

An impressionistic painting with a warm, textured background of yellow, orange, and blue. The style is reminiscent of J.M.W. Turner or a similar 19th-century painter. The colors are blended and layered, creating a sense of movement and light. There are some darker, more defined shapes, possibly figures or objects, but they are mostly obscured by the overall wash of color and brushstrokes.

Concerts at the Point

28TH SEASON 2024-2025

presents ...

**ATTACCA
QUARTET**

OCTOBER 27, 2024, 3:00 PM

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1912 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT POINT, MASSACHUSETTS

THE IMAGE ON THE COVER IS SOUND BATH, BY SUSAN STRAUSS. Ms. Strauss explains that she paints abstractly from direct observation of both inner and outer landscapes. Her paintings explore the interconnection and universality of seen and non-visual experiences. Her goal is to be present in her life and her paintings. susanstrausspainting.com

TODAY'S PERFORMANCE IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE WESTPORT CULTURAL COUNCIL, A LOCAL AGENCY SUPPORTED BY THE HELEN E. ELLIS CHARITABLE TRUST AND ADMINISTERED BY BANK OF AMERICA.

Concerts at the Point

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2024

ATTACCA QUARTET

Amy Schroeder, violin

Domenic Salerni, violin

Nathan Schram, viola

Andrew Yee, cello

BLUEPRINT

CAROLINE SHAW

STRING QUARTET NO. 6 IN F MINOR, OP. 80

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Allegro assai — Presto

Allegro assai

Adagio

Allegro molto

INTERMISSION . . .

STRING QUARTET IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 131. NO. 14

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo

Allegro molto vivace

Allegro moderato

Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile

Presto

Adagio quasi un poco andante

Allegro

THE PERFORMERS



The Grammy award-winning Attacca Quartet, as described by *The Nation*, “lives in the present aesthetically, without rejecting the virtues of the musical past,” and it is this dexterity to glide from the music of the 18th through to the 21st century repertoire that places them as one of the most versatile and outstanding ensembles of the moment – a quartet for modern times.

Passionate advocates of contemporary repertoire, the Attacca Quartet is dedicated to presenting and recording new works. Their recording project, *Orange*, for which they received the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance, features string quartet works by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw. Greatly praised by the critics, it has also been featured in NPR’s List of ‘25 Best Albums of 2019’ and ‘10 Classical Albums to Usher in the Next Decade’ and in *The New York Times*’ list of the ‘25 Best Classical Music Tracks of 2019’ for Valencia. It was also shortlisted for the 2020 BBC Music Magazine Awards and several Opus Klassik Awards.

Previous recordings include three critically acclaimed albums with Azica Records, including a disc of Michael Ippolito’s string quartets, and the complete works for string quartet by John Adams. The latter was praised by Steve Smith of *The New York Times* as a “vivacious, compelling set.” Smith described the Attacca Quartet’s playing as

“exuberant, funky, and ... exactly nuanced.” The album was the recipient of the 2013 National Federation of Music Clubs Centennial Chamber Music Award. Additional awards for their recordings include both the Arthur Foote Award from the Harvard Musical Association and Lotos Prize in the Arts from the Stecher and Horowitz Foundation.

Other accolades include First Prize at the seventh Osaka International Chamber Music Competition, the Top Prize and Listeners’ Choice award for the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, and Grand Prize of the 60th annual Coleman Chamber Ensemble Competition. *attaccaquartet.com*



AMY SCHROEDER, VIOLIN

New York based violinist and pedagogue Amy Schroeder is a founding member of the Attacca Quartet and has been hailed by the Washington Post as “an impressive artist whose playing combines imagination and virtuosity.”

Amy is proud to serve as a music faculty member at Vassar College. In 2002 she was the recipient of the Henrietta and Albert J. Ziegler Jr. Scholarship, which provided the tuition for her studies at Juilliard, where she was a student of Sally Thomas and the Juilliard String Quartet. Growing up in Buffalo, NY, she began her violin studies with Karen Campbell and Thomas Halpin. She currently plays on two different violins, a Fernando Gagliano made in 1771 on loan to her from the Five Partners Foundation, and a violin made by Nathan Slobodkin in 2012.



