

*FRENCH IMPRESSIONS*  
*Chamber Music by Chausson & Tailleferre*

**CEDILLE**  
;



*RACHEL BARTON PINE*

*PACIFICA QUARTET*

*ORION WEISS*

# FRENCH IMPRESSIONS

## Chamber Music by Chausson & Tailleferre

ERNEST CHAUSSON (1855–1899)

Concert for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet  
Op. 21 (39:35)

- 1 I. Décidé – Animé (14:41)
- 2 II. Sicilienne: Pas vite (4:05)
- 3 III. Grave (9:42)
- 4 IV. Finale: Très animé (10:53)

*Rachel Barton Pine, Orion Weiss, Pacifica Quartet*

GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE (1892–1983)

Violin Sonata No. 2 (12:42)

- 5 I. Allegro non troppo (3:58)
- 6 II. Adagietto (3:40)
- 7 III. Final: Allegro (4:54)

*Rachel Barton Pine, Orion Weiss*

TAILLEFERRE

8 Pastorale (3:22)  
*Rachel Barton Pine, Orion Weiss*

TAILLEFERRE

String Quartet (10:05)  
9 I. Modéré (2:41)  
10 II. Intermède (2:36)  
11 III. Final: Vif (4:44)

*Pacifica Quartet*

TAILLEFERRE

12 Berceuse (2:20)  
*Rachel Barton Pine, Orion Weiss*

TT: (68:34)

RACHEL BARTON PINE

PACIFICA QUARTET

ORION WEISS

*To JOHN ZION  
with many thanks for your tireless support,  
unwavering optimism, and invaluable creativity.*

## PERSONAL NOTE

RACHEL BARTON PINE

### *This recording is the realization of a three-decades-old dream.*

From age 10 to 17, I had the great fortune of studying with the incomparable Almita and Roland Vamos. I grew up with their son, Brandon, and their student (and future daughter-in-law) Simin, founding members of the Pacifica Quartet. The first time I heard this newly formed group in the mid-90's, I instantly became a fan and dreamed of one day performing the Chausson *Concert* with them.

The Chausson is special for violinists like me, who love to play chamber music and love string quartet repertoire but are not a member of a quartet. We frequently perform at chamber music festivals, joining ad-hoc groups to rehearse and perform string trios, piano trios, string sextets, and more. However, the string quartet is a specialized genre that is generally left to formed ensembles that have worked together for years. Quartets

often add a viola or cello to perform viola or cello quintets, but there is virtually no repertoire for string quartet with an added violin.

Thank goodness for the Chausson *Concert* for violin, piano, and string quartet!

It's thrilling to have finally had the opportunity to collaborate on the Chausson with the Pacifica. Our close friendship and shared musical roots made playing together feel natural, as we easily matched character ideas and tone colors.

I feel honored that we were joined by Orion Weiss, another long-time friend whose playing and artistry I greatly admire. I first met and collaborated with him nearly two decades ago at a festival in Montreal, where I was struck by his exceptional blend of technical mastery, artistic vision, and collaborative sensitivity.

Another wonderful connection that helped bring this project to fruition is that we all share the same manager,

John Zion — making this an all-MKI Artists project!

When I was considering options for repertoire to round out the album, John suggested Germaine Tailleferre. I knew of her but wasn't very familiar with her music. Listening to her compositions, I was struck by their beautiful quality of sounding simultaneously very familiar, yet unexpected. Each work we chose grabbed me immediately and continues to grow on me the more time I spend with it.

It's a great pleasure to share this album with you. I hope you enjoy listening to it as much as we enjoyed creating it.

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**French Impressions: Chamber Music by Chausson and Tailleferre**

In 1900, François-Auguste Gevaert, esteemed scholar and director of the Brussels Conservatory, told his students that Paris was unlike any other musical capital in Europe. In addition to “four of the best symphony orchestras in the world” and influential private salons, there were public concert series presenting large- and small-scale musical works: “the Société Nationale de Musique, the Groupe Jeune France, not to mention the Ballets Russes and the Concerts Wiéner, the majority of these manifesting the authentic history of music in our times.” Collectively, these concert organizations had a tremendous impact on French composers of the era that came to be known as the *fin-de-siècle* — especially on their chamber music. Both composers represented on this recording were active contributors to these performance organizations, and as such, participated in transformational musical developments and trends. This album gives us not only beautiful chamber music, exquisitely

performed, but also a more complete picture of the kaleidoscopic musical world of *Troisième République* France and beyond.

