

SEASON 13

String Theory
AT THE HUNTER

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2021



MENLO FAMILY TOUR “What You Are To Me”
Kristin Lee VIOLIN

Sean Lee VIOLIN

Dmitri Atapine CELLO

Hyejeon Park PIANO

Gloria Chien PIANO


KRISTIN LEE



SEAN LEE



DMITRI ATAPINE



HYEJEON PARK



GLORIA CHIEN



PATRICK CASTILLO

MARTINU
Variations on a Theme of Rossini for cello and piano

Theme: Poco Allegro - allegro moderato

Variation I: Poco allegro

Variation II: Poco più allegro

Variation III: Andante

Variation IV: Allegro

Theme: Vivo. Moderato maestoso

CASTILLO
Winter Light | World Premiere

String Theory Co-Commission with Apex Concerts and Emerald City Music

KORNGOLD
Suite for Two Violins, Cello, and Piano Left Hand, Op. 23

I. Präludium und Fuge

II. Walzer

III. Grotteske

IV. Lied

V. Rondo - Finale (Variationen)


Kristin Lee VIOLIN

A recipient of the 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant, as well as a top prizewinner of the 2012 Walter W. Naumburg Competition and the Astral Artists' 2010 National Auditions, Kristin Lee is a violinist of remarkable versatility and impeccable technique who enjoys a vibrant career as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, and educator. “Her technique is flawless, and she has a sense of melodic shaping that reflects an artistic maturity,” writes the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and The Strad reports, “She seems entirely comfortable with stylistic diversity, which is one criterion that separates the run-of-the-mill instrumentalists from true artists.”

In addition to her dynamic performing career, Lee was recently appointed to the faculty of University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music as Assistant Professor of Violin. She is the artistic director of Emerald City Music, a chamber music series she co-founded in 2015, that presents authentically unique concert experiences and bridges the divide between the highest caliber classical music and the many diverse communities of the Puget Sound region of Washington State.

Kristin Lee has appeared as soloist with leading orchestras including The Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, New Mexico Symphony, West Virginia Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Tacoma Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Nordic Chamber Orchestra of Sweden, Ural Philharmonic of Russia, Korean Broadcasting Symphony, Guiyang Symphony Orchestra of China, Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Dominican Republic, and many others. She has performed on the world's finest concert stages, including Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, the Kennedy Center, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Steinway Hall's Salon de Virtuosi, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Ravinia Festival, Philadelphia's World Cafe Live, (Le) Poisson Rouge in New York, the Louvre Museum in Paris, Washington, D.C.'s Phillips Collection, and Korea's Kumho Art Gallery.

An accomplished chamber musician, Kristin Lee is a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, performing at Lincoln Center in New York and on tour with CMS throughout each season, as well as a principal artist of Camerata Pacifica in Santa Barbara, sitting as The Bernard Gondos Chair. She is also concertmaster of the Nu Deco Ensemble in Miami, Florida, and is a member of Steve Coleman's Natal Eclipse, a hybrid chamber-jazz ensemble that explores the very foundations of group improvisation and spontaneous composition. Lee has also appeared in chamber music programs at Music@Menlo, La Jolla Festival, Medellín Festicámara of Colombia, the El Sistema Chamber Music festival of Venezuela, the Sarasota Music Festival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern of Germany, the Hong Kong Chamber Music Festival and the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, among many others.

Recent and upcoming highlights include performances presented by the San Francisco Symphony with Itzhak Perlman, Amarillo Symphony, Chamber Music Sedona, a tour with the Silk Road Ensemble, Music@Menlo, Parlance Chamber Concerts, Moab Music Festival, Town Hall Seattle, Lyra Music Festival, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Olympic Music Festival, North Carolina New Music Initiative, and the Leicester International Music Festival, as well as performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Camerata Pacifica.



Sean Lee VIOLIN

American violinist Sean Lee is one of few violinists who dare to perform the complete 24 Caprices of Niccolò Paganini in concert. A recipient of Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Career Grant, Lee has captured the attention of audiences worldwide, with performances described by the New York Times as "breathtakingly beautiful".

Lee's ongoing educational YouTube series, "Paganini POV", utilizes modern technology to share a unique perspective on violin playing. Upcoming performances of the Paganini Caprices include a recital of the complete 24 Caprices as arranged by Robert Schumann in January 2022, at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center with pianist Peter Dugan. In anticipation of the recital at Lincoln Center, Lee and Dugan will release nine selections from the arrangements as an EP and video series in 2021.

