

International Series



2025 Showcase Concert

Student Performer: Jacob Belcher



The 2025-2026 International Series is presented in part with support from
The Roy Minoff Family Fund

Welcome to our new season!

We absolutely love the annual, free Showcase Concert as a time for us to come together as a community. In tonight's event, we are fortunate to feature two of our wonderful educators, as well as special guests, and a very special program.

CCGS is coming off an amazing year for our Education Program. Our students and alumni performed 36 times for nearly 4,000 people, including for the Cleveland Arts Education Consortium. We had one of our best years yet for media appearances, including several student features. Throughout the last year, we employed a record six CCGS alumni. Our current and former students are now ready to achieve even greater things, as you will hear from tonight's opening performer.

This season features stellar performers: Leonela Alejandro of Puerto Rico, who recently won the Guitar Foundation of America competition; the ever-innovative Duo Noire; Cuban Edel Muñoz, who brought the house down in his Cleveland debut for us in 2012; the Vietnamese phenom An Tran; and our season headliner, Grammy winner David Russell. It's a season of stars, and we can't wait to see you at our shows!



Erik Mann

Executive Director



Kylie Eyre

Board President

2025-2026
International Series



2025 Showcase Concert

Student Performer: Jacob Belcher

Saturday, September 20th, 2025
Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center
at Temple-Tifereth Israel

Visit www.cleguitar.org
for more concerts and events

The 2025-2026 International Series is presented in
part with support from The Roy Minoff Family Fund

Cleveland Classical Guitar Society's programming
is made possible by the generous support of:



**D'Addario
Foundation**

**THE
GEORGE
GUND
FOUNDATION**



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT** **for the ARTS**
arts.gov



**The Past Presidents
Foundation**



**PAUL M. ANGELL
FAMILY FOUNDATION**

Reverb gives

**THE ROY MINOFF
FAMILY FUND**



**The
Louise H. & David S. Ingalls
Foundation**

2025 Showcase Concert

September 20, 2025

Aire Istmeño

Gerardo Tamez (b.1948)

Jake Belcher

Alba Nera

Roland Dyens (1955-2016)

Gnossienne No 1

Erik Satie (1866-1925)

arr. Roland Dyens

Lettre Encore

Roland Dyens

Max Shaffer

from *The Pilgrim Forest*

Christopher Berg (b. 1952)

Pavane for All Souls

Lullaby Blue

Christopher McDonald

Rodeña

Regino Sainz de la Maza
(1896-1981)

A Felicidade

Antônio Carlos Jobim
(1927-1994)

arr. Roland Dyens

Nolan Juairé

Selection of Standards from The Great American Songbook

Vanessa Rubin and Randy Napoleon

Autumn Leaves

Joseph Kosma
(1905-1969)

arr. Christopher McDonald

***Randy Napoleon, Nolan Juairé, Christopher McDonald,
and Max Shaffer***

About The Artists

Vanessa Rubin

Revered as both a torchbearer and a storyteller, jazz vocalist Vanessa Rubin possesses a voice hailed for crystalline clarity, hearth-like warmth and playful lioness sass. The Cleveland native brings a wealth of diverse influences to her vocal performance from both the Trinidadian/Caribbean roots of her mother and traditional jazz by way of her Louisiana-born father. Additional homespun influences include the melodic bell tone clarity of a young Capital Records recording artist, Nancy Wilson, the fire of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, the sweet sounds of trumpeter Blue Mitchell as well as her love of the Motown Sound...especially girl groups like the Supremes.

Rubin's passion for rich musical stories are evidenced throughout her eight albums plus numerous guest appearances. Highlights include the evocative "Voyager II" from the pen of Teri Thornton, "Inside a Silent Tear" written by Blossom Dearie, a refashioned waltz version of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" lyricized by New York Voices and an arrangement of "Superwoman" by Stevie Wonder inspired by the Ahmad Jamal recording of "Poinciana."