Amédée-Ernest Chausson (1855–1899) was the personification of the French *fin-de-siècle*. In both life and works, he represented the summation of one era and the dawn of another. He was an ardent champion of French music and painting and an early champion (and financial supporter) of Claude Debussy, but also influenced by the music of Richard Wagner.

Born into an affluent family, Chausson was educated privately. At age 16, his tutor introduced him to influential Parisian salons where he met artists Henri Fantin-Latour and Odilon Redon, and musicians including composer Vincent d’Indy. After briefly studying with Jules Massenet and César Franck at the Paris Conservatoire, Chausson undertook several “pilgrimages” to hear Wagner’s music in Munich and Bayreuth (including to hear *Parsifal* on his honeymoon in 1883). (He later disavowed this musical

infatuation, writing to a friend that “de-Wagnerization” was necessary in order to embrace more clarity and a “healthier” outlook.) In his own Parisian salon, Chausson entertained renowned poets, artists, and musicians, such as Albéniz, Cortot, Debussy, and Ysaÿe. A prominent member of the Société Nationale de Musique, founded with the Latin motto *Ars Gallica* (French Art) in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, Chausson was an influential voice in independent musical circles of early-Third Republic France.

Chausson’s tragic death in a bicycling accident cut short a compositional career that hadn’t begun until he was nearly 30, with his first publication — a song collection — in 1884. While best known for his *Poème* for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 25 (1896), Chausson composed in many genres including operas, sacred music, symphonic poems, and songs. His contemporaries held his chamber music in the highest regard, however. His friend, French music critic Georges Jean-Aubry, wrote in homage that Chausson’s inherent personality came through in the “exchange of confidences [that] led him to seek out in narrower limits, all the qualities that could be drawn

from individual instruments.” Highlighting Chausson’s **Concert for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet, Op. 21** as one of the most important French chamber music works of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, another contemporary writer described the work as “an enchantment without malice,” citing its reflection of the composer’s very being.

Dedicated to virtuoso violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe and premiered by Ysaÿe (violin), Auguste Pierret (piano), and the Quatuor Crickboom in 1892. Chausson’s *Concert* is an extraordinary piece, exploring and expanding the boundaries of chamber music genres. The work is scored for the unusual combination of solo violin, string quartet, and piano, alternately presenting the intimate sounds of a solo piano work or a violin sonata alongside the grand style of a violin concerto, utilizing the quasi-orchestral potential of the string quartet. The title, *Concert*, is also unusual and may reflect Chausson’s admiration for 18<sup>th</sup>-century French composers such as Jean-Philippe Rameau, who designated chamber works featuring keyboard and strings with the same title. Chausson’s performance indications in the work — *Décidé* (decisive), *Calme, Librement* (freely),

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*Très animé* (very lively) — are intentionally French (instead of Italian), perhaps a manifestation of his *Ars Gallica* stance.

The untitled first movement begins with a bold, *fortissimo* statement by the solo piano introducing the movement’s foundational motive. The string quartet echoes this three-note figure several times while the piano plays cascading arpeggios elaborating on the original motive. When the solo violin enters, it is in equal textural partnership with the piano, as the music fluidly shifts in character to take on another of its multiple genre personas. The movement reaches a high point as the piano offers virtuosic figurations while the string quartet plays in counterpoint with the soaring solo violin. The final section reintroduces the main motive in its original form, accompanied by the cascading arpeggios, now in both string quartet and piano, as the solo violin reaches stratospheric heights, fading away with a sustained *pianissimo* murmur.

The *Sicilienne* second movement opens with characteristic, lilting rhythms in the solo violin, accompanied by familiar-sounding arpeggiation from string quartet and piano. The violin’s *Sicilienne* melody is taken up successively by the piano and individual members of the string quartet. Ultimately, all of the strings play in unison as the piano’s

cascading accompaniment leads into an ascending gesture from the violin that suggests an offering to the heavens.

