

NEW YORK PIANO QUARTET

Elmira Darvarova, violin • Ronald Carbone, viola

Samuel Magill, cello • Linda Hall, piano



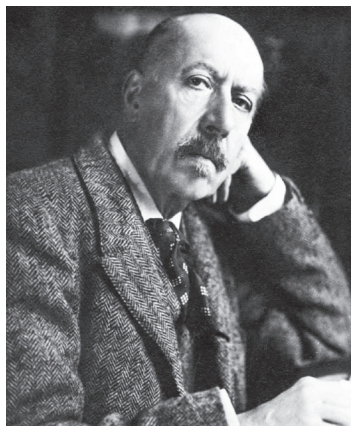
PIANO QUARTETS *by*

Charles-Marie Widor • Amanda Maier • David Amram

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Album Notes by Elmira Darvarova

The three piano quartets in our album are distinctly dissimilar, yet some coincidences point towards parallels. Two of the works date from the same year – 1891, and their composers – Charles-Marie Widor and Amanda Maier-Röntgen, both played organ. David Amram and Amanda Maier both mastered at least 4 instruments. Amram and Widor both eclipsed their musicians' vocation by becoming published writers and by building cultural bridges between nations. And all three of these composers venerated the Brahms Horn Trio, although David Amram alone holds the record number of performances among all the world's hornists – he performed it hundreds of times in the 1950s, during his military service while stationed in Europe with the Seventh Army Symphony and later on tours for the State Department. As I am writing the album's notes on April 30, 2026, I am simultaneously listening to the recording Widor completed of his Toccata for organ some 94 years ago, in 1932 on that same date (April 30) while he, at age 88 was still working as organist of Saint-Sulpice. The recording's tempo – while slower than some current renditions (to account for the particular reverberation in the huge church, built to host up to 10,000 people), is nevertheless vigorous and engaging, and word has it that after the (lasting until midnight) session, the indefatigable Widor took the recording engineer for a walk in the rain without an umbrella. Widor's remarkable stamina even in his advanced age gave him an edge to unfurl a staggering multitude of creative artistic activities, not unlike our contemporary "Renaissance Man" David Amram, with whom no one is able to keep up while he is still a veritable dynamo in his nineties. To collaborate with David Amram is for me a privilege that started with serendipitously meeting him in Chicago in 1990 when Amram guest-conducted the Grant Park Symphony (where I served as concertmaster during my summer vacations from The Metropolitan Opera), and culminated on the Carnegie Hall stage where I recently performed under his baton as soloist Amram's "Elegy for Violin and Orchestra". My similarly-fortuitous connection to Amanda Maier started even earlier, in the mid-1980s while hearing recollections about her son – as relayed by my mentor, the cellist János Starker, reminiscing about his years as Principal Cellist of The Metropolitan Opera under Fritz Reiner. (At the time, Starker's stand-partner had been Amanda Maier's son Engelbert Röntgen, who served as Associate Principal Cello – a chair which decades later had also been occupied by Samuel Magill – the cellist on our album.) Discovering later some of Amanda Maier's works, I was elated to record in 2013 her first published work – the Violin Sonata, and am thrilled to have now also recorded, for the present album, her last work – the Piano Quartet in E minor, while championing, over the years, her legacy, performing works by her at Carnegie Hall, as well as being one of the first violinists to perform her Violin Sonata at Stockholm's Konserthuset in Amanda Maier's country of birth. This exhilarating connection to the legacy of Amanda Maier, like the connection to David Amram's oeuvre – is a treasured privilege, the honor of which I take immense pride in, together with my colleagues from The New York Piano Quartet, with whom I have recorded Amram's "Portraits" more than once, and together with whom I participated, years ago, in the New York premiere performance of Widor's Piano Quartet in A minor Op. 66. What a great honor!



Charles-Marie Widor

Charles-Marie-Jean-Albert Widor (1844-1937) was the longest-serving (for almost 64 years) organist at Saint-Sulpice – the second-largest (after the Cathedral of Notre-Dame) church in Paris. Widor also held two consecutive professorships at the Paris Conservatoire – in organ performance and, later, in composition. Widor's students included Louis Vierne, Darius Milhaud, Olivier Messiaen, Edgard Varèse, Arthur Honegger, Nadia Boulanger, Germaine Tailleferre, Albert Schweitzer and Zoltán Kodály. Lili Boulanger (the first female winner of the prestigious Rome Prize) was an auditor in Widor's composition class. Widor composed a large number of works for organ, as well as several symphonies, operas and concerti, a ballet, vocal, choral and chamber music, but his contribution to the organ repertoire is the main cornerstone of Widor's legacy, and his organ oeuvre is considered as important as Bach's organ works. Louis Vierne defined Widor's organ symphonies as "the greatest monument raised to the glory of the organ"

