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Twilight Reflections

August 14, 2026
Merryall Center, New Milford, CT

ARTISTS

Sandra Piques Eddy, mezzo-soprano

Susan Rotholz, flute
Victoria Lewis, violin
Jane Chung, violin
Richard Wolfe, viola
Eliot Bailen, cello

PROGRAM

Dover Beach, Op. 3, Andante, un poco mosso — Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, Op. 80 — Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Theme – Lento di molto, sempre espressivo

Variations:

I. L'istesso tempo
II. Allegro giusto
III. Andantino con morbidezza (quasi Valser lento)
IV. Presto leggiero
V. Largo di molto, con grand espressione
VI. Allegro giocoso

INTERMISSION

Il Tramonto ("The Sunset") for mezzo-soprano and string quartet — Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Based on an Itlaian translation of a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Quartettsatz in C Minor, D. 703 – Allegro assai — Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

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Founded in 1982 by cellist and Artistic Director **Eliot Bailen** and flutist **Susan Rotholz**, the **Sherman Chamber Ensemble** has spent more than four decades bringing exceptional live music to our region.

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The New York Times described SCE as **"about as close as it gets to the Platonic ideal of a chamber music concert."**

While chamber music remains at its heart, SCE's programming ranges from Baroque and Classical masterpieces to contemporary music, jazz, bluegrass and popular favorites. Its year-round schedule includes a summer chamber music series, children's and family concerts, school programs and coffeehouse performances.

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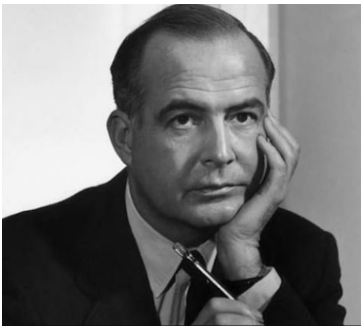
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PROGRAM NOTES

Samuel Barber
Dover Beach*, *Op. 3, Andante,
un poco mosso
(1910-1981)



Samuel Barber was only twenty-one when he completed *Dover Beach* in 1931, yet the work already reveals the lyrical intensity and emotional directness that would become hallmarks of his music. Originally written for baritone and string quartet, *Dover Beach* sets to music Matthew Arnold's celebrated 1851 poem, a deeply personal reflection on love, faith, and uncertainty in a changing world.

Arnold begins with a tranquil nighttime scene overlooking the English Channel: the moonlit sea is calm, the tide full, and the distant French coast visible across the water. But beneath this beauty, the poet hears the melancholy sound of waves drawing pebbles back from the shore. That sound becomes a metaphor for the retreating "Sea of Faith" and for a world in which old certainties seem to be disappearing.

Barber responds to the poem with music of remarkable restraint and sensitivity. The strings evoke the restless motion of the sea while the vocal line follows the natural rhythms and emotional contours of Arnold's words. As the poem moves from peaceful observation toward its darker reflections, Barber's music grows increasingly unsettled and intense.

At its heart, however, *Dover Beach* is an appeal for human connection. Faced with a world that seems uncertain and without dependable answers, Arnold turns to the person beside him: "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another!" Barber makes this intimate plea the emotional center of the work.

The piece also had special significance for Barber himself. An accomplished baritone as well as a composer, he sang the vocal

part in the work's first recording in 1935. His close identification with both the poetry and the music gives *Dover Beach* an unusually personal quality—a work written by a young composer confronting questions that remain strikingly relevant nearly a century later.

Amy Beach
Theme and Variations, for flute and string quartet
(1867-1944)



Amy (Cheney) Beach, the United States' first major native-born and trained composer, was born in Henniker, New Hampshire in 1867.

From an early age, she displayed musical talent, though it wasn't until her family relocated to Boston in the 1870s that she received formal training in piano – she was one of the late-19th-century's greatest keyboard virtuosi – and a year of composition lessons.

Remarkably, in the latter area, Beach, one of the 19th- and 20th-century's most important female composers, was largely self-taught.

Early on, she experienced great success as a composer of large-scale forms: her *Symphony in E minor* ("Gaelic") and *Piano Concerto* were both premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and, to this day, stand as two of the most brilliant, engaging, and finely-crafted examples of American symphonic music of her era.