The third movement has no title, just the performance indication *Grave*. An ominous chromatic ostinato in the piano establishes the emotional context of, as one contemporary wrote, “the most profound sadness” of a solemn ritual “celebrated in the crypt of the heart.” The basis of all the melodic material in the movement, the piano ostinato is first augmented by a slower version of the melody in the solo violin, establishing the duo instrumentation that predominates throughout. The string quartet takes a more active role at the movement’s climax, partnering with the increasingly virtuosic piano to create an almost-orchestral sound. The strings all come together playing in unison texture as the piano restates the opening chromatic ostinato to bring the movement to a solemn close.

The *Finale*, marked *Très animé*, provides a dramatic shift of mood, opening with lively, syncopated rhythms introduced by the piano then taken up by the ensemble in octaves. As with the first movement, the opening material here is varied by each of the instruments throughout the remainder of the piece. This last movement fully explores the sound genres alluded to in the previous

movements, from the intimacy of a piano interlude or a piano-plus-violin duet, to the grandeur of a piano concerto, and the full utilization of each instrument in the piano-and-strings sextet. The result is often spectacular — in the French sense of the word, derived from *spectacle* or staged event. The piano has the last word, with a Gallic flourish that seems to say, with a wry smile, “it’s nothing; let’s do this all again!”

Marcelle-Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983) is perhaps the most famous composer who (almost) no one knows anything about. Music students memorize her name as the only female member of the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century group of French composers dubbed *Les Six*, but most would be hard-pressed to cite any of her compositions or achievements. Tailleferre was, in fact, a prolific composer of symphonic, chamber, stage, and film music who participated actively in French and international musical life for more than six decades.

Musicologist Henri Collet coined the moniker, “*Les Six*,” as a journalistic convenience in January 1920. His article for the literary paper, *Comoedia*, “*Les cinq russes, les six français et Erik Satie*,” referenced the late-19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian “*Mighty Five*,” whose works established a true Russian style, and promoted the alliance of

six young French composers: Francis Poulenc, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, Louis Durey, and Germaine Tailleferre. Collet's tribute highlighted what would be the only collaboration among the group, their *Album des Six* (1920), calling the collection of piano morceaux "a magnificent return to simplicity, a renovation of French music." The publicity value of membership in this collective did no harm to the young composers' careers, although there was no real shared aesthetic beyond a rejection of (in the words of Jean Cocteau) "a heavy fog pierced with flashes of lightning from Bayreuth which became a light snow tinted with Impressionist sunlight" — a not-subtle disparagement of both Wagner and Debussy.

Germaine Tailleferre was a prodigy, both as a pianist and composer. As a young girl, she played her own transcriptions of Stravinsky ballets at the piano in salon gatherings. She enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire at age 12 — against her father's adamant objections. In common with many at the time, he believed a woman pursuing a professional career as a performer might as well be working in a brothel. Paying her own fees at the Conservatoire, Tailleferre won

more *premiers prix* — in Counterpoint, Harmony, and Accompaniment — than any of the other Six. She grew disenchanted with the institution's reactionary culture (she once was expelled from her organ class for improvising in the style of Stravinsky!) and subsequently studied composition with Charles Koechlin and befriended Maurice Ravel, who coached her on orchestration.

After receiving a commission in 1923 from the influential Princesse de Polignac, Tailleferre wrote and performed her Piano Concerto for the Concerts Jean Wiéner. A reviewer in the conservative weekly, *Le Ménestrel* was not impressed, however: "Mlle Tailleferre belongs to the 'Group of Six,' which is to say that for her both consonance and harmony are treated as young people today treat their parents: without respect." Undeterred, Tailleferre (whose surname roughly translates as "crafted from iron") preferred to cultivate what a different reviewer called the "delightful vagabond spirit particular to [her] art." During World War II, she left occupied France and travelled to the U.S. for an extended period, but composed no music until she returned home in 1946. While in the States, however, Tailleferre wrote an article for the journal *Modern*

Music about the difficulties facing French musicians, including the appalling treatment of her Jewish colleagues. Her long career allowed her to explore many genres: numerous ballets and operas, and more than 30 film scores (including a documentary film she scored when she was nearly 80). Her chamber music ranges from solo pieces for piano or harp (which she also played) to small ensemble music for nearly every wind and string instrument configuration, including a wind quintet written (in her mid-late 80's) in 1979. At age 77, she accepted a part-time position as a rehearsal pianist for children's dance classes near her home in Paris — a post she held until shortly before her death at age 91.

