

Transcript: CMS at Home Summer Evening Series 10.15.20

(Video begins with snippet of Haydn's String Quartet Opus No. 55 playing)

WU HAN [00:58] Good evening, and greetings from our backyard! I am Wu Han and this is David Finckel, and together, we're the artistic directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

DAVID FINCKEL: We welcome you to another refreshing concert in our Summer Evening Series. In keeping with our Summer Evenings tradition of starting off in the glorious baroque period, we would like to introduce cellist Mihai Marica who will acquaint you with a delightful cello sonata by the Italian violinist and composer Francesco Geminiani.

MIHAI MARICA: Hi, my name is Mihai. I play the cello and I'm currently in New York *(snippet of Geminiani's music plays)*

MIHAI MARICA: Geminiani was many things during his life. He was born in Lucca, Italy and ended up making a big enough career to travel abroad, ending up in London and eventually finding the end of his life in Dublin.

I think for that time, it would have taken a great personality and a great character to achieve these things, and you can really hear that in his writing. It always strikes me as very impressive how unchained his creativity is. You can hear him pushing the boundaries of what was done at the time, at the end of the baroque era, and kind of not letting himself be stifled by that. *(snippet of Geminiani's music plays)*

This performance of the Geminiani C Major Sonata is high up there on my favorite memories on the CMS stage. Geminiani being a violinist, I think he treated the cello with extreme creativity. There are things in there that are technically challenging to achieve, but once I heard them in Geminiani's hands, they seemed...natural for the instrument. Although, as a cellist, I know they're not.

DAVID FINCKEL: And now, from a performance on December 7th, 2014, let's hear Geminiani's Sonata for Cello and Continuo in C Major, Opus 5 Number 2. Timothy Eddy is the solo cellist, backed up by continuo cellist Mihai Marica, and harpsichordist Kenneth Weiss.

(performance begins of Geminiani's Sonata for Cello and Continuo in C Major begins at [03:42])

WU HAN [16:42]: It's a great pleasure now to welcome violinist Daniel Phillips, of the Orion String Quartet, who will introduce us to one of Joseph Haydn's immortal string quartets.

DANIEL PHILLIPS: I'm Daniel Phillips, I'm a violinist in the Orion String Quartet, which has been around now for 32 years, and I live in Manhattan with the great flutist Tara Helen O'Connor who you saw last week [on another CMS At Home performance]. *(snippet of Haydn's string quartet plays)*

DANIEL PHILLIPS: Oh I would say that I like the Haydn quartets as much or better than I did when I was a student, because of the timing, the character, and also the conversing. *(snippet of Haydn's string quartet plays)*

DANIEL PHILLIPS: By Opus 50, he [Haydn] already had this idea of "conversing" kind of down. For instance, it starts with the two violins playing together, and the viola and cello answer *(singing)* "da-da-DA, da-DA, da-DUM". It's a simple idea, but it's a conversation. And then...the second violin/viola take

up the scene too, and then the first violinist goes off and does something else. *(snippet of Haydn's string quartet plays)*

DANIEL PHILLIPS: This one is nicknamed "The Dream", and that's because of the slow movement, and --- you will hear right away--it conjures up the image of kind of a spiritual, unconscious dreamlike state. And honestly, it's quite similar, if you didn't know who wrote it, you might have thought "that must be Beethoven in his late period or perhaps Mahler". And here it was written in 1787, way before Beethoven even got his true voice going.

DAVID FINCKEL: And now from a concert in Alice Tully Hall on April 25th, 2017, let's hear the Orion Quartet--Todd and Daniel Phillips, violist Steven Tenenbom, and cellist Timothy Eddy—perform Haydn's String Quartet Opus 50, No. 5, nicknamed "The Dream".

(Performance begins of Haydn's Quartet in F Major for Strings, Op. 50, No. 5, at [19:33])

WU HAN [37:36]: We will close this concert with one of the most moving and powerful works in the classical music repertoire, the *Appalachian Spring Suite* by Aaron Copland in its original instrumentation for 13 instruments. We have asked one of CMS' most popular artists, violinist Kristen Lee, to introduce this performance in which she leads the ensemble from the first violin chair.

KRISTEN LEE: Hello everybody, my name is Kristen Lee. I am calling from new York city and I play the violin with the Chamber Music Society. *(snippet of Copland's Appalachian Spring Suite plays)*

KRISTEN LEE: I think what's really unique about this piece is that when the "Simple Gifts" tune finally comes at the end, it really comes out of something that you weren't expecting. And the way Copland introduces this tune initially is with solo clarinet, so it has this very sweet and tender, and slightly vulnerable feeling in the tune when it's first introduced. And over the span of only a couple minutes, it almost turns in to this variation and evolves into so many different forms.

What's really unique is that after all of this, the piece doesn't end there with this "grandiose" of feeling, it goes back much more to the "inward" feeling, where he writes "Like a Prayer". And so, the piece ends with sort of an unresolved harmonic chord that's an open Major 7th chord that just sort of feels a little bit left "upward", and doesn't actually feel like it's complete. *(snippet of Copland's Appalachian Spring Suite plays)*

KRISTEN LEE: It's very unique that Copland ends the piece with this unresolved interval. What you first hear is the C Major chord, what is the most standard and resolved chord, but on top of it, he layers it with another set of three notes, ending in the note "B", which is the note that clashes the most with the note "C". And, for me, what that exemplifies is humanity. I think it's the fact that humans aren't meant to be perfect, we're not. We live and strive to be better, but we live in this world where the imperfections of people and the vulnerability of people and the fact that people are continuing to try and get better—knowing that we'll never actually reach what is perfect—is what makes us beautiful and important and continuing to become better. I think what Copland is trying to say is [that] seeing the beauty in the imperfections of the world-- that in itself is perfect. *(snippet of Copland's Appalachian Spring Suite plays)*

DAVID FINCKEL: And now, from a concert in Alice Tully Hall on October 15th, 2019, let's bask in the unforgettable atmosphere of Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, the extraordinary ensemble of CMS musicians led by violinist Kristen Lee.

(performance begins of Copland's Appalachian Spring Suite, at [41:23])

DAVID FINCKEL [1:06:37]: If you enjoyed this concert, please donate to your local chamber music presenter who brought you this program. As you can imagine, the pandemic has challenged those who bring chamber music to your community, as well as the musicians who perform it. So if you consider donating to your chamber music series for this concert, perhaps in the amount of your regular concert ticket, you'll be helping to ensure that your chamber music series will be there for you when we can all meet again in the concert hall. Thank you for your consideration and for your support of chamber music at this critical time.