Lee's debut album was released by EMI Classics, and reached the iTunes top 20 classical bestsellers list. In 2018, Lee released his second album, *SONGBOOK*, featuring songs from all over the world from classical to jazz. As a soloist, Lee has appeared with orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony, Israel Camerata Jerusalem, and Utah Symphony, and recital appearances have taken him to Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Festival di Carro Paganiniano of Italy, and Vienna's Konzerthaus. A top prizewinner at the "Premio Paganini" International Violin Competition, Lee embraces the legacy of his late mentor, violinist Ruggiero Ricci, who made the first solo recording of the 24 Caprices in 1947.

Lee has collaborated in performances with Itzhak Perlman, Sir James Galway, Deborah Voigt, and members of the Emerson and Guarneri String Quartets. With the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Lee has performed numerous times at Lincoln Center, as well as on tour internationally at venues including the Lobkowitz Palace in Prague, Czech Republic; LG Arts Center in Seoul, Korea; National Theater in Taipei, Taiwan; and the White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. Lee also performed for PBS's first international production of Live from Lincoln Center, "Odyssey: The Chamber Music Society in Greece".

Lee currently resides in the Capital Region of New York State. Born in Los Angeles, Lee

studied in Southern California with Robert Lipsett of the Colburn Conservatory, and with violin legend Ruggiero Ricci. Moving to New York City at age 17, Lee studied at the Juilliard School with the internationally acclaimed Itzhak Perlman. At the Juilliard School, Lee earned both Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees, and received the William Schuman Prize upon graduation. Also a dedicated educator, Lee is a faculty member of the Juilliard School's Pre-College Division and the Perlman Music Program. Lee performs on a violin originally made for violinist Ruggiero Ricci in 1999 by David Bague, and a bow made circa 1890 by Joseph Arthur Vigneron.



Dmitri Atapine CELLO

Dmitri Atapine has been described as a cellist with "brilliant technical chops" (Gramophone), whose playing is "highly impressive throughout" (The Strad). As a soloist and recitalist, he has appeared on some of the world's foremost stages, including Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, Zankel and Weill halls at Carnegie Hall, Chicago Cultural Center, and the National Auditorium of Spain. An avid

chamber musician, Mr. Atapine frequently performs with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and is an alum of The Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two). His multiple festival appearances have included Music@Menlo, Chamber Music Northwest, La Musica Sarasota, Nevada Chamber Music Festival, Cactus Pear Music Festival, Pacific Music Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, and Aix-en-Provence Festival among many others, with performances broadcast on radio and television in Spain, Italy, the United States, Canada, Mexico, and South Korea.

Mr. Atapine's many awards include top prizes at the Carlos Prieto International, the Florian Ocampo, and the Llanes cello competitions, as well as the Plowman, New England, and the Premio Vittorio Gui chamber competitions. His recent engagements have included collaborations with such distinguished musicians as Cho-Liang Lin, Paul Neubauer, David Finckel, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Wu Han, Bruno Giuranna, David Shifrin, the St. Lawrence and Miró quartets. Mr. Atapine's recordings, among them a world-premiere of Lowell Liebermann's complete works for cello and piano, can be found on the Naxos, Albany, Urtext Digital, BlueGriffin and Bridge record labels.

Mr. Atapine holds the doctorate degree from Yale School of Music, where he was a student of Aldo Parisot. Born into a family of musicians, his teachers have included Alexander Fedortchenko and Suren Bagratuni. The Artistic Director of Ribadesella Chamber Music Festival (Spain) and Apex Concerts (Nevada), he is the co-director of Young Performers Program at Music@Menlo and the cello professor at the University of Nevada, Reno.



Hyeyeon Park PIANO

Described as “a pianist with power, precision, and tremendous glee” by Gramophone, pianist Hyeyeon Park was selected as an Artist of the Year by the Seoul Arts Center, and is a prizewinner of numerous international competitions including Oberlin, Ettlingen, Hugo Kauder, Maria Canals, Prix Amadèò, and Corpus Christi. She has appeared on major concert stages, performing with

orchestras such as the Seoul Philharmonic, KNUA Symphony Orchestra, Incheon Philharmonic, Gangnam Symphony, and Seoul Festival Orchestra, among others. Her performances have been broadcast on KBS and EBS television (Korea), RAI3 (Italy), WQXR (New York), WFMT (Chicago), and WBJC (Baltimore). Ms. Park holds degrees from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, Yale School of Music, and Korea National University of Arts. She is Artistic Director of Apex Concerts (Nevada), co-director of Young Performers Program at Music@Menlo Chamber Music Festival & Institute and Associate Professor of Piano at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her first solo CD recording, *Klavier 1853*, was released on the Blue Griffin label.