Additionally, Rubin continues to back her way into The Blues with an urgent appreciation for soulful mentors like Etta Jones and Irene Reid. Also among her current endeavors is highlighting and interpreting well known, obscure and new lyrical works of composer/arranger/pianist Tadd Dameron. "I hope to do for Tadd's music what Carmen McRae did for Monk's music," Rubin explained.

Vanessa has been performing in Cleveland since around 1980. Some of her early band mates included Wynn Bibbs, Skip Gibson, saxophonist and arranger Willie Smith, Neal Creque, Matthew "Chink" Stevenson and, later, the uniquely soulful organ quartet of The Blackshaw Brothers with Cecil Rucker on vibes. In 1992, Rubin signed to Novus/RCA Records recording five albums, three of which reached #1 on the radio. Her debut recording *Soul Eyes* (1992) was produced by the venerable Onaje Allen Gumbs. Her sophomore recording, *Pastiche* (1993) showed off her horn-like abilities interacting with an all-star sextet which included jazz legends Frank Foster and Cecil Bridgewater.

Rubin has also grown to recognize the importance and advantage of writing. "When it comes to finding your style and sound, it helps to have your own stories," she shares. "And in order to do that, you just have to live!" A turning point was composing her first original, "No Strings Attached." Other originals by Rubin featured on her recordings are

“Once Was Not Enough,” “If You Ever Go Away” and “Are You Ready For Me?” She also penned the first set of lyrics to Frank Foster’s “Simone,” Wayne Shorter’s “Speak No Evil” (vocally re-titled “All For One”) and Tadd Dameron’s “The Dream Is You” (vocally re-titled “Reveries Do Come True”).

Rubin continues to be a favorite at jazz clubs and festivals here in the US and abroad. Her work as a producer and educator/clinician with community youth, as well as in educational institutions worldwide, is ongoing.

“I understand now that my career is a calling,” Vanessa concludes. “I do it not only because I want to but because I have to. A lot is bubbling just beneath the surface and I am no longer afraid to be naked.”

Randell Napoleon

Currently an Associate Professor at Michigan State University and Associate Director of Jazz Studies, guitarist Randy Napoleon cut his teeth touring with pianist Benny Green, the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Michael Bublé, and a thirteen year tenure with Freddy Cole.

Napoleon has performed or arranged on over seventy records including the Grammy-nominated releases, *Freddy Cole Sings Mr. B and My Mood Is You*. He performed on the Clayton Hamilton Orchestra: Live at MCG. Napoleon is featured on Bublé’s Grammy-nominated CD/DVD *Caught in the Act*.

His television credits include The Tonight Show, Late Night with David Letterman, The View, Today Show, and live performances span the globe, including Royal Albert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Hollywood Bowl, and Lincoln Center.

Guitarist George Benson calls Napoleon “sensational.” *Detroit Free Press* critic Mark Stryker says Napoleon “plays with a gentle, purring tone that makes you lean in close to hear its range of color and articulation.” Napoleon’s twelfth record as a leader will be released this year.

Christopher McDonald

Christopher McDonald spends his time thinking about euphonious noises and how to effectuate them on his guitar.

Christopher received his training at Fulkerson Music Studio with Bryan Rombalski, Central Michigan University with Brad DeRoche, and, most recently, the University of South Carolina (USC) with Christopher Berg, where he completed both his Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts

degrees. While concluding his graduate studies, Christopher completed Suzuki Guitar Books 1-5 trainings with MaryLou Roberts and David Madsen.

Christopher has given solo performances at the University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University, the Shearer Summer Institute, and the Mid-Michigan Classical Guitar Society. Christopher has also performed with the inaugural Spark Collective, the USC Graduate Guitar Quartet, the University of South Carolina's production of Leonard Bernstein's "MASS," and One Voice Chorus' production of "The Man Behind the DREAM."