after the era of Bach. Widor was inspired and empowered to compose his ten "organ symphonies" as a result of working with the modernized, innovative type of organ at Saint-Sulpice, which had an unprecedentedly-symphonic range. Widor's compositions were well-known and much-promoted in his time. Leopold Stokowsky presented with the Philadelphia Orchestra the American premiere of Widor's Third Symphony for orchestra and organ – a work commissioned for the 1894 inauguration of Geneva's Victoria Hall. Stokowski's wife Olga Samaroff (who had been in Widor's organ class) performed his "Fantaisie" at a London Symphony all-Widor concert under Widor's baton. Works by Widor in other genres also received recognition – his wildly-successful ballet "La Korrigane" was performed 160 times, and Richard Strauss conducted in Berlin Widor's Second Symphony Op. 54 for an audience of 3000, in a program in which Sarasate performed as soloist. Widor was commissioned by the London Philharmonic, which invited him, along with Tchaikovsky and Grieg, to conduct his own music. Widor was also invited by the Berlin Philharmonic to conduct his Second Piano Concerto. Always the consummate perfectionist, Widor constantly revised his works, while critics either loved or hated them, as is so often the case with so many composers, even the most prominent among them (for instance, the Wagner tubas in Siegfried's Funeral March were once defined by a distinguished reviewer as "intestines ravaged by some exotic disease"). A programmatic piece by Widor had some 19th C. critics complain of "abuse" and "sonorous incoherencies that are of cold dementia", while other reviewers of the same performance hailed the very same work as a "ravishing piece", "filled with feeling, delicacy and grace". Nadia Boulanger chose to switch from Fauré's composition class to Widor's class, and Edgard Varèse admired Widor on a par with Massenet, Roussel and Debussy, while Poulenc and Koehlin consulted and respected Widor's theoretical publication "Technique de l'orchestre moderne", but in the 1970s the organ department's head at the New England Conservatory of Music allegedly stated: "We don't play Widor here, he really didn't write good music". Differences of opinion about composers along with divisive comparisons and finger-pointing about who might or might not be "overrated" will never cease, and even Mozart has not been spared from the occasional lack of appreciation.

Born in Lyon into a family of organ builders and scientific inventors (related to the Montgolfier brothers who invented the hot-air balloon, and also related to the engineer Marc Seguin who developed the first European suspension bridge), Widor followed in the steps of his father – François-Charles Widor – a composer and church organist who was also a piano professor at Lyon's Jesuit College de la Trinité. (Due to the similarity of their names, some of the father's compositions have been incorrectly attributed to the son at various times). Widor started playing the organ as a very young child at age 4, received professional appointments as church organist by age 11, and at age 24 was occasionally substituting for Saint-Saëns at the Église de la Madeleine in Paris. At age 25, Widor ascended to the most prestigious organ position in France – at Saint-Sulpice – starting his job in 1870 and remaining there until his retirement in 1933 at age 89, short by just 2 weeks of completing a 64-years long service. Leading the Bach revival movement in France, composing in a vast variety of genres and concertizing all over Europe, Widor became an internationally-renowned and highly-decorated performing artist, conductor, educator, writer, journalist, critic, editor, scholar and member of several foreign academies. Named "permanent secretary" of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, he functioned as a "de facto" cultural ambassador of France and was a co-founder and director of the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau, where Aaron Copland became the first student to enroll. Widor spearheaded and oversaw the building of several international cultural exchange centers such as Casa Velásquez in Madrid (built on land gifted by the Spanish King) and the French Cultural Institute in London (with funds from Widor's friend Baron Edmond de Rothschild). Widor presided over weekly chamber music gatherings at his home, delighting in masterpieces such as the Brahms Horn Trio and Clarinet Quintet. Published and premiered in 1891, Widor's fascinating *Piano Quartet in A minor Op. 66* (dedicated to one of his rumored girlfriends – Countess Emmanuela Potocka) was created during the time when Widor became César Franck's successor as organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire. The quartet's four movements are imbued with romantic lyricism. In a review by Maurice Léna after the work's premiere, it was noted that the piece "constitutes, by the clarity of its lines and the sureness of its development, an edifice of sonorities and rhythms, the equilibrium of which is admirable... The work delights in the precise design of a monumental ensemble, in the supple elegance of a springing arch, and the sometimes complex grace of its volutes never obscures the purity of its lines". Forty years later, a review from 1930 defined Widor's Piano Quartet Op. 66 as one of his best compositions, pointing out the "overflowing melodic abundance" and "mastery with which ideas are presented and developed". The New York Piano Quartet is proud to have presented the New York premiere of Widor's Piano Quartet Op. 66, and it has performed it at a number of venues, including at Carnegie Hall.

