



CONSTELLATIONS  
CHAMBERCONCERTS

# Inspired Echoes

**Legacy of the 1740  
"Ysaÿe" Guarneri del Gesù**

**Benjamin Beilman & Gloria Chien**

**March 1-2, 2025**

Constellations Music Salon  
8817 Belmart Road, Potomac, MD



## **Welcome to Constellations Chamber Concerts!**

We are thrilled to welcome you to our first full season of live and in-person concerts at the newly improved Constellations Music Salon in Potomac! The mission of Constellations has always been to build a community for magical and intimate chamber music experiences. So whether you are gathered in person to partake in the artistry of the world-class musicians featured this season, joining from afar over our new live-stream capabilities, or bringing your own instrument to one of our monthly Constellations Chamber Music Parties, we are delighted that you've joined our musical community!

**Masterclass with**  
**Benjamin Beilman**

Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, 5 PM

Sonata for Solo Violin in G Major,  
Op. 27 No. 5 (1923)

Eugène Ysaÿe  
(1858-1931)

Zoe Kushubar, violin  
*student of David Salness*

Sonata for Solo Violin in E Major,  
Op. 27 No. 6 (1923)

Eugène Ysaÿe  
(1858-1931)

Manuel Ordóñez Sierra, violin  
*student of David Salness*

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 (1844)  
I. Allegro molto appassionato

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)

James Post, violin  
*student of Chris Sanchez*

Violin Concerto in G Minor, Op. 12 No. 1 (1729)  
III. Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi  
(1678-1741)

Yiyi Liu, violin  
*student of Chris Sanchez*

*This masterclass is co-sponsored by  
Constellations Chamber Concerts and Capitol Sound Strings*

## About the Student Performers

A native of South Carolina, **Zoe Kushubar** is currently pursuing her doctorate in violin performance at the University of Maryland, where she studies with David Salness. Her dissertation will focus on stylistic traditions in Hungarian folk music and Klezmer, and how they uniquely inform interpretations of Western art music. Zoe is also on the string faculty at the International School of Music in Bethesda, MD and Opal Music Studio in Alexandria, VA. In addition to her doctoral studies and teaching, Zoe enjoys learning about historical performance practice; she most recently participated in the 2025 Haydn Quartet Academy and the inaugural Smithsonian Academy Orchestra, both directed by Kenneth Slowik.

Colombian violinist **Manuel Ordóñez Sierra** is a current doctoral student at the University of Maryland under the guidance of David Salness. He previously studied at Boston University (M.M.) and Texas Christian University (B.M.). As an enthusiast of chamber music, Manuel has performed duo and string quartet recitals in Colombia and the United States alike. His musical pursuits have led him to attend festivals such as Green Mountain Music Festival and Wintergreen Music Academy. As an orchestral musician, he has played with Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra and the Filarmónica Joven de Colombia, under the baton of Maestro Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

**James Post** asked for a violin when he was three years old and has played enthusiastically ever since. He is now thirteen and attends Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. He made his orchestral debut as a soloist at age 11, performing with the Amadeus Orchestra. He has won several first-place prizes in competitions as a soloist and chamber musician, and served as the concertmaster for his youth orchestra. He attended the Sphinx Performance Academy at Juilliard and at the University of Colorado Boulder, as well as the Heifetz International Music Institute. In addition to music, James enjoys tennis, Tae Kwon Do, and chess.

**Yiyi Liu**, a gifted 10-year-old violinist from Northern Virginia, discovered her love for music at the age of 3. Guided by her dedicated teachers—Chris Sanchez, Ronda Cole, and David Strom—Yiyi has developed a deep connection to the violin and a passion for sharing music with others. Whether she’s practicing scales, perfecting a classical piece, or exploring new melodies, her dedication and enthusiasm shine through in every note. As a 4th grader, she balances her artistic pursuits with an active lifestyle, enjoying sports like tennis and lacrosse alongside music and schoolwork.

## About the Teachers

Violinist **David Salness** has attained international recognition as a performing artist and teacher. He has appeared in more than 25 countries and in 48 out of the 50 United States in such renowned venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, Salle Pleyel and London’s Wigmore Hall. His performances are broadcast on National Public Radio, Radio France, Bavarian Radio and the British and Canadian Broadcast Corporations. He is currently professor of violin at the University of Maryland.



