

Concerts at the Point

17TH SEASON 2013-2014



PETER SCHAAF

presents ...

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

OCTOBER 27, 2013, 3:00 PM

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Concerts at the Point

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2013

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Peter Winograd, violin

Laurie Carney, violin

Daniel Avshalomov, viola

Wolf from Koessel, cello

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 77, NO. 2

HAYDN

Allegro moderato

Menuetto: Presto, ma non troppo

Andante

Finale: Vivace assai

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 73, NO. 3

SHOSTAKOVICH

Allegretto

Moderato con moto

Allegro non troppo

Adagio, attacca

Moderato

INTERMISSION . . .

QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 59, NO. 3

BEETHOVEN

Introduzione: Andante con moto; Allegro vivace

Andante con moto quasi Allegretto

Menuetto: Grazioso

Allegro molto

THE PERFORMERS: THE AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Internationally recognized as one of the world's finest quartets, the American String Quartet has spent decades honing the luxurious sound for which it is famous. The Quartet will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2014, and, in its years of touring, has performed in all fifty states and has appeared in the most important concert halls worldwide. Their presentations of the complete quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, Schoenberg, Bartók, and Mozart have won widespread critical acclaim, and their MusicMasters Complete Mozart String Quartets, performed on a matched quartet set of instruments by Stradivarius, are widely considered to have set the standard for this repertoire.

Formed when its original members were students at The Juilliard School, the American String Quartet's career began with the group winning both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award in the same year. Individually, the members devote additional time outside the Quartet's active performance and teaching schedule to solo appearances, recitals, and master classes.



PETER WINOGRAD joined the American String Quartet in 1990. He gave his first solo public performance at the age of 11, and at age 17 he was accepted as a scholarship student of Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School. Recognized early as an exceptionally promising young artist, Winograd was a top prize winner in the 1988 Naumburg International Violin Competition. He then made his New York debut to critical acclaim and has since appeared as a guest soloist with numerous orchestras and in recital across the country and abroad, including annual collaborative performances with cellist Andrés Díaz at the Florida Arts Chamber Music Festival.

Winograd has been a member of the violin and chamber music faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and the Aspen Music School (where the American is Quartet-in-Residence) since 1990. Born into a gifted musical family, Winograd began his studies with his parents. His mother was a professional pianist, and his father was the founding cellist of the Juilliard Quartet and a conductor of the

Hartford Symphony in Hartford, Connecticut, where Winograd grew up. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Juilliard. His violin is by Giovanni Maria del Bussetto (Cremona, 1675).

LAURIE CARNE, a founding member of the American String Quartet, began concertizing while she was still an undergraduate at Juilliard. Apart from the Quartet, she has performed trios with her husband, cellist William Grubb, and pianist Anton Nel; duos with violist Michael Tree; and as an ensemble partner to such artists as Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, Salvatore Accardo, Cho-Liang Lin, Joshua Bell, Yefim Bronfman, Misha Dichter, Ralph Kirshbaum, Alain Meunier, and Frederica von Stade.



A faculty artist at the Aspen Music Festival and School since 1974 and the Manhattan School of Music since 1984, Carney has held teaching positions at the Mannes College of Music, Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, University of Nebraska, University of Michigan, Shepherd School at Rice University, and the Taos School of Music. Her dedication to the development of young players brings frequent invitations to offer master classes, most recently in California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, and New Mexico. Carney is a member of a prodigious musical family: her father was a trumpeter and educator, her mother a concert pianist, and all three siblings are professional violinists. Her violin is by Carlo Tononi (Venice, 1720).

DANIEL AVSHALOMOV *The Strad* magazine hailed violist Daniel Avshalomov as “one of the finest occupants of that chair, both instrumentally and musically, of any quartet now active.” Before joining the Quartet, Avshalomov served as principal violist for the Aspen, Tanglewood, and Spoleto festival orchestras, as well as for the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Opera Orchestra of New York, and American Composers Orchestra. He also was a founding member of the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble. A frequent guest artist with the Guarneri Quartet, he has performed with such groups as the Da Camera Society, Marin Music Fest, and La Musica di Asolo.



He has shared the stage with Norbert Brainin (first violinist of the Amadeus Quartet), Misha Dichter, Bruno Giuranna (a founding member of I Musici), Maureen Forrester, the Juilliard and Tokyo quartets, and the Bolshoi Ballet (as solo violist).

