Cynthia Siebert begins The Friends of Chamber Music with four performances, all in private homes.

The Tokyo String Quartet makes their KC debut shortly after appearing on the Johnny Carson Show.

Cynthia performs on two concerts, including one with her sister, internationally renowned, chamber music flutist Renée Siebert, who will appear three more times on the series until 1994.

Robert P. Lyons files the legal documents to create The Friends of Chamber’s 501(C)3 status with three board members: Cynthia Siebert, Lee Berkowitz, and Sarah Ingram-Eiser.

Cynthia Siebert, pianist and Friends’ founder, performs every season on the series from its first concert in 1975, until 1995.

FCM moves out of private homes into its first public venue: the Unitarian Church on Warwick Boulevard, where FCM’s concerts will take place for the next three seasons.

Arthur Benson offers FCM the use of his office and staff for administrative support on whatever basis is required.

Four volunteers—Jim Mitchell, Peter Swindler, Mark Huebner and Richard Keith who became known as the “Breakfast Club,” meet weekly to discuss, and see to all of the production needs for FCM’s concerts. Richard Keith is still a FCM volunteer today with the longest history of volunteer involvement of anyone in the organization’s history.

The American String Quartet, win the Naumburg and Coleman Quartet competitions, and perform on the series.

Tashi presents the KC premier of Messiaen’s *The End of Time*.

Cleveland Quartet makes its first appearance.

The first Kansas City appearance of the Beaux Arts Trio, the greatest piano trio in the world and the most recorded trio in history. They will perform for the next ten consecutive years, the only artists in the history of The Friends to do so. They will perform a total of 14 concerts on the FCM series, more than any other single ensemble.

Mezzo soprano Jan DeGaetani, possibly America’s greatest vocal recitalist of her time, performs with pianist Gil Kalish.

The Vermeer Quartet makes its first Friends appearance.

Baritone Gerard Souzay, the finest singer in the world of French Art songs, performs.

St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, America’s only full-time chamber orchestra and its finest, is conducted by Dennis Russell Davies.

The Emerson String Quartet makes its first appearance on the series with pianist Cynthia Siebert. They will perform a total of twelve times on the series.

The Friends moves its concerts to St. Teresa’s Academy for the next three years.

The Friends presents Concert Royal and the New York Baroque Dance Company, the first early music concert on the series.

The Juilliard String Quartet makes its first appearance.

The Friends begins a new sub-series called The Kansas City Chamber Soloists, with co-artistic directors Cynthia Siebert and Yuval Waldman, Concertmaster of the Kansas City Philharmonic; these concerts will take place for the next three years in the Bennett-Marak Gallery in downtown Kansas City.

The Beaux Arts Trio performs the complete cycle of Beethoven Piano Trios, the first time this cycle has ever been heard in Kansas City.
1981-82 The work of local composer Jean Belmont is heard for the first time on the series with Robert Bucker conducting a performance of Belmont’s *Nativitas*.

The Friends works together with Robert Bucker to create Kansas City’s first ever professional choir: The Kansas City Chorale.

The Friends presents its first solo pianist and will present a pianist each season (including Rudolf Firkušný, Richard Goode, Jörg Demus and Malcolm Frager) until 1987-88 when Richard Goode performs the complete cycle of Beethoven Sonatas.

1982-84 The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, Europe’s finest chamber orchestra, appears under their Founder and Artistic Director Karl Münchinger.

The Borodin Piano Trio, Russia’s greatest piano trio, and the Orford Quartet, Canada’s finest, make their first appearances.

The Friends creates a new board of directors transitioning from the first three directors of 1975 to five new directors: William G. Levi, Chairman; Sally Rheinfrank, Vice-President; William Quirk, Secretary; David Kemper, and Cynthia Siebert.

1984-85 The Guarneri String Quartet and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center make their first appearances.

The Alban Berg String Quartet, Europe’s greatest quartet, appears for the first time.

The Munich Chamber Orchestra makes its first appearance.

1985-86 For its 10th Anniversary, the Friends moves into The Folly Theater, which will become its permanent home for the International Chamber Music series, and later for The Master Pianists Series.

The Juilliard performs the complete cycle of Beethoven String Quartets in six concerts throughout the season, the first time this cycle had been heard in 50 years in Kansas City. The Juilliard celebrates its 25th Anniversary by playing the cycle in three cities: Boston, New York and Kansas city. Michael Steinberg, the eminent music scholar, presents a series of lectures before each concert. The Quartet will go on to play a total of 12 concerts on the series.

