Watkins** and pianist, **Gloria Chien** will open our season with a riveting program of Liszt/ Saint-Saëns' evocative *Orpheus* and Dvořák's impassioned Piano Trio in F Minor.

During Thanksgiving week, flutist **Tara Helen O'Connor** returns with guitarist **Jason Vieaux** for a vibrant program including Leclair's Lyrical Sonata, Schocker's *Mysterious Barcodes*, Ravel's exotic *Piece en Forme de Habanera*, and the Argentinean rhythms of José Luis Merlin and Astor Piazzolla.

Beloved clarinetist **Anthony McGill** joins Gloria for a richly expressive evening in January featuring both of Brahms's Clarinet Sonatas. These masterworks, cornerstones of the clarinet repertoire, offer an intimate exploration of Brahms's emotional depth.

Luminous pianist **Anne-Marie McDermott** brings her **SPA Trio** with soprano, **Susanna Phillips** and violist **Paul Neubauer** to Chattanooga in February for a captivating program, highlighting Mendelssohn's concert aria *Infelice*, Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, Clara Schumann's *Nocturne* for solo piano, and a tapestry of Italian serenades by Tosti, Mascheroni, Braga, and de Curtis.

Renowned cellist **Gary Hoffman** makes his notable String Theory debut in March, joining charismatic violinist **Sasha Saitkovetsky**, violist **Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt**, and Gloria for a soulful pairing of Bloch's *From Jewish Life* and Brahms's Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major - one of Brahms's most profound, tender, and expansive masterworks.

We close our season with a thrilling celebration of strings! Violinists **Benjamin Beilman**, **Erin Keefe**, **Alexi Kenney**, **Arnaud Sussmann**, violists **Misha Amory**, **Nicholas Cords**, and cellists **Nina Lee**, **Edward Arron** will unite for an electrifying finale, which features Dvořák's nostalgic *Terzetto*, Shostakovich's fiery *Two Pieces for String Octet* and Mendelssohn's exuberant Octet.

String Theory Season Seventeen is a celebration of world-class artistry and a reminder of the enduring friendships that make this series so deeply treasured. Whether you are joining us for the first time or the seventeenth, we welcome you back to the heart of String Theory!

With much gratitude and anticipation,



*Gloria*  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,  
STRING THEORY AT THE HUNTER

## SEASON 17 concert dates

### Tuesday Evenings at 6:30 pm

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2025**  
**CHIEN-KIM-WATKINS TRIO**  
SOOVIN KIM  
PAUL WATKINS  
GLORIA CHIEN

**NOVEMBER 25, 2025**  
**TARA HELEN O'CONNOR**  
JASON VIEAUX

**JANUARY 20, 2026**  
**ANTHONY MCGILL**  
GLORIA CHIEN

**FEBRUARY 3, 2026**  
**SPA TRIO:**  
SUSANNA PHILLIPS  
PAUL NEUBAUER  
ANNE-MARIE MCDERMOTT

**MARCH 10, 2026**  
**ALEXANDER SITKOVETSKY**  
MILENA PAJARO-VAN DE STADT  
GARY HOFFMAN  
GLORIA CHIEN

**APRIL 14, 2026**  
**BENJAMIN BEILMAN**  
ERIN KEEFE  
ALEXI KENNEY  
ARNAUD SUSSMANN  
MISHA AMORY  
NICHOLAS CORDS  
NINA LEE  
EDWARD ARRON



### Pregame with Bob

**5:45PM**  
**ON SELECT DATES**

Join us for a pre-concert exploration with Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra's Music Director Emeritus, Bob Bernhardt, as he dives into the evening's program for an in-depth look at the featured masterworks!



Broadcasts made possible by our Platinum Media Sponsor, WSMC 90.5 FM, allow us to share String Theory performances across the Tennessee Valley and into neighboring states





23<sup>SEPT</sup>

DVOŘÁK & ORPHEUS



*Soovin Kim* VIOLIN  
*Paul Watkins* CELLO  
*Gloria Chien* PIANO

LISZT  
*Orpheus*, S98/R415

DVOŘÁK  
Piano Trio in F Minor, Op.65

SUPPORT FOR THIS CONCERT WAS  
GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY

JOHNNY & MAJORS  
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

*Johnny Majors*



Our Season Seventeen opens with a joyful reunion: the return of the powerhouse **Chien-Kim-Watkins Trio**, featuring Artistic Director **Gloria Chien**, violinist **Soovin Kim**, and cellist **Paul Watkins**. Debuted at String Theory ten years ago, this trio brings both personal history and musical affinity to a program that explores love, loss and the Romantic spirit.