Tailleferre wrote her **Second Sonata for Violin and Piano** in 1947 (publ. 1951), after her return to France post-WWII. A revision of the Violin Concerto (1936) she wrote for French virtuoso Yvonne Astruc, it exhibits the “vagabond spirit” ascribed to her early in her career. Although it sounds deceptively simple, Tailleferre's Sonata is, in reality, quite technically demanding. The first movement, marked *Allegro non troppo*, is a lively *plein air* romp for the violin with a more turbulent middle section. After a recap of the opening melody, it ends with an ascending *pianissimo* sigh. The brief second movement, *Adagietto*,

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is a ballade for the violin in harmonically adventurous partnership with the piano. The energetic *Final* resonates with the neo-classical spirit of Poulenc, who also wrote (or re-wrote) his sonatas for violin, cello, and various woodwinds during the late-1940s. After venturing through a series of harmonic adventures, the sonata ends with violin and piano joining forces in a brilliant virtuosic flourish.

Tailleferre wrote her **Pastorale for Violin and Piano** in Grasse during 1942, just before she left war-torn Europe for the United States. Its gentle sicilienne rhythms and tranquil melody conjure the floral scents of the Côte d'Azur and suggest a nostalgic yearning for a better time.

Tailleferre dedicated her **String Quartet** (1919) to Arthur Rubinstein, who had been introduced to Parisian musical circles by the Princesse de Polignac in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Significantly, the String Quartet received its premiere in January 1920, at a concert of the prestigious Société Nationale de Musique just weeks before Henri Collet penned his promotion of “Les Six.” Collet singled out Tailleferre’s Quartet as one of the group’s best works, saying he knew of none that were more well-composed. The first movement begins with a principal theme handed off among the

instruments in what Collet characterized as a mischievous game of hide and seek. The harmonies become increasingly bolder, incorporating double stops to create a dissonant sort of chord planing – taking Debussy’s technique one step further. The *Intermède* begins without pause between movements; its playful melody is introduced in rhythmic unison. A middle section features fluid accompanimental figurations supporting gentle syncopations that are gradually retransformed into the opening theme. The *Final* begins as a modally inflected jig that is more rhythmic than melodic. The mood shifts in the second section with an octatonic melody in the viola, supported by insistent rhythms that soon transform into atmospheric arpeggios below the violin’s contemplative melody. The jig-like melody is reintroduced and is then deconstructed until the movement ends, slowing and diminishing into an open, sustained *pianissimo* sonority.