Following the turn of the century, Beach's output (which grew to over 300 works) focused primarily on songs and chamber music.

The *Theme and Variations for flute and string quartet* dates from this period and was written in 1916 on a commission from the San Francisco Chamber Music Society. As with many of Beach's

compositions, the principle theme is drawn from one of her many songs, in this instance a certain Indian Lullaby.

We hear this melody played, at first, only by the string quartet. After the statement of the theme, the flute enters with an extended solo and the first variation – basically a repetition of the theme now with a flute descant – commences.

Five further variations ensue, each alternating characters and moods: a brisk second variation; a slow, sad, waltzing third; a short, enigmatic fourth; a sprawling fifth, this the emotional heart of the composition; and a contrapuntal sixth, which ends with a restatement of the theme now involving the flute.

In all, it's a complex, ambitious score, a glowing example of the American Romantic style of which Beach, along with George Whitefield Chadwick, John Knowles Paine, and Arthur Foote, was such a wonderful exemplar.

© *Jonathan Blumhofer*

Ottorino Respighi
Il Tramonto (The Sunset) for mezzo-soprano and string quartet
(1879-1936)



Composed in 1914, Ottorino Respighi's *Il Tramonto* ("The Sunset") is an intensely expressive work for mezzo-soprano and string quartet, setting an Italian translation of a poem by the English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Written before the brilliant orchestral works for which Respighi would become best known, *Il Tramonto* reveals a more intimate side of the composer, rich in lyricism, color, and emotional depth.

Shelley's poem tells of two lovers who spend an idyllic evening together beneath the setting sun. The beauty and tenderness of the scene gradually give way to tragedy: when morning comes, the

woman awakens to discover that her lover has died beside her. She survives him for many years, but the experience changes her forever, leaving her to live quietly with the memory of their brief, perfect happiness.

Respighi follows the emotional arc of the poem closely. The strings create an atmosphere that shifts from warmth and serenity to passion, grief, and finally resignation, while the vocal line moves between intimate storytelling and soaring lyricism.

Rather than treating the quartet simply as accompaniment, Respighi gives the four instruments an important dramatic role, allowing them to reflect and deepen the emotions expressed by the voice.

The title *Il Tramonto* refers literally to the sunset at the beginning of Shelley's poem, but it takes on a deeper meaning as the work unfolds—the ending of a day, the ending of a life, and the fading of a love that nevertheless remains alive in memory.

At once romantic and deeply introspective, *Il Tramonto* shows Respighi at his most intimate, transforming Shelley's meditation on love, loss, and remembrance into a work of extraordinary tenderness and emotional power.

Franz Schubert
Quartettsatz in C Minor, D. 703 – Allegro assai
(1797-1828)



Schubert composed his *Quartettsatz* ("Quartet Movement") in December 1820, at the age of twenty-three.

Although he had already written numerous string quartets, this work marked a striking change in his musical language. More dramatic, harmonically adventurous, and emotionally intense than his earlier

quartets, it points toward the great chamber works of his final years.

Schubert apparently intended the *Quartettsatz* to be the opening movement of a complete string quartet. He finished the first movement and began an Andante, but abandoned the work after completing only forty-one measures of the second movement. Why he stopped remains unknown. The completed *Allegro assai*, however, is so compelling and self-contained that it has become one of Schubert's most frequently performed chamber works.

The music begins almost in a whisper, with a restless, rapidly moving figure that immediately creates a sense of unease. From this turbulent opening emerges a wonderfully lyrical second theme, unmistakably Schubertian in its warmth and songlike character. Throughout the movement, these contrasting worlds—agitation and serenity, darkness and light—continually interrupt and transform one another.

The *Quartettsatz* stands at an important turning point in Schubert's development. Here, the graceful proportions of the Classical string quartet give way to something more personal and emotionally charged. Sudden shifts of key, dramatic contrasts, and an underlying sense of urgency anticipate the mature Schubert of the *"Death and the Maiden"* Quartet and the great late chamber works.

Though technically an unfinished quartet, the *Quartettsatz* hardly feels incomplete. In a single concentrated movement, Schubert creates a remarkably complete emotional journey—restless, lyrical, dramatic, and unmistakably his own.

