



# Bologne + Mozart

**Co-presented by The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center  
and Orchestra of St. Luke's**

**Monday, November 23th, 2020 at 6:30pm**

**Streamed live from The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center**

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# Performers

Naoko Tanaka, Laura Lutzke, *violins*  
Louise Schulman, Lois Martin, *violas*  
Thapelo Masita, *cello*

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# Program

## LUIGI BOCCHERINI

String Trio in E Major, G. 106  
Allegro giusto  
Larghetto  
Menuetto. Con moto - Trio  
Rondo. Andante un poco lento

## JOSEPH BOLOGNE, CHEVALIER DE SAINT-GEORGES

String Quartet in C Minor, Opus 1, No. 4  
Allegro moderato  
Rondeau

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

String Quintet No. 5 in D Major, K. 593  
Larghetto - Allegro  
Adagio  
Menuetto. Allegretto - Trio  
Finale. Allegro

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# Program Notes

## String Trio in E Major by Luigi Boccherini

Luigi Boccherini was a cosmopolitan, international composer and cellist whose all-encompassing oeuvre includes nearly every genre at his disposal at the time, from symphonies, oratorios, and operas, to cello sonatas, piano trios, and guitar quintets. But his reputation firmly stands on his elegant and inventive writing for strings and his contributions to the repertoire of a variety of chamber works for string ensemble.

Born into a musical family in Lucca, Italy, Boccherini worked as a court musician in Vienna before entering the service of Infante Luis Antonio of Spain, the younger brother of the king. Boccherini was dismissed from court after refusing to remove a passage from one of his works that King Charles III didn't like. He then followed Infante Luis Antonio to the small town of Arenas San Pedro in the Gredos Mountains, where he would spend the next nine years of his life. In Arenas San Pedro, Boccherini experienced a period of immense creativity, composing over 80 pieces of music, including his collection of string trios, Opus 34.

Over the course of his career, Boccherini wrote between 60 and 70 string trios. The six string trios comprising Opus 34 are written for two violins and cello, rather than the usual violin, viola, and cello, and represent some of his finest compositions for this unusual configuration. (Boccherini's experimentation with unconventional combinations of string instruments, including over 100 string quintets and several guitar quintets and string sextets, is one of his hallmarks and may have inspired later compositions, such as Brahms's two string sextets.) The String Trio in E Major is the sixth and final trio in the collection. The Allegro giusto is a playful yet leisurely movement, full of lively syncopated exchanges between the instruments balanced by an enchanting, pastoral digression and a brief, recurring minor theme. Similarly, the Larghetto begins with a lively, spirited dance that gives way to a doleful middle section, full of yearning suspensions. The third Minuetto con moto section starts softly, with an almost transparent introduction that contrasts with the stylish elegance and sudden swells in texture of the Trio section. The final Rondeau movement is a lively, yet restrained that ends in a playful whisper.

## String Quartet No. 4 in C Minor by Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges

On Christmas Day 1745 on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe—then a French colony—a son was born to an enslaved 16-year old woman of Senegalese descent named Anne. The son's father was Anne's

enslaver Georges Bologne de Saint-Georges, a French planter and the husband of Anne's mistress Elisabeth Mérican Boulogne. Unusually, Georges chose to recognize his son Joseph by giving him his surname. Joseph Bologne would one day defy the odds of the circumstances of his birth and become a prolific, respected, and influential composer in France. Only recently, however, have his compositions and contributions begun to receive the attention and performances they have long deserved after centuries of being excluded from the canon.

In 1753, Joseph Bologne's father brought him to France and enrolled him in a boarding school in Paris. Bologne eventually graduated from the Royal Polytechnique Academy, was named a Gendarme du roi and knighted, becoming Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St. Georges. During his school years, Chevalier de St. Georges was a decorated and widely-known fencer; however, little is known about his musical education and his path to musical stardom. Some sources speculate that he started to learn the violin as a child; however, he doesn't appear in musical circles until the early 1760s, and even then, only as the dedicatee of works by other composers, including his teacher François Gossec. He was much better known as a champion fencer than as a musician when he made his first documented public appearance as a violinist with Les Concert des Amateurs in 1769, soon becoming its concertmaster and music director. He made his professional debut as a soloist with the ensemble in 1772, performing the solo in his two violin concertos. According to contemporary sources, Bologne's debut and subsequent performances were great successes.

After the disbanding of Les Concerts des Amateurs, Bologne became the main conductor of Le Concert Olympique, where he commissioned and conducted the premieres of Haydn's six "Paris" symphonies (Nos. 82 through 87). He began to build a strong reputation as both a skilled performer and a talented composer, composing in a variety of genres, including concertos, symphonies, sonatas, songs, and opera, and achieving something of a superstar status in Paris. But he

was often discriminated against and passed over for prominent leadership positions because of his mixed heritage. He was proposed as the new director of the Paris Opera in 1776, but removed himself from consideration after three of the opera's leading ladies wrote a petition to the Queen Marie Antoinette, who had attended many of the Chevalier de St. Georges' performances with Le Concert Comique, saying that they "could never...submit to the orders of a mulatto."

