

MSM ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Peter Winograd and **Laurie Carney**, violin

Daniel Avshalomov, viola

Wolfram Koessel, cello

With guest artist **Linda Chesis**, flute

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GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

JOSEPH HAYDN
(1732–1809)

String Quartet in D Major, Hob. III/79, Op. 76, no. 5
Allegretto
Largo: Cantabile e mesto
Menuet: Allegro
Finale: Presto

AARON JAY KERNIS
(b. 1960)

Air for flute and quartet

Linda Chesis, flute

Intermission

VIVIAN FUNG
(b. 1975)

Pizzicato

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135
(1770–1827)

Allegretto
Vivace
Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo
Grave, ma non troppo tratto — Allegro

PROGRAM NOTES

Joseph Haydn

String Quartet in D Major, Hob. III/79, Op. 76, no. 5

When Count Joseph Erdödy commissioned the Opus 76 Quartets in 1796, Haydn had recently returned to Vienna from the second of his highly successful London visits. He had always composed with confidence, but a certain new boldness in his style may have come from the realization that all of Europe considered him the greatest living composer. The six “Erdödy” Quartets show formal experiments in or instead of sonata-form movements, a new profundity in their extremely slow-paced Adagios, fast “modern” minuets—scherzos in all but name—and more weight and novel tonal approaches in their finales.

In June 1797 Haydn played some or all of the Opus 76 Quartets on the piano for Swedish diplomat Frederik Silverstolpe, who considered them “more than masterly and full of new thoughts.” The Quartets were completed in time for a September 1797 performance at Eisenstadt as part of the grand festivities surrounding the visit of the Viceroy of Hungary, Palatine Archduke Joseph. Count Erdödy’s rights to the Quartets precluded their being published until 1799. That year English music historian Charles Burney wrote to Haydn that he “never received more pleasure from instrumental music: [the Quartets] are full of invention, fire, good taste, and new effects.”

The most striking aspect of the D Major Quartet, Op. 76, no. 5, is its expansive slow movement, which is how the work is often singled out among the plethora of Haydn Quartets. In order to lead up to this extraordinary movement and not rob it of its weight, Haydn decided he needed a form other than the conventional sonata form for his first movement. Thus he devised a form—not obviously marked out in the music with double bars and labels—that unfolds as a theme and variations, with enough contrasts to also suggest ternary form. A lyrical melody with rocking accompaniment is transformed in the “first variation” or middle section, depending on one’s perspective, into an agitated contrapuntal minor-mode section in which the cello begins the melody. The return to major signifies a return to the opening as in ternary form, but this turns out to be a further variation. Yet another variation then begins, but this turns into a lengthy and intriguing coda.

For the famous slow movement Haydn chooses a key relationship that jumps him ahead several generations. The Romantics later liked to juxtapose movements by the interval of a major third *up*, but in Classic times such a novelty surely

must have made ears prick up. The bright key of F-sharp major—with six sharps in the key signature—is certainly rare in pieces of the period. Haydn fashions a main theme with two basic ideas, each presented by the first violin—a gracious arpeggiated melody and a more jagged gesture featuring dotted rhythms over pulsing accompaniment. These he combines and distributes in ingenious ways through the course of the movement, which unfolds in a kind of sonata form based only on this two-part theme. A memorable hushed passage in the development has the lower voices eerily doubling the underlying stepwise descent of the melody, which results in parallel octaves—a part-writing taboo, but something Haydn knew he was using to great effect.

The Menuet swings along with good cheer and impish off-beat accents. Its contrasting trio has the cello rumbling mysteriously with delicate accompaniment from the higher strings.

Haydn's sense of humor bubbles over in the Presto finale with its “closing” chords as an opening, its high-spirited dance tune, and its impudent harmonic clashes and unexpected turns. Employing a compact sonata form, Haydn cleverly varies the start of the recapitulation, wisely omitting his opening joke and sending the second violin into a tizzy of fast passage work. At the very end Haydn places the “closing” with which he began in its proper place.

Aaron Jay Kernis

Air

Aaron Jay Kernis came to national attention as a 23-year-old composer in 1983 when the New York Philharmonic premiered his *Dream of the Morning Sky*. He went on to receive the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for his String Quartet No. 2, “Musica instrumentalis,” and the 2002 Grawemeyer Award for *Colored Field* for cello and orchestra (originally an English horn concerto). In both cases he was the youngest composer to win these prestigious awards. His highly imaginative, sophisticated yet accessible works have been commissioned and performed by a pantheon of music organizations, ensembles, and soloists.