Amanda Maier-Röntgen

Carolina Amanda Erika Maier (1853-1894) was a Swedish-born virtuoso violinist, organist and composer, whose early demise at age 41 doomed her legacy to oblivion for 100 years, before being rediscovered in the late 1990s. A talented multi-instrumentalist, playing violin, piano, organ and cello, she became the first woman to graduate as "Music Director" from Stockholm's Royal Academy of Music (performing on both the organ and the violin at her graduation concert at age 20), before moving to Germany for studies with the two leaders of Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra – the music director (and friend of Brahms) Carl Reinecke, with whom she studied composition, and the orchestra's concertmaster – Engelbert Röntgen, who became her violin teacher. By then she had made a choice to become not an organist, but a violinist. Yet her training as organist (which had been her primary instrument at the Academy in Stockholm) had been so solid, that even after several years of not practicing organ, she was able to substitute on a "same-day notice", and without a rehearsal, for the organist in an 1878 program presented by the Bach Society at Leipzig's Thomaskirche (she performed on Bach's organ, in two Bach cantatas, and also added, as a violin solo, the Air from Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3). Embarking on several international tours where she programmed her own works (including her violin concerto, which she performed also in Leipzig as soloist of the Gewandhaus Orchestra), Amanda Maier's artistic career initially flourished until it was severely curtailed after she married in 1880 her violin teacher's son, the pianist and composer Julius Röntgen. From then on, she almost completely stopped performing in public, had 5 pregnancies in the span of 5 years (including 3 miscarriages), and her main function was relegated to acting on a daily basis as hostess to her and her husband's circle of friends, entertaining in their Amsterdam home the likes of Brahms, Grieg, Joachim, Casals and other music luminaries (Widor had been their guest as well, during his 1888 and 1891 concerts in Amsterdam). Amanda's husband actively pursued a career centered on performing, conducting, teaching and composing. His oeuvre grew to more than 600 works, while most of Amanda's compositions disappeared (lost or destroyed), and only 4 were published during her life. There was a period of seven and a half years (April 1885 – October 1892) when she was completely away from the stage, ending her absence only briefly to participate in a benefit for an unnamed singer. This total lack of concert activities was in stark contrast with the hundreds of performances Amanda had amassed prior to her marriage, when she had appeared in so many venues (including before the Swedish King), when she had performed in prestigious halls in Stockholm, Leipzig, and Amsterdam, and when at one time an extra train was announced for the abundant audience to get home after Amanda's concert. While international tours had been in her reach prior to marrying (and even a 4-month, 100-concerts tour of the United States had been considered as a possibility), once she became a wife and a mother Amanda only performed chamber music, and only informally at home, for, and with, her guests. Prejudices and stereotypical sexist attitudes surely had played a role in her retreat from public stages, but the prioritizing of the husband's career advancement might have been planned as only a temporary strategy while their children were still too young, and she might have later resumed her performing and composing, had she not succumbed to fatal illness barely 41 years old. Putting her own ambitions on hold for a while and hoping for a career comeback could have been what sustained her frail health through bouts with sickness. Shortly before her wedding she had learned and performed in casual settings the Brahms Violin Concerto barely a year after it had been world-premiered by Joachim at the Gewandhaus under the baton of Brahms, and she might have dreamed of performing the Brahms Concerto on important stages one day, not unlike the way her own husband successfully championed Brahms' Second Piano Concerto. Amanda Maier had performed, with Brahms on the piano, all of Brahms's piano quartets at chamber music gatherings at her home, where she also played with Clara Schumann the Violin Sonata No. 1, Op. 78 by Brahms. Liked and respected by Brahms, Amanda Maier was the first violinist to see the manuscript of his Violin Sonata No. 3, Op. 108 and to play through it, together with Brahms's student, the pianist Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, to whom Brahms had sent the just-finished score for possible advice and corrections. That Brahms accepted Amanda Maier's suggestion to replace with pizzicato the chords in the Scherzo of his newly-composed Op. 108, speaks of the high esteem in which Maier was held by Brahms. Had she managed to regain control



over her ever-worsening health, Amanda Maier surely would have continued her chosen artistic path, from which she had been detoured by illness. After all, this was the Amanda Maier who confidently knew that she had composed a splendid violin sonata (awarded with the Prize of the Swedish Royal Music Academy), and on the strength of that confidence she bravely had rejected attempts by a committee (of several men) to bully her into having her sonata altered before publication. This was the Amanda Maier disregarding condescending critics who couldn't refrain from using the "not bad for a woman" trope to smear her amazing sonata. She had shrugged-off utterances such as this (in Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung): *"It could very well have come from a man – the talent, that is. Thanks to the solidity of the compositions they make a good impression. Skillfully created and extremely beautifully invented, they don't suffer from sentimentality either, a mistake that composing ladies easily make. We could say a great deal more about this in every sense talented lady, without worrying that it would go to her head."* She was just biding her time and was going to continue composing and performing, once she was done healing. She was almost there – at the point of finally reclaiming her energy and creative inspiration, and in 1891 she felt revitalized enough to start working on her most monumental (to this point) composition – her gorgeous **Piano Quartet in E minor**. In October 1891 Widor performed in Amsterdam, socializing with Amanda and Julius. Learning that Widor's Piano Quartet Op. 66 had been recently published and premiered, might have given Amanda the impulse to wrap-up her own Piano Quartet, which she finalized shortly after, in December 1891. Julius Röntgen wrote to Grieg that Amanda had created a magnificent piano quartet, to be premiered in the near future. Amanda and Julius looked forward to performing it. Alas, the recovery had been temporary. After the birth of Engelbert – her second son, Amanda's declining health had continued to let her down, for years, until her untimely death in 1894. Her piano quartet turned out to be her last work. Under the final measure the wording "non omnis moriar" ("not everything dies", a quote by the Roman poet Horace) is inscribed. Amanda Maier's tragic early demise deprived us from all the marvelous music she could have created, had she lived longer. As for her son Engelbert (who was 8 years old when his mother perished), after cello studies with his cousin Julius Klengel and with Pablo Casals, Engelbert Röntgen held major principal cello positions in Zürich, Vienna, Minneapolis and in New York, where he was solo cellist at The Metropolitan Opera from 1930 until the 1949 arrival of János Starker.