The evening begins with Saint-Saëns' stunning transcription of Liszt's symphonic poem **Orpheus**, a work glowing with lyricism and mythic grandeur. Originally written for orchestra, this seldom-heard version for piano trio casts the familiar tale in a more intimate, transparent light. Anchoring the evening is Dvořák's **Piano Trio in F Minor**: a work of sweeping emotion and Slavic fire. This passionate masterpiece explores themes of longing and grief, offering a moving counterpart to the luminous beauty of *Orpheus*.



25<sup>NOV</sup>

BAROQUE TO BUENOS AIRES

Flutist **Tara Helen O'Connor** and guitarist **Jason Vieaux** step into a captivating dialogue that travels from 18th-century France to the vibrant heart of Buenos Aires.

**Leclair's Sonata in E Minor, Op. 9**, originally composed for violin and keyboard, brought to life here with the guitar as the continuo - adding warmth and clarity to the elegant Baroque counterpoint. Gary Schocker's **Mysterious Barcodes** follows with vivid, shifting moods, while Ravel's **Pièce en forme de Habanera** infuses Cuban dance rhythms with his signature timbral colors. Argentine composer José Luis Merlin's **Progresiones para Pauline** offers lyrical reflection, setting the stage for Piazzolla's **Histoire du Tango**, which closes the program by igniting a vivid journey through tango's passionate evolution from smoky cafés to the concert hall.

*Tara Helen O'Connor*  
FLUTE

*Jason Vieaux*  
GUITAR

SUPPORT FOR THIS CONCERT WAS  
GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY COMPASS  
COMMISSIONING AND DESIGN



LECLAIR  
Sonata E Minor, Op. 9

SCHOCKER  
*Mysterious Barcodes*

RAVEL  
*Pièce en Forme de Habanera*

JOSÉ LUIS MERLIN  
*Progresiones para Pauline*

PIAZZOLLA  
*Histoire du Tango*



## 20<sup>th</sup> AN BRAHMS CLARINET SONATAS

Clarinetist **Anthony McGill** and pianist **Gloria Chien** reunite to share Brahms' **Clarinet Sonatas No. 1 in F Minor** and **No. 2 in E-flat Major**. Upon hearing the transformative performance of clarinet virtuoso Richard Mühlfeld in 1890, Brahms emerged from a self-imposed retirement to compose these sonatas - works that remain cornerstones of the repertoire.

Epitomizing Brahms's "late style," the sonatas present a striking "chiaroscuro" - the contrast between the dark intensity of the first and the radiant lyricism of the second. Together, our own virtuosos McGill and Chien explore the rich, intimate dialogues between two instruments, bringing to life music that spans from the deeply soulful to the lush grandeur.

**Anthony McGill** CLARINET

**Gloria Chien** PIANO

**BRAHMS**

**Clarinet Sonata No. 1 in F Minor**

**BRAHMS**

**Clarinet Sonata No. 2 in E-flat Major**

SUPPORT FOR THIS CONCERT WAS  
GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY THE  
TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION



## 3<sup>rd</sup> FEB SPA TRIO



**Susanna Phillips** SOPRANO

**Paul Neubauer** VIOLA

**Anne-Marie McDermott** PIANO

**MENDELSSOHN**

***Infelice***

**FRANCIS CASADESUS**

***Romance provençale et Danse***

**WAGNER**

***Wesendonck Lieder***

**SCHUMANN**

***Abegg Variations***

**AMY BEACH**

***Chanson d'Amour***

***Ecstasy***

***The Year's at the Spring***

**GERSHWIN**

***Let's Call The Whole Thing Off***

***A Foggy Day/Love Walked In***

***Our Love Is Here to Stay***

Soprano **Susanna Phillips**, violist **Paul Neubauer**, and pianist **Anne-Marie McDermott** bring fresh vibrancy to salon songs. Performing together as the SPA Trio since 2011, these celebrated artists have embraced the charm and nostalgia of 19th- and 20th-century parlor songs, continuing a storied tradition once favored by some of the great singers of the past.

The program opens with a dramatic arrangement of Mendelssohn's *Infelice*, a rare example of his venture into operatic and Italianate styles. Casadesus's *Romance provençale et Danse* explore charming dialogues between the viola and piano, which contrasts Wagner's haunting *Wesendonck Lieder*, inspired by poems from his muse and lover, Mathilde Wesendonck. Schumann's *Abegg Variations* follows - a graceful set based on a theme that spells the name of a fictitious friend. The program concludes with songs by Amy Beach and George Gershwin - Beach with romantic lyricism, and Gershwin with timeless, jazz-infused swing.

THIS CONCERT IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY







10 MAR

## BLOCH & BRAHMS

Brahms and Bloch offer two compelling visions of introspection and cultural identity in this richly expressive program featuring violinist **Sasha Sitkovetsky**, violist **Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt**, cellist **Gary Hoffman**, and pianist **Gloria Chien**.

