



NAUMBURG AT MSM

Erin Wagner (BM '19),
Mezzo-soprano

Winner of the 2021 Naumburg Vocal Award

Maureen Zoltek (DMA '13), **Piano**

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026 | 7:30 PM
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

WELCOME FROM NICHOLAS MANN, NAUMBURG FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

For many years the Naumburg Foundation has enjoyed a strong relationship with Manhattan School of Music. The Foundation's past winners include numerous graduates of MSM and many current faculty members. It is an illustrious list including sopranos Dawn Upshaw and Lucy Shelton, violinist Elmar Oliveira, cellist David Geber, clarinetist Charles Neidich, and flutist Carol Wincenc. MSM's current quartet in residence, the American String Quartet was winner of the Foundation's 1974 chamber music award and our most recent 2021 vocal winner Erin Wagner is an MSM alumna.

Our two organizations share a mission to find, develop and promote young musicians. One need only look at the list of winners to see our mutual success in discovering young artists with a unique voice.

–Nicholas Mann

*President, Naumburg Foundation
Chair of Strings, Manhattan School of Music*

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PROGRAM

HUGO WOLF
(1860–1903)

Mignon Lieder (1888)

- I. Heiss mich nicht reden
- II. Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt
- III. So lasst mich scheinen
- IV. Kennst du das Land?

DAVID CLAY METTENS
(b. 1990)

The Sustaining Air (2021)

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.
- V.
- VI.

Intermission

FRANCIS POULENC
(1899–1963)

La dame de Monte Carlo (1961)

SAMUEL BARBER
(1910–1981)

Hermit Songs, Op. 29 (1953)

- I. At Saint Patrick's Purgatory
- II. Church Bell at Night
- III. St. Ita's Vision
- IV. The Heavenly Banquet
- V. The Crucifixion
- VI. Sea-Snatch
- VII. Promiscuity
- VIII. The Monk and His Cat
- IX. The Praises of God
- X. The Desire for Hermitage

PROGRAM NOTES

Each of the pieces you will hear on this program captures someone grappling with themselves...what they are, what they are seeing and feeling, what they have gone through...And each of these individuals confronts their circumstances alone regardless of their surroundings. Whether in an intimate conversation with a father figure, or in observance of the world from the windows of one's apartment, or in the flurry of crowds gambling and drinking at a casino in Monte Carlo, or within the thick and isolating walls of a monastery each of these individuals is forced to reckon with themselves.

The poems of Mignon from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* have been set to music by many composers including Schubert, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Hugo Wolf. Mignon's tragic story of being forcefully taken from her home to be used as a circus performer and then having to deal with her trauma after being rescued by Wilhelm has not lost its relevance as we continue to witness stories like this unfold on a daily basis. What distinguishes Wolf's settings is how his music tracks Mignon's psychological journey as she confronts her trauma and seeks a way forward. The cycle begins with Mignon in a state of fear as she begs to keep what happened to her a secret, following this she almost descends into madness as she tries to endure longing for the past and for her homeland, she then goes on to describe her perfect heaven which is a place she can simply exist as she is, and finally after she recalls images of her homeland she asks Wilhelm directly if he knows where it is and what happened to her.

David Clay Mettens and I first connected through being paired up at Aspen Music Festival in a project dedicated to creating new art song. I immediately expressed my love of Larry Eigner, an American poet of The Black Mountain School, described by Charles Bukowski as "the greatest living poet". I felt deeply connected to and moved by Eigner's story and loved that his words describing everyday images he encountered could take on endless interpretations. Clay agreed that Eigner's poems were an inspiring canvas and so he set six poems for my dear friend, Richard Fu, and I. Clay's songs piece together Eigner's fragmented prose and provide not only the atmosphere of what Eigner is seeing but also reveal what Eigner perhaps felt as he observed the world. Eigner was born with severe cerebral palsy, he was in a wheelchair and often had difficulty speaking and typing. Of Eigner's literary output, Norman Fischer writes, "Living as he did, he was forced to see the world, as it were, from the ground up, intensely inward and yet inwardly-outward (he is probably above all a nature poet, sensitive to weather and the phenomenology of being in a physical world)—and

to develop, quite consciously and carefully, if at the same time spontaneously, a way of writing that could express this directly, rather than explain it...Eigner's work situates itself in the world uniquely—intensely present with it, with ranging thought and perception, and, above all, without sentimentality." Eigner's way of navigating and viewing the world reminds me of my father who was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. Despite the challenges my father faces because of his disability he has always been able to find the beauty and wonder in all things.