David Amram

David Werner Amram III (b. 1930) has been hailed as the "Renaissance man of American music" (*The Boston Globe*), "one of the most versatile and skilled musicians America has ever produced" (*The Washington Post*), a "musical catalyst and leader on a par with Leonard Bernstein, Pete Seeger and Dizzy Gillespie" (*Minneapolis Star & Tribune*). He was heralded as "multicultural before multiculturalism existed" (*The New York Times*) during his career spanning more than 8 decades as a versatile composer, conductor and multi-instrumentalist in many cross-pollinating genres. Remaining respectful to a multitude of diverse cultures and forms of artistic expression, and mentored by Dimitri Mitropoulos and Leonard Bernstein, as well as by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, Amram became the first-ever Composer-in-Residence of The New York Philharmonic, while he was also among the first to integrate the French Horn as an improvising voice in jazz, simultaneously also rising as an acclaimed pioneer of World Music, and creating works which shared the essential values of Middle Eastern, Native American and Latin American music. Associating with some of the greatest classical musicians of all time, who also cherished jazz (such as Leonard Bernstein), as well as with some of the greatest jazz artists of all time, who revered classical traditions (such as Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk) elicited for Amram a perspective which still continues to inspire his multidimensional compositions and to pay tribute to many music traditions, without boundaries or preferences. Amram is also a poet, a published author, and a Lifetime Member of The Actors Studio where he recently performed in the Chekhov play "Uncle Vanya". Collaborating with Jack Kerouac as co-founder of the first Jazz/Poetry series that shaped much of New York City's contemporary culture, Amram also composed music for, and acted in, the experimental film *Pull My Daisy*. Amram's numerous scores for film, theater and television include the incidental music for the Archibald MacLeish drama *J.B.* (which won a Pulitzer Prize), scores for Arthur Miller's plays *After the Fall* and *Incident at Vichy*, and music for the American production of Camus's *Caligula*, as well as Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, T.S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*, and Eugene O'Neill's *Great God Brown*. Amram composed the scores for two of the most sensational American films of the 1960s – *Splendor in the Grass* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, and Amram's television scores include an NBC dramatization of Henry James's *The Turn*

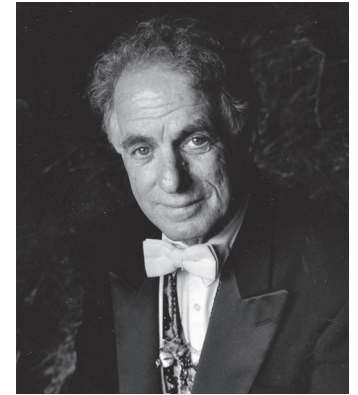


Photo by Chris Felner

of the *Screw*, which starred Ingrid Bergman. Amram's long association with the New York Shakespeare Festival resulted in scores for 25 of its Shakespeare productions, and Amram also composed the comic opera *Twelfth Night*. Amram's second opera, *The Final Ingredient, An Opera of the Holocaust*, was created for ABC Television.

Familiar with Mozart and Brahms since early childhood and studying piano and trumpet since age 7, Amram simultaneously discovered jazz through radio broadcasts, and learned gospel and blues through participation, since age 12, as a trumpet player in gospel groups. Inspired by the Brahms Horn Trio, at age 14 Amram was already composing chamber music. His development as a composer continued with studies at Oberlin Conservatory and at Manhattan School of Music, where he studied composition with Vittorio Giannini and Gunther Schuller, and took conducting lessons with Dimitri Mitropoulos. (Amram also earned a degree in history from George Washington University.) Amram studied horn with Gunther Schuller, and also with Abe Kniaz, Principal Hornist of the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. (Amram was for a while employed as extra hornist there.) Amram has performed and conducted in over 35 countries from Egypt to Brazil, Cuba, Kenya, Pakistan, Israel, Latvia and China. Amram's "Trail of Beauty", which features poetry and music of Native American origin, was commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and premiered under Eugene Ormandy. Amram was the Composer and Music Director for the Lincoln Center Theatre in the 1960s and he also served, for more than 25 years, as music director for young people's concerts at the Brooklyn Philharmonic. Appointed by Leonard Bernstein as the first Composer-in-Residence at The New York Philharmonic, Amram has also been Composer-in-Residence at the Marlboro Music Festival and is currently Composer-in-Residence of the New York Chamber Music Festival. Amram has written 5 books and is still in great demand for performances, interviews, podcasts and masterclasses. After returning from a Middle Eastern tour Amram embarked on writing his 1979 piano quartet ***Portraits***, which, in his own words, was "composed to celebrate and honor the unique sonority of the violin, viola, cello and piano, and to afford each player the chance to showcase their own creativity in a variation, or 'portrait', which featured them. I thought that if I could create a simple theme that provided the musicians and the audience with a sense of the bitter-sweet memories of traveling back in time to a more peaceful and ideal world, then each ensuing variation could show all the complexities of our modern times". The introductory solemn solo cello hymn also re-appears in the final Coda moments of the piece, unifying the entire work and framing its shape under the auspices of a classically-composed piece, although one that also presents delicious surprises of spicy Middle Eastern folk elements in the individual 'portraits' of the cello and viola, as well as syncopated jagged jazz rhythms and clustered jazz harmonies when the piano's turn comes to "sit" for its portrait. The solo piano variation also proposes the theme backwards, as if reflected in a mirror. The solo violin variation abounds with sharp accents and extreme articulation of each beat, complete with laconic, bluesy cadences. Time and again, David Amram's multifaceted essence imbues yet another beautiful work with not just jazz elements on display like jewels under the – not so rigid – confines of the classical construction, but also by richly adorning this piece with ample motifs inspired by the folklore treasures of ethnic world music.

