



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

GROUP 11

49th Annual Benefit Concert

Eileen Buck, piano
Marcia Eckert, piano
Quan Ge, violin
Michael Katz, cello
Sara Paar, soprano
Michael Takiff, narrator
Cong Wu, viola

Sunday, November 17, 2024, at 4 PM
Broadway Presbyterian Church
601 W. 114th St, NYC

Program

Natural Selection

Jake Heggie

Creation

Animal Passion

Alas! Alack!

Indian Summer – Blue

Joy Alone (Connection)

Sara Paar and Marcia Eckert

The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant

Text by Jean de Brunhoff

Music by Francis Poulenc

Michael Takiff and Marcia Eckert

Intermission

Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 15

Gabriel Fauré

Allegro molto moderato

Scherzo – allegro vivo

Adagio

Allegro molto

Quan Ge, Cong Wu, Michael Katz, Eileen Buck

Pianist **Eileen Buck** has performed as a recitalist, chamber musician, and concerto soloist in North America and Europe. She has won several competitions, including taking First Prize at the Josef Hofmann Piano Competition in 1996. She has appeared as soloist with the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, Etherridge Chamber Orchestra, Collegium Westchester Orchestra, and the Mannes Orchestra. Ms. Buck recorded, with cellist Wendy Warner, Paul Hindemith's complete works for cello and piano for Bridge Records and Popper and Piatigorsky's works for cello and piano for Cedille Records, to universally high critical acclaim. She has also performed with members of the Guarneri, Brentano and Borromeo Quartets, the New York Philharmonic, MET Orchestra, and Philadelphia Orchestra, among others. Ms. Buck received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Mannes College of Music, where her teachers were Eleanor and Vladimir Sokoloff and Edward Aldwell, respectively. She also studied with Carl Schachter at the City University of New York Graduate Center, Adolph Baller and Maria Curcio. Currently, she serves on the faculty at the Mannes School of Music Preparatory Division, and coaches in the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program.

Marcia Eckert is active as a collaborative pianist and has appeared in the Mostly Mozart Festival, as well as at Merkin, Alice Tully, and Weill concert halls, and London's Leighton House. She has been referred to as "a pianist of impressive skill and sensitivity, the sort of keyboard collaborator that every instrumentalist dreams of" (Scott Cantrell, *Albany Times-Union*). Ms Eckert has made a special focus of performing music by women composers and Charles Ives. Recordings include *Musique de Chambre* (music of Germaine Tailleferre with violinist Ruth Ehrlich and others) on Cambria Records; *Songs by Women* with soprano Susan Gonzalez; *20th Century Music for Recorder and Piano* with Anita Randolfi; chamber music by Debra Kaye on her albums *And So It Begins* and *Ikarus*; and songs by Nailah Nombeko with soprano Sara Paar. At Hunter College, she was a 1998 recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching. She taught at Mannes Prep for four decades and maintains a large private studio in Manhattan. She is the founder and director of *Pianophoria!*, a summer piano intensive for adults, which began in 2004. <http://marciaeckert.com>

Violinist **Quan Ge** joined the New York Philharmonic in June 2009. Ms. Ge is a top prize winner at the China National Violin Competition and Jeunesses International Music Competition in Romania, and has served as guest concertmaster with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. As an avid chamber musician, Ms. Ge is a regular performer at the New York Philharmonic Merkin Hall Chamber Series, and has appeared at SubCulture, National Sawdust, the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, Taos School of Music, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, New York String Seminar, and Encore School for Strings. Born in Huainan, China, Ms. Ge went to Shanghai Conservatory of Music before coming to the United States. She received her Bachelor's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music and a Master's degree from the Juilliard School. Her teachers include Lei Fang, Ida Kavafian, Pamela Frank, Jaime Laredo, Yumi Scott, and David Chan.

Hailed by the press for his "bold, rich sound" (Strad Magazine) and "nuanced musicianship," (The New York Times), Israeli cellist **Michael Katz** has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician across North America, Europe, and Asia. His musicianship has been recognized with many awards, among them all three prizes at the 2011 Aviv Competition, and first prizes at the Juilliard School's 2010 Concerto Competition and the 2005 Turjeman Competition.

As the cellist of the Lysander Piano Trio, Mr. Katz was a winner of the 2012 Concert Artists Guild Competition, and was awarded first prizes at the 2011 Coleman competition and 2011 J.C. Arriaga competition. He has performed with artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Midori, Anthony Marwood, Donald Weilerstein, Peter Frankl, Roger Tapping and Charles Neidich. His festival appearances include Ravinia, Music@Menlo, Mostly Mozart, Malaga Classica, Luzern, and Yellow Barn. Mr. Katz received degrees from the New England Conservatory, The Juilliard School, and Stony Brook University, and was a student of Laurence Lesser, Joel Krosnick, and Colin Carr. <http://michaelkatzcello.com>