As a scholar, Christopher researches the compositional trends in lute music during the transition between the Renaissance and Baroque eras. As an educator, Christopher has instructed guitar, music theory, and aural skills classes at the University of South Carolina. He has taught private guitar and music theory lessons at Carolina Music Studios and the Suzuki Academy of Columbia & USC, where he also directed the advanced guitar ensemble. In Summer 2024, Christopher was invited to lecture on lute music and coach a guitar ensemble at the Shearer Summer Institute.

In Fall 2024, Christopher joined Cleveland Classical Guitar Society, where he now serves as an Educator, the Training and Data Coordinator, and as a Curriculum Co-Lead. He also teaches a few traditional and Suzuki students at the Music Settlement.

Nolan Juaire

Nolan Juaire is a classical guitarist based in Cleveland, Ohio. Described as having a 'relaxed and engaging stage presence', Nolan has always found fulfilment in sharing music in as many venues and to as many audiences as possible. As a soloist, he has performed around the country and the world - from performances at venues like the Music Box Supper Club and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, to community events with ChamberFest Cleveland, and solo recitals reaching as far away as Japan and Switzerland.

As a sought-after chamber musician, he performs with The Cleveland Orchestra, Columbus Symphony, Opera Columbus, and more. During his undergraduate studies, Nolan was asked to perform a world debut guitar concerto with the University of Southern California's Thornton Symphony as part of the New Music for Orchestra program.

At the age of sixteen, Nolan began studying classical guitar with Erik Mann at the Cleveland Institute of Music's Preparatory Department. In 2022, Nolan graduated summa cum laude from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music with a Bachelor's

of Music in Classical Guitar Performance. While an undergraduate, he studied primarily with William Kanengiser and Scott Tennant of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, and had frequent private lessons with Pepe Romero. He has performed in numerous masterclasses for world-renowned artists, including David Russell, Paul O'Dette, Xuefei Yang, Colin Davin, and Marcin Dylla. He has participated in various conventions and festivals, including the Guitar Foundation of America's first Summit, the Chicago Guitar Competition/Festival, and the Celedonio Romero Guitar Institute. Nolan recently earned his Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music with Jason Vieaux.

As a teacher, Nolan believes in the value of sharing knowledge and igniting excitement for the arts. Having started relatively late learning classical guitar, he has a unique perspective on development with the instrument. During his degree studies, Nolan researched and wrote extensively about guitar pedagogy and its importance and place within music education. With experience teaching both solo and group guitar from beginner to advanced levels, he finds joy in helping people achieve their artistic goals.

Max Shaffer

Max Shaffer is a passionate and emerging classical guitarist noted for his emotionally evocative performances. Max has been privileged to study with some of the world's most renowned guitarists, including David Russell, Lorenzo Micheli, Eduardo Fernandez, Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, and more. Max received his Bachelor of Music in Guitar Performance at the University of Washington with Michael Partington and was a teaching assistant to renowned pedagogue Bruce Holzman at Florida State University while acquiring his Master's degree.

Max has earned awards and recognition for his playing, teaching, and recordings from across the world. Most notably, Max was a prize winner at the Troy University Guitar Competition and the Northwest Guitar Festival Competition. He was also a recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award at Florida State University, an award given to six graduate teaching assistants from across the university based on faculty and student nominations. His recording of Carlos Rafael Rivera's "Cancion" is featured on the Siccaguitars' YouTube channel. In addition, his video Cuna from Suite Compostelana, directed by Sean Taylor, was an Official Selection at the 8th Music Film Festival. He has also been a featured performer in various guitar festivals and institutions around the United States, including the New Mexico Classical Guitar Festival, the Northwest Classical Guitar Festival, the University of Washington Summer Classical Guitar Workshop, and he was featured in a recital series at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Max is currently a teacher for the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society's Education Program.