The first known compositions written by the Chevalier de St. Georges were his collection of six string quartets. Published in 1773, they were inspired by Haydn's string quartets—which brought the form to prominence in the latter half of the 18th century—and were some of the first string quartets to be published and performed in France. The six string quartets are unique in that they all consist of just two movements, rather than the four-movement structure we are familiar with today through Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. Yet despite their brevity, Bologne's saturates each of these six string quartets with sweeping elegance and subtle dramatic shifts that speak to the keen refinement and unmatched inventiveness of his talents.

The first Allegro moderato movement of his String Quartet No. 4 begins with a simple, long-stretching melody that is passed effortlessly between instruments, followed by a lighter contrasting mood in major. The second Rondeau movement is another exercise in contrasts: the two main themes of the rondo consist of jarring, angular syncopations juxtaposed against feather-light but energetic dances, including what briefly appears to be a passing quote of the main theme from the "Alleluia" of Mozart's Exsultate, jubilate, published and premiered in the same year. Lasting less than two minutes, the Rondeau with its seamless transitions between highly contrasting themes encapsulates the broad strokes of the Chevalier de St. Georges' abilities.

## **String Quintet No. 5 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Written in December 1790, Mozart's String Quintet No. 5 in D Major is the fifth of the composer's six string quintets and also one of his final

compositions. Less than a year after composing the string quintet, the young Austrian composer, whose name would one day become synonymous with Western classical music, would be dead at the age of 35. In late 1790, Mozart had been commissioned to write two string quintets: the fifth in D Major and the sixth and final string quintet in E-flat major, which he completed in April 1791. The exact identity of the commissioning patron remains unconfirmed. When the string quintets were published two years after Mozart's death, they were published with the note "for a Hungarian amateur." Years later, Mozart's widow asserted that the works had been commissioned by and written for Johann Trost, a violinist from the Esterhazy estate in Hungary where Haydn had been employed for most of his career. According to violinist Maximilian Stadler, Trost and Haydn played through the String Quintet No. 5 with Mozart while they were visiting Vienna in December 1790. Whether Trost commissioned Mozart's two final string quintets are not, they are often ranked among the finest of Mozart's chamber works.

Although Mozart's string quintets are often referred to as viola quintets due to the addition of a second viola to the traditional string quartet (two violins,

viola, and cello), the first violin remains the melodic focal point with the added viola enriching the texture of the quintet; however, the first Larghetto movement of the String Quintet No. 5 is initiated by the cello, which seems to pose questions that are responded to and riffed on by the violins and violas. This leads to the movement's Allegro section characterized by leaping syncopations and the independence of each instrument, as they toss themes and snatches of melody between themselves, talking to, over, and under one another in engaging musical conversation. The second Adagio movement is a stunning movement, full of lush, long-stretching melodies and framed by star turns for the first violin and cello. This is followed by the graceful—if subtly off-kilter—third Menuetto movement in which the expected strong down beat of the minuet is obscured. In disrupting the equilibrium of the straightforward courtly dance, Mozart sets up the listener for the equally disorienting five-voice canon, complete with a seemingly improvisatory flourish from the cello. The Rondo finale is light and breathless in character but saturated with contrapuntal complexity and flecked with chromatic surprises that flaunt Mozart's ability to make opulent and intricate musical ideas seem effortless.

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## About Orchestra of St. Luke's

Called “[New York’s] hometown band” by The New York Times, OSL performs at venues throughout the city including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City Center, Merkin Hall, The Morgan Library and Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and many more. OSL is dedicated to cultivating a lifetime of engagement with classical music and offers free instrumental training and mentorship for students from elementary school through conservatory and beyond; produces guided community and educational performances for thousands of students and families; and owns and operates The DiMenna Center for Classical Music, New York City’s only rehearsal, recording, education, and performance facility expressly dedicated to classical music, serving more than 500 ensembles and more than 30,000 musicians each year. OSL has participated in 118 recordings, four of which have won Grammy Awards; has commissioned more than 50 new works; and has given more than 179 world, US, and New York City premieres. Recent guests and collaborators include cellist Alisa Weilerstein, tenor Jonas Kauffman, composer Eleanor Alberga, violinist Christian Tetzlaff, and pianist Jeremy Denk. As New York Magazine notes, the Orchestra has a “...reputation for being able to play virtually any score as if the musicians had all grown up with it under their pillows.” Learn more at [OSLmusic.org](http://OSLmusic.org) or @OSLmusic on Instagram, Facebook, Spotify and more.

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## About Temple Emanu-El

Founded in 1845, Temple Emanu-El is the third-oldest Reform Jewish congregation in the United States. Its odyssey mirrors that of the Jewish community in New York.

Temple Emanu-El is also one of the great Jewish houses of worship in the world. Within our walls, an enormous range of social, educational, and cultural programs are offered.

Awe and soaring spirituality are feelings that are invoked when one first steps into the majestic 2,500-seat Main Sanctuary. In the vastness of the space and the quiet dignity of the mood we feel the presence of God. The play of light refracted through the clerestory windows against the arched side walls is a luminous reminder that this sanctuary is expressive of God’s spirit.

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## About The Streicker Center

From history to culture, food to politics, music to Israel. Night after night, the Streicker Center offers opportunities for discussion and debate about the most challenging and important issues of the day, from anti-Semitism, fake news, immigration, and racism to the future of the Jewish people.