The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the first orchestra of its size in the history of music to perform without a conductor, makes its first appearance on the series.

Lynn Harrell performs with Rudolf Firkušný.

The Waverly Consort, one of America’s first early music ensembles, makes its first appearance.

The Trio di Milano, Europe’s finest piano trio, perform.


The Friends receives a $100,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to establish an endowment, the first grant of its kind ever offered to a chamber music series in the country.

The Friends forms its first Community Advisory Board comprised of George Dillon, Irv Hockaday, David Kemper and Cynthia Schwab.

Richard Goode plays the complete cycle of Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas in seven concerts throughout the season. This is not only the first time in Kansas City’s history to hear this cycle in one season, it is also only the 12th public performance since Beethoven composed the works. Goode premieres the cycle first in Kansas City, followed by performances in New York; he then records the complete sonatas, considered by many of the most esteemed critics to be the finest ever made. This was Richard Goode’s introduction as a new solo artist. He would go on to become one of the world’s greatest living pianists.

1988-89 The Scottish Chamber Orchestra with pianist Cecile Licad appear in two different programs, with Kansas City premiers of works by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, who also conducts the orchestra in these concerts.

The English Baroque orchestra and the Monteverdi Choir perform two different concerts with their Founder and Director Sir John Elliot Gardiner.

The first appearance of the Elmer Iseler Singers, Canada’s foremost choir. They sing Belmont’s *Nativitas*.

The Kronos String Quartet makes its first appearance.

The Friends makes a commitment to present an on-going series of solo pianists creating The Master Pianists Series, the first such series of world class pianists in the Kansas City area.

András Schiff makes his first appearance on the series.

Pianist Walter Klein appears on the series.
At age 99, Pianist Mieczyslav Horszowski makes his only appearance on the series.

Chanticleer, violinst Elmar Oliveira, and pianist Robert McDonald make their first appearance on the series. Soprano Dawn Upshaw appears with Richard Goode.

The English Concert makes its first appearance on the series, conducted by Trevor Pinnock.

Malcolm Bilson performs on his fortepiano—the first time such an instrument had been heard on a Kansas City stage. He plays the complete cycle of piano sonatas by Mozart, in celebration of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. Bilson had recently made history by making the first recording of the Mozart piano concertos on the fortepiano, with John Elliot Gardiner conducting The English Baroque Soloists.

Radu Lupu makes his first appearance on the series.

The Uptown String Quartet, the first professional African American string quartet, makes its first appearance on the series in partnership with the Gem Theater.

The Trio Fontenay, Europe's finest piano trio, makes its first appearance on the series.

Pianist Edward Aldwell performs four concerts that celebrate the Art of the Fugue. The programs include the complete Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach's Well-Tempered Klavier, Book II; The Goldberg Variations and French Overture in B Minor, BWV 831; Handel's Suites Nos. 1, 2 and 8; Mozart's Fantasy and Fugue, K. 394; Beethoven's Op. 110; and the Brahms' Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel.

Jazz artist Billy Taylor joins the Uptown String Quartet, a partnership with the Gem Theater raising $10,000 for the Gem Theater.

Ivan Moravec makes his first appearance on the series. He will appear 11 times in the series.

The Academy of Ancient Music makes its first appearance on the series with Founder and Director Christopher Hogwood.

The Philharmonia Baroque appears with Founder and Director Nicholas McGegan.

The Waverly Consort performs their fully-staged, costumed Christmas Story, a 12th-century pageant, and the first program of its kind ever to be seen in Kansas City.

The Friends receives a three-year grant from the Lila Wallace Readers' Digest Arts Partners Program to launch a major music educational initiative called MusiConnection, and hires NPR commentator Rob Kapilow and composer-commentator Stephen Hatfield. Over the next twenty years, the program will offer over 2000 performances throughout the community, the largest and most successful music education program designed for a lay audience ever launched in Kansas City.

For the next ten years, The Friends helps several worthy arts organization grow by providing administrative support and advice. These organizations are chosen because they are important additions to the rich field of chamber music for the community that the Friends cannot fulfill alone. They include: Summerfest, The Kansas City Chorale, The Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, The Kansas City string Quartet Camp and the Early Music Consort of Kansas City.

Violinist Pamela Frank appears with her father, Claude Frank.