Student Spotlight: Jacob Belcher



Jake Belcher is excited to be selected as the opening performer for this concert. He has been playing the guitar for four years since he joined a CCGS class as a sixth-grade student. Jake has been interested in the guitar for as long as he can remember. He enjoys the various sounds the instrument makes and the way it works. For him, playing guitar feels like a special ability to sit down and create music. Now in his second year of high school, Jake's other hobbies include spending time with his friends, making quiet time for prayer, exercising, and fishing.

When asked what he likes about the guitar, Jake said, "I love playing the guitar and how I feel the vibe of the music and hear the sounds I can create. To think that I get to perform for others...well, it's crazy. I love it and feel proud of myself after a performance."

Congratulations on your performance, Jake!

2025-2026

International Series

Tickets On Sale Now!



**Leonela
Alejandro**
October 25, 2025

Duo Noire
November 15, 2025



Edel Muñoz
February 7, 2026

An Tran
March 7, 2026



David Russell
April 11, 2026

**Purchase a Season Ticket Package and Save 20%
on 5 great concerts!**

**\$94 General Admission
\$77 Senior (62+)
\$40 Student**

cleguitar.org/international-series

**All International Series concerts will take place at
Maltz Performing Arts Center
1855 Ansel Rd, Cleveland, OH 44106**





Grammy Award nominated

Diego Figueiredo

Presented by CCGS and Jim Wadsworth Productions

Saturday, September 27th

with percussionist Dylan Moffitt

Sunday, September 28th

with Brazilian All Stars feat. Ella & The Bossa Beat

"One of the greatest guitarists I've seen in my whole life"

—George Benson

"From Classical to Jazz"

A grand fusion of Brazilian Bossa-Nova, Classical, and Jazz

Irishtown Bend Taproom

1849 W. 24th St. Cleveland,

Behind the Market Garden Brewery and the West Side Market

Details and Tickets at cleguitar.org

CCGS offers life-changing experiences.



Please scan the QR code
or visit the link to donate.

cleguitar.org/donate



Your donations provide items such as:

- Instruments and equipment
- Books and instruction materials
- Lessons and classes
- Special programs
- Performance opportunities



Was it destiny — or betrayal?

PURCELL'S
Dido & Aeneas
A Dramatic
Concert Presentation

OCTOBER
3 & 9-12

Tickets & Subscriptions on Sale Now!

apollosfire.org | 216.320.0012

Les Délices presents

*bohémian
rhapsody*

Oct. 17 in Akron
Oct. 18 in Cleveland Heights
Oct. 19 in Rocky River



Les Délices presents a colorful
program of 18th century music
for oboe and strings by Bohemian
composers along with classical
music's most enduring genius:
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

tickets at LDmusic.org



SEASON 76
2025/2026

BELCEA QUARTET



OCTOBER 21, 2025

Disciples
Church,
Cleveland Hts.

6:30 pm Lecture
7:30 pm Concert

**Webern
Mozart
Britten**

216-291-2777
ClevelandChamberMusic.org

**Musical
Momentum**

*With Ohio
Contemporary Ballet*

**Sat, October 4
7:30 PM**

**Lakewood Civic
Auditorium**

Explore the relationship
between music and dance as
BlueWater collaborates with
Ohio Contemporary Ballet in a
synergistic creative endeavor.



BlueWater
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

PAY-WHAT-YOU-WISH
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
BLUEWATERORCHESTRA.COM

Daniel Meyer, Artistic Director and Conductor

JEFFREY SIEGEL
KEYBOARD CONVERSATIONS®
MALTZ PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



FOUR SUNDAY CONCERTS
SEPT 21 • NOV 9
MAR 8 • APR 26
ALL CONCERTS AT 3 PM
TICKETS \$25

For tickets call, 216-368-6062
or visit, case.edu/maltzcenter



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY



M.U.S.i.C. Stars in the Classics
presents...
***A Classical Cabaret in the
Waterloo Arts District***

September 27, 2025, 4:00 pm

Hear!