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Photo by Yui Kitamura

New York Piano Quartet

"Ultra-impassioned, vividly detailed" –Gramophone

Comprised of Metropolitan Opera musicians (violinist Elmira Darvarova, violist Ronald Carbone, cellist Samuel Magill and pianist Linda Hall), The NEW YORK PIANO QUARTET is the core ensemble of the New York Chamber Music Festival, appearing at prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall. Their performances have been called "revelatory" and "stunning" by Fanfare Magazine, while their recordings were praised as "ultra-impassioned, vividly detailed" by Gramophone Magazine. Their recording of Alfred Schnittke's "Piano Quartet after Mahler" was hailed as the definitive version, and they have championed works by Gustav Mahler, Erich Korngold, Joseph Marx, Charles-Marie Widor, Amanda Maier, David Amram, Gernot Wolfgang, Wang Jie and José Serebrier (among many others), presenting a multitude of world premieres, American premieres and New York premieres. A CD album with world-premiere recordings of chamber works by René de Castéra (released by the French label Azur Classical), on which three of the New York Piano Quartet members appear, was selected by Music-Web International as Recording of the Month, and among the Records of the Year. The string players of the group – Elmira Darvarova, Ronald Carbone and Samuel Magill – participated in an album of José Serebrier's chamber music for which they recorded a number of never-before released works, and they also registered, for a different album, the world-premiere recordings of Eugene Ysaÿe's String Trios Op. 33 and 34, in their recently-discovered finalized versions.

