



da Capo

Da Capo Chamber Players
NY Consortium for New Music
215 West 90th Street, #1G
New York, NY 10024
da-capo.org



da Capo

DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS

PURE MOTION

MUSIC INSPIRED BY MOVEMENT OF ALL KINDS

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your cell phones and other
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The logo for da Capo, featuring the words "da Capo" in a stylized, handwritten script font.

DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS 54TH SEASON

Roberta Michel, *flute*
Marianne Gythfeldt, *clarinet*
Curtis Macomber, *violin*
Chris Gross, *cello*
Steven Beck, *piano*

GUEST ARTIST

Amber Neff, *dance*

TENRI CULTURAL CENTER

Sunday | September 28, 2025 | 7:30 pm

PURE MOTION

Thomas Ades – *Catch, op. 4*

Marianne Gythfeldt, Curtis Macomber, Chris Gross, Steven Beck

Vera Ivanova – *The Firebird's Feather* (2024)

Roberta Michel

Lembit Beecher – *Stories from my Grandmother* (2009)

Roberta Michel, Marianne Gythfeldt, Curtis Macomber,
Chris Gross, Steven Beck

INTERMISSION

Alvin Lucier – *Love Song* (2016)

Curtis Macomber, Chris Gross

Ursula Mamlok – *Rotations* (2011)

Chris Gross, Steven Beck

Augusta Read Thomas – *Acrobats* (2018)

Amber Neff, Roberta Michel, Marianne Gythfeldt, Curtis Macomber,
Chris Gross, Steven Beck

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM



Thomas Adès – *Catch, op. 4*

Catch structures itself around various combinations of the four instruments. There are several games going on: at the start, the clarinet is the outsider, the other three are the unit, then, after a decoy entry, the clarinet takes the initiative. All four then play jovial 'pig-in-the-middle' with each other. The clarinet is then phased out leaving a sullen piano and cello, with interjections based on the clarinet's original tune. This slower passage gradually mutates back into fast music, and this time the game is in earnest: the piano is squeezed out, only to lure the clarinet finally into the snare of its own music. — *Thomas Adès*



Vera Ivanova – *The Firebird's Feather* (2024)

The Firebird's Feather for flute solo is written at request of Michael Matsuno, the first performer of the piece. The piece is inspired by the legend of the Firebird (from Russian fairy tales) and partially by its interpretation by Igor Stravinsky in his famous ballet score "The Firebird" (specifically, by the overtone glissandos in strings from the Introduction to the ballet). In all versions of this fairy tale, once upon a time, a simpleton is seeing at night a magic bird which leaves behind its feather. The simpleton picks up and brings the feather to the Tsar, who gives him an impossible task to catch the magic bird. That's the moment in the story which I am capturing – the vision of the firebird, who drops her feather, which lightens up the darkest night. To mimic a magical bird, the piece makes use of many extended performance techniques, and at some point, the performer is asked to articulate certain vowels and syllables mimicking bird's chirping (ti-ki- ti-ta, ph i-u) and pronouncing English transliteration of Russian words for "firebird" (zharptitsa) and "firebird's feather" (p r zharptitsy), later diminished to phonemes. — *Vera Ivanova*

Lembit Beecher – Stories from my Grandmother (2009) *Stories From My Grandmother* is a two movement suite excerpted from a 50-minute documentary oratorio called *And Then I Remember*. The oratorio weaves recorded interviews that I conducted with my grandmother with music performed



by a soprano soloist, small chorus, solo double bass and chamber ensemble. The piece follows the story of my grandmother, Taimi Lepasaar, who was born in Estonia in 1922 and survived both the Russian and German occupations of Estonia during World War II before escaping the country near the end of the war, eventually making it to the United States. The two movements of *Stories From My*

Grandmother are instrumental reflections on my grandmother's stories. The first movement, "It was Like a, Like a Lightning," tries to capture the visceral energy, fear and mournful sadness of one particular story, a portion of which I am including below:

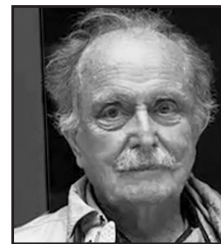
And then, was the summer 1940 and I was in Alatskivi with my grandparents. In the evening, there was a dance. About 6'o'clock we left the farm and we went to the castle to dance together. It was about 9:30... the music stopped.. and the announcement came that the Russian troops have come over Lake Peipsi; the Russian army is coming towards this castle, towards us. We ask you all to take your bicycles and go home. And then was Estonia was conquered. 1940, that summer. It was like a, like a lightning, like somebody had hit you on the back. And then we all rode quietly, it was a... June night. The moon was lighting the road, but the hearts were heavy. And we drove home and went to the farm, but the farm was far away from the highway up on the hill. Next morning we were all standing there on the fence under the big linden trees, watching how the Russian army, marched along that highway towards Tartu, towards our city, and this moment we shared together. You know, it seemed that all the dreams were broken.

