



ENSEMBLE

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welcome

The **MELERensemble** is a flexible and innovative chamber collective, featuring a rotating roster of outstanding musicians who come together around a shared mission: harnessing music's power to inspire cultural dialogue, foster inclusion, and drive positive social impact. With a core group of dedicated artists, the ensemble creates vibrant, engaging programs that combine diverse musical traditions and repertoires. True to their name—mêler, meaning “to combine”—they blend styles and voices to craft transformative concert experiences that resonate beyond the stage.

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“...Unexpectedly entertaining. They told jokes that were not always the kind you'd expect from a concert experience. They were periodically risqué, very light-hearted, and casual.”

-New York Times

“This was a performance I never wanted to end.

-Peninsula Reviews

about us

The **MELERensemble** brings together musicians from diverse cultural and musical backgrounds, whose collective experience spans six continents. This rich tapestry of perspectives informs their artistic practice, from programming choices that celebrate both canonical and underrepresented works to their commitment to creating inclusive musical spaces. The ensemble is dedicated to educating new generations of musicians and music lovers in diverse settings, blending their unique backgrounds through collaborations ranging from the standard canon of repertoire to unusual and rarely performed chamber works. Passionate about community engagement and education, the ensemble invites audiences to become active participants in the concert experience, promoting social causes, art as activism, and multidisciplinary collaborative performances.

The ensemble has performed at prestigious venues and festivals including Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Park Lane Series at London Southbank Centre, Lakes Area Music Festival in Minnesota, Washington Performing Arts, Missouri River Festival, Amadeus Concerts, Bard Spiegeltent, Hudson Opera House, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and Cabrillo College.

The ensemble's commitment to music education and community outreach has been recognized with the prestigious McGraw-Hill Robert Sherman Award for Music Education and Community Outreach, which led to their radio debut on WQXR. Their dedication to community building has led them to serve as Artist-in-Residence at 23Arts in the Catskills, Grace Church in The Plains, Virginia, and Guild Hall, where they received mentorship from renowned artist Laurie Anderson. Beyond their artistic pursuits, the **MELERensemble** demonstrates their commitment to service through benefit performances, including fundraisers for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, embodying their belief in music as a force for social good.

The name of the group comes from the French word *mêler*, meaning "to combine", reflecting their approach to blending works of varied instrumentations and bringing together diverse musical elements.



core bios



Isabelle Ai Durrenberger

Hailed for her expressive depth and fearless artistry, violinist Isabelle Ai Durrenberger is rapidly emerging as one of the most compelling chamber musicians of her generation. A 2023-25 fellow of Carnegie Hall’s prestigious Ensemble Connect and the newly appointed

first violinist of the acclaimed Aeolus Quartet, Isabelle performs regularly with the Boston Chamber Music Society, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and A Far Cry. Based in New York City, she is a sought-after collaborator noted for her magnetic stage presence and imaginative musical voice.



Emilie-Anne Gendron

Celebrated for her “brilliant” solo playing (The New York Times) and “marvellous and lyrical” interpretations (The Strad), violinist Emilie-Anne Gendron maintains a vibrant international career. A cornerstone of New York’s chamber music scene, she serves as concertmaster of the

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and is a longtime member of the acclaimed Momena Quartet. A Marlboro Festival regular and founding member of Ensemble Échappé and Gamut Bach Ensemble, Emilie-Anne brings elegance, intellect, and fearless versatility to the stage



Tanner Menees

Violist Tanner Menees is lauded for his sumptuous tone, incisive musical intellect, and commanding artistry. A graduate of the Colburn School and the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Kim Kashkashian, Tanner is a featured performer at leading festivals

including Marlboro, Ravinia, and Chamberfest Cleveland. He collaborates with major figures such as Mitsuko Uchida and Susan Graham, and regularly champions new American music through his work with Copland House. He performs on a fine 19th-century Milanese viola, courtesy of Guarneri Hall and Darnton & Hersh.



Ryo Usami

Violinist and violist Ryo Usami is a rising international talent known for his radiant sound and versatility across repertoire. He has performed with the LA Philharmonic, Boston Pops, and National Symphony, and at festivals including Pacific Music Festival (Japan),

Festival Napa Valley, and Aurora Chamber Music Festival (Sweden). Ryo is a member of “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Chamber Orchestra and Principal Second of the Santa Barbara Symphony. His dynamic artistry and global presence make him a standout in today’s chamber music scene.

core bios



Khari Joyner

Internationally acclaimed for his charismatic stage presence and profound artistry, cellist Khari Joyner is a force in contemporary classical music. He has premiered major works by Tyshawn Sorey, Kaija Saariaho, and Carman Moore, and performed with Orpheus Chamber

Orchestra and symphonies across the U.S. A dynamic educator and advocate, Khari has led transformative residencies across Asia, Europe, and North America. His performances—from the Oval Office to Carnegie Hall—reflect a deep commitment to artistic excellence, innovation, and social impact.



