

# *Musica Viva!*



Treble Logo—Marilyn Banner

**THE MILO TRIO**  
Music of the modern era  
Washington Musica Viva  
**Sunday, December 2**  
[dcmusicaviva.com](http://dcmusicaviva.com)



## THE MILO TRIO

**Carl Banner, piano**  
**Celaya Kirchner, violin**  
**Emma Hays Johnson, cello**

The sixth of the Milo Trio's series of concerts examining the development of the piano trio genre, takes us into the twentieth century with three women composers who helped to knock down the barriers that had largely discouraged women from composing music during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Not only did they break barriers, they also produced memorable music.

## PROGRAM

**Amy Beach**

(Sept. 5, 1867–Dec. 27, 1944)

**Piano Trio in a, Op. 150** (1938)

- I. Allegro
- II. Lento espressivo
- III. Allegro con brio

**Tina Davidson**

(b. Dec. 30, 1952)

**Blue Like an Orange** (2009)

**Rebecca Clarke**

(Aug 27, 1886–Oct 13, 1979)

**Piano Trio in e-flat**

(1921)

- I. Moderato ma appassionato
- II. Andante molto semplice
- III. Allegro vigoroso

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Beach, Piano Trio in a, Op. 150.** Although born in an era when children were not expected to be intrusive among the adults, Amy Cheney, was born in Henniker, NH, to musical parents, and herself showed signs of musical talent early on. It is said she was able to sing forty songs accurately by age one, could improvise counter-melody by age two, and that she taught herself to read at age three. At four, she composed three waltzes for piano, during a summer at her grandfather's farm, despite the absence of a piano; instead, she composed the pieces mentally and played them when she returned home. She could also play music by ear, including four-part hymns. The family struggled to keep up with her musical interests and demands. Her mother sang and played for her, but attempted to prevent young Amy from playing the family piano herself, believing that to indulge the child's wishes in this respect would damage parental authority. Amy often commanded what music was played in the home and how, becoming enraged if it did not meet her standards.

Her early achievements were repeated throughout her life in spite of the prejudices of the era against female early achievers. She made her concert debut at age 16 at Boston Music Hall, and two years later she starred in the final performance of the Boston Symphony's 1884–85 season. Her First Symphony was premiered by the Boston Symphony in 1896.

Following the death of her husband in 1910 she spent the next four years in Europe where she performed frequently, often of her own music. A Hamburg critic wrote "we have before us undeniably a possessor of musical gifts of the highest kind; a musical nature touched with genius." She was greeted as the first American woman "able to compose music of a European quality of excellence."

She returned to the US in 1914, where her successes continued. She used her status as the top female American composer to further the careers of young musicians, and worked as a music educator during the early 20th century. She served as President of the Board of Councillors of the New England Conservatory of Music. Heart disease led to Beach's retirement in 1940 and her death in New York City in 1944.

**Davidson, Blue Like an Orange.** Over her forty-year career, Davidson has been commissioned by well-known ensembles such as National Symphony Orchestra, Opera Delaware, Roanoke Symphony, Orchestra Society of Philadelphia, VocalEssence, Kronos Quartet, Mendelssohn String Quartet, Cassatt Quartet, and public television (WHYY-TV). Her music has been widely performed by many orchestras and ensembles, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Musicopia String Orchestra, and Orchestra 2001. She was commissioned in 2011 by violinist, Hilary Hahn, who recorded her work on Deutsche Grammophon. The compact disc won a GRAMMY in 2015.

She has been acclaimed for her authentic voice, her "vivid ear for harmony and colors" (New York Times) and her works of "transfigured beauty" (OperaNews). She

writes "real music, with structure, mood, novelty and harmonic sophistication—with haunting melodies that grow out of complex, repetitive rhythms" (Philadelphia Inquirer) that is both "intellectually rigorous and deeply moving" (Star-Tribune).

Long-term residencies play a major role in Davidson's career. As composer-in-residence with the Fleisher Art Memorial (1998–2001), she was commissioned to write for the Cassatt Quartet, Voces Novae et Antiquae, and members of the Philadelphia Orchestra. She also created the citywide Young Composers program to teach inner city children how to write music through instrument building, improvisation, and graphic notation. She was composer-in-residence as part of the innovative Meet the Composer "New Residencies" with OperaDelaware, the Newark Symphony and the YWCA in Delaware (1994–97). During this residency, she wrote the critically acclaimed full-length opera, Billy and Zelda, as well as created community partner programs for homeless women, and with students at a local elementary school.

**Clarke, Trio.** An English classical composer and violist best known for her chamber music featuring the viola. She was born in Harrow and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music in London, later becoming one of the first female professional orchestral players. Stranded in the United States at the outbreak of World War II, she settled permanently in New York City and married composer and pianist James Friskin in 1944. Clarke died at her home in New York at the age of 93.