Gloria Chien PIANO

Taiwanese-born pianist Gloria Chien has a diverse musical life as a noted performer, concert presenter, and educator. She was selected by the Boston Globe as one of its Superior Pianists of the year. She made her orchestral debut at the age of 16 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Thomas Dausgaard, and performed again with the BSO with Keith Lockhart. In recent seasons she has performed

as a recitalist and chamber musician at Alice Tully Hall, the Library of Congress, the Phillips Collection, the Kissinger Sommer festival, the Dresden Chamber Music Festival, and the National Concert Hall in Taiwan. She performs frequently with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and is an alum of CMS’s Bowers Program. In 2009 she launched String Theory, a chamber music series at the Hunter Museum of American Art in downtown Chattanooga that has become one of Tennessee’s premier classical music presenters. The following year she was appointed Director of the Chamber Music Institute at the Music@Menlo festival by Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han, a post 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 is the new Artistic Directors at Chamber Music Northwest, celebrating its 50th season, in Portland, OR. Ms. Chien received her bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees from the 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.



Patrick Castillo COMPOSER

Patrick Castillo leads a multifaceted career as a composer, performer, writer, and educator. His music has been described as “restrained and reflective but brimming with a variety of texture and sound that draws you into its world” (*I Care If You Listen*) and has been presented at festivals and venues throughout the United States and internationally, including the Chamber

Music Society of Lincoln Center, Schubert Club, Birdfoot Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, June in Buffalo, the Santa Fe New Music Festival, Queens New Music Festival, Hot Air Music Festival, National Sawdust, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Bavarian Academy of Music (Munich), the Nuremberg Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Havana Contemporary Music Festival.

Recent season highlights include commissions and premieres by the Jasper String Quartet, Areon Flutes, the Experiential Orchestra, Apex Concerts (Reno, NV), Emerald City Music (Seattle, WA), String Theory at the Hunter (Chattanooga, TN), and the Manhattan Choral Ensemble; as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center premiere of *Incident* for violin and piano, performed by Alexander Sitkovetsky and Wu Qian. In 2017 and 2019, Patrick Castillo appeared as Composer-in-Residence at the Birdfoot Festival (New Orleans, LA). The 2020-21 season features premieres by violinist Jennifer Koh, cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han, the Delphi Trio, flautist Jill Heinke, and others.

Patrick Castillo is variously active as an explicator of music to a wide range of listeners. He has written for *New Music Box*, *Q2 Music*, Minnesota Public Radio, and other publications, and provided program and liner notes for numerous concert series and recording companies. He has been a guest lecturer at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, for whose Late Night Rose series he serves as host; Fordham University; the University of Georgia; the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; the Chamber Music Festival of the Bluegrass (Kentucky); String Theory at the Hunter (Chattanooga, TN); and ChamberFest Cleveland. From 2010 to 2013, he served as Senior Director of Artistic Planning of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. He is founding composer and managing director of “forward-looking, expert ensemble” Third Sound (*The New Yorker*) and Executive Director of contemporary music collective Hotel Elephant. In 2021, he was appointed Vice President of Artistic Planning of the New York Philharmonic.

Patrick Castillo holds degrees in composition and sociology from Vassar College, where his teachers included Lois V Vierk, Annea Lockwood, and Richard Wilson. He has also participated in master classes with John Harbison, Alvin Lucier, Roger Reynolds, and Charles Wuorinen. While at Vassar, Patrick Castillo served as composer-in-residence for the Mahagonny Ensemble, a collective of performers specializing in twentieth-century music. His *Requiem aeternam* for mixed chorus and chamber ensemble, composed for the Mahagonny, was awarded the 2001 Jean Slater Edson Prize. He has also been the

recipient of the Brian M. Israel Prize, awarded by the Society for New Music for his chamber work *Lola*.

