

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**USCB Chamber Music: Magnificent Music Making**

by Michael Johns

USCB Chamber Music's 45th season promises to be its biggest, most varied, and richest. An international array of string, wind, brass, percussion and vocal soloists will perform music written in the 1600's to music currently being composed, from Argentina, Austria, Bosnia, Brazil, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the United States. Artistic Director, pianist, host, and high-wattage personality Andrew Armstrong has assembled an all-star cast of talent to animate a spectacular range of colors, moods, and styles.

The opening concert, Sunday, November 10, 5:00, features Stefan Jackiw, one of America's foremost violinists, and clarinetist Yoonah Kim, hailed by *The New York Times* for her "inexhaustible virtuosity." They begin with Schubert's calming, transcendent, non-denominational "Ave Maria," arranged for violin and clarinet. Mr. Armstrong joins them for the spirited and sublime Poulenc Clarinet Sonata, Stravinsky's crisp, neo-classic trio-version of *L'Histoire du Soldat*, Richard Strauss' extravagant, bursting-at-the-seams Violin Sonata, Op. 18, and closes the evening with Astor Piazzolla's raucous and untamed *Libertango*.

When have you experienced an integrated concert of trumpet, voice, guitar, violin, and piano? The New Year brings such an opportunity. On Sunday, January 12, 2025, 5:00, hear Belgian trumpeter/vocalist Jeroen Berwaerts, Balkan-American guitarist Mak Grgić, Hungarian-American violinist Abigél Králik, and home-grown Andy Armstrong perform a concert traversing continents, centuries, and genres. Baroque composers Leonora Duarte and J. S. Bach, classical-period standouts Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Ludwig van Beethoven (Violin Sonata No. 7), twentieth-century nationalists George Enescu, Heitor Villa-Lobos, and Miroslav Tadić, along with song composers Richard Rodgers and Jacques Brel, will all be represented. It promises to be a luscious collage of tuneful, memorable, and evocative musical delights. That Saturday, January 11, at 3:00, the players present a second-annual, one-hour, Youth Concert. This

FREE for Youth event features conversations about music and performances of works by Enescu, Beethoven, Tartini, et. al.

Sunday, February 16, 5:00 is a joyous homecoming, reuniting cellist and former Artistic Director Edward Arron and pianist Jeewon Park with Lowcountry audiences. They have recently been augmenting their national and international reputations and will serve up three duo works: Gaspar Cassadó's *Requiebros*; a Spanish-inflected dedication piece for Pablo Casals, Arvo Pärt's hypnotic and deeply meditative *Spiegel im Spiegel*, and one of the most significant cello sonatas of the nineteenth century, Felix Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 2, for Cello and Piano. Andy will perform a surprise original work of his own composition and team-up with Jeewon for four-hand versions of Gabriel Faure's *Dolly Suite*, an affectionate, chiffon cupcake of childlike naïveté, and George Gershwin's adventures of a tourist sampling European glories, *An American in Paris*.

The first half of the Sunday, March 9, 5:00. concert features *Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Quartet* by Ernest Chausson. This is powerful and fiery music, orchestral in its capacity to thrill with sweeping waves of sound and operatic in its ability to create compelling emotional scenarios. Frequent and much-appreciated guest violinist Amy Schwartz Moretti joins Andy for the solo roles. The accompanying quartet consists of four members of the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings program at Mercer University. On most programs this outsized work would occupy the second half. On March 9th, however, that honor goes to the largest ensemble ever to appear on this series, a conductor-less chamber orchestra of 13 accomplished and vigorous performers from the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings. They will collaborate with Ms. Moretti on J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3. The program will close with a dazzling work so cherished that its popularity can be whispered in the same breath as Beethoven's 5th Symphony and Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus:" Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Ms. Moretti will be the brilliant soloist in the Spring and Winter movements.

Sunday, April 6, 5:00 the season concludes with soprano Indra Thomas, marimba virtuoso Eriko Daimo, and composer/saxophonist Alison Shearer joining Andy for a gala celebration including a world premiere and music for recital-halls, opera-stages, campgrounds, and jazz-clubs. It begins with Baroque structural perfection and energy by Johann Sebastian Bach and continues with the Impressionistic shimmer of Debussy, arranged for marimba. Three opera arias: "Pace, pace mio dio," from *La Forza del Destino* (Verdi), "O mio babbino caro,"

from *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini), “Vissi d'Arte,” from *Tosca*, and Alison Shearer's world premiere, *Luminescence*, for soprano, alto saxophone, marimba, and piano, close the first half. This three-movement work has a unique Lowcountry point of view as Ms. Shearer formed some of her musical impressions one spring evening sitting on a Bay Street porch and later reading Lowcountry descriptions by Dr. Lawrence Rowland and Pat Conroy. The second half includes Richard Strauss' haunting miniature to love and reverie, *Morgen!* (Tomorrow!), Opus 27, No. 4, followed by two African-American spirituals, “Deep River” and “Ride On, King Jesus!” The energy then turns from religious-folksong introspection to delicate Romanticism and acrobatic brilliance with Emmanuel Séjourné's *Concerto for Marimba and Strings*, which leads surprisingly to the jazz-standard, “Misty,” by Erroll Garner for the memorable conclusion to an adventurous season.

The 45th USCB Chamber Music Season has multiple musical delights for every palette and sensibility. Artistic Director Andy Armstrong has scoured the western chamber music repertoire for brilliantly absorbing and passionately heartwarming compositions and secured impeccably trained and technically polished artists to perform them. Experience in-the-moment creativity with musicians who arrive in Beaufort with performance-earned reputations in hand, assuring they will deliver intriguing, soothing, probing, joyous, and memorable concerts. On merit, USCB Chamber Music has risen to an enviable position; the 2024-2025 season is almost entirely sold out by subscription. There are some seats remaining but do not take the chance at missing out on this exciting season; reserve your seats today for the Lowcountry's premiere chamber music series.

There are three ways to enjoy each concert: in person and virtually by Live-Stream and On- Demand. All virtual concerts are professionally produced, creating great viewing opportunities. On- Demand is accessible four days after the concert and available to view at your leisure for three weeks. For concert, artist, event, and ticket information, go to [www.uscbchambermusic.com](http://www.uscbchambermusic.com) or call 843-208- 8246, Monday through Friday. The concerts are on five Sundays, November 10, 2024, January 12, 2025, February 16, March 9, and April 6, 5:00 pm at the USCB Center for the Arts, 801 Carteret Street, Beaufort in the downtown historic district.

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