Acclaimed as “sensitive to every expression in the text” (*New York Concert Review*), soprano **Sara Paar** is an interpreter of contemporary classical music and opera. She has performed both traditional and new works with several New York-based ensembles. With Ensemble 365, Ms. Paar released the critically acclaimed CD *Eastern Currents* (Romeo Records) and was also featured on the recently released CD of Marga Richter’s vocal music. She serves as Co-Chair of the Board of Directors for the New York Women Composers, Inc. and on the music faculty at Fordham. <http://sarapaar.com>

Michael Takiff appeared off-Broadway at The Flea in 2022 as author and performer of *Jews, God, and History (Not Necessarily in That Order)*, a solo show directed by Tony nominee Brian Lane Green. *DirectorTalk* raved that Michael “melds his prodigious intelligence and expert showmanship to illuminate the darkest (and most tender) moments in the life and mind of the modern American Jew.” Recent stage roles include Caesar in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, Brutus in Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, Papa in *Goldberg’s Kaddish*, Eichmann in *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, and Washington Irving in *Impressions of the Alhambra*. Recent feature film work includes principal roles in *Beach Town Maidens*, *Gone Without a Past*, and *The Rabbit Hole*. Trained as a classical singer and jazz dancer, Michael spent ten years touring the country as a stand-up comic. He is the author of numerous books, including an award-winning biography of Bill Clinton published by Yale University Press.

Cong Wu joined the New York Philharmonic as Assistant Principal Viola, The Norma and Lloyd Chazen Chair, in September 2018. Wu is the winner of the Third Prize and the Chamber Music Prize in the Fourteenth Primrose International Viola Competition, and of the Special Prize in the Twelfth Tertis International Viola Competition. His performances throughout North America and Asia include solo appearances with the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, New York Classical Players, and the Long Island Concert Orchestra. An avid chamber musician, Wu has performed at various festivals, including the Marlboro Music Festival, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Chamber Music Encounters, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Perlman Music Program, Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival, and Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival in Germany. Born in Jinan, China, Cong Wu (Cong pronounces as Ts’ong) holds a Master’s degree from The Juilliard School and a Doctoral degree with the Helen Cohen Award from the Manhattan School of Music. Wu is currently on the viola faculties at the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes School of Music.

Natural Selection

Music by Jake Heggie, Poetry by Gini Savage

Creation

I give birth to myself
my own mother and father
for years I ran like a clock-work mouse
Mama says, Papa says,
when does Goldilocks say
I am
Driven
I didn't stop
expected more from the umbilicus
never once got off the hook line or sinker now
before the world
I reach out

Animal Passion

Fierce as a bobcat's spring
with start-up speeds of sixty miles per hour
I want a lover to sweep me off my feet
and slide me into the gutter
without the niceties of small-talk roses
or champagne.
I mean business.
I want whiskey
I want to be swallowed whole,
I want tiles to spring off the walls
when we enter hotel rooms or afternoon
apartments
I won't pussy-foot around responsibility
"shoulds" and "oughts" are out for good.
And I don't want to be a fat domestic cat
I want to be frantic,
yowls and growls to sound like the lion house
at feeding time
I don't give a damn who hears,
I don't give a damn!
no discreet eavesdroppers' coughs can stop
us
in our frenzy.
Let the voyeurs voient
And let the great cats come.

Alas! Alack!

Alas! Alack!
I have a knack for falling for the wrong man
Cavaradossi or Don Ottavio were just too
tame
I never seem to want to stick to my own script
It's the chain-smoking bad guy in leather
the one who'll ruffle my feathers the most
who gets me
I fear it's a lack___Alas!
As Tosca I lost it over Scarpia
not such a bad fella
he had the power and a steady job
the better tune
so when they asked me to pick up the knife
and
dispatch him
I demurred
perhaps it was his theme song I preferred
I know there's a lack___Alas!
If I were Oberon, I'd choose Puck,
for Pamina, it's Papagena
If I'm Brünnhilde it's bound to be Wotan
on whom I'm stuck
If Isolde were smitten by King Mark or Melot
would it make her a zealot?
Damn!
I know there's a lack___Alas!

Indian Summer – Blue

When I was sixteen I had a red hot Chevy
Bucket seats, white top, the steering not too
heavy
I loved that car like a child loves a pony
shoe-blackened its tires
my freedom to ride
Now I am Bluebeard's wife
I'd rather be Sleeping Beauty
"Honey, don't open that door," he says
though he gave me a master key

and I've peeked through the keyhole
always a guard on duty
a red light and odor of rusty gardenia
slips out from under the door
no bushes grow in the garden
a saint's blood smells of roses
Blue was married before at least three times
no family portraits and I don't ask
It's so hot
I get tired here in the east
I could doze away the days
Blue thinks I'm too fat
too this
too that
Mama says
Curiosity killed...
the Cat may well undo me.

Joy Alone (Connection)

the stunning silence of myself
from the hearts of forests
middle of mountains
a late low sun rests her friendly hand
on the crowns of uncompromised trees
a fox streaks across the sand and scented
sagebrush
a chatter of chipmunks scatters
squirrels who stuff their briefcases for the
winter
blue collar workers long term plans
the resinous crunch of orange pine needles
warm under foot
a windfall of sweet cones
joy alone
a startle of saplings
the power of trees
unraveling of rivers
joy alone
joy