The Quality of Mercy, an album of Patrick Castillo's vocal chamber music featuring mezzo-soprano Abigail Fischer, has been praised as "affecting and sensitively orchestrated... [a]

PROGRAM NOTES

MARTINU Variations on a Theme of Rossini

Moving to Paris from his native Czechoslovakia (as it was then known) in 1923, Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) experienced the vibrant eclecticism and opportunities the city afforded to many foreign composers, including Igor Stravinsky and later Aaron Copland. For Martinů, it meant absorbing the latest trends, including jazz, which influenced Stravinsky as well as others, and the neoclassicism of *Les Six* (a group of composers that included Poulenc and Milhaud).

Tapping into that neoclassicism, Martinů's *Variations on a Theme of Rossini* follow the tradition for such works established during the time of Mozart and Beethoven, in which a theme from a popular opera serves as the basis for a set of variations. In this case, Martinů chose "Dal tuo stellato soglio" from Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* (Moses in Egypt, 1819 version) for the melodic material.

Those who know the aria, however, may miss the aria's solemn mood, since Martinů was apparently inspired by Nicolò Paganini's (1782-1840) variations on the same tune, rather than its original setting. The 19th-century violinist used the tune as a vehicle to display the showy virtuosity for which he is justly famous, going so far as to write it to be played only on the G string of a retuned violin.

Though that kind of novelty is missing from Martinů's version, technical challenges for the cellist and piano remain. These include awkward leaps, thick textures, and rapid scalar figures. The latter are paired with a dotted (long-short) rhythm at so many places in the set that they serve as a unifying device.

The overall design of the work follows its Classical antecedents. After a brief introduction for piano alone—featuring the unifying dotted rhythm—the cello joins for a straightforward presentation of the main theme. Martinů provides the expected pair of allegro variations and then a slower, lyrical one. Before the final variation, the composer interjects a brief, free-flowing passage for piano alone. When the cello rejoins, the virtuosic pyrotechnics à la Paganini explode. One can see this as a testament to the skills of famed Russian-American cellist Gregor Piatigorsky (1903-1976), to whom the work is dedicated. A triumphant return to the theme provides both a rousing finale and the balance suggested by the work's neoclassic roots.

CASTILLO Winter Light

Award-winning composer Patrick Castillo (b. 1979) has also enjoyed success as a writer, entrepreneur, and performer. In April 2021, the New York Philharmonic named him Vice-President for Artistic Planning, a post that naturally followed his work with the Brooklyn-based ensemble Hotel Elefant, Music@Menlo, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and especially the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (where he held a similar position). Regular patrons of String Theory may remember Patrick from his fine work as annotator and speaker in Season 10.

Here are the composer's notes on the newly commissioned work heard on this program:

Winter Light takes its title from Ingmar Bergman's 1963 film (in Swedish, *Nattvardsgästerna*: literally, "The Communicants"). While not a work of program music, my quartet does share certain elements with Bergman's *Winter Light*: a hymn at its beginning (here, a nod to Robert Schumann's Piano Quartet); an imploring parlando section, analogous to Bergman's remarkable letter scene; and, most significantly, a prevailing existential dread over an inevitable crisis. A pre-occupation with our changing climate hovered over the conception of my *Winter Light*; the work was completed under quarantine, as the world weathered the COVID-19 pandemic. The cello's concluding elegy, surrounded by a halo of bowed piano, refracts the opening hymn into an expression of cautious hope and anxious despair.

Winter Light is dedicated with great affection to my co-communicants: Kristin Lee, Sean Lee, Dmitri Atapine, Hyeyeon Park, and Gloria Chien, for whom my admiration lies deeper than ten thousand bassi profondi trapped at the bottom of the ocean.

KORNGOLD Suite for Two Violins, Cello, and Piano Left Hand, Op. 23

As far back as Season 7, String Theory has participated in the rediscovery of the wonderful music of Erich Korngold (1897-1957). For years after his death, the composer's name, if recognized at all, was associated with his pivotal role in symphonic film scores, a genre he helped define in the 1930s and 1940s. His peers lauded Korngold's artistry by awarding Academy Awards for two of those scores, the films of which have mostly been forgotten.

Long before these successes, Korngold was highly regarded as a composer of opera, chamber music, and symphonies in Vienna. Having been declared a musical genius at age 8 by Mahler, Korngold received critical acclaim, international recognition, and a university professorate by the time he was 30. Unfortunately, the troubling events in Germany soon interrupted his promising career. Reportedly, Korngold commented, "we thought of

ourselves as Viennese; Hitler made us Jewish.” The young musician was able to escape the Anschluss by emigrating to the United States as a film composer, becoming a naturalized citizen in 1943.