The Friends creates a new partnership with the Kansas City Chorale and the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra to perform Handel's Messiah for the next three seasons, the first time in Kansas City's history this work has received a professional performance with the original number of musicians used by Handel and his contemporaries.
1995-96  Heinz Holliger and Thomas Zehetmair appear with the Camerata Bern from Switzerland.
       The world’s leading ensemble for the performance of French baroque music, Les Arts Florissants with Founder and Director
       William Christie perform.
       Cynthia Siebert plays her last concert for The Friends, playing the Shostakovich Piano Quintet with the Vermeer String
       Quartet.
       The Friends commissions a new work written by Rob Kapilow entitled Shuttlecocks for two string quartets performed by the
       St. Lawrence and Ying String Quartets.
       The farewell concert of the Cleveland String Quartet takes place on the Friends’ series with a newly-commissioned work by
       Pulitzer-Prize-winning composer John Corigliano. The Corigliano quartet wins the Grammy Award for best contemporary
       work written that year. The Quartet creates the Cleveland quartet Award to identify, honor and support an emerging quartet
       capable of a significant international career and creates an endowment to fund an eight-city tour of the U.S. for the awardees. The
       Friends is selected to be one of those eight presenters. The Friends is now able to present a Cleveland Quartet winner
       every two years, in perpetuity. This award will become the most important competition for a string quartet in the United
       States. Winners of this award for the next ten years are the Brentano, Borreo, Miami, Pacifica, Miró, Jupiter, Parker, Jasper
       and Ariel String Quartets.

1996-97  The Tallis Scholars, the world’s greatest performers of Renaissance vocal music, first appear, and will perform ten more times
       on the series.
       The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir perform with director Ton Koopman in a performance of Bach’s B Minor Mass.
       Anonymous 4 make their first Friends’ appearance; founded in 1992, they were America’s first, professional medieval vocal
       quartet and remain its finest. They will perform eight times on the series.
       The Pražák String Quartet, pianist Dubravka Tomšič, and Lionheart make their first appearances.

1997-98  The Netherlands Chamber Choir appears.
       The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra appears with Richard Goode in Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto.
       Tafelmusik, Canada’s finest baroque orchestra makes their first appearance.

1998-99  The Brentano String Quartet, the first winners of the Cleveland Quartet Award, make their first appearance on the series.
       The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra performs with violinist Elmar Oliviero in Samuel Barber’s Violin Concerto.
       The Munich Chamber Orchestra, Ollie Mustonin and Krystian Zimerman all make their first appearances.
       The Takács String Quartet makes its first appearance on the series and will perform eight more times over the years.
       Sequentia from Cologne, the world’s greatest medieval ensemble, founded by Ben Bagby and the late Barbara Thornton,
       performs.
       The Friends co-present the “What Makes it Great?” series with the Kansas City Symphony.
       Although The Friends has presented early music concerts since the 1979-80 season, it now creates a series dedicated to early
       music, The Early Music Series, which continues to this day.

1999-2000  The Friends presents the Orpheus Chamber orchestra with Radu Lupu in Mozart’s A Major Piano Concerto, K. 488.
         The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the Tallin Chamber Orchestra make their first appearance with Founder and
         Director Tõnu Kaljuste
         The English Concert directed by Trevor Pinnock with guest violinist Rachel Podger play the Brandenburg Concertos.
         Capriccio Stravagante (founded by Skip Sempé) with Guillemette Laurens, soprano; Musica Antiqua Köln and Piffaro
         appear for the first time.

2000-2001  For its 25th Anniversary, The Friends commissions a new quartet composed by Richard Danielpour which is performed by
         the American String Quartet.
         Gidon Kremer conducts Kremerata Baltica, the first professional chamber orchestra comprised of musicians exclusively from
         the Baltic countries to tour the world.
         Pianists John Browning and Ignat Solzhenitsyn appear on the series.
         Il Giardino Armonica, Italian baroque orchestra, appears.
         For the next three seasons, The Friends partners with the Carlsen Center to present the “What Makes it Great?” series.
2001-02  Estonian Philharmonia Chamber Choir and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra perform works by James MacMillan and Arvo Pärt, conducted by their Founder Tõnu Kaljuste; this is a co-presentation with The Carlsen Center.

Les Arts Florissants conducted by their Founder and Director William Christie in an all-Charpentier program, including his Christmas Mass, a co-presentation with the Carlsen Center.