Chamber works by Schoenfield,
Piazzolla, Ginastera, Bernstein,
and the premiere of a suite inspired by
the historic Euclid Beach Park

An Event of Art, Music & Dance

Featuring: International Rising Stars
Violin, Cello, Clarinet, Flute,
Voice, Piano, and Dance

At the Praxis Fiber Workshop
15301 Waterloo Road, Cleveland

MORE INFO:

(216) 702-7047

www.starsintheconcerts.org



cleguitar.org

Cleveland Classical Guitar Society Donors

...the life of our organization!

(Donations and Pledges received 1/1/24-12/31/24)

Maestro: \$20,000 and higher

Anonymous, Augustine Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, The George Gund Foundation, National Endowment of the Arts, The Ohio Arts Council, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

Virtuoso: \$10,000 - \$19,999

Richard & Lynda Chandler, Hosier Family Fund, Martha Holden Jennings Family Foundation, The Roy Minoff Family Fund, The Past Presidents Foundation

Benefactor: \$5,000 - \$9,999

Chris Adelman- in memory of Kathleen Mylecraine, The Char & Chuck Fowler Family Foundation, Leonard Krieger Fund of the Cleveland Foundation, WC & EJ Thornton Foundation

Sponsor: \$2,500 - \$4,999

Anonymous, Arts Midwest GIG Fund, Endel and Ellen Mann

Patron: \$1,000 - \$2,499

Mary Bushong, Cleveland Israel Arts Connection of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, D'Addario Foundation, Arthur & Shirley Duffy, Bruce and Catherine Fallick, Debra & Gary Franke, Kenneth Kabb*, Louis Mylecraine, The Roberts family- in loving memory of mom and Grammy- Phyllis Faye Goodman*, Jeffrey Scott & Shari Wong

Supporter: \$500 - \$999

Anonymous (2), David & Kristine Denton, Kylie Eyre, Scott & Melissa Fitzsimmons, Michael Frank, Bernard Goodman*, Steve & Sondra Hardis, Bob Kloos, Erik & Ellen Mann, Hanz & Francisca GC Richter, Lisa & Michael Sharon, Tori Ung

Friend: \$250 - \$499

Anonymous (2), James Collins & Patricia Brownell, Suzanne DeBrosse, Carl Dettlebach, Joanna & Brad Ellis, John Fahr, George Gecik, William Lavigna, Bernie & Nancy Karr, Mark & Amy Kollhoff, Jason Lakin & Nirmala Ravishankar, Ruth Maguire & Craig Cobb, Jason & Amy Roberts, Geoff Powers, Benjamin Sperry, David Weiss, Phil & Debbie Weiss

Fan: \$100 - \$249

Anonymous (4), William & Diane Blocker*, Bluberry Guitar, Laura & Mollie Borgione, Pedro Ciarlini & Renata Bezerra, Rick & Suzanne Cooper, Sheila Haney Drain, The Phyllis Faye Goodman Memorial Scholarship Fund*, Andy Hardis, Kathryn W. & David R. Hexter Fund, David Holmes, In memory of James Luce, In memory of Phyllis F. Goodman*, Greg & Vickie Leyes, Karen R. Long & Joseph Frolik, Steven Martin, Dale & Ruth Mortensen, Patrick O'Connor, Earl Pike, Michael Primc, Tony & Sharon Purgar, Linnea Rostek, Mike & Roberta Rusek, Terry & Myra Stull, Brian Thornton and Jennifer Woda, Jean Toombs, Robert & Emily Williams

Also thanks to...

Thomas Brand, Beth Dew in memory of Phyllis*, Robert Cohen, Arthur Dorland, In memory of Julian Bream, In memory of Rita Fallon, Walter & Mary Knake*, Kim Lash*, Elaine Neifach*, Ed Pavisich, Jim Riggs, Kay & Gary Shetler, Robin Slattey*, Babette Krause Weiss*

*The Phyllis Faye Goodman Memorial Scholarship Fund

We thank you for your generous support!