

CONCERTONOVO PRESENTS

# Classical & New Music

Music from the 1870s to 2025

With new compositions by Al-Ahmad, Carlson, and Oakley

**Klavierhaus**, 790 11th Avenue, New York City

December 6, 2025, 7:00 pm

CONCERTO NOVO PRESENTS

## CLASSICAL & NEW MUSIC

Al-Ahmad, Alkan, Carlson, Fujikura, Hailstork, Oakley,  
Poulenc, Rebikov, and Villa Lobos

**Klavierhaus**

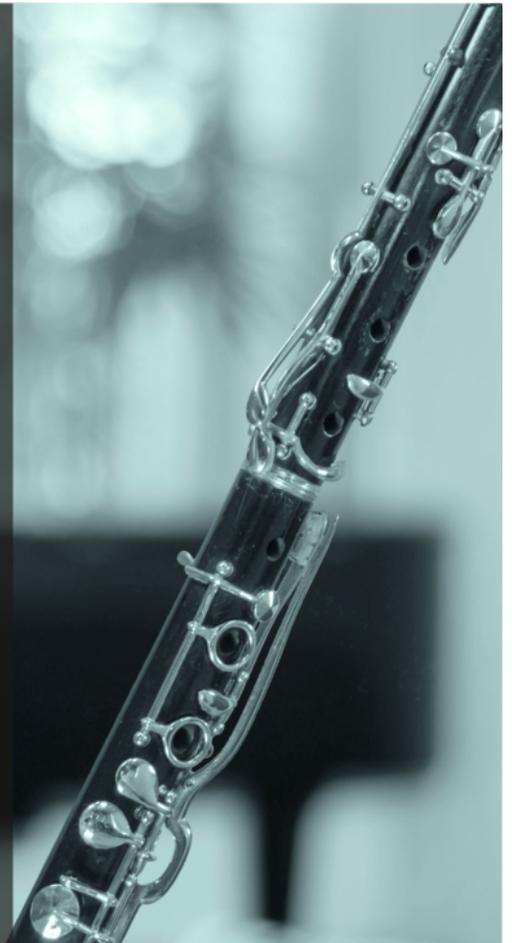
790 11th Avenue  
December 6, 2025  
7:00 pm

### ARTISTS

Lora Al-Ahmad, piano  
Devin Cohen, bassoon  
Inga Kashakashvili, piano  
Emmalie Tello, clarinet

Tickets \$25

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# Program

## Inga Kashakashvili, piano

A Tale of the Bald Eagle	George Oakley	(b. 1979)
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## Lora Al-Ahmad, piano

Ether, <i>in memory of Domingo Toledo</i>	James Carlson	(b. 1946)
Solea, <i>in memory of Mary Cattani</i>	James Carlson	
Momentum and Reverie	James Carlson	

## Devin Cohen, bassoon & Emmalie Tello, clarinet

Perpetuum Mobile	James Carlson	(b. 1946)
Turtle Totem	Dai Fujikura	(b. 1977)

## Lora Al-Ahmad, piano

Song	Milcho Leviev	(1937-2019)
Invention from Nouvellettes Op.59	Pancho Vladigerov	(1899-1978)
Nightingale, <i>in loving memory of Stefka Evstatieva</i>	Lora Al-Ahmad	(b. 1995)

## Inga Kashakashvili, piano

Waltz	James Carlson	(b. 1946)
Waltz from <i>Yolka</i> , The Christmas Tree	Vladimir Rebikov	(1866-1920)
Valse da Dor	Hector Villa Lobos	(1887-1959)

## Devin Cohen, bassoon & Emmalie Tello, clarinet

Bassoon Set	Adolphus Hailstork III	(b. 1941)
Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon, Allegro	Francis Poulenc	(1899-1963)



# Biographies

## Lora Al-Ahmad

Lora Al-Ahmad is a pianist and composer from Sofia, Bulgaria. She graduated with honors from Mannes College in New York City, earning degrees in Piano Performance, under the guidance of Pavlina Dokovska and Vladimir Valjarevic, and Composition, studying with Lowell Liebermann.