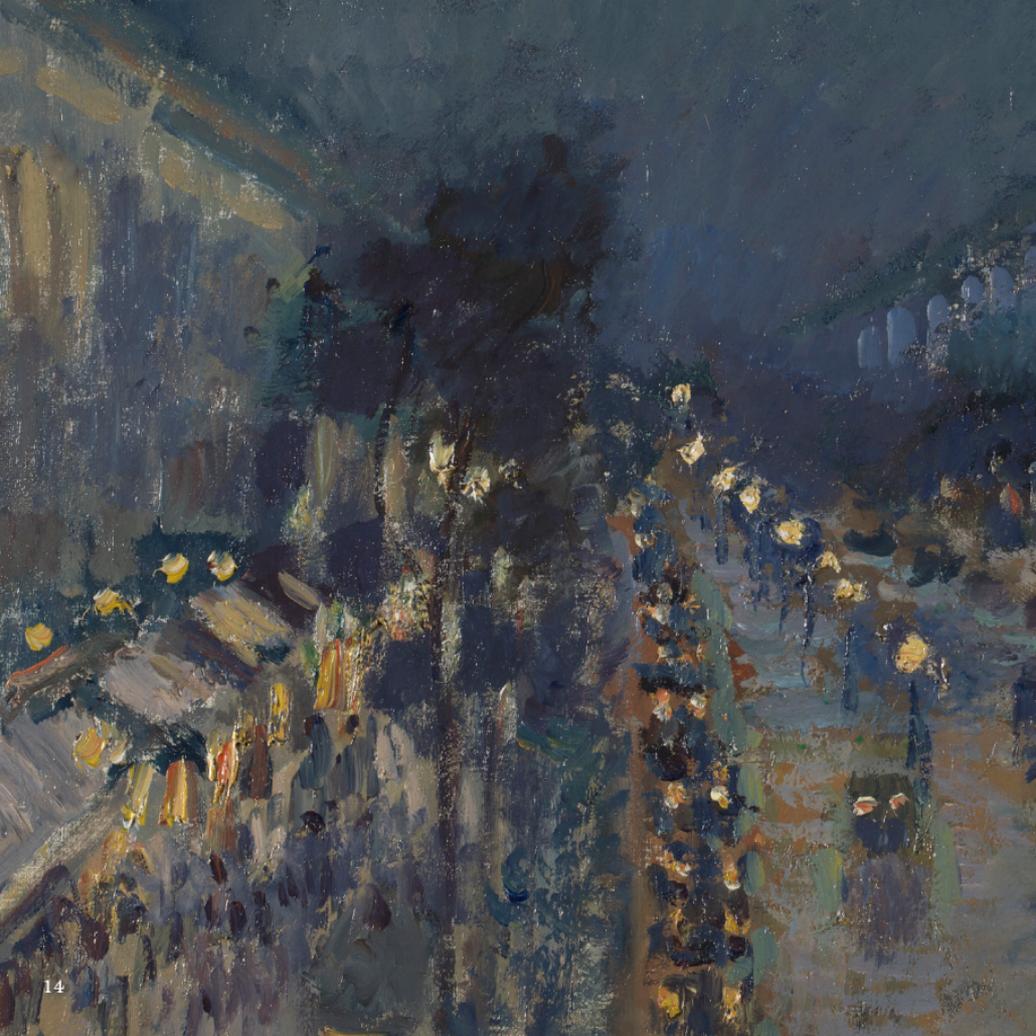
**Berceuse for Violin and Piano**, written in 1913 and published 11 years later, was affectionately dedicated to “mon Maître et Ami Monsieur H. Dallier,” who had been the composer’s Harmony professor at the Paris Conservatoire. The piano’s rocking accompaniment in this charming lullaby gently supports a continuously developing

violin melody, incorporating a soupçon of harmonic dissonance as it explores the full range of the violin. This early musical gem both foreshadows and encapsulates the spontaneity, succinct expression, and Gallic refinement of Tailleferre's distinctive musical style.

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*Dr. Elinor Olin is a professor at Northern Illinois University School of Music and has a background in both music performance and music history.*







## RACHEL BARTON PINE



Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Acclaimed American concert violinist Rachel Barton Pine thrills international audiences with her dazzling technique, lustrous tone, and emotional honesty. With an infectious joy in music-making and a passion for connecting historical research to performance, Pine transforms audiences' experiences of classical music. She is a leading interpreter of the great classical masterworks and of important contemporary music.

Pine performs with the world's foremost orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra; Los Angeles Philharmonic; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Camerata Salzburg; and the Chicago, Vienna, and Detroit Symphony Orchestras. She has worked with renowned conductors that include Teddy Abrams, Marin Alsop, Daniel Barenboim, Semyon Bychkov, Neeme Järvi, Christoph Eschenbach, Erich Leinsdorf, Nicholas McGegan, Zubin Mehta, Tito Muñoz, and John Nelson. As a chamber musician, Pine has performed with Jonathan Gilad, Clive Greensmith, Paul Neubauer, Jory Vinikour,

William Warfield, Orion Weiss, and the Pacifica and Parker quartets.

She has recorded over 40 acclaimed albums (more than 20 for Cedille Records), many of which have hit the top of the charts. Most recently, Cedille Records released *Corelli: Violin Sonatas, Op. 5*, a two-disc set featuring the 12 sonatas for violin and continuo; *Dependent Arising*, which reveals surprising confluences between classical and heavy metal music by pairing Shostakovich's *Violin Concerto No. 1* with Earl Maneein's *Dependent Arising*; and *Violin Concertos by Black Composers Through the Centuries: 25th Anniversary Edition*, which includes a new recording of Florence Price's *Violin Concerto No. 2* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Jonathon Heyward. Other top-charting albums include Pine's *Mozart: Complete Violin Concertos* with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Sir Neville Marriner; *Testament: Complete Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* by Johann Sebastian Bach; *Violin Lullabies*; and *Bel Canto Paganini: 24 Caprices* and other works for solo violin.

