



# Faculty Tuesdays Series

## George Rochberg Centennial Celebration

Christina Jennings, flute  
Erika Eckert, viola  
Margaret McDonald, piano  
Andrew Jennings, guest violin  
Charles Wetherbee, violin  
Matthew Dane, viola  
Thomas Heinrich, cello  
David Korevaar, piano

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2018  
Grusin Music Hall  
Imig Music Building

# Program

## **Caprice Variations** (1972)

arr. Christina Jennings

- I. Allegro energico
- II. Allegro fantastico
- III. Allegretto
- IV. Andante con moto after Brahms Op. 35, Bk. 1, No. 12
- V. Languido after Schubert Waltz Op. 9 No. 22
- VI. Aria
- VII. Fantasy
- VIII. Quasi presto: robusto Paganini's Theme (Caprice XXIV, Bk. II)

## **Sonata for Viola and Piano** (1979)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Adagio lamentoso
- III. Fantasia: Epilogue

## **Intermission**

## **Quintet for Piano and Strings** (1981)

- I. Introduction
- II. Fantasia
- III. Fugue-Scherzo
- IV. Sfumato
- V. Little Variations
- VI. Molto Allegro Con Spirito
- VII. Epilogue

# Program Notes

## Caprice Variations

George Rochberg, one of the unique American minds of the last century, composed in an astonishing diversity of voices. His compositional style was at first firmly rooted in the atonal and serial movements, and eventually shifted towards neo-baroque and highly romantic. This move towards tonality was precipitated by the death of his teenaged son in 1964. As a result of this tragedy, Rochberg experienced a personal and artistic crisis that caused a complete reevaluation of his music, eventually culminating in his 1971 String Quartet No. 3. This landmark composition, along with his Concord String Quartets Nos. 4-6, featured a dominant use of tonality with clear influences from Beethoven, Mahler and Pachelbel. In total, seven quartets and quintets were written for the Concord String Quartet, in which my father, Andrew Jennings, was the second violinist. This unique music was the soundtrack of my childhood, and I absorbed Rochberg's distinctive vocabulary during my own musical development.

I have explored Rochberg's original flute works in two volumes of recorded music on Naxos Records, but his *Caprice Variations* have long been a subject of fascination for me. This publication is my transcription of the original 1970 collection for solo violin. Entirely based on the theme of Niccolò Paganini's 24th Caprice, these masterful pieces demonstrate the stylistic compositional variety for which Rochberg was known. In these pieces we hear clear homages to Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Bartok and Schoenberg. Flutists have a long tradition of borrowing from the violin repertoire; in a similar vein to this project, the 24 Caprices by Paganini have been transcribed by countless flutists, from John Wummer to Claire Chase. We dive into this repertoire to play great works with virtuosic flair, to learn new techniques, stretch our own capacity and most of all to have a little fun!

—Christina Jennings

## Sonata for Viola and Piano

Rochberg's Sonata for Viola and Piano was the result of a commission from friends of William Primrose, the American Viola Society and Brigham Young University, in honor of Primrose's 75th birthday. The work was first performed in July of that year at the seventh International Viola Congress on the Brigham Young campus. The sonata is a major work in three movements, the first of which begins boldly with a soaring melody in the viola covering that instrument's highest range. This gives way to a fugato tune, stated first in the piano, and characterized by its heavy accents. After the viola and piano develop the fugato tune, a third melodic component emerges; a heavily dotted, jagged melody which is accompanied by repeated chord clusters. Rochberg combines and develops these three components throughout, and the movement dies away with quiet statements of fragments from the fugato tune. The beautiful second movement is a plaintive song whose melody, stated in the viola, is accompanied differently each time it returns. The closing *Fantasia* is a short postlude to the sonata. Here, fragments of themes from the first movement—both the lyrical opening line and the dotted melody—return in a free, discursive style, as if they are mere recollections of the first movement, tempered by the song which has intervened.

—Kendall L. Crilly

## Quintet for Piano and Strings

There have not been many great works of art whose “birth” happened on talk radio, but George Rochberg’s Quintet for Piano and Strings is one such. In 1970, Rochberg, chairman of the composition program at the University of Pennsylvania, was a highly respected composer who had cut his musical teeth in the style of the great Second Viennese School of Schoenberg—with whom he briefly studied—and more directly with the legacy of Alban Berg. His works were intense, often dense and frequently serial, demanding the greatest focus and intensity from performers and audiences alike. That year, two commissions came his way; one from pianist Jerome Lowenthal, for a solo work, and another through the Naumburg Foundation for the debut of the Concord String Quartet, of which I was a member. The first to be completed was the String Quartet No. 3, which had its premiere at Lincoln Center in 1972. In it, Rochberg turned his back on what he had been doing for 20 years and instead created a vast pastiche of movements, filled with stylistic nods to everything from Beethoven to Mahler, Stravinsky to Berg, and “broke the mold of academic music composition.” The piece received a reaction at its premiere reminiscent of the premiere of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*; shouts of “bravo,” screams of approval and disapproval, boos and some bewilderment and a much longer-than-usual intermission with raised voices, as well as an astounding amount of notice in the press. Commissions started to come at Rochberg in great numbers and he was the “it” composer of the early 70s. The work for Lowenthal followed shortly, *Carnival Music*, which showed a similar brash disregard of what a “normal” composer should be writing. Sometime after its premiere Russell Sherman, then the host of a very popular radio program on the New York Times’ WQXR invited Rochberg, Lowenthal and the quartet to come on and talk about this new direction in music, and to play brief excerpts from each work. I no longer remember exactly where the suggestion to combine the quartet with Jerry in a single new work came from, but it took root, on the air, and in a very intense, somewhat cocktail-fueled lunch after the show a firm deal was struck to complete just such a work and to schedule performances in New York and elsewhere (as well as to record it for Nonesuch.)