Francis Poulenc's and Jean Cocteau's *La Dame de Monte Carlo* has lost all sense of herself and with it her self preservation. She seeks solace and excitement at the gambling tables of Monte Carlo and is willing to sacrifice all she owns for the thrill of being someone other than who she really is. When everything she has runs out and she can no longer outrun her fears she leaps head first into the sea below screaming "Monte Carlo", her fall is echoed by a solitary and nearly silent splash.

Samuel Barber composed *Hermit Songs* for Leontyne Price in 1952 and they have since become an iconic American song cycle. Barber said of them, "They are settings of anonymous Irish texts of the eighth to thirteenth centuries written by monks and scholars, often on the margins of manuscripts they were copying or illuminating—perhaps not always meant to be seen by their Father Superiors. They are small poems, thoughts or observations, some very short, and speak in straightforward, droll, and often surprisingly modern terms of the simple life these men led, close to nature, to animals and to God." Each song is its own world with its own personality and intent. The song cycle traverses a wide array of emotions and colors including humor, reverence, joy, and melancholy but what emerges most for me is a sense of comfort and acceptance in solitude.

-Erin Wagner

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Erin Wagner (BM '19), Mezzo-Soprano

Mezzo-soprano, Erin Wagner, the winner of the 2021 Naumburg Vocal Award, is establishing herself as an artist of “versatility and musical curiosity” (*Opera News*). She is a graduate of Manhattan School of Music (BM '19), where she studied with Joan Patenaude Yarnell. A recent alumna of Houston Grand Opera's Butler Studio, Wagner appeared in productions of *The Wreckers*, *Salome*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Parsifal*, *The Sound of Music* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, and was heard in scenes as Béatrice (*Béatrice et Bénédicte*), Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*), Frau Reich (*Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*), and Larina (*Eugene Onegin*). This season, she also made her debut as Hansel in HGO's Family Day Production of *Hansel and Gretel*.

Recent highlights include debuts with Ars Lyrica Houston in Haydn's *Arianna a Naxos* and David Ashley White's *The Peace of Wild Things*; Messiaen's *Harawi* with Brooklyn Art Song Society; and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, along with recital appearances throughout the United States including a recital sponsored by The Shoshana Foundation for Bay Area Turning Point, a shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Houston.

A Wolf Trap Opera Filene Artist, she sang Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (2024) and returned in 2025 as Blanche de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites* and Mércèdes in *Carmen*. In the 2024/25 season, Wagner made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Unborn Voice 3, Servant 2 cover), and appeared with the Louisville Orchestra, the Maryland Symphony, Brooklyn Arts Song Society, and Brazos Valley Symphony.

Wagner is a prizewinner of the Gerda Lissner Foundation Lieder Competition, Opera Index Competition, George & Nora London Foundation Competition, Young Concert Artists International Auditions, and Schwabacher Recital Debut Competition, and is a recipient of The Shoshana Foundation's Richard F. Gold Career Grant. She is an alumna of the Aspen Music Festival and School's Renée Fleming Artist Fellowship, the Merola Opera Program, Renée Fleming's SongStudio, The Chautauqua Institution, SongFest's Colburn Fellowship, and Matthew Rose's Scuola di Bel Canto. Erin has performed with Steven Blier and Bénédicte Jourdois at Caramoor and with Brian Zeger at Juilliard Songfest. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music.

As part of the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation's 100th Anniversary Celebratory concert, Erin Wagner will be performing early songs by Alban Berg on Sunday, May 17, at the Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Maureen Zoltek, piano

Pianist and educator Maureen Zoltek has built a dynamic career working with leading vocalists, orchestras, and opera companies across North America and abroad. She currently serves as Head of Music Staff and Butler Studio Music Director at Houston Grand Opera, as well as a teaching artist at Music Academy of the West and Festival Napa Valley. Previously, Dr. Zoltek spent eight seasons on the music staff of San Francisco Opera and has assisted at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis, among others. A graduate of the Ryan Opera Center in Chicago, she has also attended the Aspen Music Festival and School and Music Academy of the West. Dr. Zoltek earned her D.M.A. from Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Warren Jones and holds a master's degree in piano performance and musicology. When she is not in rehearsal, Dr. Zoltek enjoys baking, true crime podcasts, and traveling with her standard poodle, Henry.