Although Clarke's output was not large, her work was recognized for its compositional skill and artistic power. Some of her works have yet to be published (and many were only recently published); those that were published in her lifetime were largely forgotten after she stopped composing. Scholarship and interest in her compositions revived in 1976. The Rebecca Clarke Society was established in 2000 to promote the study and performance of her music.

## THE MILO TRIO

The Milo trio was formed in 2018 by Carl Banner, Celaya Kirchner and Emma Hayes Johnson, under the auspices of Washington Musica Viva, of which Carl Banner is the executive director. The group came together when Bonnie Thron, principal cellist with the North Carolina Symphony, and occasional participant in Musica Viva programs, introduced her fellow cellist, Emma Johnson, to Banner, who in turn introduced her close friend Celaya Kirchner to him. Johnson suggested that they form a trio and the group held their first concert on January 27, 2019, in the home of Richard White, who resides on Milo Avenue in Bethesda, thus the trio gained its name.

A musician since childhood, pianist Carl Banner studied with, among others, Harold Zabrack, Leon Fleisher, Leo Smit, and Leonard Shure, and performed in numerous solo and chamber concerts from the age of 14. In 1964 he was the winner of the Washington, DC, National Society of Arts and Letters Scholarship Award in piano. He continued to perform regularly while earning a PhD in cell biology from Harvard University in 1982. In 1998 he and his wife, artist Marilyn Banner, founded Washington Musica Viva, which to date has produced more than 300 chamber music concerts in the Washington DC area and elsewhere. In 2004, Banner retired from the National Institutes of Health in order to devote full time to music. With Musica Viva, he has produced concerts at the Embassies of the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, Denmark, Israel, and the European Union, as well as at the Kennedy Center, New York's Czech Center, and the Donnell Library. He has also performed at the Wellfleet Preservation Hall and Public Library in Wellfleet, MA, where his father, Paul, is a long-time resident.

Cellist Emma Hayes Johnson currently resides near the DC and Baltimore areas after recently finishing her second master's degree under the tutelage of Edward Arron at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. In addition to freelancing, Emma has been a member of several notable orchestras including the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra and the American Festival Pops Orchestra. Her most recent performances include solo and chamber recitals and tours in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Virginia, and the Carolinas as well as France and Sri Lanka. As a chamber musician, she has worked alongside Xiao-Dong Wang, Hye-Jin Kim, Ara Gregorian, Colin Carr, Emanuel Gruber, and Raman

Ramakrishnan. Prior to her engagements in Massachusetts, she held the position of adjunct professor at Beaufort County Community College in North Carolina while also maintaining a private studio and freelancing. Emma studied at Converse College and George Mason University under the tutelage of Kenneth Law, and she graduated with her first Master's degree from East Carolina University under the instruction of Emanuel Gruber.

Celaya Kirchner currently resides in Northern Virginia after receiving her Masters in Violin Performance from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst under the tutelage of renowned pedagogue Elizabeth Chang. There she received a string quartet fellowship, performing four chamber music recitals and playing in masterclasses for members of the Cleveland Quartet, Ying Quartet, and Dover Quartet as well as many others. For her undergraduate degree, Ms. Kirchner studied with David Salness, of the Left Bank Quartet, at the University of Maryland. She also attended numerous summer chamber music festivals, including Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Meadowmount School of Music, and Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music. In the summer of 2018, Ms. Kirchner travelled to Piobbico, Italy to participate in the Brancaloni International Music Festival, performing in a 13th century castle as well as in other venues in the Marche region. Ms. Kirchner also enjoys orchestral playing, regularly performing with the Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra as well as participating in the National Orchestral Institute and Festival. In her teaching, Ms. Kirchner likes to focus on establishing a good technical foundation while also establishing skills for musical expression. Because why learn all of this technique if we don't use it to express ourselves? Ms. Kirchner also hopes to impart onto her students her passion for chamber music and the importance of learning chamber music skills.

**Marilyn Banner.** Marilyn is the artist whose music-related paintings grace the cover of these programs. She is a rising star among the artists who work in the "encaustic medium" in the DC area. Spend a little time browsing her works on her



web site at [marilynbanner.com](http://marilynbanner.com). Marilyn has participated in many individual as well as juried shows of her work,

**Washington Musica Viva** produces high quality, unpretentious public performances of a broad range of classical, jazz-based, and contemporary chamber music. WMV began as a monthly multi-disciplinary performance series in the Kensington studio of visual artist Marilyn Banner. Now in our 21st season, WMV has produced more than 300 programs, including performances at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, the Czech Center in NY, the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the Embassy of Austria, Busboys and Poets, Twins Jazz Club, and the Brooklyn Conservatory. WMV is directed by pianist Carl Banner. Participants include professional musicians from Washington, Baltimore, New York, and elsewhere.

Washington Musica Viva, Inc. is a 501(c)(3)

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Program design by Hugh Haskell

Suggestions for improvement are welcome at [haskellh@verizon.net](mailto:haskellh@verizon.net).