concertnova Presents icarus Quartet in Bartók Rebórn

A 1937 Masterwork and Three Contemporary Responses

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CINCINNATI, OH — In 1937, Hungarian composer Béla Bartók — already famous for blending classical technique with Eastern European folk traditions — wrote a major chamber work for two pianos and two percussionists. It was a genuine provocation. Percussion barely had a seat at the concert hall table. Bartók gave it two. The *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* has occupied a unique place in the repertoire ever since. This April, the icarus Quartet performs it alongside three new works written in direct response, by leading contemporary composers Jennifer Higdon, Martin Bresnick, and Viet Cuong.

Bartók Rebórn, presented by concertnova, comes to Cincinnati's Cohen Family Studio Theater at UC/CCM on **April 15, 2026 at 7:30 PM**. The program is the artistic vision of the icarus Quartet, a Baltimore-based ensemble that has built its identity around new music for exactly this combination of instruments — two pianos and two percussionists — and the composers who write for them.

Those composers, in this case, are three of the most significant voices in contemporary classical music. Jennifer Higdon is one of America's most performed living composers, a Pulitzer Prize and Grammy winner whose work spans orchestral, chamber, and vocal music. Martin Bresnick is a Yale-based composer whose music has been described as viscerally powerful and deeply humane. Viet Cuong is among the most exciting of a younger generation, known for work that is rhythmically inventive and immediately engaging. Each has written a new piece in direct response to the Bartók — making *Bartók Rebórn* less a concert than a conversation, one that spans nearly 90 years.

The icarus Quartet is well matched to the task. Following their Carnegie Hall debut, composer Paul Lansky offered a terse verdict: "This is music making of the highest order." *The Wall Street Journal* praised the quartet's 2022 album *BIG THINGS* for its "virtuosity, precision and unflagging energy."

For concertnova — a Cincinnati-based chamber ensemble known for programming at the edges of classical music — the April 15 concert represents a welcome pivot. The originally announced program, *Cincinnati Sandbox*, has been rescheduled to next season; that program will feature Grammy-nominated Sandbox Percussion and violinist Kristin Lee, including a world premiere by composer Vivian Fung. "We usually build our programs from scratch, so there's something exciting about presenting a project that icarus Quartet has developed entirely on their own terms," says executive director Brianna Matzke about the programming shift. "Sometimes our

job is simply to get out of the way and let a fully realized artistic vision speak for itself — and *Bartók Rebórn* is exactly that."

Mainstage Concerts
Concertnova's #mainstage concert series presents large-scale events that put classical music front and center. Expect to hear amazing musical performances and explore new ideas from an interdisciplinary lens.

About concertnova:
concertnova is a Cincinnati-based chamber music ensemble dedicated to pushing the boundaries of classical music through innovative programming, collaborations, and community engagement. By blending art forms and amplifying diverse voices, concertnova creates immersive musical experiences that resonate with modern audiences.

WHO: concertnova, icarus Quartet
WHAT: Bartók Rebórn
WHEN: April 15, 2026 at 7:30 PM
WHERE: Cohen Family Studio Theater - UC/CCM - 290 CCM Blvd, Cincinnati, OH 45221
TICKETS: available now at concertnova.com
ABOUT: click here for press kit | click here for info on concertnova |
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Brianna Matzke

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