Avshalomov's articles appear in *Notes and Strings*; he has edited several viola works for publication and contributed to ASTA's *Playing and Teaching the Viola*. Avshalomov developed a lecture-demonstration, "Inside Passages," first presented to the New York Viola Society in 2000. On his CD, *Three Generations Avshalomov*, with pianists Robert McDonald and Pamela Pyle, Avshalomov performs works for viola and piano composed by his grandfather, father and brother. The CD was featured on NPR's *All Things Considered*. Avshalomov has been on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music since 1984 and at the Aspen School since 1976. His viola is by Andrea Amati (Cremona, 1568).



WOLFRAM KOESSEL Since his Carnegie Hall debut in 1994, cellist Wolfram Koessel has performed as a chamber musician, recitalist and soloist throughout the world. *The Strad* magazine praised his "exceptionally attractive cello playing." He also has appeared often with the New York Metamorphoses Orchestra, which he cofounded in 1994. His collaborations include performances with legendary tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain, distinguished dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, and cellist Yo Yo Ma, among many others. Koessel also appears with a wide range of ensembles, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Trio+ (a group he formed with violinist Yosuke Kawasaki and pianist Vadim Serebryani), which performs creative and collaborative concerts throughout Japan, the United States, and Canada.

Koessel served as music director of the Mark Morris Dance Group from 2004 to 2008 and has toured extensively with the company, performing in several world premieres. In the fall of 2009, he was the featured performer in a new dance work, performing Beethoven's Cello Sonata in C. His cello is by Giovanni Cavani (Modena, 1917).

PROGRAM NOTES

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 77, NO. 2

Allegro moderato

Menuetto: Presto, ma non troppo

Andante

Finale: Vivace assai

The F major, the last quartet that Haydn completed, was written when he was in his late sixties, in failing health, and deeply involved in composing his great oratorios and masses. Unaware that the F major was to be his last quartet, Haydn did not use it for any great summing up. Instead he composed a meticulous work that has all the characteristic drive and vigor of his more youthful works, yet is imbued with a certain wistful melancholy.

The main theme of the first movement is essentially a melancholy descending F scale, but with many interruptions of its downward motion. To intensify the doleful impression, Haydn starts with a strong phrase, which fades away to a number of soft, weak extensions. Other motifs follow until the first violin introduces the new subsidiary melody while the second violin plays the opening of the principal theme. After a rather lengthy development section, which ends with a measure of silence, Haydn brings both subjects back for a truncated recapitulation.

There can be little doubt that Haydn wrote the humorous Menuetto with tongue in cheek. The first clue is the gay and skittish melody. Then, although the movement is in the traditional triple meter, Haydn goes out of his way to create duple-meter rhythmic patterns that go in and out of phase with the underlying beat. He also writes a cello part that at times makes the instrument sound like a timpani. After the high spirits of the Menuetto, the Trio, in a distant key, is quite unexpected. Smooth and sober, almost hymn-like, it is a sharp contrast to the impish playfulness of what came before. But Haydn's hijinks are not yet over. In the transition back to the Menuetto, he throws in a few "wrong" beat entrances, just for fun.

In the strange, striking opening of the Andante, the violin plays the staid, deliberate theme while the cello moves it forward with a slow, implacable tread. Basically there are three quite freely realized variations on the theme (featuring the second violin, the cello, and the first violin respectively), which are separated by contrasting episodes between the variations. A tremendous crescendo and climax precede the final variation, which nonetheless starts very quietly, much as the movement began, and ends just as quietly.

The Finale theme captures all the dash and fire of a fast folk dance. A slightly more subdued second theme, characterized by misplaced accents, on the third beat instead of the usual first, follows. With great rhythmic vitality, Haydn then builds the rest of the movement almost exclusively on the first theme, although he brings both ideas back for the recapitulation. A few soft measures in the midst of the bustling coda heighten the impact of the exciting conclusion

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DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906– 1975)

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 73, NO. 3

Allegretto

Moderato con moto

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Moderato

Shostakovich began his five-movement Third Quartet in January 1946, the year following the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. According to Valentin Berlinsky, cellist of the Borodin Quartet, Shostakovich originally planned to give its movements programmatic titles with reference to the war: "Peaceful Soviet life"; "Beginning of distant war"; "Invasion of Russia"; "Requiem for the dead"; "Reflection on the fate of man." No explanation exists for their absence from the quartet's final design, although Shostakovich may have decided not to risk even patriotic-sounding written statements in the score. He had survived

the purges of the 1930s, but with the war over Stalin was again finding 'enemies of the people' in the artistic community.