One of the works that helped establish his reputation in Europe came from a 1923 commission for a concerto by Paul Wittgenstein, a then-famous pianist who lost his right arm in World War I. Korngold’s concerto was the first of four commissioned by the pianist; the composers of the other three—Hindemith, Prokofiev, and Ravel—affirm Korngold’s place in the musical world of the early 20th century. Wittgenstein was so pleased with the concerto that he commissioned the Suite, Op. 23 (heard on this program) later in the same year.

Perhaps more stylistically unified and harmonically dense than the concerto, Korngold’s masterful suite unfolds in five movements, all inspired by earlier models. The first, a prelude and fugue, obviously imitates famous works by Johann Sebastian Bach. Like those, Korngold’s prelude establishes the mood for the set; his marking “powerful and decisive” gives us a clue to the serious character of the piano’s opening music. Its initial rhythmic gesture, which often ends with a surprising pitch (a dissonant 7th), serves to unify this section, and also recurs later in the movement. When the strings enter in unison with a new theme, the music becomes more brutal (signified by instruction “hammered” to the pianist). One wonders whether this symbolizes Wittgenstein’s anger at war through Korngold’s eyes.

In stark contrast, the subject of the fugue, presented *pianissimo* by the cello, seems to suggest a different mood; however, its chromaticism and strategic trills reinforce the prelude’s pathos. Korngold makes his mastery of fugal technique obvious, allowing instruments to enter with the subject in order, but he also demonstrates a creative approach to the baroque design, interrupting it with unexpected twists, including a quiet second subject that starts imitatively but never develops contrapuntally. Unlike a traditional fugue, the movement finishes with a return to the texture and material of the prelude’s opening, ending with a triumphant, D-major chord.

Moving from a baroque genre to one from Viennese classicism, Korngold addresses the waltz, a staple of his native culture, in the quartet’s second movement. He gives little evidence of that model at the beginning of the movement, however, preferring a mysterious, rather tentative approach. Building off the dotted rhythm heard first in the strings, the composer eventually accelerates the tempo to the traditional speed of a Viennese waltz, interjecting trills, pizzicato, and arpeggios to great effect. Based on his treatment of the material, one wonders if this is more of a parody than a tribute to Korngold’s home city.

Beethoven, another Viennese icon, seems to be the subject of Korngold’s neo-classic foray in movement three. Here, he explores the scherzo/trio form, which Beethoven popularized in the late 18th century and beyond. In the bookend sections of the movement, Korngold uses unevenly spaced accents and irregular meters to provide turbulence and a sense of unrest to morph the “joke” of the scherzo into the “grotesque” of this movement’s

title. A quieter respite signals the central trio, which ends with a passage of unabashed Romanticism.

If one were not convinced of the composer’s ability to write powerful, emotionally charged music, the *Lied* of movement four should remove any doubt. Based on Korngold’s own song, “Was Du mir bist” (What You Are to Me), which later appeared as the first song in his Op. 22, this adaptation is the picture of sublime beauty, intensity, and emotionalism. At the same time, the composer seems to struggle with the limitations of writing for the pianist’s left hand only; the music seems to practically beg for the ability to hold chords and play melodic figures that are impossible in this setting. Occasionally, the violins’ portamento and glissando in the cello border on sappy, yet the composer manages to keep them from becoming maudlin.

Korngold’s finale continues to rely on the lovely song from Op. 22, using a variant of its main melody to sing through the cello’s first theme. This version of the song consists of four segments, each of which begins with the same gesture, a rising perfect fourth. The eight minutes of music that follow are a rollercoaster ride of emotion that vacillates between intense passion and quiet reverie. The more contemplative moments begin by reducing the texture to solo piano, and then expanding it to unleash the pent-up fervor, which characterizes the composer’s musical language. The second of the reveries deserves special mention, as it includes the eerie sound of *col legno* (drawing the wood of the across the strings of the violin and cello). For the grand finale of his massive suite, Korngold takes a grand pause, reminds us again of the simplicity of the opening theme, and then ends with a flourish that reveals the composer’s roots in 19th century Romanticism.

Phillip Thomas, Ph. D.
Lee University

Thank you to Dr. Phillip Thomas for tonight’s program notes

COVER ART:

John Henry Twachtman (1853 - 1902), Snow Scene, circa 1890. Oil on canvas. 10 × 14 inches.
A gift of a friend of the museum, 1993.42

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