

CONVERSATIONS

SCHOENFELD, STRAVINSKY,
LARSEN, SCHUMANN

TRIO CASPAR

DELOS

COLBURN COLLECTION



MENU

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTS

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TRIO CASPAR

SPECIAL THANKS & CREDITS

TRACK LIST

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTS

What began as preparation for the Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition soon became something far more meaningful. With every rehearsal, our connection to this repertoire deepened, and every musical detail we uncovered strengthened our conviction that these extraordinary works deserve to be heard and recorded more often.

Though the four works on this album inhabit strikingly different musical worlds, together they reveal the remarkable expressive range of the clarinet-violin/viola-piano trio. Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen* unfolds with poetic lyricism and Romantic intimacy, while Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* brims with rhythmic vitality and neoclassical wit. Schoenfeld's Trio draws on the exuberance and emotional depth of the klezmer tradition, and Libby Larsen's *Slang* blends jazz, boogie, funk, and contemporary classical idioms into a vibrant and unmistakably American voice. Each composer approaches the ensemble from a unique perspective, illuminating new colors and possibilities within the instrumentation.

Among chamber music ensembles, the combination of clarinet, violin/viola, and piano remains a rare and distinctive one. Each instrument produces sound through fundamentally different means, giving every voice a unique character and expressive identity. Our challenge – and our joy – has been discovering how these contrasting voices retain their individuality while blending into a single musical conversation. It is within this constant interplay between contrast and unity that we believe the ensemble finds its greatest expressive potential.

We are profoundly grateful to our mentor, Jonathan Brown, whose guidance has shaped both our artistic identity and our approach to chamber music. His musical philosophy that every note carries purpose and every phrase tells a story has fundamentally influenced the way we engage with this repertoire. He also played a pivotal role in Jason's development as both violinist and violist, opening the door to a broader artistic and musical landscape for our ensemble.

Our years at the Colburn School have likewise been integral to Trio Caspar's growth. The opportunity to perform regularly while learning from Jonathan Brown, Fabio Bidini, Martin Beaver, and Yehuda Gilad has provided an extraordinary musical laboratory – one in which we have continually refined our ideas, challenged our assumptions, and discovered our collective voice. We hope these performances invite listeners to experience these remarkable works with the same sense of curiosity, joy, and admiration that inspired us throughout this journey.

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The compositional output of pianist and composer Paul Schoenfeld, who was born in Detroit and died in Jerusalem, was deeply rooted in his Jewish identity; in the case of his Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano, that sensibility emerges clearly in the work's overt references to Jewish musical traditions. The work was the result of a request for a composition for that grouping of instruments from the clarinetist David Shifrin, and it gave Schoenfeld an opportunity to write music related to Chassidic Judaism, a movement grounded in Eastern Europe. "In addition to the primary goal of composing a work for David," as Schoenfeld described it, "the Trio realizes a long-standing desire to create entertaining music that could be played at Chassidic gatherings as well as in the concert hall." Schoenfeld based each movement "partly on an East European Chassidic melody." The energetic first movement, "Freylakh" – a stylized and at times tempestuous approach to the festive dance for which it is named – features the three instruments swirling around one another and trading phrases. Dissonance and mysterious undercurrents define the second movement, a march Schoenfeld called "bizarre and somewhat diabolical in nature." The name of the third movement, "Nigun," refers to the tradition of wordless song in Chassidic Judaism; this "slow movement of introspection" gives way to the raucous finale, "Kozatzke," or Cossack Dance.

One precedent for the trio compositions on this album is found in Igor Stravinsky's own arrangement of his theatrical work *L'Histoire du soldat* (*The Soldier's Tale*), which tells the story of an encounter between a soldier and the Devil. Its 1918 premiere was financed by the patron Werner Reinhart, to whom Stravinsky would dedicate the trio adaptation. (The complete theater version itself is famously small in scale, requiring just seven musicians – meant for what Stravinsky envisioned as "a sort of little traveling theatre" at a time of financial constraint). The suite generally follows the arc of the play, beginning with the initial off-kilter "March du soldat" ("March of the Soldier"), which introduces the audience to the soldier. The second movement, "Le violon du soldat" ("The Soldier's Violin"), with its insistent accompaniment and repetitive figures, has the soldier playing an old violin he has carried with him (and which he will trade to the Devil for promises of wealth). In the play, the festive music of the suite's third movement, "Petit concert" ("Little Concert"), celebrates the soldier's victory over the Devil in a card game, which allows the soldier to recover his violin. In the play, the soldier then enters the room of a princess who has fallen ill; if he cures her, he is promised her hand in marriage, and indeed, the soldier's playing of a miniature suite of three dances (a tango, a waltz, and a rag) restores her to health.

These three dances feature in the suite's fourth movement, and their Stravinskian rhythmic and harmonic distortions push the dance types to the outer limits of recognizability. The suite concludes with the "Danse du diable" ("Dance of the Devil"), where the soldier's music leads the Devil to dance to the point of collapse. (While this marks the triumphant end of the suite, in the play itself it is the Devil who has the last laugh.)