Bloch's *From Jewish Life*, for cello and piano, explores the intimate and meditative voice of the cello. Drawing on cantorial traditions and modal harmonies, it captures the spiritual and emotional depth of Jewish expression in three brief yet evocative movements.

In contrast, Brahms's **Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major** stands among his most expansive works, marked by emotional depth and profound introspection. It opens with a grand, concerto-like first movement and unfolds through sweeping harmonies and rich textures, conjuring tenderness and longing before culminating in a finale bursting with Hungarian folk rhythms.

*Alexander Sitkovetsky* VIOLIN

*Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt* VIOLA

*Gary Hoffman* CELLO

*Gloria Chien* PIANO

BLOCH

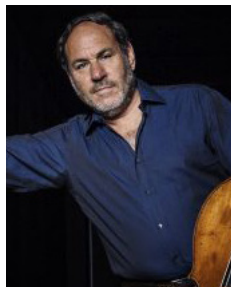
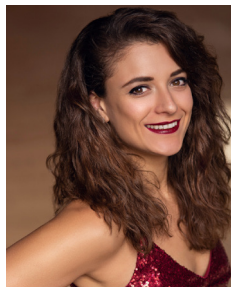
*From Jewish Life*

BRAHMS

**Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major**

SUPPORT FOR THIS CONCERT WAS  
GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY  
HK ARCHITECTS

**HK ARCHITECTS**



## 14 APR STRING CELEBRATIONS

**String Celebration** brings together eight masterful performers for a program that showcases the breadth, beauty, and bravura of chamber music for strings.

The program opens with Shostakovich's *Two Pieces for String Octet*, written when the composer was just eighteen. Sharp-edged and intense, these youthful works already reveal the emotional volatility and formal daring that would define his mature style.

Dvořák's *Terzetto in C Major* offers a nostalgic shift in scale and timbre. Scored for two violins and viola, it was originally intended for informal "musicking" at home - though its technical demands soon surpassed its amateur origins. With graceful interplay and lyrical warmth, *Terzetto* weaves a heartfelt musical conversation.

For our grand Finale, all eight musicians join forces for Mendelssohn's *Octet in E-flat Major*, a work of astonishing brilliance and youthful exuberance. Composed at just sixteen, the *Octet* merges symphonic grandeur with intricate precision, culminating in an electrifying fugue that brings Season Seventeen to a thrilling close.

*Benjamin Beilman*

*Erin Keefe*

*Alexi Kenney*

*Arnaud Susmann*

VIOLIN

*Misha Amory*

*Nicholas Cords*

VIOLA

*Nina Lee*

*Edward Arron*

CELLO

SHOSTAKOVICH

**Two Pieces for String Octet**

DVOŘÁK

*Terzetto*

MENDELSSOHN

**Octet in E-flat Major**

SUPPORT FOR THIS CONCERT WAS  
GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY

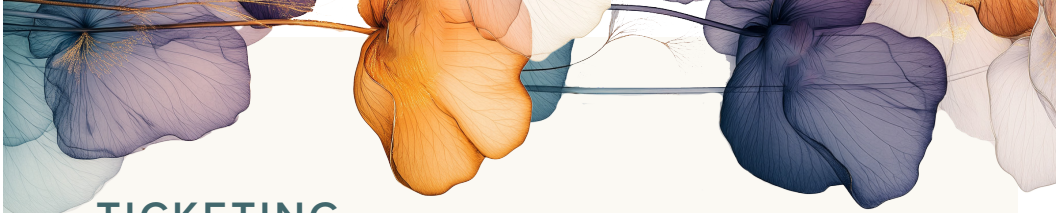
**The William L. Montague, Jr.  
Performing Arts Fund**



# String Theory

For Season 17, we are committed to continuing String Theory's mission of bringing high-quality classical music education to our local schools and community organizations. This fall, we will have violinist **Adam Millstein** and pianist **Dominic Cheli** joining us for our outreach days. They will be presenting a program exploring the connections between some of the most famous movie music written today by John Williams (Harry Potter, Star Wars, Jaws) and lesser-known composers. This residency will focus on the greater Chattanooga area for a week, featuring school presentations, visits to local nonprofit partners, retirement communities, and engagements in other community spaces. Additionally, in January, we are thrilled that clarinetist **Anthony McGill** will be joining us for a masterclass with clarinet students in the community before his main-stage concert. String Theory is thrilled to bring these exceptionally gifted educators and talented artists to our local community!

## ARTIST RESIDENCY DAYS



## TICKETING *information*

SEASON STXVII TICKET PRICING	REGULAR	HUNTER MEMBERS*	STUDENTS & MUSIC TEACHERS
Season Subscription 6 Concerts	\$300	\$240	\$60
Single Tickets	\$54	\$42	\$10

\*To become a member of the Hunter Museum, please visit [huntermuseum.org/membership](http://huntermuseum.org/membership) or call 423.267.0968.