Elmira Darvarova, violin

A concert violinist since the age of 4, and acclaimed by American Record Guide as “marvelous in the Heifetz tradition”, Elmira Darvarova is an award-winning recording artist (Gold Medal at the Global Music Awards in 2 consecutive years – 2017 and 2018), nominated for Latin Grammy®, and a multiple-Grammy® winner (as a former concertmaster of The Metropolitan Opera). Darvarova caused a sensation, becoming the first ever (and the only, as of 2026) female concertmaster in the entire history of the Metropolitan Opera. With the MET Orchestra she toured Europe, Japan and the United States, and was heard on the MET’s live weekly international radio broadcasts, television broadcasts, CDs and laser discs on the Sony, Deutsche Grammophon and EMI labels. At the Metropolitan Opera she has worked with the greatest conductors of our time, including the legendary Carlos Kleiber. She studied with Yfrah Neaman at the Guildhall School in London (as a British Council scholar), with Josef Gingold at Indiana University in Bloomington (as one of his assistants), and, privately, with Henryk Szeryng. She is a Fellow of the Guildhall School of Music, where a scholarship bearing Elmira Darvarova’s name is being awarded annually. An award-winning artist (Gold Medal at the 2017 & 2018 Global Music Awards, the Gold Quill Award by Classic FM Radio, and the Boris Christoff Medal), Elmira Darvarova can be heard on numerous CDs (50 to date), recorded for a number of labels (notable album releases include the world-premiere recording of Vernon Duke’s violin concerto with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, and a CD with world-premiere recordings of chamber music by René de Castéra, named by Music-Web International a Record of the Year). Elmira Darvarova’s albums have entered the Billboard Charts, most recently at the No. 3 position. Her CDs have won critical acclaim in The Strad, Gramophone, American Record Guide, Fanfare, BBC Music Magazine, Klassik Heute, Ritmo. She has appeared in recitals and as soloist on 5 continents, and has performed concertos with the Moscow State Symphony, the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony, and with numerous orchestras on 3 continents. She has performed on the world’s most prestigious stages (including at Carnegie Hall, as soloist with orchestra). She has partnered for chamber music performances with James Levine, János Starker, Gary Karr, Pascal Rogé, Vassily Lobanov, Fernando Otero, Octavio Brunetti, David Amram, and with the superstar of the Sarod - Amjad Ali Khan, with whom she recorded a trilogy of CD albums, based on traditional Indian Ragas (released in the United States, and separately, on the Indian sub-continent, home to 1.9 billion people). Their CD album *“Masterpieces for Sarod & Violin”* entered the Billboard Classical Charts at No. 3 and was lauded by the world-music magazine Songlines as one of the best “East Meets West” collaborations in a tradition which includes also Yehudi Menuhin and Ravi Shankar. Elmira Darvarova recorded 2 CDs of Baroque music (world-premiere recordings) with the world’s most renowned double bassist Gary Karr, and she performed with him Bottesini’s Gran Duo Concertante in the United States and Canada. She has recorded 4 CDs of music by Astor Piazzolla, two of them with the late Argentine-born tango pianist and arranger Octavio Brunetti (named by the New York Philharmonic “the inheritor of Piazzolla’s mantle”), and she performed in a duo with Octavio Brunetti at festivals in the U.S. and Europe. Elmira Darvarova is a high-octane performer of Piazzolla compositions, as verified by millions of Spotify listeners. For the Naxos label she recorded in 2025 an album of music by David Amram which includes Amram’s newest violin composition “Voyages”, written for Elmira Darvarova. Also for the Naxos label, she has recorded 3 albums of chamber music by Franco Alfano, comprising Alfano’s entire chamber music output (all world-premiere recordings), and the latest of the Alfano “installments” – his previously unrecorded string quartets – earned praise as “one of the best recent Naxos releases”. She can also be heard on world-premiere recordings of chamber music by René de Castéra, and by Émile Goué, on 2 albums recorded by the French label Azur Classical. For the German label Solo Musica she has recorded 2 albums: the complete Brahms Sonatas, together with pianist Zhen Chen, and masterpieces by Brahms, Franck, Clara Schumann with the world-renowned Russian pianist Vassily Lobanov (a former piano-duo partner of the legendary Sviatoslav Richter), including the world-premiere recording of Lobanov’s Violin Sonata. For the Urlicht AudioVisual label she has recorded a number of albums, including the acclaimed world-premiere recording of the (written for Heifetz) violin concerto by Vernon Duke (with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony), a highly-praised recording of the Brahms Horn Trio with the former principal horn of The New York Philharmonic Philip Myers, the violin sonata of Amanda Maier (with renowned pianist Bryan Wagorn), a Poulenc disc with the distinguished French pianist Pascal Rogé, 2 albums with Gary Karr, a Piazzolla album with Octavio Brunetti, an all-Amram album with live recordings, the solo violin album *“Violin Declamations from the Twilight of the Workers’ Paradise”*, in addition to several albums with the New York Piano Quartet (of which she is a founding member), and the Kodály Duo, recorded live with János Starker in a sublime partnership which elicited an avalanche of sensational reviews hailing it as “the epitome of two powerful musicians as absolute equals”. For the Affetto label she has recorded numerous albums (abounding with world-premiere recordings), including *“Music from Five Centuries”*, *“Masterpieces by Beethoven, Franck, Clara Schumann”* (with Japanese-Canadian pianist Shoko Inoue), *“David Amram – So in America”*, with the participation of David Amram and film-star Estelle Parsons (Oscar-winner, *“Bonnie and Clyde”*), *“Astor Piazzolla – Genius of Tango”* (one of the most-requested on Spotify), *“Music by Women”*, *“American Music for Violin & Horn”*, two Ysaÿe albums (*“Homage to Eugène Ysaÿe”* and *“The Genius of*