DOMENIC SALERNI, VIOLIN

Violinist Domenic Salerni is active as a chamber musician, composer and arranger, and freelance musician. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he graduated with academic honors, and the Yale University School of Music, where he was the recipient of the Yale Chamber Music Society Award. Domenic started violin at the age of three in the Suzuki Method with Linda Fiore. Other teachers include Linda Cerone, Naoko Tanaka, Diane Monroe, Lee Snyder, Geoffrey Michaels, and William Preucil. He can be found on the Delos, Naxos, Artek, Canary, Innova, and DoMilo labels.



NATHAN SCHRAM, VIOLA

Hailed by the New York Times as an “elegant soloist” with a sound “devotional with its liquid intensity,” Nathan is a composer, entrepreneur, and violist of the Attacca Quartet. Nathan has collaborated with many of the great artists of today including Björk, Itzhak Perlman, Sting, David Crosby, Becca Stevens, David Byrne, Trey Anastasio, Joshua Bell, Simon Rattle, and others. He has premiered music by Steve Reich, Nico Muhly, Timo Andres, Elliot Cole and Gabriel Kahane. Nathan is also a violist in the Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall, Decoda and an Honorary Ambassador to the city of Chuncheon, South Korea.



ANDREW YEE, CELLO

Cellist Andrew Yee has been praised by Michael Kennedy of the *London Telegraph* as “spellbindingly virtuosic.” Trained at the Juilliard School, they are a founding member of the internationally acclaimed Attacca Quartet, which has released several albums to critical acclaim including Andrew’s arrangement of Haydn’s “Seven Last Words” which Thewholenote.com praised as “. . .easily the most satisfying string version of the work that I’ve heard.” Attacca was the quartet-in-residence at the Met Museum in 2014, and has won the Osaka and Coleman international string quartet competitions. Their newest recording of the string quartets of Caroline Shaw won a GRAMMY for best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble performance.

As a soloist last season, Andrew performed John Taverner’s “The Protecting Veil” and “Don Quixote” (Strauss). They like making stop-motion videos of food, drawing apples, cooking like an Italian Grandma, and developing coffee and cocktail programs for award-winning restaurants (Lilia, Risbobk, Atla) in New York City.

They play on an 1884 Eugenio Degani cello on loan from the Five Partners Foundation.

andrewyecellist.com



PROGRAM NOTES



CAROLINE SHAW (B. 1982)

BLUEPRINT

Caroline Adelaide Shaw is an American composer, violinist, and singer. Shaw is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and media, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. At age thirty, she was the youngest composer ever to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music, when she received the honor for her *a cappella* vocal work *Partita for 8 Voices*. She is also the recipient of several Grammy awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. She has worked with a range of artists, including Rosalía, Renée Fleming, and Yo-Yo Ma, and she has contributed music to films and television series including *Fleishman is in Trouble*, *Bombshell*, *Yellowjackets*, *Maid*, *Dark*, and Beyoncé's *Homecoming*. Most recently, she composed the score for *Leonardo da Vinci*, the new documentary produced by Ken Burns for PBS. Shaw has studied at Princeton, Rice, and Yale Universities.

Shaw most often composes for a particular artist or ensemble, crafting her music to a degree on aspects of the artist/ensemble revealed through personal encounters. *Blueprint* was composed for the Aizuri

Quartet, which played its world premiere in April 2016 at Wolf Trap in Vienna, Virginia. *Blueprint* takes its title from the Japanese blue woodblock printing tradition as well as from a familiar standard architectural representation of a blueprint.

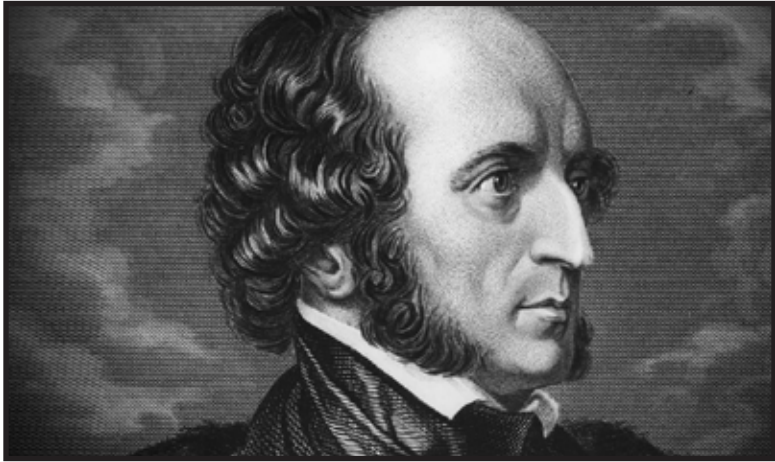
The piece began as a single seven-minute harmonic reduction – a kind of floor plan – of Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 18 No. 6, “La Malinconia,” based on a commission from the Aizuri Quartet. Shaw writes, “Chamber music is ultimately about conversation without words. We talk to each other with our dynamics and articulations, and we try to give voice to the composers whose music has inspired us to gather in the same room and play music. *Blueprint* is also a conversation, with Beethoven, with Haydn (his teacher and the ‘father’ of the string quartet), and with the joys and *malinconia* (melancholy) of his Op. 18 No. 6.”