William Pitt

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THE PERFORMERS

"At Merkin Hall (NYC) cellist Eliot Bailen displayed a warm focused tone, concentrated expressiveness and admirable technical command always at the service of the Music."

- Strings Magazine



Eliot Bailen has an active career as an artistic director, cellist, composer and teacher. Founder and Artistic Director of the Sherman Chamber Ensemble, now in its 44th year, whose performances the New York Times has described as "the Platonic ideal of a chamber music concert," Mr. Bailen is also Founder and Artistic Director of Chamber Music at Rodeph Sholom in New York and Artistic Director of the New York Chamber Ensemble.

Principal cello of the New Jersey Festival Orchestra, New York Chamber Ensemble, Orchestra New England, Teatro Grattacielo and the New Choral Society, Mr. Bailen has performed regularly with the Saratoga Chamber Players, Cape May Music Festival, Sebago-Long Lake Chamber Music Festival, Bronx Arts Ensemble as well as with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, New York City Opera and Ballet, Oratorio Society, American Symphony, Orchestra Lumos (Stamford Symphony), New Jersey Symphony and is heard frequently in numerous Broadway shows.

Among Mr. Bailen's commissions are an Octet, a Double Concerto for Flute and Cello, Perhaps a Butterfly, Saratoga Sextet, The Tiny Mustache (a musical) and recently a Dectet ("Inclusion") commissioned by the New Choral Society.

Mr. Bailen is recipient of over forty commissions for his "Song to Symphony" for schools (subject of a NY Times feature article Sept. 2006 and winner of a Yale Alumni Grant).

He received his Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) from Yale University and a Music Associate in cello and chamber music at Columbia University and Teachers College. Graduating in 1977 with High Honors in Music and French Literature from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Mr. Bailen also holds an M.B.A. in Finance from New York University where he was awarded the coveted Slater Prize for Entrepreneurship.

In 2002, he was awarded the Norman Vincent Peale Arts Award for Positive Thinking. He is on the cello and chamber music faculty at Columbia University, Barnard College and Teachers College.



Violinist **Jane Chung** is a member of the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra and a founding member of the Athabasca String Trio and the Radian String Quartet.

A dedicated chamber musician, advocate of new music, and educator, she has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia with ensembles including the New York Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony.

She has taught violin and chamber music at Yale University, Juilliard and Mannes Pre-College Divisions, and Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp, and served as resident musician for The Walden School for five summers.

A frequent collaborator with choreographers and contemporary dance companies, Ms. Chung was resident musician for Cheylyn Lavagnino Dance for 10 years, as well as for Cedar Lake Contemporary Dance, for whom she managed the company's first project with live music.

She has appeared at venues such as the Sadler's Wells, Jacob's Pillow, Joyce Theater, BAM and Baryshnikov Arts Center. Ms. Chung was winner of the Montgomery Symphony Violin Competition and both the graduate and undergraduate concerto competitions at Yale University (B.A., M.M.). She completed

her musical studies in Vienna at the Universitaet fuer Musik und darstellende Kunst as a Fulbright grant recipient.



Sandra Piques Eddy, mezzo-soprano, has been praised for her "dark, sensuous mezzo and charming stage presence" (*Opera Magazine*), "lustrous voice" (*Opera News*), and "fine technique" and rich range of colors (*The New York Times*).

With more than 100 performances at the Metropolitan Opera, Eddy's roles there have included Fiona in Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Rosette in *Manon*, Zulma in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and roles in *Rigoletto*, *The Merry Widow*, *Parsifal*, and other productions.

Her signature role of Carmen has taken her to companies and orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, including two tours of Japan with legendary conductor Seiji Ozawa. Other notable roles include Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Angelina in *La Cenerentola*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and Paula in *Florencia en el Amazonas*.

She has appeared with Boston Lyric Opera, New York City Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Glimmerglass Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Portland Opera, Opera Colorado, Vancouver Opera, and numerous other companies.

On the concert stage, Eddy has appeared with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society, Baltimore Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony, and New York Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble, with whom she performed Respighi's *Il Tramonto*.

She made her Carnegie Hall debut with New York City Opera in Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

A Boston native, Eddy earned her master's degree in Vocal Performance from Boston University. She was a New England Regional Winner and National Semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, received the Shoshana Foundation Richard Gold Career Grant, and was honored with Boston Conservatory's Distinguished Alumni Award.