Al-Ahmad has performed at prestigious venues, including annual appearances at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, The Bohemian National Hall, The DiMenna Center, and The German House at the United Nations Plaza, as well as concert stages across Europe and the United States. Her festival engagements include The Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau in France, the Festetics Palace Festival in Hungary, the Bowdoin International Music Festival in Maine, the Gingold Festival in Miami and the Mannes Sounds Festival in New York. She is dedicated to promoting works by women composers, regularly featuring their music in her curated recitals.

As the winner of the 2020 Newly Published Music Competition by the National Flute Association in the United States, Al-Ahmad's compositions have earned international recognition and have been performed by acclaimed musicians, including Stefan Ragnar Hoskuldsson, principal flutist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Maron Khoury, flutist at the Metropolitan Opera; Billy Hunter, principal trumpet of the Metropolitan Opera; and Wolfram Koessel, cellist of the American String Quartet. Her piece "Consolation in Loving Memory of Allan Evans" was selected for the ABRSM's piano repertoire collection at the post-graduate diploma level.

Currently pursuing Doctoral Studies in Piano Performance at the CUNY Graduate Center, Al-Ahmad remains an advocate for contemporary music, serving as an executive board member of the Bulgarian Concert Evenings in New York and as a resident composer at the Off the Beaten Path Chamber Music Festival in Bulgaria. Her compositions are published by the Theodore Presser Company.

Lora Al-Ahmad has maintained a steady teaching career for over a decade, teaching privately and serving on the faculty of Bard College Preparatory Division for three years. As of 2025, she joined the esteemed faculty of the Hoff-Barthelson School of Music.

## James Carlson

James Carlson is a retired mathematician whose lifelong passion for jazz and classical music eventually led him to composition. Since 2012, he has studied with composer George Oakley. His *Waltz* was performed in 2018 by pianist Inga Kashakashvili at the Nicholas Roerich Museum as part of her program *Circle of Waltzes & Space Carnival*. She presented the work again the following year in the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series at the Chicago Cultural Center.

*Momentum and Reverie* was Carlson's first composition; the pieces featured in this evening's program reflect his work over the past two years.

## **Devin Cohen**

Devin Cohen has held principal bassoon positions with several esteemed ensembles, including the Delphi Chamber Orchestra, Riverside Opera Company, and NewOrch. Additionally, Cohen was a two-time featured soloist with the Hartford Symphony in the company of well know performers such as Anika Noni Rose as part of their Martin Luther King Gala series where he performed Weber's prolific Bassoon Concerto in F Major.

Most recently Cohen has performed as principal bassoon in the Maverick Concert Series, performing Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde with members of the Metropolitan Opera Company as well as participating in prestigious music festivals, such as the Maine Chamber Music Festival, Prisma, and the Caroga Lake Music Festival, where he served as a resident artist.

Cohen is a graduate of the Mannes College of Music and Manhattan School of Music where he earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees of Music in Bassoon under the instruction from prominent bassoonists, including Ben Hoadley (IDRS Board member), Marc Goldberg, Principal bassoon of Orchestra of St. Lukes, and Kim Laskowsky of the New York Philharmonic

## **Inga Kashakashvili**

Inga Kashakashvili, a Georgian-born pianist has performed at major venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Steinway Hall, Merkin Hall at Kaufman Center (New York), Tredegar House (Newport, UK), Barbican Centre (London), the Kakhidze Music Center (Tbilisi, Georgia). She has been praised as "a stellar soloist" (Gramophone), "excellent" (New York Concert Review), and "persuasive, authoritative—much to the delight of the audience" (Hudson Falls). Highlights of her recent seasons include solo performances at Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series at Chicago Cultural Center, Nicholas Roerich Museum, Salmagundi Art Club, Strand Theatre, American Irish Historical Society.