The Delaware-born Libby Larsen is a celebrated composer and a stalwart champion of American music. Her one-movement work *Slang* differs in structure from Schoenfeld's Trio, which is cast in a traditional four-movement form, complete with an inner dance movement and slow movement. But both works bear deep connections with a sense of the vernacular; in Larsen's case, the title "refers to my use of jazz, boogie, and twentieth-century 'new music' slang throughout the composition." The composer wrote that she is "fascinated by the dynamic and fluid nature of American English and our propensity to create and use slang as a quick way to identify with particular groups," adding that "American culture, dynamic and fluid, has evolved a vast array of musical languages and I was taken by the idea that just as we have developed slang in our speaking language, we have also developed a lexicon of musical slang." The resulting work "explores this idea, asking the performers to freely change performance styles as the musical language dictates." Perhaps fittingly, given the work's title, the atmosphere throughout this engaging composition is often one of casual conversation among friends, complete with spontaneous pauses and outbursts. It is in the final section that Larsen alludes clearly to boogie, which surfaces, recedes, and resurfaces again. Just as striking is the boisterous closing material itself, prepared with Larsen's score marking "hard funk to the end."

One earlier precursor of these works for clarinet, piano, and violin – and one that happens to share with *L'Histoire du soldat* a fantastical edge – is Robert Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen* (*Fairy Tales*). This work's title points to the Romantic-period fascination with folklore and fantasy, though there is no indication of which, if any, specific fairy tales may have inspired Schumann's music. Like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Kegelstatt Trio*, K. 498 (1786) before it, *Märchenerzählungen* was actually composed for clarinet, piano, and viola (rather than violin). At the time Schumann wrote this quite late work, in October of 1853, a young Johannes Brahms was a guest of Robert and his wife, the noted composer and pianist Clara Schumann, in Düsseldorf. The first movement is delicate, playful, and songlike, and the quick staccato figures that infuse it convey a sense of childlike exuberance. Largely

weighty and march-like, the second movement contrasts with that convivial opening movement, though a brief and more nimble middle section, defined by triplet rhythms, offers some relief. The achingly expressive third movement conveys longing and melancholy through its intertwining melodic lines over a flowing piano accompaniment. And it prefigures, in its melodic material, a celebrated piece of a different genre: the *Méditation* from Jules Massenet's opera *Thaïs*. The finale, with its clear suggestions of fanfares, is stately and celebratory; its middle section is more reflective and lyrical, but the movement's initial material returns to offer a resolute conclusion.

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Professor of Musicology
at the University of Arizona

TRIO CASPAR



Trio Caspar was the first group to be named as the Colburn Conservatory's inaugural Honors Chamber Music Ensemble, and mentored by Colburn faculty members Jonathan Brown (Cuarteto Casals), Yehuda Gilad, Fabio Bidini, and Martin Beaver (Tokyo String Quartet).

Trio Caspar was awarded the Gold Medal, Lift Every Voice Prize and Horszowski Trio Prize for Piano Ensemble at the 2026 Fischoff Competition in the Senior String Division, as well as the Audience Award and 2nd Prize at the 2026 Yellow Springs Chamber Music Competition.

The ensemble is an innovative union of three individual voices. Founded in 2024 by clarinetist Andrea Caputo, violinist Jason Moon, and pianist Bogang Hwang, Trio Caspar aims to bring a fresh perspective of the highest standard to chamber works that are less frequently performed. The name pays homage to the German painter Caspar David Friedrich, whose exploration of the complexity of individualism inspires the trio's distinctive sound. Some concert highlights include a debut recital at the Colburn Conservatory and a performance of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* alongside cellist Gary Hoffman.

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We would like to express our thanks to the Colburn School for their support from the very beginning of this project. We greatly appreciate the staff who have facilitated the process: Nick Gianopoulos and Jennifer Kallend.

We are also deeply grateful to our coaches – Jonathan Brown, Yehuda Gilad, Martin Beaver, and Fabio Bidini (who was also our producer) – for their invaluable guidance, mentorship, and dedication. We would also like to recognize our piano technicians, Neema Pazargad and Chris McKelway, and our engineer, Sergey Parfenov, for their expertise and care throughout the recording process.

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on May 4 – 6, 2026

Recording Producer
Fabio Bidini

Recording & Mastering Engineer
Sergey Parfenov

Piano technicians
Neema Pazargad, Chris McKelway

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Andrea Caputo
clarinet

Jason Moon
violin & viola

Bogang Hwang
piano

Paul Schoenfeld (1947–2024)
Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (1990)

1.	Freylakh	4:01
2.	March	6:37
3.	Nigun	4:49
4.	Kozatzke	4:14

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)
L'Histoire du soldat (1919)

5.	Marche du soldat	1:34
6.	Le violon du soldat	2:27
7.	Petit concert	2:57
8.	Tango, valse, ragtime	6:17
9.	Danse du diable	1:25

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

10.	**Slang** (1994)	10:23

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)
Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132 (1853)

11.	Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell	3:00
12.	Lebhaft und sehr markirt	3:13
13.	Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck	4:35
14.	Lebhaft, sehr markirt	4:29

Running Time **60:07**