The second movement, "Slow Memory," was not inspired by a specific story but is instead a meditation on memory and my grandmother's way of storytelling. It tries to capture the mix of emotion and matter-of-factness within her voice; the moments of gentle lilt and the moments of struggle, in which a feeling of sadness seems to break through the veil of her words.

— *Lembit Beecher*

Alvin Lucier – *Love Song* (2016)

A few years ago I went to see Robert Wilson's staging of *Lohengrin* at the Met. In the famous love duet he purposefully placed the singers far apart on either side of the stage. Usually singers in love duets are intertwined,



singing as they grasp each other. I thought how beautiful this was: you could hear the voices more clearly and even though they were spaced far apart their love for each other was not diminished at all. In fact the spacing made their love all the more poignant, like images in a haiku poem.

When I was asked to compose a duo for Conrad Harris and Pauline Kim the image of two players placed far apart on

the stage came to me. At the same time I envisioned connecting the bridges of the two violins with a long length of music wire. I discovered that one player's bowing could produce sound in the other player's instrument and that changing the tension of the wire as well as bow pressure on the open strings could produce amazing alterations in the resulting sounds.

Love Song was composed expressly for the duo String Noise who gave the work its first performance on October 11, 2016 at the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. — *Alvin Lucier*



Ursula Mamlok – *Rotations* (2011)

Rotations for cello and piano presents an easily recognizable melody within a framework of constant rhythmic and textural change in a one-movement sectional form. After a prelude-like introduction, Mamlok introduces the main theme, followed by a single variation. The third section consists of an ostinato with accompanimental flourishes. In

the final section, Mamlok inverts the ostinato before adding three additional variations on the main theme. *Rotations* begins and ends with the almost inaudible repetition of the pitch B, linked to a delicate, fluttering motive. These two conjoined gestures are also employed to articulate formal junctures within the work. Mamlok dedicated *Rotations* to cellist Jakob Spahn and pianist Holger Groschopp, who gave the first performance in Berlin in October 2011. — *Barry Wiener*

Augusta Read Thomas – *Acrobats* (2018)

The title *ACROBATS* hopefully captures the spirit of the dedicatee of the composition, Linda Reichert, who is radiant, elegant, brilliant, graceful, fun, beautiful, generous, sophisticated, and positive. I am grateful for her magnificence, twinkle, positive energy and skill at the many



"gymnastic feats" she has performed for contemporary music-at-large.

I care about craft, clarity, and passion. My works are organic and, at every level, concerned with transformations and connections. The carefully sculpted musical materials of *ACROBATS* are agile and energized, and their flexibility allows a way to braid harmonic, rhythmic, and

contrapuntal elements that are constantly transformed — at times whimsical and light, at times jazzy, at times layered and reverberating.

Across *ACROBATS*' six-minute duration, there unfolds a labyrinth of musical interrelationships and connections that showcase the musicians in a virtuosic display of rhythmic agility, counterpoint, skill, energy, dynamic range, clarity, and majesty. Throughout the kaleidoscopic journey, the work passes through many lively and colorful episodes, never losing its sense of dance, caprice, and effervescence.— *Augusta Read Thomas*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



The Da Capo Chamber Players has been hailed by *The New Yorker* as a "distinguished ensemble...at the center of the New York new-music scene for forty-five years" (May 2016). Winner of the Naumburg Chamber Music Award early in its trajectory (1973), the ensemble is about to enter its 54th season. The internationally acclaimed group has worked closely with today's most respected composers, building a heritage of present day American

chamber music drawn from an enormous spectrum of styles.

In response to the Covid pandemic's interruption of live concerts, Da Capo initiated *MUSICAL OFFERINGS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS*, a YouTube series combining previously recorded videos with current conversations. Composers and performers spoke about the power of music to help build awareness for Human Rights. The series featured works by Wendell Logan, Luciano Berio, Chinary Ung, Chou Wen-chung, Valerie Coleman, and Kyle Gann. The series

was viewed by listeners near and far and received enthusiastic responses.