The Third Quartet opens with a simple, almost comic little tune, but after an off-kilter restatement, a dark double fugue emerges before being banished by the little tune's reappearance. The tempo accelerates, and a strong descending line from the fugue builds in volume to an abrupt ending. A heavy, joyless waltz opens the second movement in the jarring key of E minor. This is followed by a contrasting section of tiny strokes interrupted occasionally by melancholy melodic lines.

Brutal chords open the third movement, introducing a demonic march that is symphonic in scope and written in a musical language far removed from the quartet's opening. The movement rushes headlong with sustained intensity to a cascading ending.

The fourth movement Adagio opens with two contrasting statements, one a low funeral unison and the other a high, delicate grieving recitative in the first violin. After they alternate with some variation, the serious opening theme evolves into a longer melodic line that rises in intensity before falling, dissolving into fragments, and fading away.

Without pause, the last movement begins quietly with a rambling, lyrical theme in the cello that seems to be searching for a new beginning after the violence and grief of the two previous movements. Two more themes emerge in the first violin over rhythmic backgrounds, but without much development a Jewish folk dance abruptly intervenes. These musical elements are brought back in unstable harmonies and are interrupted by a shrill canon using the first theme from the fourth movement. The music slows to a dying ending with an eerie rising phrase as the first violin tries without success to restate the movement's opening theme.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 59, NO. 3

Introduzione: Andante con moto; Allegro vivace

Andante con moto quasi Allegretto

Menuetto: Grazioso

Allegro molto

The subtitle “Hero” (or “Eroica”) refers to the last movement of the quartet and acknowledges its truly mighty conception. Just as Beethoven’s Eroica Symphony vastly expanded the scope of symphonic writing, so the grandiose finale of the third “Rasumovsky” quartet made all previous string quartets seem modest by comparison.

The eerie introduction that opens the quartet, without any forward motion and seemingly suspended in time, seems to contradict Beethoven’s tempo direction, *Andante con moto* (“moderate speed with motion”). The jaunty first theme is, in effect, ‘kicked off’ by a short upbeat and long arrival note—a rhythmic figure that remains important throughout the movement. Several other first group themes gradually lead to the start of the exuberant second subject—sustained note, which is imitated in order by the viola, cello and second violin. The development section provides flashy virtuosic passage work for all the instruments with frequent reappearances of the short-upbeat/long-resolution motto. The exposition skips the first theme and deals entirely with the triumphant second melody before the arrival of a brief sparkling coda.

The second movement begins with a theme that is a heavy, despondent violin line over repeated cello pizzicato notes. The melodic interval of the augmented second, with its Middle Eastern overtones, adds to the poignancy of the effect. The dispirited opening serves as the perfect foil to the warm, frothy second theme that follows. Both themes are developed and returned according to traditional sonata form, but in a surprise move, the composer brings them back in reverse order.

Beethoven probably returned to the traditional eighteenth-century minuet style for the third movement because a brilliant scherzo would have been inappropriate before the monumental finale he had in mind. The first part is gentle and languorous, despite a great deal of inner rhythmic drive. The sharper and more penetrating trio precedes a repeat of the Menuetto and the brief coda that leads, without pause, to the finale.

The last movement starts softly, but at a very fast tempo, with the viola playing the theme alone. The second violin enters with the same melody while the viola continues with a countermelody—a fugal treatment in which one theme is successively imitated by the individual players. The cello and then the first violin join in with the original melody to bring the section to a powerful climax. As the movement proceeds, Beethoven audaciously juxtaposes homophony (accompanied melody), on the richly textured polyphony (independent voices) of the opening fugal section, with absolutely thrilling results. Beethoven endows every note, from first to last, with a force and energy that propels the musical line irresistibly forward. He also calls on the players to stretch their tonal resources to the very limit, to produce the maximum sound possible. The result is a movement of stunning impact—a triumphant conclusion to this most impressive work. *Notes from Guide to Chamber Music, by Melvin Berger ©1985*

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