Growing up in Philadelphia, Kernis first studied violin, then taught himself piano at age 12, and turned to composition the following year. He studied with John Adams at the San Francisco Conservatory, Charles Wuorinen at Manhattan School of Music, and Jacob Druckman and Morton Subotnick at Yale University. He describes his wide-ranging influences as embracing everything from “Gertrude Stein to hard-edged rap to the diaphanous musical canvas of Claude Debussy.” He has taught at the Yale School of Music since 2003, has directed the

Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, and held composer residencies with Astral Artists, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Albany Symphony, Minnesota Public Radio, and the American Composers Forum.

In the early 1990s many of Kernis's compositions were concerned with dark images: his Second Symphony (1992) dealt with the Gulf War, *Still Movement with Hymn* (1993) with World War II and the Holocaust, and *Colored Field* (originally 1994) reflected his visits to the Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps. But his varied and colorful writing has also encompassed the humorous—*The Four Seasons of Futurist Cuisine*—and the erotic—*Goblin Market*, based on Christina Rossetti's moody poem. More recently the St. Louis Symphony premiered his *Venit illuminatio (Toward the Illumination of Colored Light)* in 2019, the same year in which his Violin Concerto, recorded and premiered by violinist James Ehnes with the Seattle Symphony, led by Ludovic Morlot, won two Grammy Awards.

Kernis originally composed his famous *Air* for violin and piano in 1995 for violinist Joshua Bell on a joint commission from the Houston Society for the Performing Arts and the performing arts centers of UCLA and the University of Texas (Austin). He has since adapted the piece for flute or cello and arranged the piano part for orchestra or string quartet. Thus his note that “*Air* is like a love letter to the...”—insert flute, violin, or cello depending on the performance—applies to the melodic capabilities of them all, and the piece can really be considered a love letter to his wife, pianist Evelyne Luest, to whom he dedicated the piece.

The composer's note continues, “Songlike and lyrical, it opens up the full range of the instrument's expressive and poignant possibilities. Composed with two main themes and open harmony, the first theme poses melodic questions and their responses, while the second is very still, rising ever upward into the highest range of the instrument. Following a middle section of dramatic intensity it cycles back to the themes in reverse, developing each along the way, and ending quietly after a final plaintive ascent.”

Vivian Fung

Pizzicato

Born in Canada of Chinese parents, composer Vivian Fung received her music training in the Western classical tradition, which included composition studies with Violet Archer at the University of Alberta, Narcis Bonet in Paris, and David Diamond and Robert Beaser at the Juilliard School, where she earned her doctorate in 2002. Several years later she became equally fascinated with finding

out more about her Asian heritage and began a series of travels to Southwest China, North Vietnam, and Indonesia. She has since created a remarkable body of work based on combining textures and styles learned from these different cultures with her own Western training.

Fung's First Violin Concerto, indebted to her immersion in Balinese gamelan music, won the 2013 Juno Award for Best Composition of the Year. More recently her *Clarinet Quintet: Frenetic Memories* (2017) was inspired by the music of minority groups in Southwest China and her sometimes overwhelming experiences during her travels there in 2012. Fung finds inspiration not only from her travels but from daily encounters and world issues. Her whimsical *Earworms*, premiered by Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra in March 2018, draws on the constant barrage of music and other media in the course of our multitasking lives. *The Ice Is Talking*, for solo percussion and electronics, commissioned by the Banff Centre and premiered in July 2018, uses three ice blocks to illustrate the beauty and fragility of our environment.

In 2019 the American String Quartet premiered Fung's String Quartet No. 4, "Insects and Machines," and in July 2020 the Canadian Broadcasting Company's Virtual Orchestra gave the world premiere of Fung's *Prayer*, a unique work recorded in isolation for an online performance led by conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin during the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2021 her flute concerto, *Storm Within*, was streamed online in its premiere with flutist Christie Reide and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tania Miller.

Devoted to fostering young talent, Fung has mentored composers in programs at the London Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Forum, San Francisco Contemporary Chamber Players, and Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. She serves on the composition faculty at Santa Clara University, where she recently received an Outstanding Career Influencer Award.