A native of the Washington D.C. region, violinist and Capitol Sound Strings co-founder **Chris Sanchez** has earned performance degrees from the University of Maryland, College Park (BM) and the University of Georgia (MM). His major teachers have included Ronda Cole, Sally Thomas, David Salness, Dr. Levon Ambartsumian, Charles Castleman, and Arnold Steinhardt and John Dalley of the Guarneri String Quartet.



# Concert Program

## Inspired Echoes

Legacy of the 1740 “Ysaÿe” Guarneri del Gesù

Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, 3 PM

Sonata for Solo Violin in D Minor, Eugène Ysaÿe  
Op. 27 No. 3 “Ballade” (1923) (1858-1931)

Sonata in G Major “Devil’s Trill” (c. 1740) Giuseppe Tartini  
I. Larghetto (1692-1770)  
II. Allegro arr. Kreisler  
III. Grave - Allegro assai

Cantabile, Op. 17 (1822-24) Niccolò Paganini  
(1782-1840)

Rondo in B Minor, D. 895 (1826) Franz Schubert  
(1797-1828)

*intermission*

*Three Airs* (WORLD PREMIERE) Chris Rogerson  
I. Processional (b. 1988)  
II. Home  
III. Lullaby

*Three Airs by Chris Rogerson has been commissioned by  
Constellations Chamber Concerts for Benjamin Beilman*

Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major (1886) César Franck  
I. Allegro ben moderato (1822-1890)  
II. Allegro  
III. Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia  
IV. Allegretto poco mosso

**Benjamin Beilman, violin**  
**Gloria Chien, piano**

## Program Notes

This program, *Inspired Echoes*, reflects on the storied yet deeply personal history of one of the world's greatest violins, the 1740 Guarneri del Gesù known as the “Ysaÿe” after one of its more prominent owners and performers, Belgian virtuoso Eugène Ysaÿe. It is tempting to say that this violin has borne witness to innumerable milestones in music history, but that would only be half true: it has not only been a witness but a *participant*, lending the sound of its beloved voice to artists across the centuries. From Ysaÿe to Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, Sergey Khachatryan, and now Benjamin Beilman, the violin has had no shortage of great violinists as companions.



“Companionship” is certainly the right word, according to Ysaÿe - who had a label inserted inside the instrument celebrating the Del Gesù as “the faithful companion of my life,” to which Isaac Stern famously replied in his memoir: “Mine, too.”

The opening work of the program is **Ysaÿe’s third sonata for solo violin (“Ballade”)**, part of a set of six. The set, inspired by J.S. Bach’s own six sonatas and partitas for solo violin, was Ysaÿe’s symbolic “passing of the torch” to a new generation of violinists. Ysaÿe never premiered his own solo sonatas, writing them in quick succession after the sun had largely set on his own performing career.

Up second on the program is **Tartini's "Devil's Trill" Sonata**, as infamous for its difficulty as for its colorful origin story. Tartini recounted a dream of making a bargain with the devil for supernatural music lessons, concluding with a performance by the archfiend himself of "a sonata so wonderful and beautiful, played with such great art and intelligence, as I had never even conceived in my boldest flights of fantasy." Tartini suddenly awoke and scrambled for his violin to recreate the work, the result being the "Devil's Trill" sonata. While the exact year of its composition has been lost to history, scholars believe the 1740s are the most likely decade - making this sonata a close contemporary of the Del Gesù violin it is performed on today.

Rounding out the first half of the program are a pair of works, composed just a few short years apart in the 1820s: **Paganini's Cantabile** and **Schubert's Rondo in B Minor**. This pairing offers a fascinating juxtaposition of an operatic "song without words" by one of history's great violin virtuosos against a virtuosic showpiece by one of classical music's greatest songwriters.

The penultimate work on the program offers a rare treat: a brand-new work by rising star composer **Chris Rogerson**, commissioned by Constellations and written especially for this very occasion. In the words of the composer:

*"Three Airs* was written for violinist Ben Beilman. Ben and I have been friends for over fifteen years. Recently I had the distinct honor of composing the processional music for his wedding. I had already collaborated with Ben several times, on two works for violin and piano, one solo violin partita, and a violin concerto. This one, however, was different: it was not for him to play but to hear—in a very important moment in his life no less! This task was not so easy. How to create something that captured this moment gracefully and appropriately while also appealing to Ben's sense of musicality? I will admit, I was a bit confounded at first at what to do. In the end, I decided to write something I actually could imagine him playing, even if he wasn't going to be in that moment. What would I write for him to play at his own wedding? And I thought of his



(in my opinion) unmatched lyricism and warmth of tone and also his unique ability to create wonderful and diverse colors with his instrument out of the simplest of phrases. The original processional was just under two minutes, designed to be short and sweet. This expanded version brings deeper focus to what it means to write for a specific player. Beyond that, what it means to write for someone you know. And finally, what it means to write for one of your dearest and oldest friends.

