

MSM ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Peter Winograd and **Laurie Carney**, violin

Daniel Avshalomov, viola

Wolfram Koessel, cello

With **Ella Bukszpan**, viola

Winner of the 2022 ASQ Competition

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GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

W. A. MOZART
(1756–1791)

String Quartet in G Major, K. 387

Allegro vivace assai

Menuetto

Andante cantabile

Molto allegro

GEORGE WALKER
(1922–2018)

Lament

Intermission

JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833–1897)

String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111

Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

Adagio

Un poco allegretto

Vivace, ma non troppo presto

PROGRAM NOTES

W. A. Mozart String Quartet in G Major, K. 387

One of Mozart's most earthshaking developments musically upon his move from his native Salzburg to Vienna in 1781 was meeting Joseph Haydn for the first time and hearing the older composer's Opus 33 Quartets. The profound influence of these works on the younger composer resulted in his composing six Quartets, now known as his *Haydn* Quartets—the first three between December 1782 and July 1783 and the second three between November 1784 and January 1785. He dedicated these “fruits of a long and arduous labor” to his esteemed friend, saying, “During your last stay in this capital you yourself, my dear friend, expressed to me your approval of these compositions. Your good opinion encourages me to offer them to you and leads me to hope that you will not consider them wholly unworthy of your favor.”

In fact, on that occasion in 1785 when Haydn had heard Wolfgang, his father Leopold, and two friends play these Quartets, Haydn had told Leopold: “I tell you before God as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by reputation. He has taste, and what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition.”

Haydn's Opus 33 Quartets, which he himself had said were written “in an entirely new manner,” influenced Mozart particularly in their new equality of part-writing for the four individual instruments and their treatment of thematic elaboration as an integral part of a whole work rather than belonging only to traditional development sections. Mozart's *Haydn* Quartets show these elements in abundance along with his own inspired brand of grace and inventiveness.

Mozart completed the G Major Quartet, K. 387, the first of the *Haydn* Quartets, on December 31, 1782. The stunning variety of the four movements and their combined effusive optimism have made this perhaps the most popular quartet of the six. The first movement revels in contrasts—soft and loud, determined and tender, ascending and descending, diatonic and chromatic. The opening gesture's forthrightness followed by its gentle tag immediately demonstrates this, as does the contrast between the entire first theme and the gently marching second theme with its repeated notes. Not only is the development remarkable for Mozart's ingenious spinning out of these ideas, but the recapitulation delights in further elaboration.

The Menuetto takes dynamic contrast to a new level of detail when, following two graceful downward leaps, his chromatic lines alternate soft and loud with every note. As a counterbalance Mozart introduces a second theme—as part of this section’s miniature sonata form—now featuring repeated notes followed by chromatic descents. Drama explodes in the trio in minor-key unison where one might often find more pastoral repose.

By now we expect dynamic contrast, which certainly abounds in the slow movement, though with a preponderance of quiet that is especially striking at the close of the first phrase. What becomes more salient as the movement unfolds is the contrast in textures between slow-moving lines and the fast notes of Mozart’s filigree, which is not always confined to the first violin part. A striking harmonic surprise prepares the second theme of this slow-movement sonata form (that is, exposition and recapitulation without a development section). In the recap’s brief delicate extension, Mozart emphasizes the triplet motion that had made an appearance toward the end of the first theme and become a defining feature of the second.

The last movement gives us a wonderful preview of the composer’s crowning *Jupiter* Symphony, both in its four-note theme and in its fugal (imitative) treatment. The miracle of Mozart’s fugal style here comes in the ease with which he switches back and forth between contrapuntal and homophonic texture (melody and accompaniment). Thus his fugal writing becomes an enticing propellant rather than an academic exercise. These effortless shifts of style correspond to structural divisions in which the fugal texture presents the main thematic material of sonata form, and the homophonic texture the transitional and cadential material. Mozart takes his leave with a nice Haydnesque touch—forceful, seemingly conclusive chords that then give way to the quiet “true” ending.