Shaw’s ability to integrate the various ‘blueprinted’ motivic ideas is impressive and complex. The performers are challenged to continually adapt to the different rhythms posed in each section. Presented in a single offering, the music builds up into an intertwined texture with the two violins in dialogue, helping the music to transition away from the second thematic material and taking it through a “technicolor” texture of the broader triplets heard in the introduction. Then comes an entirely new ‘thorny’ passage in which the texture of crawling chromatic eighth notes is interrupted by vertical half-note pizzicatos. The resulting fully diminished pizzicato chords keep musical tension and stall the flow of the eighth notes. This third new thematic section is also harmonically more dissonant and unresolved, unlike the first two motives.

With quick acceleration through flurries of fast sixteenth notes, which Shaw has marked, “Quaker meeting vibe with the occasional 16th run interruption, gradually becoming more and more ecstatic,” the music gains momentum into the final outburst similar to the Prestissimo coda from Op. 18 No. 6’s finale, and the movement ends with two lighthearted pizzicato chords.

While the piece was not intended to be described with any traditional musical terms or defined in its structure, the overall scheme of the work points to the notion that this work is a “blueprint” not only of Beethoven’s motivic materials in Op. 18 No. 6 but also of classical forms.

Excerpted from: carolineshaw.com; An Analysis of the String Quartets of Caroline Shaw, dissertation by Minju Kim, Indiana University; Editions, by Caroline Shaw; Blueprint Program Notes, Dr. Michael Fink, Camerata San Antonio



FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809 - 1847)

STRING QUARTET NO. 6 IN F MINOR, OP. 80

Allegro assai -- Presto

Allegro assai

Adagio

Allegro molto

Mendelssohn’s last complete string quartet is a dark tour de force celebrated for that blistering intensity that music writer James Keller

calls “combustible.” Throughout Mendelssohn’s work one finds passionate drama and that signature nervous drive, high strung, anxious and ready to explode. But in the F Minor Quartet of 1847, the mood is unrelentingly sustained across three of the four movements, ending with a virtuosic firestorm, a conflagration of musical angst. Connections with his personal life seem compelling.

At this point in his life, Mendelssohn was immensely famous and successful, but overworked, exhausted and in desperate need of rest and recuperation. Word arrived that Fanny, his cherished sister and intellectual soul mate, had suddenly died of a stroke. Devastated, Mendelssohn took a vacation with friends in Switzerland and composed his final quartet dedicated to her memory. Two months later, Felix would follow the fate of his sister, father and grandfather, dying of a stroke himself at the age of 38. Whether one dares to connect this biographical setting to the abstract music of his string quartet, one cannot deny the musical effect: surging agony enfolding a loving elegy within.

Surrounding the slow movement song are three bristling movements. The first is a suspenseful sonata with all the nervous splendor of Mendelssohn’s finest music dating back to his childhood masterpieces. Here, as in many places throughout the quartet, one hears the influence of Bach and Beethoven in contrapuntal textures that deftly weave throughout, occasionally jutting out in bare, exposed edges. The unrelenting forward momentum crashes through the end of the sonata form like an unstoppable, accelerating train. The “scherzo” brings no relief. Unlike his trademark scherzos of lightweight tensile agility, this one lurches and stomps, recalling his more spicy tarantellas. The trio is hushed and cryptic, low rumblings suddenly overcome by the raging storm in the foreground.