Known for its unique and dedicated attention to every work, its dynamic performances are consistent with the highest musical standards found in performances of traditional repertoire. A further very important goal is to bring exciting American music to other destinations around the world, and to present musics of global cultures for American audiences.

The Da Capo Chamber Players' annual New York series has been praised for "superb" and "gripping" performances. Ground-breaking programs have included premieres by Elliott Carter, George Perle, Louis Karchin (*AMERICAN VISIONS*, setting of poems by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, with the poet as guest reader), Joan Tower, Shulamit Ran, Chinary Ung, and countless others.



This season pianist Steven Beck appears with the orchestras of Austin, Princeton, and Chattanooga, can be heard in chamber music in Chicago and Oklahoma City, and repeats his annual Christmas Eve performance of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* at Bargemusic, which has become a New York institution.

As a soloist Mr. Beck has performed with the New York Philharmonic and the National Symphony and has appeared at Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Library of Congress; summer concerts have been at the Aspen Music Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, and Lincoln Center Out of Doors. As an orchestral musician he has played with the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet Orchestra, and Orpheus.

An experienced performer of new music, Steven Beck has premiered works by Charles Wuorinen and Fred Lerdahl. He can be heard on over forty CDs, including the first complete recording of George Walker's piano sonatas for Bridge Records. Mr. Beck is a member of the Knights, the Talea Ensemble, Quattro Mani, and the Da Capo Chamber Players. He is on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and the Sewanee Summer Music Festival. A Steinway Artist, he is a graduate of the Juilliard School, where he now teaches orchestral piano.

Cellist **Christopher Gross'** performances have been praised by *The New York Times* "beautifully meshed readings...lustrous tone", and *The Strad* magazine "...



the tone of Gross' cello enveloped the crowd [as he] showed energy and intonational accuracy, even when racing around the fingerboard".

He is a founding member of the Talea Ensemble, a member of the Da Capo Chamber Players, and has appeared at venues and festivals throughout the US and Europe including Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Disney Hall, Darmstadt Festival,

Mostly Mozart Festival, Wien Modern, the Composers Conference and many others. As a soloist and ensemble member his premieres of new works are numerous, including works by Pierre Boulez Milton Babbitt, Charles Wuorinen, Georg Friedrich Haas, Brian Ferneough, Olga Neuwirth, James Dillon, Augusta Read Thomas, and many others. He has appeared on recordings on various labels, including Bridge, New Focus, Tzadik, and New World. As an orchestral musician, he has played with the New York Philharmonic and the Riverside Symphony.

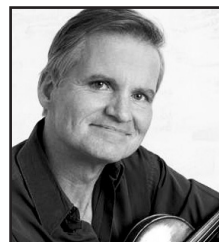
An active educator, he is a Teaching Artist with the New York Philharmonic and has given classes and lectures at Harvard University, Peabody Conservatory, Sydney Conservatory, Cleveland Cello Society, Brooklyn College, and the Walnut Hill School for the Arts. He is also the creator of *Cello Solos Today* (www.cellosolostoday.org), which commissions new works for young cellists and creates online educational resources. He received his doctoral degree from Juilliard in New York and teaches at Lehigh University.



Clarinetist **Marianne Gythfeldt** has played a central role in the music scene of New York City for three decades, as a chamber ensemble player, an electroacoustic music soloist, and educator. Winning the Naumburg chamber music award with New Millennium Ensemble in 1995 launched a wide-ranging career as clarinetist with Ensemble Sospeso, SEM Ensemble, Absolute Ensemble, Collide-o-scope Music, Da

Capo Chamber Players, Zephyros Winds and Talea Ensemble. As a freelance performer, she has performed with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and many others. Academic positions include William Paterson University, the University of Delaware and Brooklyn College where she is currently head of woodwinds at the Conservatory of Music. Ms. Gythfeldt's recent solo CD release on the New Focus label was called "...stunning...Gythfeldt

is setting a new standard for her instrument here." Marianne can also be heard on recordings by CBS Masterworks, CRI, Albany, Innova, New World Records, Koch and Mode Records.



The playing of violinist **Curtis Macomber** was praised recently by The New York Times for its "thrilling virtuosity" and by Strad Magazine for its "panache." He enjoys a varied and distinguished career as soloist, chamber musician, and teacher, and he has for several decades been recognized as one of this country's foremost interpreters and proponents of new music.

