

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 12, 2026

Chamber Music Resilience
by Michael Johns

On Sunday, March 1 at 5, USCB Chamber Music reconvenes for the season's third concert. Music is eternal. Concerts are etched into schedules, and then Fate steps in. Scant hours before press time, circumstances outside anyone's control required program changes, and amazingly Andrew Armstrong pulled together replacement artists and designed a brilliant new program. It is a tribute to his enormous stamina, creativity, and wide reach that he has quickly brought together brilliant and evocative works performed by seasoned artists collaborating with emerging talents. The program begins with a taste of Bach (Prelude to Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007) followed by meals of Brahms (Piano Quintet in F minor, Op 34) and (Tchaikovsky String Sextet, Op. 70 "Souvenir de Florence"). These works represent the very heart and soul of classical chamber music and will thrill anew. Violinists Amy Schwartz Moretti and Hayoung Choi, violists Natalie Loughran and Carlos Walker, cellists Edward Arron and Sara Scanlan, join host and pianist Armstrong to raise the roof and rejuvenate the soul.

Violinist Amy Schwartz Moretti has a musical career of broad versatility, being equally adaptable as soloist, chamber musician, concertmaster, and educator. Before becoming the inaugural Director of Mercer University's McDuffie Center for Strings, she was concertmaster of the Florida Orchestra and Oregon Symphony, guest concertmaster of the Atlanta, Houston, and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras. Recognized as a deeply expressive artist, solo performances, recordings, and frequent string quartet appearances with the Ehnes Quartet dot her schedule now and into the future. Director of the McDuffie Center since 2007, Moretti holds the Caroline Paul King Chair and has developed and curates the Fabian Concert Series. Violinist Hayoung Choi is an award winner of solo and chamber music competitions in Asia and the US. Her artistic growth led to the New England Conservatory (Master of Music) and continues in the Master of Musical Arts Program at Yale. Violinist Virgil Moore (Lynchburg, VA) grew up excelling in orchestral playing, winning competitions, and earning fellowships. He is currently pursuing a masters degree at the Juilliard School. Violist Natalie Loughran was awarded First Prize at the 2021 Primrose International Viola Competition and appeared as a finalist for the 2020 Young Concert Artist Auditions. As the newest violist of the Castalian String Quartet, Natalie has appeared in many internationally renowned chamber music series, including The Heidelberg Frühling Musikfestival, 92NY, San Francisco Performances, Dallas Chamber Music Society, and Marlboro Music Festival. She holds a deep love of the orchestral repertoire and has performed regularly with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and New York Philharmonic.

Natalie earned her B.M. and M.M. in Viola Performance at The Juilliard School. Violist Carlos Walker is currently pursuing a masters degree in viola performance at the Juilliard School. In addition to performing, he has a strong interest in teaching and increasing accessibility to music. Cellist Edward Arron, a highly sought-after artist, is equally at home playing a concerto with orchestra, collaborating in chamber music, especially string quartet, presenting a masterclass/teaching in a studio, or curating multiple chamber music series, including USCB Chamber Music, which lowcountry audiences hope was a career highlight. Cellist Sara Scanlan began winning local competitions early and often. She made her orchestral solo debut with the Charleston Symphony (Elgar Concerto) and has since been a featured soloist in concert and on radio. She attended the Juilliard Pre-College Program and recently received a Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School.

Lowcountry audiences have been impressed with Andrew Armstrong for his innovations as Artistic Director—an enthusiastic embrace of all types of music packaged with programming flare—and demeanor as charming, never-at-a-loss-for-words host. He remains an unflagging and enthusiastic advocate for the communicative power of live, acoustic, concert music. Experience spontaneous creativity in real-time with the musicians; let your spirit soar and bask in the glow of music's unspoken, sublime power, and don't forget the upcoming free-for-children Youth Concert on Saturday, February 28, 2026, 3:00 at the CFA. Mark your calendar and text your children!

There are three ways to enjoy each concert: in person at the Arts Center and virtually by Live-Stream and OnDemand. All virtual concerts are professionally produced; great viewing opportunities abound. On the Wednesday before each concert, live and virtual ticket holders receive an email with a link to Sunday's concert. OnDemand is accessible four days after the concert and available to view at your leisure for three weeks.

Each Friday before a Series concert the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) presents Inside the Music, a two-hour, general audience, deep dive into Sunday's repertoire. Dr. Michael Johns provides multiple recorded excerpts and commentary, acclimating listeners to what they will hear on Sunday. Classes are free and open to the public. For concert, artist, event, OLLI, and ticket information, go to www.uscbchambermusic.com or call 843-208-8246, Monday through Friday. The third concert of USCB Chamber Music's 46th season is Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 5:00pm at the USCB Center for the Arts, 801 Carteret Street, Beaufort, in the downtown historic district.

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