In October 2018, NAXOS label released an album "Wanderer" with music by Georgian-American composer George Oakley. It included major solo and chamber works performed by Kashakashvili. A prizewinner of numerous international competitions, Kashakashvili has participated as artist-faculty in Bermuda Piano Festival and Puerto Piano and Strings, and performed at the Oracle Piano Society, The United Sounds of America, PianoSummer at New Paltz, and Leipzig Music Festival. She has been featured on WQXR, WNYC, WFMT.

Kashakashvili studied at DePaul University, Mannes College, Tbilisi State Conservatory and the Special Music School. Her principal teachers include Eteri Andjaparidze, Vladimir Feltsman, Nino Katamadze, and Tsitsino Todua.

## **George Oakley**

George Oakley, is a Georgian-American composer who "represents a return to a great tradition" (Jay Nordlinger, music critic). His unique musical style, deeply narrative and symbolic, derives from the rich folklore of Georgia, the long tradition of Western classical music, and his personal philosophical

reflections. American Record Guide writes about Oakley's album *Wanderer* released by NAXOS, "...This is a wonderful set of works by a composer whose every work opens up a wide, kaleidoscopic new world of melodic possibility." Gramophone wrote about Oakley's music "...ardent and propulsive music that sounds like the product of an original and fertile mind." His major compositions include numerous works for solo and duo piano, Concerto for piano, chorus and orchestra, chamber music for various instruments, Symphony for strings, *Stabat Mater* for harp and chorus, and many others.

Oakley studied piano at the Tbilisi Conservatory with Edisher Rusishvili. In 2003, after winning the top prize at the Flier International Piano Competition, he moved to the United States to continue his education at DePaul University with Eteri Andjaparidze. A featured alumnus of the NYU Steinhardt, Oakley studied film scoring with Ira Newborn and classical composition with Justin Dello Joio. Upon graduation, he was mentored by composer Richard Danielpour.

Oakley's compositions have been performed at Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall, Merkin Hall, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Le Poisson Rouge, the Chicago Cultural Center, and the Kakhidze Music Center in Georgia. His music has also been heard at international festivals including Festival Manufactur der Kunste in Vienna, Mannes Sounds Festival, Puerto Piano & Strings, and Bermuda Piano, and broadcasts on WOXR and WFMT.

## **Emmalie Tello**

Clarinetist Emmalie Tello is dedicated to creating art that explores storytelling and emotional narratives within music. A member of the International Contemporary Ensemble, she has a passion for collaborative projects with performance highlights at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hear Now Festival, MATA Festival, and Bang on a Can's Long Play Festival. Emmalie has appeared with groups including the Talea Ensemble and Wet Ink Ensemble and can be heard on recordings with saxophonist/composer Jeff Lederer and string quartet ETHEL.

As an educator, she has taught in school, after-school, and pre-college programs across New York City, including at the New York Public Library, Mannes Prep, the Youth Orchestra of St. Luke's, and at the collegiate level with symphony members at Hunter College. She has also workshoped and performed student compositions from the New York Philharmonic's Very Young Composers Program, Luna Composition Lab, Wildflower Composers, and the Walden School Music Camp.

Emmalie co-founded Art Beyond the Ink (ABI) with Rebecca Schifilliti, using interdisciplinary collaboration to engage young audiences and support early-career artists. Alongside educational programs and curriculum, Emmalie has written and produced short films for ABI, with screenings at The Backyard at Hudson Yards, Canberra Film Festival, and The DiMenna Center. She is co-author of "Hearing and Seeing Musical Stories," a children's workbook that teaches musical concepts through short stories, artistic prompts, and kinesthetic exercises. She holds an M.A. in Arts Management & Entrepreneurship and a B.M. in Clarinet from The New School, and an M.M. in Contemporary Clarinet Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with Jon Manasse and David Krakauer.