Since 2022 **Victoria Wolf Lewis** has held the position of Assistant Concertmaster of the Israel Symphony Orchestra Rishon LeZion (the resident orchestra of the Israeli Opera).

Previously based in New York City, she performed with ensembles across the United States, including the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, American Ballet Theatre, New York City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Broadway production of Phantom of the Opera. She was also Concertmaster of Bare Opera.

Ms. Lewis has appeared as a soloist with the Orquestra de Cámara Galega in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, as well as at the Sale Apollinee of Teatro La Fenice in Venice.

In 2023, she co-founded the Tel Aviv String Trio with colleagues from her orchestra. The ensemble has since performed widely throughout Israel and the United States.

She also appeared with the Ensemble for the Romantic Century in Anna Akhmatova: The Heart Is Not Made of Stone at BAM Fisher Theater. The New York Times praised the performance, noting: "But the real stars are the musicians […] playing rapturous accounts of Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich."

Ms. Lewis holds a Bachelor's degree from Columbia University and a Master's degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

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Winner of Young Concert Artists with Hexagon Piano and Winds and of Concert Artists Guild as a soloist, **Susan Rotholz** is Principal flute of the New York Pops, Greenwich Symphony and The New York Chamber Ensemble and is a member of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Little Orchestra Society.

She is Co-founder of the Sherman Chamber Ensemble. Ms. Rotholz has recorded and toured internationally with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. She also appears each season with the Cape May Music Festival, Greenwich Chamber Players, Saratoga Chamber Players and the Sebago Long Lake Chamber Music Festival.

Ms. Rotholz attended the Marlboro Music Festival and was principal and solo flutist with the New England Bach Festival for twenty-five years.

Her recording of the *Bach Flute Sonatas and the Solo Partita* with Kenneth Cooper, fortepiano, is described by The Wall Street Journal as "eloquent and musically persuasive."

Recently, Ms. Rotholz released *American Tapestry, Duos for Flute and Piano* performing the Beaser Variations, commissioned by her in 1982, Copland Duo, Muczynski and Liebermann Sonatas presented by Bridge Records as "…brilliant instrumental virtuosity with deep understanding of this quintessentially American repertoire."

Ms. Rotholz is an Adjunct Artist in Music at Vassar College and continues to teach at Columbia University/Barnard College, Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College and the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College. She also was guest performer and teacher at the Colorado College Music Festival.

She holds degrees from Queens College (BM) and Yale School of Music (MM). In 2002 she received the Norman Vincent Peale Award for Positive Thinking.



Richard Wolfe, viola, was born and raised in New York City in a family immersed in the arts—his father was a graphic artist and his mother danced with the Martha Graham company. He studied violin with Aaron Shapinsky and Dorothy DeLay. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, he studied with Walter Levin, first violinist of the celebrated LaSalle Quartet.

After completing his studies, Wolfe spent five years in Israel, performing with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. It was there, at the encouragement of the orchestra's chief conductor, Rudolph Barshai, that he began playing the viola professionally—a change of instrument that would define the rest of his career.

Mr. Wolfe settled in the Netherlands in 1982 and in 1984 began a 35-year tenure as principal violist of the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra/Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. He appeared frequently as soloist with the orchestras in the Netherlands and abroad. His recording of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, K. 364, with violinist Gordan Nikolić and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra was released by the Tacet label in 2020.

Chamber music has remained central to his musical life. He has performed with Sergiu Luca's Music in Context in the United States and Ensemble Explorations in Belgium, collaborating with distinguished artists including cellist Roel Dieltiens. He and his wife, violinist Elisabeth Perry, are core members of the Utrecht-based **Rietveld Ensemble**, an international chamber group whose repertoire ranges from the Classical and Romantic periods to contemporary music and world premieres.

Wolfe has also devoted much of his career to teaching, serving on the viola faculties of the conservatories of Amsterdam and Utrecht and influencing a new generation of violists.

Mr. Wolfe performs on an anonymous Milanese viola dating from around 1800 and has also played a modern viola made by Amsterdam luthier Bengt Widlund.

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