Angelo Quail

Clarinetist Angelo Quail is a dynamic performer praised for his “mellow sound and adroit breath control” (South Florida Classical Review). A member of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, he has appeared with world-renowned ensembles including The Cleveland

Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, and Toronto Symphony. He has performed on major international stages and recorded for high-profile projects like Netflix’s Chef’s Table and BBC’s Blue Planet. Angelo’s versatility and expressive range make him a standout voice in today’s clarinet scene.



Camille Zamora

Soprano Camille Zamora is renowned for her vivid artistry and arresting emotional power. Acclaimed by The New York Times for her “dramatic and nuanced” performances, she has sung with Yo-Yo Ma, Plácido Domingo, and Sting, and headlined at the Kennedy Center,

Lincoln Center, and internationally. Her wide-ranging repertoire spans from opera to American song, and recent performances—including La voix humaine and Pagliacci—have earned national recognition. Camille’s work exemplifies the intersection of vocal brilliance and deep artistic integrity.



Tanya Gabrielian

Praised by The London Times for her “powerful physical and imaginative muscle,” pianist Tanya Gabrielian commands the stage with fearless virtuosity and penetrating insight. She has appeared in major venues on five continents—from Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center to the

Sydney Opera House and Wigmore Hall—and performed with orchestras such as the LA Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony. Tanya gained international recognition after winning back-to-back first prizes at the Scottish International Piano Competition and the Aram Khachaturian International Piano Competition.

sample program

Echoes of the Mind

Echoes of the Mind invites listeners on an emotional and deeply human journey through music shaped by inner struggle and unwavering creativity. Featuring works by composers who faced significant mental health challenges, this program is a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit and a reminder that everyone—regardless of their personal circumstances—can make enduring contributions to the world.

Rachmaninoff's Trio élégiaque No. 1, written at just 19, foreshadows a career marked by both soaring musical expression and lifelong depression. Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2, composed during World War II, reflects the weight of grief, fear, and oppression, with haunting themes that capture both personal and collective suffering. Smetana's Piano Trio in G minor, an elegy for his daughter, channels raw, Romantic emotion and was written before his descent into deafness and madness. These works are more than masterful compositions—they are acts of courage, vulnerability, and humanity. Through them, we are reminded that even in times of great pain, beauty and meaning can emerge—and that every voice, no matter the struggle, has the power to resonate.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor (1892)

Lento lugubre - Moderato - Allegro - Lento

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67

I. Andante - Moderato

II. Allegro con brio

III. Largo

IV. Allegretto

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 15

I. Moderato assai

II. Allegro, ma non agitato

III. Finale - Presto

sample program

Resilience and Renewal

This program traces the journey of resilience and artistic rebirth through three works by composers shaped by cultural transition, personal adversity, and the search for belonging.

Jessie Montgomery's *Strum* opens the concert with infectious energy and rhythmic drive. Drawing from jazz, spirituals, and American folk traditions, it captures the optimism and creative momentum of building community from diverse voices.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold's *Suite for Piano (Left Hand) and Strings*, composed in exile after fleeing Nazi-occupied Austria, is a deeply expressive and virtuosic work. Written for Paul Wittgenstein, who lost his right arm in World War I, it is a testament to artistic endurance in the face of loss and dislocation. The program closes with Antonín Dvořák's *Piano Quintet in A Major*, a radiant affirmation of national identity and cultural memory. Written after his return from the United States, the quintet is infused with Czech folk rhythms and melodies—an homage to home and heritage.

Together, these works explore how music can carry the weight of history, express longing, and ultimately celebrate renewal.

Jesse Montgomery (b. 1981)

Strum (2006)

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)

Suite for Piano (Left Hand) and Strings, Op. 23

I. Präludium

II. Waltz (Walzer)

III. Grotteske

IV. Lied

V. Rondo - Finale

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Piano Quintet No. 2. in A Major, Op. 81

I. Allegro, ma non tanto

II. Dumka: Andante con moto

III. Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace

IV. Finale: Allegro

sample program

Sounds of Passage

Sounds of Passage explores how immigration, heritage, and cultural fusion have shaped American music. Each work on this program reflects a journey across borders—whether geographic or cultural—and the creativity that emerges from those experiences.

Kian Ravaei’s Variations on "This Land Is Your Land" offers a vivid tone painting that weaves together American folk themes with the rich musical heritage of his Iranian ancestry. Béla Bartók, who immigrated to the United States fleeing fascist Europe, blends Eastern European folk traditions with modernist innovation in Contrasts.

Rebecca Clarke, an English émigré, expresses introspection and resilience in her Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale for clarinet and viola, while Paul Schoenfield, born to immigrant families, infuses klezmer and folk idioms into his spirited Trio, celebrating the vibrant cultural mosaic of America.

Together, these works illustrate how immigration and heritage shape not only individual identities but also the evolving soundscape of American music.

Kian Ravaei (b. 1999)

Variations on “This Land is Your Land” (2023)

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Bartók’s Contrasts, Sz. 111

I. Verbunkos

II. Pihenő

III. Sebes

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale

Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano (1990)

I. Freylakh

II. March

III. Nigun

IV. Kozatske



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