George Walker

Lament

Walker’s long life consisted of a string of outstanding achievements. After graduating from Oberlin College as a piano and organ student, he studied at the Curtis Institute of Music—composition and theory with Rosario Scalero, teacher of Samuel Barber, and piano with Rudolf Serkin—and became the school’s first African American graduate. Walker was also the first Black instrumentalist to give a recital—his debut—at New York’s Town Hall and to appear as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He toured Europe under the auspices of National Concert Artists (their first African American instrumentalist) and then taught briefly before beginning his doctoral studies at Eastman. He was awarded both a Fulbright and a John Hay Whitney fellowship (the Whitney’s first composer), enabling him to study in Paris with the renowned Nadia Boulanger.

Walker taught at the Dalcroze School of Music, the New School for Social Research, Smith College (the first Black tenure recipient), University of Colorado, Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, and University of Delaware. His longest professorship was at Rutgers University (1969–92), where he chaired the music department.

Composing remained an equally important facet of Walker's career well into his 90s, evidenced by over 90 published works to his credit, ranging from orchestral pieces and chamber music to choral works, songs, and piano pieces. Highlighting Walker's remarkable list of awards and honors is the 1996 Pulitzer Prize in Music—he was the first African American composer so honored—for his *Lilacs* for voice and orchestra, premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Lament originated as the second movement of Walker's String Quartet No. 1, "Lyric," written in 1946, after he graduated from Curtis, and dedicated to his grandmother, who had recently died. One of his friends at Curtis, pianist and conductor Seymour Lipkin, suggested that he adapt it for string orchestra by adding a bass part, as had been done a decade earlier by another Curtis student, Samuel Barber, for his renowned *Adagio for Strings*. Seymour conducted the premiere of the movement with a string orchestra of Curtis students on a radio concert the following year. Retitled at the request of the publisher, *Lyric for Strings* became one of the most frequently performed orchestral pieces by an American composer.

Famous precursors aside, Walker's *Lament* stands beautifully on its own. Falling motives and sustained tones set a mournful mood at the outset. The motion increases with contrapuntal lines weaving their way over a sustained pedal tone until gentle chordal iterations briefly arrest the flow. The resumption of the entwined lyrical lines eventually comes to an impassioned peak, now with low, jabbing chordal interjections of utter anguish. As the passage ebbs and quiet chords sound again, the gentle earlier flow resumes. The piece concludes somberly yet with a sense of peace.

Johannes Brahms

String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111

In the summer of 1890 the esteemed, decorated, feted Brahms decided he might be content to rest on his laurels. He told his friend Eusebius Mandyczewski that he had been working on a number of pieces but nothing was coming to him the way it used to and “I’m just not going to do it anymore. My whole life I’ve been a hard worker; now for once I’m going to be good and lazy!” Nevertheless, ensconced in Ischl, his favorite holiday retreat, he composed his G Major String Quintet, fulfilling the wish of his friend, the great violinist Joseph Joachim, for a companion piece to the F Major Quintet, Op. 88. In contemplating his creative retirement—which fortunately turned out to be shortlived—Brahms must have felt some pressure to exit on a memorable note, and the G Major Quintet shows a wonderful combination of youthful vigor, mature confidence, and bold inventiveness.

As it happened, a small misunderstanding about the score seems to have caused some friction with Joachim, which had to be smoothed over, and it was actually a group led by violinist Arnold Rosé who premiered the Quintet to great acclaim in Vienna on November 11, 1890. Joachim’s group did perform the work a month later in Berlin.

The bold opening of the first movement with its vaunting cello solo cutting through the forceful undulation of the top four strings has elicited comment since its inception. Its orchestral character led Kalbeck, Brahms’s first biographer, to believe that the composer had originally sketched it for a fifth symphony. Several of Brahms’s friends complained that the cellist had to strain too hard to be heard, and Brahms even jotted down a sketch for a less massive accompaniment. In the end, however, he published the opening with the glorious fullness of his original sound concept, leaving it up to the performers to make the balance succeed. What is remarkable about those upper-string oscillations is that Brahms begins to use them structurally and thematically. Furthermore his main theme as a whole has an organic quality that lets it roam harmonically.