The processional movement is complemented by two additional airs. The second, 'Home,' is flowing and nostalgic and meant to evoke the warmth and simplicity of life at home. The final air, 'Lullaby,' transports us to the magical world of dreams, and celebrates the arrival of Ben and his wife Tracy's baby Felix.

My deepest thanks are to Constellations Chamber Concerts for commissioning this work and to Ben Beilman and Gloria Chien for bringing it to life."

**César Franck's Sonata in A Major** brings the program to its epic conclusion, both musically and thematically. Like the processional that formed the seed for Chris Rogerson's newest work, the Franck sonata was also composed as a wedding gift: for none other than Eugène Ysaÿe, a dear friend of the composer. Presented with the score just before his nuptials in 1886, Ysaÿe gave the sonata an impromptu premiere (on his dear Del Gesù, no doubt) for his wedding guests, which thankfully included French virtuoso pianist Marie-Léontine Bordes-Pène. (The same duo famously gave the public premiere a few months later, as the final work on another winter chamber recital that began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, but from memory in pitch darkness in a gallery that prohibited artificial lighting!)

The Franck sonata is beloved not only for its endearing origins but also for its rich harmonic language, sweet melodies, and fiendishly difficult piano part, particularly in the bombastic second movement. It has earned its place as one of Franck's best-known works and part of the core violin-piano repertoire.

**Benjamin Beilman** is one of the leading violinists of his generation. He has won international praise for his passionate performances and deep rich tone which The New York Times described as “muscular with a glint of violence,” and the Strad described as “pure poetry.” Le Monde has described him as “a prodigious artist, who combines the gift of utmost sound perfection and a deep, delicate, intense, simmering sensitivity.”



Benjamin's 2024/25 season includes his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic and Kirill Petrenko on tour in the US, as well as returns to the Chicago Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, and Antwerp Symphony. He also makes his debut with the Belgian National Orchestra in a performance of Stravinsky's concerto, and with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony performing Korngold. In the US, he also embarks on a recital tour with pianist Steven Osborne.

Last season included Benjamin's subscription debut with the Chicago Symphony with Semyon Bychkov, and six weeks of performances in Europe, including concerts with the SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart alongside Elim Chan, a return to the Kölner Philharmonie with the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken, and appearances at the Grafenegg Festival, Festpielhaus St. Pölten, and the Musikverein in Vienna with the Tonkünstler Orchester and Tabita Berglund. He also returned to play-direct the London Chamber Orchestra, and reunited with Ryan Bancroft for his debut with BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Meanwhile, performances in the US included his debut with the St Louis Symphony under Cristian Macelaru, as well as returns to

the Minnesota Orchestra with Elim Chan.

In past seasons, Benjamin has performed with many major orchestras worldwide including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Trondheim Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Taipei Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Zurich Tonhalle, Sydney Symphony, and Houston Symphony. He has also extensively toured Australia in recital under Musica Aviva, and in 2022, became one of the youngest artists to be appointed to the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music.

In recent seasons Beilman's commitment to and passion for contemporary music has led to new works written for him by Frederic Rzewski (commissioned by Music Accord), and Gabriella Smith (commissioned by the Schubert Club in St. Paul, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music). He has also given multiple performances of Jennifer Higdon's violin concerto, and recorded Thomas Larcher's concerto with Hannu Lintu and the Tonkünstler Orchester, as well as premiered Chris Rogerson's Violin Concerto ("The Little Prince") with the Kansas City Symphony and Gemma New.

Conductors with whom he works include Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Cristian Măcelaru, Lahav Shani, Krzysztof Urbański, Ryan Bancroft, Matthias Pintscher, Gemma New, Karina Canellakis, Jonathon Heyward, Juraj Valčuha, Han-Na Chang, Elim Chan, Roderick Cox, Rafael Payare, Osmo Vänskä, and Giancarlo Guerrero.