Pizzicato originated as the third movement of Fung's String Quartet No. 1, which was premiered by the Avalon String Quartet on January 24, 2004, yet she began the piece several years earlier. Says Fung, "*Pizzicato* was read by the American String Quartet while I was an associate artist at the Atlantic Center for the Arts (ACA) in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, from April 29 to May 17, 2001." This witty energetic piece has since accrued many performances, not only by string quartets but in its version for string orchestra.

Fung writes, "*Pizzicato* is a short work for string quartet, for the duration of which the players never use their bows. The central sound produced is that of plucked strings as well as a few surprises in the middle and towards the end of the work.

Inspired by listening to Asian folk music, the piece is influenced partly by the music of the Chinese plucked instruments *pipa* and *qin* as well as by the energetic rhythms of Indonesian gamelan.”

Ludwig van Beethoven **String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135**

When Prince Nicholas Galitzin ordered “one, two, or three new quartets” from Beethoven in November 1822, he could hardly have realized that he was instigating a series of works by which all later generations would judge profundity. Beethoven had not forgotten the quartet medium in the twelve years since the F Minor Quartet, Op. 95, but the commission gave him the impetus to turn sketches into finished works. Nevertheless, he could not concentrate on quartet writing until after completing the *Missa solemnis*, the *Diabelli Variations*, and the Ninth Symphony, so the project did not begin in earnest until mid-1824.

Beethoven completed the E-flat Major Quartet, Op. 127, in early 1825; the A Minor, Op. 132, that July; and the B-flat Major, Op. 130, in early 1826. The prince loved the Quartets, but was able to make only one payment before going bankrupt and joining the army. The floodgates had been loosed, however, and out of inner necessity Beethoven completed two more quartets in 1826, the C-sharp Minor, Op. 131, and the present F Major, Op. 135, to arrive at the five works known as the “late quartets.” It should be noted that, too late for Beethoven himself but in the proper spirit, a son of Galitzin paid with interest what was owed on his father’s three quartets into the Beethoven estate.

The first four of the late quartets abound in the original features and otherworldly sonorities that so aptly illustrate the privacy and intimacy of Beethoven’s late period. The present F Major Quartet seems to be taking a step back from these more unusual structures and expanded proportions, but at the same time it presents us with one of his most original closing movements, uniquely headed by the inscription (in translation) “The resolution reached with difficulty” and a musical epigraph: two phrases underlaid with the text “Must it be?” and “It must be.” These phrases may have originated in a joke or a legal dispute, but there is also the serious side involving the struggle to find life’s meaning, which Beethoven does through his art.

The first movement also begins as if setting a text, but this is a more lighthearted conversation—at least on the surface. The unassuming mood and brevity of this sonata-form exposition are particularly striking after the slow, weighty fugue that initiated the preceding C-sharp Minor Quartet, but we should remember

that Beethoven often wrote works in contrasting pairs. The F Major Quartet continues with a development section that also gives the impression of brevity because of the apparent entrance of the recapitulation after only a few phrases. This turns out to be a false recapitulation in the witty manner of Haydn, with the real recapitulation waiting in the wings to be introduced after further development.

The wonderfully wild scherzo takes us on an adventure of cross rhythms and syncopation. The trio erupts with almost manic humor and impetuosity, constructed of insistent repetitions and scales that boil over into acrobatic leaps. Beethoven accomplishes his return to the scherzo with dramatic and hushed flair. In his astonishing ending he repeats his home chord in three successively quieter little groups, each beginning—as the movement has prepared us to expect—on an off beat, before delivering a final forte jolt on the downbeat.

Beethoven referred to the slow movement in his sketches as a “sweet song of rest, song of peace,” and a greater contrast with the preceding movement is hard to imagine. Profound in its simplicity—akin to the celebrated Cavatina of the B-flat Major Quartet—this movement consists of a serene main theme and four brief, quiet variations. The second and fourth make compelling use of his celebrated late-period “expressive pauses.”

Returning to sonata form for his questioning and affirming finale, Beethoven employs a slow introduction to ask with rising insistence, “Must it be?” The lower “voices” intone the question motive while the upper “voices” alternately seem to plead and shriek. The concise main portion of the movement cheerfully asserts that “It must be,” complemented by a quiet second theme in a refreshing new key. When the slow introduction returns before the recapitulation, Beethoven steps up the level of intensity by having the upper strings wail away with increased dissonance. The introduction is further altered as “It must be” phrases already begin insinuating themselves. New stabilizing touches affirm the triumph of “It must be” in the recapitulation and Beethoven concludes the piece in a humorous mood. First he suspends motion with a slow rendering of the answer, then introduces a playful pizzicato version of the second theme that never rises above pianissimo, and compresses the answer motive in a descending succession. He caps the whole with a final fortissimo unison sendoff.