Mr. Macomber's extensive discography includes the complete Brahms and Grieg Sonatas; violin concertos by Martin Boykan and Laura Schwendinger; and hundreds of critically praised recordings of contemporary solo and chamber works.

His CD of Roger Sessions' *Solo Sonata* was acclaimed by American Record Guide as "one of the best recordings of 20th-Century solo violin music ever made." A solo CD entitled Songs of Solitude was named by *The New York Observer* as one of 1996's best instrumental solo discs — "Macomber's intensely human fiddle... seems an entire universe, sufficient unto itself." He has recorded for Nonesuch, Koch, Bridge, Arabesque, Naxos, Musical Heritage, and Albany; he has performed, commissioned, and made first recordings of solo violin and chamber works by, among others, Carter, Davidovsky, Perle, Wuorinen, and Macky.

Mr. Macomber is a founding member of the Apollo Piano Trio and a member of the Da Capo Chamber Players, the Manhattan String Quartet, the Walden Chamber Players, and the New York Chamber Soloists. He was for many years the violinist of Speculum Musicase and has also appeared with the New York New Music Ensemble, Group of Contemporary Music, and in chamber music series across the country and in Europe. He has been a regular participant at La Musica in Sarasota, at the Yellow Barn Festival, and at the Monadnock Music Festival.

As first violinist of the award-winning New World String Quartet for 11 years (1982-93), Mr. Macomber performed the standard repertoire as well as numerous contemporary works in performances in major halls throughout the United States and Europe, and with the Quartet, was appointed Artist-In-

Residence at Harvard University from 1982-90; with that group he also recorded 14 discs and performed numerous times on Public Radio and Television in this country, and the BBC in Great Britain.

Macomber is a longtime member of the chamber music faculty of The Juilliard School and the violin faculties of the Manhattan and Mannes Schools of Music, and has also taught at the Tanglewood Music Center and Taos School of Music. Other recent summer engagements have included Chamber Music Northwest and the Bard Festival. He holds his B.M., M.M., and D.M.A. degrees from the Juilliard School, where he was a scholarship student of Joseph Fuchs and winner of Morris Loeb and Walter Naumburg Prizes.



Brooklyn-based flutist **Roberta Michel** is dedicated to the music of our time. She has commissioned and premiered hundreds of new works and has worked with many notable composers of our day. Roberta is the flutist and Co-Director of Wavefield Ensemble and is a member of Da Capo Chamber Players, PinkNoise, and Duo RoMi.

Roberta has also performed with: Art Ensemble of Chicago, Cadillac Moon Ensemble (founding member), SEM Ensemble, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Ecce Ensemble, Portland String Quartet, Newspeak, Wet Ink Ensemble, Argento, Iktus, Wordless Music Orchestra, Ensemble LPR, and Cygnus Ensemble among others. Recent venues include: Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Alice Tulley Hall, Merkin Hall, The Kennedy Center, Roulette, Issue Project Room, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She can be heard on New Focus, Chandos, Innova, Tzadik, Bridge, Wide Hive, New Dynamic, and Meta Records. She played on the 2021 GRAMMY-winning album of Dame Ethyl Smyth's *The Prison with Experiential Orchestra*.

Her recently released solo album *Hush*, on New Focus Recordings, "digs deep into the possibilities of flute on this gripping solo recital" and was included on Bandcamp's "Best Contemporary Classical: November 2024."

Originally from Maine, Roberta attended the University of Colorado at Boulder and SUNY-Purchase College and has studied with Robert Dick, Tara O'Connor, Alexa Still, and Jean Rosenblum. She holds a doctorate in music performance from the City University of New York Graduate Center and is a winner of the NFA Graduate Research Competition for her dissertation on the flute music of Salvatore Sciarrino.

Roberta teaches flute at Sarah Lawrence College and Brooklyn College, classes at St. Francis College, and maintains a private music studio in Brooklyn. She plays a Brannen flute with a Mancke head joint.



Nominated by *Pointe Magazine* as Standout Performance of 2022. Amber has been a member of New Chamber Ballet for twelve seasons. She performed featured roles for The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, Claudia Schreier & Company, and Emery LeCrone DANCE, and was a member of Boston Ballet and Richmond Ballet. Amber received her training in New York at The Dance Design School, the HARID Conservatory, and the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theater.

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