The resulting work, which you will hear tonight, had its official premiere in 1974 at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center, and it was again a dizzying assemblage of stylistic references; some of his most acerbic, violent music as well as a D Major fugue and wild dances in all vocabularies. It is a virtuoso work for all involved and compelling listening. It is hard to recapture just how revolutionary this piece and its companions sounded in 1976, for the simple reason that they changed the entire landscape of American concert music. Hardly a piece written since then has not benefited from the freedom his works modeled.

The Quintet for Piano and Strings is a massive work, cast in seven movements in a kind of arch form. The short first movement, *Introduction*, provides a musical challenge with widely contrasting characters. The final movement, some forty-five minutes later, takes many of the same materials as well as some others from the quintet, but treats them almost nostalgically as if the intensity of the opening has been fully exhausted. The second and fifth movements are large-scale scherzo-fantasias, each have multiple characters, all on the intense side of things. The three middle movements are an arch of their own. The third is a grand fugue in D major that goes by at great velocity. The fourth is marked *Sfumato*, or shadowed, and is for the solo piano. It consists of three phrases rising from extreme bass to extreme treble and growing from pianissimo to fortissimo, each one more dramatic than the last. In fifth position is a set he called *Little Variations*. As a student, Rochberg made his living playing cocktail piano in a club in New Jersey. His future wife, Gene, used to meet him there, and they would finish out the evening with a popular song called *It’s three o’clock in the morning*. That tune, much transformed, is the basis of this stunning movement and also perhaps explains why the Quintet was dedicated to his wife.

Thanks to all my old and new colleagues here at CU for being willing to undertake such a huge project.  
—Andrew Jennings

# About the Performers

## **Andrew Jennings, violin**

Naumburg Award-winning violinist Andrew Jennings, has achieved international acclaim as both a performer and a teacher. As a soloist and chamber musician, he has appeared in virtually every state and province in the United States and Canada, as well as most of the major cities in Europe. He can be heard on recordings for RCA, Nonesuch, Vox, Turnabout, CRI, Danacord, Crystal and MMO, and these recordings have twice received Grammy recognition. Television appearances both here and abroad have also received numerous awards, including an Emmy. His chamber music career has included a 16-year tenure with the acclaimed Concord String Quartet, as well as the Gabrielli Trio and his current membership in the Concord Trio. As a leading exponent of new music, he has given nearly 300 premiere performances, as well as acclaimed surveys of the complete chamber and duo works of Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Ives, Brahms, Rochberg, Bartok and others. His primary teachers were Pamela Gearhart, Alexander Schneider and Ivan Galamian, and his chamber music studies were with the Juilliard and Budapest String Quartets. Jennings' teaching credentials include long-term appointments as artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College and 25 years as professor at the Oberlin College Conservatory. His students have won important international competitions, such as Naumburg and Fischoff, and hold positions in orchestras, string quartets and universities throughout this country and abroad, including two winners of the Avery Fisher Prize.

Jennings has performed with many of the world's greatest musicians including Richard Goode, Garrick Ohlsson, Jorge Bolet, Lukas Foss, Manahem Pressler, Bernard Greenhouse, Walter Trampler, James Levine, Stephanie Blythe, Dawn Upshaw, the Juilliard Quartet, Donald Weilerstein, Joseph Kalichstein, Alexander Schneider and others. He currently is professor of violin and chamber music at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and on the artist faculty of the Boston Symphony's Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts where, for the past thirty years, he has held the Richard Burgin Master Teacher Chair. Recent concerts have taken him around the country, playing the 51 Solo Caprice Variations by American composer George Rochberg and the Kafka Fragments of Gyorgy Kurtag, frequent recitals with his wife, Gail and numerous appearances at chamber music festivals and series. In 2016, he gave the world premieres of eight new works and played the complete works of Bach for violin in three recitals. A PBS documentary/portrait on the integration of a western string quartet and a trio of indigenous Ecuadoran musicians, *Musica Mestiza*, is currently airing throughout the country and has been nominated for an Emmy. The Jennings' three daughters are all professional musicians and their four grandsons make joyful noise as well. His video performance of the Rochberg Caprices can be found on YouTube.

# Upcoming Performances

🎟 Ticketed events   📺 Live broadcast at [cupresents.org](http://cupresents.org)

## Thursday, Oct. 18

### **Guitar Celebration Recital 📺**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

## Friday, Oct. 19

### **Diverse Musicians' Alliance 📺**

**INTERSECT: A Celebration of**

**Diverse Musics and Stories**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

## Saturday, Oct. 20

### **Wind Symphony**

**At Boulder's Rayback Collective**

1 p.m., Boulder Rayback Collective

## Monday, Oct. 22

### **Concert Band 📺**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

## Thursday, Oct. 25

### **Chamber Orchestra 📺**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

## Friday, Nov. 2

### **Artist Series**

### **Venice Baroque Orchestra 🎟**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

## Sunday, Nov. 4

### **CU Choirs 📺**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

## Sunday, Nov. 11

### **Ekstrand Competition Finals 📺**

2 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

## Wednesday, Nov. 14

### **Symphonic Band 📺**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

## Thursday, Nov. 15

### **Wind Symphony 📺**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

## Friday, Nov. 16

### **Artist Series**

### **Sarah Chang, violin 🎟**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

## Thursday, Nov. 29

### **Symphony Orchestra 📺**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

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