Anonymous 4 and Lionheart, America’s premier female and male medieval vocal quartets team up for a special concert. Stephen Hough makes his first appearance on the series.

2002-03  Academy of Ancient Music with conductor/violinist Andrew Manze, Les Violins du Roy with guest soprano Karina Gauvin, and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with Richard Goode are co-presented with the Carlsen Center.

Pierre-Laurent Aimard performs on the series.

Jordi Savall’s first appearance on the series, with Hesperion XXI and La Capella Reial de Catalunya.

The Ensemble for Early Music directed by Frederick Renz in the fully-staged, 12th-century performance of Daniel and the Lions.


Les Talens Lyriques with founder/ harpischordist Christophe Rousset, appears on the series.

2004-05  The Emerson String Quartets appears with guest pianist Menachem Pressler of the Beaux Arts Trio.

The Miami String Quartet pair up with the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio for the first time on the series.

Viennese pianist Rudolph Buchbinder makes his first appearance.

French pianist Pascal Rogé appears on the series.

Jordi Savall, Concert of Nations and La Capella Reial de Catalunya perform works by Monteverdi.

Olivier Latry, the Titular Organist for the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, inaugurates the new organ at Visitation Church.

2005-06  The Kopelman String Quartet, pianist Jonathan Biss and the Artemis String Quartet all make their first appearances on the series.

Venice Baroque Orchestra with violinist Giuliano Carmignola, performs on the series.

Tragicomedia, founded and directed by Stephen Stubbs, and Concerto Palatino, Europe’s baroque brass ensemble, perform Monteverdi’s Vespers.

Trio Medieval from Norway, Europe’s most famous female vocal ensemble of medieval music, makes its first appearance on the series.

Vladimir Feltsman performs Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition on the series and again at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art with artworks chosen from the museum’s collection curated and discussed by Ian Kennedy, Louis L. and Adelaide C. Ward Senior Curator of European Arts.

2006-07  The Vermeer String Quartet appears with Rabbi Michael Zedek in a performance of Haydn’s Seven Last Words of Christ with texts representing religions of the world, chosen and read by Rabbi Zedek.

The Moscow Soloists performs with Yuri Bashet, violist.

Dialogus, founded by Katarina Livljanić, the world’s leading authority on Croatian medieval music, performs her semi-staged version of The Vision of Tondal.

2007-08  The Zehetmair String Quartet, German pianist Christian Zacharias and Norway’s Trio con Brio, appear for the first time.

James Ehnes, one of the world’s pre-eminent violinists appears on the series.

The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin make their first appearance.
Chanticleer, America’s most celebrated vocal ensemble, comprised of 12 male singers, celebrates its 25th anniversary by commissioning a new work by Chen Yi, a MacArthur awardee. The work is written for Chanticleer and the Shanghai String Quartet, the first time in history that a work has been written for this combination. Chen Yi writes From the Path of Beauty, a 40-minute, seven-movement work, each movement of which honors a specific art form that dominated seven specific Chinese dynasties. The Curator for Chinese Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art selects photos of art works from the museum’s collection to best represent each of these art forms.

Australian Chamber Orchestra with violinist and conductor Richard Tognetti makes its first appearance.

Katarina Livljanic, Founder and Director of Dialogus, performs the 12th-century, fully-staged production of The Story of Judith.

Ben Bagby, the world’s leading authority and performer of medieval music makes his solo appearance in Beowulf.

Jordi Savall performs a program entitled Don Quijote de la Mancha with actor F. Murray Abraham, star of the film “Amadeus” and Hesperion XXI and La Capella Reial de Catalunya.

Pianists Konstantin Lifschitz and Giles Vonsattel perform on the series.

Tafelmusik performs the U.S. debut of their multi-media program The Galileo Project in honor of the 400th anniversary of Galileo’s invention of the telescope. This brought together the music and scientific community in one of the most exciting and unprecedented artistic ventures ever presented in Kansas City.

Uzbekistani pianist, Behzod Abduraimov makes his Kansas City recital debut with his teacher Stanislav Ioudenitch. Abduraimov, at age 18, has just won the 2009 London International Piano Competition, the youngest pianist in history ever to win this competition.

Violinist Pinchas Zukerman performs with Pianist Yefim Bronfman.