Ysaÿe”), *“Music by Phillip Ramey”* (which was No. 1 best-seller in Chamber Music on Amazon, and also entered the Billboard Charts), *“Horn Trios by Brahms, Kahn, Koechlin and Dubois”*, plus three volumes of the anthology *“Horn Trios from Mozart to Piazzolla and beyond”* (critically-acclaimed double-CD albums which have been broadcast in programs of BBC Radio London and ABC Radio in Australia), an album of Hungarian composers (*“From Liszt to Ligeti”*), the 2026 violin & horn duo-album *“Kaleidoscope – Music from a Thousand Years”*, and a disc with chamber works by José Serebrier, whose composition *“Nostalgia”* was transcribed and interpreted for solo violin by Elmira Darvarova at the composer’s request. She also recorded, for the Siderata label, the album *“Can You Hear the Flowers”* with Argentine-born Grammy®-winning pianist & composer Fernando Otero, with whom she has performed on 2 continents, and who has dedicated to her 6 compositions for solo violin. Many other composers have dedicated works to Elmira Darvarova, most notably David Amram, José Serebrier, Wang Jie, Phillip Ramey, Dmitri Smirnov, Vassily Lobanov, Francine Trester, Paul Chihara, Yui Kitamura, Sean Hickey, Zhen Chen, Konstantin Soukhovetski, Stephen Brown, and others. Elmira Darvarova registered the world-premiere recordings of Elena Firsova’s works *“Fantasia for solo violin”* and *“Memoria”*, and she also presented the world-premiere performance of Firsova’s *“Memoria”* in 2020 in New York. Elmira Darvarova has participated in high-profile world-premiere performances of chamber music by Nikolai Kapustin and David Baker, and in the American premiere of György Ligeti’s newly-discovered Duo for Violin & Piano (with pianist Thomas Weaver). Elmira Darvarova was among the first violinists to perform Amanda Maier’s Violin Sonata at Stockholm’s Konserthuset in Amanda Maier’s country of birth. Elmira Darvarova has recorded live for Radio Innsbruck in Austria, as well as for Radio Suisse Romande in Switzerland. Her recital at Béla Bartók’s memorial house in Budapest was broadcast live throughout Europe. A documentary film about her life and career was shown on European television. She performs in a duo with Grammy®-winner, pianist & composer Fernando Otero, and she is a founding member of the New York Piano Quartet, the Delphinium Trio, the Quinteto del Fuego and the Amram Ensemble. She is Jury President of several international chamber music competitions in Europe, and she is Artistic Director of the New York Chamber Music Festival. Praised by Gramophone Magazine for her “ultra-impassioned performances”, and in The Strad for her “intoxicating tonal beauty and beguilingly sensuous phrasing” and “silky-smooth voluptuous tone”, she was featured in Gramophone Magazine with an interview about her world-premiere recording of Vernon Duke’s violin concerto with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony. She has also been featured with numerous interviews in Fanfare, and has been interviewed live at radio stations in the United States, Canada, South America, Europe, India and Japan. Not specializing in any particular music genre, Elmira Darvarova instead chooses to be a top interpreter in a vast variety of styles and epochs, not only strictly-classical, but also in the realm of jazz, blues, tango, folk music. Her Mozart interpretation was lauded by Igor Oistrakh in the most eminent Russian musical publication, while the *Chicago Tribune* reviewed her Mozart performance in a write-up under the title “A Night to Remember”. *The New York Times* extolled her affinity for Debussy and Ravel. Her rendition of the Brahms Horn Trio (recorded together with the former Principal Horn of the New York Philharmonic Philip Myers, and pianist & MET Opera conductor Bryan Wagorn) has been hailed as belonging in the same league as the iconic 1960s Myron Bloom recording. *Ritmo Magazine* defined Darvarova’s Brahms Sonatas album (with pianist Zhen Chen) as an “exceptionally-expressive flight to the heights of classic interpretations of music which was born to be understood this way”. Her recording of Ysaÿe’s *“Ballade”* was praised as breathtaking and among the best. Reviews of the Franco Alfano recordings raved that “the performances are wondrously fervent, the sound is at your throat, heated and upon you with tiger-like ferocity”. Elmira Darvarova’s interpretation of the Kodály Duo with legendary cellist János Starker has been unanimously recognized in the press as “spellbinding”, “electrifying”, “the epitome of two powerful musicians as absolute equals”, “edge-of-the-seat performance”, “thrilling”, “astonishing”, “the finest performance of the Kodály Duo” and many other accolades. A reviewer also stated: “I have heard the Kodály Duo played with comparable virtuosity by Heifetz and Piatigorsky, but the exposed, almost wounded, rendition by Darvarova and Starker practically impales the listener for the duration of the performance”.

Ronald Carbone, viola

Violist Ronald Carbone has had a diverse musical life encompassing chamber music, orchestral and solo performances, as well as recording. He has been Principal Violist of the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra, an Associate Member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and a member of the Orchestra of St. Luke’s. He is the founder and music director of the Canaan Chamber Music Festival. He performs with the New York Piano Quartet and the Omni Piano Quartet, and is a frequent guest violist with the renowned concert series Spectrum Concerts in Berlin, Germany. Ronald Carbone has been a member of the Composer’s String Quartet, the Portsmouth Chamber Ensemble, the Lexington Trio and the Griffes String Quartet. Mr. Carbone has been on the faculties of Vassar College and Smith College. His recordings have been released on many record labels including Naxos,

CRI, Albany, Reference-Records, Affetto, Azur Classical and Urlicht Audiovisual. The recipient of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Grant for Music Award, he has been awarded two Artists International Awards. He was a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, has performed extensively with The New York Philharmonic and was Assistant Principal Violist of the Barcelona City Orchestra. A student of Boston Symphony's concertmaster Richard Burgin and the eminent violin soloist Ruth Posselt, Mr. Carbone received his master's degree from Yale School of Music. Involved in a multitude of performing and recording projects, Ronald Carbone has participated in numerous important premiere performances, including the New York premiere of Eugène Ysaÿe's String Trio No. 1, Op. 33, a.k.a. "Le Chimay", the American premiere of the "Rhapsodie" by Joseph Marx, and the New York premiere of Charles-Marie Widor's Piano Quartet Op. 66 (a performance hailed in the press as "revelatory, stunning"). Ronald Carbone has recorded a number of works for solo viola by contemporary composers, including the world-premiere recordings of viola pieces by David Amram, José Serebrier, Garth Knox. Ronald Carbone was the first violist to record Eugene Ysaÿe's recently-discovered "Introduction for Solo Viola", and he also participated, together with Elmira Darvarova and Samuel Magill, in the world-premiere recordings of Ysaÿe's String Trios Op. 33 and 34, in their recently-discovered finalized versions.