Beilman studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Ida Kavafian and Pamela Frank, and with Christian Tetzlaff at the Kronberg Academy, and has received many prestigious accolades including a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, an Avery Fisher Career Grant and a London Music Masters Award. He has also recorded works by Stravinsky, Janáček and Schubert for Warner Classics. He performs with the ex-Balaković F. X. Tourte bow (c. 1820), and plays the "Ysaÿe" Guarneri del Gesù from 1740, generously on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.



Taiwanese-born pianist **Gloria Chien** has a diverse musical life as a performer, concert presenter, and educator. She made her orchestral debut at the age of 16 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Thomas Dausgaard, and performed again with the BSO under Keith Lockhart. Recently she has performed as a recitalist and chamber musician at Alice Tully Hall, the Library of Congress, the Phillips Collection, the Kissingen Sommer festival, the Dresden Chamber Music

Festival, and the National Concert Hall in Taiwan. A former member of The Bowers Program, she performs frequently with CMS. In 2009 she launched String Theory, a chamber music series at the Hunter Museum of American Art in Chattanooga, which has become one of Tennessee's premier classical music presenters. The following year she was appointed Director of the Chamber Music Institute at Music@Menlo by Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han, a position she held for the next decade. In 2017, she joined her husband, violinist Soovin Kim, as Co-Artistic Director of the Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival in Burlington, Vermont. The duo became Artistic Directors at Chamber Music Northwest in Portland, OR, in 2020, and were named the recipients of the 2021 Award for Extraordinary Service to Chamber Music from CMS, recognizing their efforts during the pandemic. Ms. Chien received her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from New England Conservatory of Music as a student of Russell Sherman and Wha-Kyung Byun. She is an artist-in-residence at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, and is a Steinway Artist.

## About the Commissioned Composer

Hailed as a “confident new musical voice” (The New York Times), a “big discovery” (The Philadelphia Inquirer), and a “fully-grown composing talent” (The Washington Post), Chris Rogerson’s music has been praised for its “haunting beauty” and “virtuosic exuberance” (The New York Times). Rogerson’s music is often characterized by its lyricism: recent notable works include *Of Simple Grace*, for cellist Yo-Yo Ma, his violin concerto, for Benjamin Beilman and the Kansas City Symphony, and *Dream Sequence*, for Anne-Marie McDermott and the Dover Quartet. Rogerson’s music has been programmed at venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall in London, Prague’s Rudolfinum, Radio France, and the Musikverein in Vienna. He recently was awarded the 2022 Elise L. Stoeger Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the highest honor given to contributions to chamber music.

Born in 1988, Mr. Rogerson studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, Yale School of Music, and Princeton University with Jennifer Higdon, Aaron Jay Kernis, Martin Bresnick, and Steve Mackey. He is represented by Young Concert Artists, Inc. and served as YCA Composer-in-Residence from 2010-2012. He also is one of two composers on the roster of Manhattan Chamber Players. In 2012, he co-founded Kettle Corn New Music, a new music presenting organization in New York City, and currently serves as its co-artistic director. In 2016, Mr. Rogerson joined the Musical Studies Faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he lives full-time with his chocolate lab, Poppy.



# Constellations Chamber Music Parties



Come have a blast with the Constellations crew in a “judgment-free zone” for music-making! We are excited to announce a new Constellations community initiative: monthly Chamber Music Parties during our regular concert season, open to everyone with a love for chamber music!

Here at Constellations, we’re all about the magical ability of chamber music to bring people together. And while our main series concerts at the Constellations Music Salon bring the artistry of world-class musicians to Potomac, chamber music isn’t just something you witness—it’s something that musicians of all levels can partake in first-hand! Join the many Constellations staff, supporters, and friends who have kept their violins, violas, and cellos close at hand as passionate amateurs as we make our way through readings of two (or more) masterworks every month.

All Constellations Chamber Music Parties are FREE, but registration is requested in advance for headcount purposes.

Not a string player? We’ll be hosting these parties regularly and will be mixing up the repertoire each time - so let us know what you play if you’d be interested in joining for future events!

No preparation is necessary and parts (and refreshments!) will be provided, but we will provide links to public-domain parts each month if you want to take a peek in advance.



*NEXT EVENT: Sun. Mar. 23, 1 PM*

Register online at  
**[constellationsmusic.org](http://constellationsmusic.org)**

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*(list reflects donations since September 1, 2022)*

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