Groups of 10 or more can receive a discount. Please call 423.414.2525 for group ticket sales.

### *Tickets may be purchased*

#### ONLINE

At [www.StringTheoryMusic.org](http://www.StringTheoryMusic.org)

#### BY PHONE

423.414.2525. Our office is open Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm.

#### IN PERSON ON CONCERT DAY ONLY

At the Hunter Museum beginning at 5:00pm. Credit cards only.

#### ALL TICKETS ARE "WILL CALL"

We do not print paper tickets. You will be checked in using a ticket list upon arrival.

#### CONCERTS START AT 6:30 PM

Your ticket includes the pre-concert engagement **Pregame with Bob** starting at 5:45pm on select concert dates. The Pre-Concert Bar opens at 5:00pm.

#### PARKING

Parking is available in the paid parking lot at the Houston Museum of Decorative Arts and along High Street, E 2nd Street, and Riverfront Parkway. The Hunter Museum parking lot is reserved for String Theory Donors at the **Jubiloso** and **Maestoso** levels, guests with handicapped permits, and String Theory Artists and staff.





## IS MADE POSSIBLE by music lovers like you!

**DID YOU KNOW THAT** ticket sales make up less than 20% of our annual budget? That's why your gift of any amount is so important to continue incredible music experiences right here in Chattanooga. This is only possible with the dedicated support of the individuals, businesses, and foundations who partner with us to fund String Theory each year! In addition to supporting the best in chamber music in Chattanooga, your gift will:

*Enhance the Arts and Culture* offerings in our community by providing the opportunity to experience world-renowned artists right here in Chattanooga!

*Support our outreach program* to schools and community groups with our artist residency program

### WAYS TO GIVE TO STRING THEORY

*Donations are made to Lee University where funds are restricted solely for String Theory. Donations are tax-deductible and can be one-time or recurring.*

#### ONLINE

- Go to [stringtheorymusic.org/donate](http://stringtheorymusic.org/donate)
- Click the DONATE button
- Select "one-time" or "recurring"
- Under FUND scroll down to select "String Theory"
- Enter your payment information

#### BY MAIL

Please make your gift payable to Lee University with **"String Theory"** in the memo line and mail it to:

School of Music  
Attn: Rachael Sutton  
Lee University  
PO Box 3450  
Cleveland, TN 37320

## DONOR LEVELS and benefits

# XVII

*In addition to the benefits of your membership level, you will enjoy the benefits associated with all previous levels*

### *Friends \$100 - \$249*

Prominent acknowledgment in concert programs

### *Piccolo \$250 - \$499*

Special ticket pricing of \$25 for 2 of your guests during Season 17

### *Dolce \$500 - \$999*

Special ticket pricing of \$25 for 4 of your guests during Season 17  
Season Highlights CD

### *Espresso \$1,000 - \$2,499*

Special ticket pricing of \$25 for up to 6 of your guests during Season 17  
2 complimentary drinks per concert at pre-concert reception  
CD from a String Theory artist

### *Cantabile \$2,500 - \$4,999*

Special ticket pricing of \$25 for up to 6 of your guests during Season 17  
Reserved seating for 2 at each concert

### *Maestoso \$5,000 - \$9,999*

10% discount on season subscription  
Special ticket pricing of \$25 up to 8 of your guests during Season 17  
4 complimentary drinks per concert at pre-concert reception  
Reserved parking in the Hunter Museum lot\*  
Reserved seating for your party\*

### *Jubiloso \$10,000 and above*

Dedication of one concert in your honor  
Complimentary admission for 2 to all Season 17 concerts and  
Special ticket pricing of \$25 for your guests at each concert  
Invitation for 2 to dinner with the artists after one Season Seventeen concert  
4 complimentary drinks per concert at pre-concert reception  
Reserved parking in the Hunter Museum lot\*  
Reserved seating for your party\*



## PARTNERS



## CORPORATE SPONSORS



## SEASON 17 HOTEL SPONSOR



## ADVISORY BOARD

Nora Bernhardt • Bob Bernhardt • Sherry Keller Brown • Gary Chazen  
Darlia Conn • Deanne Irvine • Lavinia Johnston • Karen "Candy" Kruesi  
Rob Majors • Stephen Rich • Vanessa Hammond

## SPONSORS



## PLATINUM MEDIA SPONSOR



## GRANTS



William L. Montague, Jr.  
Performing Arts Fund





Lee University  
P.O. Box 3450  
Cleveland, TN 37320

NONPROFIT  
ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 269  
CLEVELAND TN

StringTheoryMusic.org  
423.414.2525