As one would expect of Brahms, the first movement follows sonata form, though his ingenuity brings new sounds, such as the whisperings and fragments at the beginning of the development. Most of the movement exhibits the ebullient character of the opening, though Brahms does permit moments of thoughtfulness—often related to the lovely second theme, but also including a surprising rendition of the first theme in the coda.

In his “old age” (he was 57) Brahms was especially given to concision where in his youth he had been more expansive. A prime example is the melancholy Adagio,

with its subtle modulations and compact yet organic form, which moves to a second subject area without employing marked contrast. Especially noteworthy is the impassioned climax and viola “cadenza” that leads to a calm conclusion.

The third movement, one of Brahms’s many innovative departures from the traditional minuet or scherzo, often suggests a “valse triste” (sad waltz). The middle section, with the slight Slavonic tinge of its sweet violin and viola duets reminds us that Brahms showed great interest in the chamber music of the younger Czech composer Dvořák, whose career he had helped launch earlier. After the return to the opening, Brahms uses this middle material to fashion a brief coda.

Underlying the exuberance of Brahms’s finale is a carefully considered sonata-rondo that is full of harmonic “teases.” The opening, for example, begins in the “wrong” key, as does the tempestuous start of the recapitulation, and again, just before the coda, Brahms carefully highlights a cadence in the “wrong key.” The Gypsy spirit of the coda comes close to the “Rondo all Zingarese” of his G Minor Piano Quartet, about which his Hungarian friend Joachim had been particularly enthusiastic. Thus the work Brahms thought would be his last rounds off with boundless optimism, as opposed to the “autumnal” quality associated with many of his late works.

—*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.

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).

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).

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.

Ella Bukszpan, viola

Ella Bukszpan, winner of the 2022 ASQ Competition, was born in Jerusalem in 1997 and began studying the violin at age 7 with Emma Elishov at the Givatayim Conservatory of Music. At age 14 she switched to viola, studying with Delia Yaakov at the Israel Conservatory of Music in Tel Aviv and then with Tali Kravitz at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. Ella currently studies with Ms. Patinka Kopec at Manhattan School of Music, where she is pursuing her Bachelor of Music degree.

Ella has participated in the Perlman Music Program, Young Artists Program, Keshet Eilon Summer Program, Aspen Music Festival, Musethica, Summer Music Academy of Nice, Astona Summer Music Academy, and the Polyphony Foundation program and has taken part in master classes with Jonathan Brown, Molly Carr, Krzysztof Chorzelski, Miguel da Silva, Kirsten Doctor, Miriam Fried, Amihai Grosz, Jeffrey Irvine, Grigory Kalinovsky, Kim Kashkashian, Masao Kawasaki, Patinka Kopec, Tatjana Masurenko, Pacifica Quartet, Itzhak Perlman, Yitzhak Rashkovski, Emmanuella Reiter, Carol Rodland, Uzi Wiesel, Roger Tapping, and Pinchas Zukerman, among other distinguished artists. She is a Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts graduate and has performed solo with the school's symphony orchestra. She participated in the David Goldman Chamber Music Program for Outstanding Musicians at the Jerusalem Music Center and was a member of the Young Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. She has served in the Israeli Defense Force as an "Outstanding Musician." She received the Havah Stern excellence scholarship in 2010 and has been a scholarship recipient of the America–Israel Cultural Foundation since 2013. Since 2019, Ella has been supported by the Ronen Foundation and Zefunot Culture Foundation. In 2021 Ella won second prize at the Ruth Widder Chamber Music Competition at Manhattan School of Music. The viola she plays was made by Joannes Franciscus Pressenda in 1833 and generously loaned to her by Mr. Yehuda Zisapel.