—Program notes ©Jane Vial Jaffe

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

American String Quartet

Internationally recognized as one of the world's foremost quartets, the American String Quartet marks its 48th season in 2022–23. Critics and colleagues hold the Quartet in high esteem and many of today's leading artists and composers seek out the Quartet for collaborations. The Quartet is also known for its performances of the complete quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, Schoenberg, Bartók, and Mozart. The Quartet's recordings of the complete Mozart string quartets on a matched set of Stradivarius instruments are widely held to set the standard for this repertoire. To celebrate its 35th anniversary, the Quartet recorded an ambitious CD, *Schubert's Echo*, released by NSS Music. The program invites the listener to appreciate the influence of Schubert on two masterworks of early 20th-century Vienna. In addition to quartets by European masters, the American naturally performs quartets by American composers. Their newest release, *American Romantics* (Apple Music, 2018), is a recording of Robert Sirota's *American Pilgrimage*, Dvořák's "American" quartet, and Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. The American also champions contemporary music. The Quartet has commissioned and premiered works by distinguished American composers Claus Adam, Richard Danielpour, Kenneth Fuchs, Tobias Picker, Robert Sirota, and George Tsontakis. The Quartet has recorded on the Albany, CRI, MusicMasters, Musical Heritage Society, Nonesuch, RCA, and Apple Music labels. The Quartet's discography includes works by Adam, Corigliano, Danielpour, Dvořák, Fuchs, Prokofiev, Schoenberg, Sirota, and Tsontakis. The Quartet's innovative programming and creative approach to education has resulted in notable residencies throughout the country. The Quartet continues as artists in residence at Manhattan School of Music (1984–present) and the Aspen Music Festival (1974–present). The ASQ also teaches in Beijing, China, and travels widely abroad. Formed in 1974 when its original members were students at the Juilliard School, the American String Quartet was launched by winning both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award in the same year.

Laurie Carney, violin

A founding member of the American String Quartet, Laurie Carney comes from a prodigious musical family. Her father was a trumpeter and educator, her mother a pianist, and her siblings all violinists. She began her studies at home and at the age of 8 became the youngest violinist to be admitted to the Preparatory Division of the Juilliard School. At 15 she was the youngest to be accepted into Juilliard's College Division. Ms. Carney studied with Dorothy DeLay and received both Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from Juilliard. She has shared the stage with many of the world's leading artists, including Isaac Stern, Yefim Bronfman, Pinchas Zukerman, and Frederica von Stade, and been featured in Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with the Bournemouth Symphony and the Basque (Spain) Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Carney frequently performed duo recitals with Guarneri Quartet violist Michael Tree. She was featured in the New York premiere of Giampaolo Bracali's *Fantasia*. Robert Sirota wrote his Sonata No. 2, *Farewell*, for Ms. Carney in 2013. She recorded it in 2014 along with an earlier work, *Summertime*, with pianist David Friend on a CD of Sirota's music entitled *Parting the Veil: Works for Violin and Piano* (Albany Records).

Since receiving the Walter W. Naumburg Award in 1974 with the American String Quartet, Ms. Carney has performed across North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Israel, including special projects with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, New York City Ballet, and Mark Morris Dance Group. The quartet has an extensive discography, ranging from the complete Mozart quartets to the many contemporary works written for them.

A member of the faculty of Manhattan School of Music since 1984 and of Aspen Music Festival since 1974, she has held teaching positions at the Mannes College of Music, Peabody Conservatory, the University of Nebraska, and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Her frequent master classes have taken her to California, Colorado, Indiana, Michigan, and New Mexico. Ms. Carney performs the duo repertory with her husband, cellist William Grubb. Her nonprofessional interests include animal rights and environmental concerns. Her violin is by Carlo Tononi (Venice, 1720).

Peter Winograd, violin

Peter Winograd joined the American String Quartet, Artists in Residence at Manhattan School of Music, 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 prizewinner 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. In 2002 Winograd performed the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Hartford Symphony; his father, Arthur Winograd, was the featured guest conductor. Peter 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 of Music and Master of Music degrees from Juilliard. His wife, violinist Caterina Szepes, is a regular participant in the Marlboro Festival and a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. His violin is by Giovanni Maria del Bussetto (Cremona, 1675).