UPCOMING NAUMBURG CONCERTS

NAUMBURG AT SFCM

TERRA STRING QUARTET

2025 Chamber Music Competition Winner

APR 3, 2026 | FRI

7:30 PM

Hume Concert Hall

The San Francisco recital is generously underwritten by Mr. Sin-Tung Chiu, in honor of his parents Bella and P.P. Chiu.

Tickets and Streaming available at Naumburg.org

100 YEAR CELEBRATION— Gala Concert

MAY 17, 2026 | SUN

3PM

Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Tickets Available now at Naumburg.org

PERFORMING ARTISTS:

CAROL WINCENC

COLIN CARR

CHARLES NEIDICH

LEONIDAS KAVAKOS

AWADAGIN PRATT

FRANK HUANG

ERIN WAGNER

ANDREAS MADER

VALENTIN KOVALEV

JACK GAO

LUCY SHELTON

SETH KNOPP

TERRA STRING QUARTET

EMERSON STRING QUARTET

BRENTANO STRING QUARTET

The Walter W. Naumburg Foundation celebrates its 100th year as the world's oldest music competition with this extraordinary event featuring a remarkable gathering of alumni whose artistry has defined the Foundation's first century.

TERRA STRING QUARTET RECITAL

2025 Chamber Music Competition Winner

FEB 9, 2027 | TUES

7:30 PM

Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

UPCOMING NAUMBURG COMPETITION

View competition rules and apply online at Naumburg.org

INTERNATIONAL VIOLIN COMPETITION 2026

OCT 27 - NOV 1 2026

New York City

FIRST PRIZE:	\$25,000 Two New York City Recitals Commissioned Work by an American Composer
SECOND PRIZE:	\$15,000
THIRD PRIZE:	\$10,000

Event Access, Rules and Requirements are available at **NAUMBURG.ORG**

ABOUT THE WALTER W. NAUMBURG FOUNDATION

The Walter W. Naumburg Foundation celebrates its 100th year as the world's oldest classical music competition. Today it continues Mr. Naumburg's desire to assist gifted young musicians, made possible by its long-standing program of competitions and awards in solo and chamber music performance, commissions, and composer recordings. On Sunday, May 17, 2026, Naumburg will present an extraordinary concert featuring a remarkable gathering of alumni whose artistry has defined the Foundation's first century: Awadagin Pratt, Andreas Mader, Anton Nel, Carol Wincenc, Colin Carr, Charles Neidich, Erin Wagner, Frank Huang, Jack Gao, Leonidas Kavakos, Lucy Shelton, Seth Knopp, Valentin Kovalev, and the Brentano, Emerson and Terra String Quartets. The concert takes place in the Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Tickets are now available at the Jazz at Lincoln Center Box Office.

Past winners include Violinists Leonidas Kavokas and Frank Huang; Pianists Stephen Hough, Gilles Vonsattel and Awadagin Pratt; as well as eighth blackbird and the American, Brentano and Pacifica String Quartets. Past winners of the Naumburg vocal award include Regina Sarfaty, Elizabeth Mosher, Edmund Leroy, Faith Esham, Irene Gubard, Jan Opalach, Lucy Shelton, Dawn Upshaw, Stanford Olsen, Julia Bullock and Erin Wagner. For more information, please visit www.naumburg.org

Officers

Nicholas Mann, President

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Marshal Gibson

Linda Rappaport

Anton Nel

Robert Yekovich

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Directors Emeritus

Judith Naumburg

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a professionally oriented Saturday music program dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 8 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

Your gift helps a young artist reach for the stars!

To enable Manhattan School of Music to continue educating and inspiring generations of talented students and audiences alike, please consider making a charitable contribution today.

Contact the Philanthropy Office at 917-493-4434
or to make an online gift, [scan this code](#)
or visit giving.msmnyc.edu.



Land Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.



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