Pine has appeared on *The Today Show*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *CNN*, *PBS NewsHour*, *A Prairie Home Companion*, *NPR's Tiny Desk*, *NPR's All Things Considered*, and *Performance Today*. She holds prizes from several of the world's leading competitions, including a gold medal at the 1992 J.S. Bach International Violin Competition. Pine writes her own cadenzas and performs many of her own arrangements.

Her RBP Foundation assists young artists through its Instrument Loan Program and Grants for Education and Career and, since 2001, has run the groundbreaking Music by Black Composers project.

She performs on the “ex-Bazzini, ex-Soldat” Joseph Guarnerius “del Gesù” (Cremona 1742), on lifetime loan from her anonymous patron.

[rachelbartonpine.com](http://rachelbartonpine.com)

For a complete list of Rachel Barton Pine's Cedille recordings, please visit [cedillerecords.org/artists/rachel-barton-pine](http://cedillerecords.org/artists/rachel-barton-pine) or scan this QR code and click the “Discography” tab



# PACIFICA QUARTET

With a career spanning nearly three decades, the multiple Grammy Award-winning Pacifica Quartet has achieved international recognition as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. The Quartet is known for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices. Having served as quartet-in-residence at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music for the past decade, the Quartet also leads the Center for Advanced Quartet Studies at the Aspen Music Festival and School, and was previously the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and University of Chicago. In 2021, the Pacifica Quartet received its second Grammy Award, for Cedille's *Contemporary Voices*, an exploration of music by three Pulitzer Prize-winning composers: Shulamit Ran, Jennifer Higdon, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002, the ensemble was honored

with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and appointment to Lincoln Center's The Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two) and, in 2006, was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. With its powerful energy and captivating, cohesive sound, Pacifica has established itself as the embodiment of the senior American quartet sound.

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Bloomington, IN, where they serve as quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Prior to that appointment, the Quartet was on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana from 2003 to 2012, and also served as resident performing artist at the University of Chicago for 17 years.

[pacificaquartet.com](http://pacificaquartet.com)

For a complete list of the Pacifica Quartet's Cedille recordings, please visit [cedillerecords.org/artists/pacifica-quartet](http://cedillerecords.org/artists/pacifica-quartet) or scan this QR code and click the "Discography" tab





Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Simin Ganatra and Austin Hartman, violins  
Mark Holloway, viola; Brandon Vamos, cello



Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

# ORION WEISS

One of the most sought-after soloists and chamber music collaborators today, Orion Weiss is a “brilliant pianist” (*New York Times*) with “powerful technique and exceptional insight” (*Washington Post*). He has dazzled audiences worldwide with his “head-spinning range of colors” (*Chicago Tribune*) and has performed with the major orchestras of North America, including the Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, National, and American Symphonies; Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics; and the Cleveland Orchestra.

In 2024, Weiss released *Arc III*, the final album in his critically-acclaimed *Arc* recital trilogy (First Hand Records). His live performances include engagements in London (Wigmore Hall), Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Bergen (Norway), New York (Carnegie’s Zankel Hall), Washington DC (Kennedy Center), Seattle, and Bloomington (Indiana). He has featured in recitals at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Italy’s Teatro Marrucino Biglietteria, Washington University (St. Louis), LaMusica Chamber Music Festival (Sarasota, Florida), and on tour

with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Known for his affinity for chamber music, Weiss has performed with such artists as violinists Augustin Hadelich, William Hagen, and James Ehnes; pianists Michael Brown and Shai Wosner; cellist Julie Albers; and the Ariel, Parker, and Pacifica Quartets.

A native of Ohio, Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music and Juilliard. Weiss’s awards include the Classical Recording Foundation’s Young Artist Award of the Year, a Gilmore Young Artist Award, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

[orionweiss.com](http://orionweiss.com)

# CREDITS

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*RACHEL BARTON PINE'S VIOLIN*  
Guarneri “del Gesù,” Cremona, 1742,  
the ‘ex-Bazzini, ex-Soldat’

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Isaac Salchow, copy of Dominique Pecatte

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Camille Pissarro: *The Boulevard  
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