Samuel Magill, cello

Cellist Samuel Magill has been called "a world-class artist" in the press, and his first Naxos CD, of Vernon Duke's 1945 Cello Concerto, was lauded as "flat-out magnificent" by the American Record Guide. After a concert, conductor Lorin Maazel hailed Magill's playing as "well-nigh perfect." The Strad Magazine raved about Magill's "sumptuous tone" in his 2014 recital at New York's Bargemusic series, in which he and Beth Levin played the rarely heard Czerny arrangement of Beethoven's "Kreutzer" Violin Sonata. This led to their 2016 Navona CD which includes the Kreutzer, the Solo Cello Sonata by Artur Schnabel, and the Ballade by Emanuel Moór. Writing in Classics Today, Jed Distler said "...Magill's superb technique, range of color, and intelligent pacing make a compelling case (for the Schnabel)". Among Magill's 20 CDs, his and his colleagues' (Elmira Darvarova, Craig and Mary Ann Mumm, and Scott Dunn) three volume survey of the complete chamber music of Franco Alfano, for Naxos, is a stand-out. Mr Magill has appeared as soloist throughout Japan and the U.S., including performances of both the Schumann Concerto and the Brahms Double Concerto in Tokyo's famed Suntory Hall, and the Brahms and the Haydn D Major Concerto in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. During nine tours of Japan, Magill performed, besides the above works, the concerti of Dohnanyi, Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, and the Triple Concerto of Beethoven. He has partnered with the pianists Oxana Yablonskaya, Pascal Rogé, and the late Grant Johannesen, and presented annual recitals from 1994 until 2019 at Lincoln Center's New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. He is a co-founder, with flutist Lucian Rinando and harpist Grace Ludtke, of the flute, cello, and harp trio Sono Auros. They made their New York debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall to critical acclaim, with Strings Magazine declaring them "masters of their instruments." Magill is also a founding member of the New York Piano Quartet (Elmira Darvarova, violin; Ronald Carbone, viola; and Linda Hall, piano). Festivals Mr. Magill has participated in include the Tanglewood, Aspen, Tahoe, Castleton, and the Festival Albert Roussel in France and Belgium, for which he and pianist Diane Andersen played recitals in Bruges and Paris. A pupil of the late Zara Nelsova, Mr. Magill also studied with Laurence Lesser at the Peabody Institute and with Shirley Trepel at Rice University. He is the former Associate Principal Cello with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, former member of the Houston Symphony, and a former member of the Pittsburgh Symphony. In his 43 years as a member of these orchestras, Magill worked with conductors Muti, Levine, Rattle, Bernstein, Ozawa, Maazel, Thielemann, Rozhdestvensky, Leinsdorf, Rudolf, Barenboim, Luisi, and Santi, among many others. Mr. Magill is originally from Chapel Hill, NC and attended the University of North Carolina School of the Arts for high school. There he was a student of the late Irving Klein, who was a pupil of Emanuel Feuermann, as were Ms. Trepel and Ms. Nelsova.

Linda Hall, piano

A long-time Assistant Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Linda Hall has prepared some of the most challenging operatic masterpieces (including works of Schoenberg, Berg, Strauss, Britten and world-premieres of operas by Corigliano, Harbison, Bolcom, and Picker). She also performs as part of the MET Orchestra, and has appeared regularly with the MET Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall. In addition to her work with the MET, she collaborates with many singers and instrumentalists in concerts throughout the United States, in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. At age 5 she performed Chopin on the radio, and at 13 was piano soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Having received degrees from Oberlin, Juilliard and the Salzburg Mozarteum, Linda Hall has taught in Israel, Mexico, Japan and China. She has also been performing and recording with the New York Piano Quartet. Her recordings include discs on the Neuma label with flutist Patricia Spencer, an album with MET Orchestra principal cellist Jascha Silberstein for the Heritage label, a CD on the Capriccio label, recordings for the French label Azur Classical, and albums with the New York Piano Quartet for Urlicht AudioVisual.

NEW YORK PIANO QUARTET

Elmira Darvarova, violin

Ronald Carbone, viola

Samuel Magill, cello

Linda Hall, piano



Photo by Yui Kitamura

PIANO QUARTETS *by* CHARLES-MARIE WIDOR, AMANDA MAIER, DAVID AMRAM

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937): Piano Quartet in A minor, Op. 66 (1891)

1. *Allegro moderato* 9:38
2. *Adagio* 9:43
3. *Vivace* 4:23
4. *Allegro ma non troppo* 9:00

Amanda Maier-Röntgen (1853-1894): Piano Quartet in E minor (1891)

5. *Allegro* 9:02
6. *Andante* 6:12
7. *Presto con fuoco* 4:19
8. *Finale - Largo espressivo - Allegro vivace* 9:01

9. **David Amram** (1930): Portraits for Violin, Viola, Violoncello and Piano (1979) 12:31

Total Playing Time: 73:49

Produced by Elmira Darvarova and Gene Gaudette • Recorded in October 2025 at Oktaven Audio, Mount Vernon, New York • Recording Engineer: Ryan Streber • Editing Engineers: Ryan Streber and Calista Case
Mastering Engineer: Gene Gaudette • Album Notes: Elmira Darvarova • Executive Producer: New York Chamber Music Festival • Cover Art: Pablo Picasso: "Seashells on a Piano", 1912

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