The slow movement brings a welcome repose, with a final example of Mendelssohn’s sweet songs without words, a tender outpouring of love with such lyrical grace. But it is not without its own sorrow in the

“wilting” opening line, the climatic surge of passionate plea, and the almost stark scoring for long solo lines that whisper over sustained pedal points.

The finale restores the pervasive panic of the quartet as a whole. Restless, dissonant, stabbing and surging, sharp waves of music crest above a few small islands of lyrical repose quickly submerged by a muscular sea pierced by the cry of a soaring violin frantic with mad figurations. We are lost at sea, destined to drown in raging waters.

Is this quartet a reflection of Mendelssohn’s personal life, a tale of despair regarding his sister’s death, a journal of dread dashed off while his life deteriorated? Or, as some have conjectured, might this have signified the beginning of a new style in Mendelssohn’s music, perhaps something more professional than personal, a craft rather than a confession. Regardless, the quartet is unique and would become his final completed composition. In a lifelong album of music so supremely colorful, this page is etched and spare, a black and white photo that manages to be that much more clear.

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 - 1827)

STRING QUARTET IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 131, NO. 14 (1826)

- I. *Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo*
- II. *Allegro molto vivace*
- III. *Allegro moderato*
- IV. *Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile*
- V. *Presto*
- VI. *Adagio quasi un poco andante*
- VII. *Allegro*

“After this, what is left for us to write?” asked Franz Schubert, upon listening to a private performance of the String Quartet No.14 he requested on his deathbed. Indeed, Beethoven himself suggested to his friend Carl Holz that he loved this Quartet most of all. This is music that moves into a new dimension, leaving behind everything that came before. It is highly experimental, set in seven movements that flow together without pause (instead of the traditional four). It uses the fugue as the seed for all movements, and the interval of the half-step is prevalent throughout. Only the first and last movements are set in C-sharp minor, with the finale featuring the fugue subject from the first movement. Yet it is not the structural unity and technical details of this work that most amaze. It is how the music makes us feel.

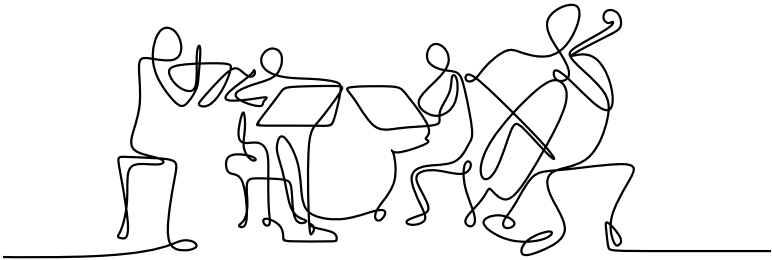
The Quartet opens with a gradually unfolding fugue that Richard Wagner described as “the most melancholy sentiment ever expressed in music.” Musical phrases break down and overlap in a way that keeps pulling our attention to the moment. The second movement moves up a half-step from C-sharp to D, and brings a light-hearted transition, although with dynamic outbursts. The third movement, lasting only eleven bars, is an operatic recitative in which all the instruments converse.

The fourth movement is the expressive heart of the piece, a series of seven far-reaching variations in different meters and tempos that grow out of a sublimely simple melody. Beethoven’s last complete interpretation of the tune suggests a hymn-like transcendence, after which the variations dissolve into fragmentary suggestions and half-remembered allusions. The fifth movement (Presto) is a whirlwind *scherzo*, which literally means “joke.” It is full of jokes and pranks, including a coda that begins with a glassy sound achieved by playing on the bridge of the instruments. The brooding Adagio sixth section is a transition to the furious finale (Allegro), the only full sonata form in the Quartet. The second theme is derived from the subject of the opening fugue, and its latent anger and energy now explodes. “This is the fury of the world’s dance,” Wagner wrote. “and above the tumult the indomitable fiddler whirls us on to the abyss.”

Sources and excerpts from: Parker Quartet, “Beethoven Illuminated, YouTube video 16; James M. Keller, Chamber Music: A Listener’s Guide, 2011, pp. 74-76; Wikipedia; John Henken, program notes for LA Phil. laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/3698/string-quartet-no-14-op-131; Timothy Judd, The Listeners’ Club, thelistenersclub.com/2019/11/01/late-beethoven-revelations; Kai Christiansen, Earsense, earsense.org/chamber-music/Ludwig-van-Beethoven-String-Quartet-No-14-Op-131/



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