Daniel Avshalomov, viola

Daniel Avshalomov is the violist of the American String Quartet, which enjoys its fifth decade of international acclaim. Recently hailed by *Strad* magazine as “one of the finest occupants of that chair, both instrumentally and musically, of any quartet now active,” Mr. Avshalomov finds time each season for concerto appearances, recitals, and collaborative concerts, and returns as a featured performer to festivals across the country.

Before joining the Quartet, Mr. 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, American Composers Orchestra, and as solo violist with the Bolshoi Ballet. He was a founding member of the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble.

His articles appear in *Notes* and *Strings*; he has edited several viola works for publication and contributed to the American String Teachers Association's

Playing and Teaching the Viola: A Comprehensive Guide. The subject of two articles in *Strad* and one in *Classical Pulse*, Mr. Avshalomov developed “Inside Passages,” a lecture-demonstration first presented to the New York Viola Society in 2000; gave the world premiere of Giampaolo Bracali’s *Concerto per Viola* and the American premiere of Alessandro Rolla’s *Esercizio 3*; and recorded the CD *Three Generations Avshalomov* with pianists Robert McDonald and Pamela Pyle, which was featured on NPR’s All Things Considered. He has been a member of the Manhattan School of Music faculty since 1984 and of the Aspen School faculty since 1976. His instrument is by Andrea Amati, from 1568.

Wolfram Koessel, cello

Since his Carnegie Hall debut in 1994, cellist Wolfram Koessel has performed as a chamber musician, recitalist, and soloist throughout the world. *Strad* magazine praised his “exceptionally attractive cello playing.” As a soloist he has performed concertos throughout the United States as well as with Japan’s Osaka Symphony Orchestra and orchestras in Germany and South America. Cellist of the American String Quartet, Artists in Residence at Manhattan School of Music, he also has appeared often with the New York Metamorphoses Orchestra, which he cofounded in 1994. His collaborations include performances with the legendary tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain, 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 both nationally and internationally, performing in several performances. In 2018 he travelled with them to Israel performing Bach’s Third Cello Suite in several performances. He resides with his wife, pianist and writer J. Mae Barizo, and his daughter in Manhattan.

Linda Chesis, flute

Described by the *New York Times* as “a marvelous artist, whose sophisticated technical resources and lively, informed musicality vitalize everything she plays,” Linda Chesis is considered to be one of the most exciting and dynamic flutists of her generation. Equally devoted to her roles as a chamber musician, teacher, soloist, curator, and festival director, Ms. Chesis has forged a career of uncommon breadth and diversity.

Ms. Chesis has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in major halls throughout the U.S., France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Korea, and China. A top prizewinner at the Paris and Barcelona International Competitions and at the National Flute Association Competition, she has received several career awards, including a Solo Recitalist’s Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Linda Chesis is the founder and artistic director of the Cooperstown Summer Music Festival, currently celebrating its 24th year of bringing chamber music performances of the highest quality to upstate New York. Ms. Chesis has also been a guest artist at the Bowdoin International Music Festival, Salzburg Mozarteum, the Spoleto Festival, Bravo! Colorado, Tanglewood Music Festival, An Appalachian Summer Festival, and Music from Angel Fire, among others.

Deeply committed to educating the next generation of musicians, Ms. Chesis has been on the flute and chamber music faculties at Manhattan School of Music since 1986. In 1988 she was appointed Chair of the Woodwind Department, and in 2012 she was the recipient of the President’s Medal for Distinguished Teaching. She joined the Precollege faculty in 2005. In addition to her work at MSM, she is regularly invited to give master classes at conservatories, universities, and institutes around the globe.

Linda Chesis received a BA from Yale College with a major in the History of Art. Upon graduation she was awarded the John Courtney Murray Fellowship and a Rotary International Fellowship, which allowed her to pursue flute studies with Jean-Pierre Rampal at the Paris Conservatory. After earning the conservatory’s coveted Premier Prix de Flute and performing for a season as principal flute of the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Ms. Chesis returned to the U.S. to pursue a solo career.

Ms. Chesis’s recordings can be heard on the EMI, Nonesuch, and Music Masters labels, and television and radio broadcasts featuring Ms. Chesis’s chamber music performances can frequently be heard on American Public Media’s Performance Today.

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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