Young Polish pianist Rafal Blechacz makes his Kansas City debut after winning first prize in the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, the first Polish pianist since Krystian Zimerman to win this award in 25 years.

The Boston Early Music series brings its fully-staged production of Handel’s one-act opera Acis and Galatea, the first time Kansas City has seen an authentically-staged, baroque opera with baroque instruments and singers, and staging and costumes by noted baroques historians.

The Friends partner with UMKC of Music and Dance Conservatory to create a new sub-series called Music Alliance (MA) that will take place mostly on the campus of UMKC for the benefit of the students, faculty and the greater Kansas City community for the next five years.

The Friends produces its first multi-media production entitled The Darwin Project, one of the first performances to be held at the newly-opened Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, as a joint presentation with the Kauffman Center. Written by Nancy Cervetti and Jeremy Lillig, The Friends models the project after Tafelmusik’s Galileo program. The project brings together over 25 Kansas City-area organizations, including Avila University, the Missouri Repertory Theater, Jim Mitchell of Kansas City Actors, the Linda Hall Library and biologist and photographer John Hess. The actors for the performance are Gary Neal Johnson, Kathleen Warfel and Cinnamon Schultz; while musicians include Kansas City Collegium Vocale directed by Ryan Board, the Daedalus String Quartet and pianist Alon Goldstein. This performance sells out Helzberg Hall, and will be the first of four Friends’ concerts held at the Kauffman Center in this season.

Chanticleer performs at the Kauffman Center.

The Friends creates the Bach Festival, comprised of six, all-Bach concerts in partnership with the Kauffman Center, The Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, the Folly Theater and the Conservatory of Music. Russian pianist Konstantin Lifschitz is the centerpiece of this festival and performs Bach’s Well-Tempered Klavier Book II, the Goldberg Variations, two Bach keyboard concertos (in G and D Minor, BWV 1058 and BWV 1052), St. Ann’s Prelude and Fugue, BWV 552 and The Art of the Fugue. Two performances take place at the Folly Theater, two at the Kauffman Center and one at the UMKC Conservatory of Music.
2012-13  Pianists Louis Lortie and Alexander Melnikov make their first appearances on the series. Pianist Jonathan Biss performs a mini-series of four concerts focusing on the works of Schumann. Two concerts are solo recitals and two with the young British Quartet, the Elias, performing Schumann's Piano Quartet and Piano Quintet. They will record these works soon thereafter. The Elias Quartet makes its first appearance on the series. Stile Antico, the young Renaissance vocal ensemble from England, make their first appearance on the series.

2013-14  The Venice Baroque Orchestra performs with counter-tenor Philippe Jaroussky, a co-presentation with the Performing Arts Series at Johnson County Community College. Jaroussky is considered by critics to be the finest counter-tenor in the world. Pianist Arnauld Cohen and Ben Grosvenor make their first appearances on the series. Jordi Savall brings his Hesperion XXI program “Music of the Ottoman Empire” with musicians from France, Bulgaria, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Armenia, and Spain. The Friends partners with Kim Masteller, Curator of Near and Southeastern Asian Art from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art for this program. With this performance, The Friends forges new relationships in the community, and casts its programming net further than ever in its historic, geographic and cultural reach.

2014-15  Finnish pianist Juho Pohjonen makes his first appearance on the series, performing with the Brentano String Quartet. Vox Luminous, the Belgian ensemble specializing in the 16th-18th century literature, makes its first appearance. The French string quartet, the Ébène, appears for the first time. The Friends partners for the first time with the National WWI Museum presenting pianist Alon Goldstein and the Ariel String Quartet performing music written during WWI (Shulhoff, Stravinsky and Elgar). A panel moderated by Matthew Naylor, President of the WWI Museum; UMKC Musicologists, William Everett and Andrew Grenade and UMKC historian Lynda Payne join the musicians on the stage of the museum two days before the Friend’s concert at the Folly Theater for a lecture demonstration. Sir András Schiff, recently knighted by the Queen of England, makes his seventh appearance on the series. He plays the first of two programs dedicated to the late works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Les Violons du Roy performs with pianist Marc-André Hamelin.

Tafelmusik performs their multi-media Galileo Project for The Friends which partners with the Linda Hall Library. The library provides images from the Renaissance for an exhibit at the Folly Theater. Dr. William Ashworth, Jr., UMKC Professor of the History of Science gives the pre-concert talk.

Sir András Schiff

The Artemis Quartet