



MSM ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

# AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

**Peter Winograd** and **Laurie Carney**, violin

**Daniel Avshalomov**, viola

**Wolfram Koessel**, cello

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2023 | 3 PM  
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL



**Council on  
the Arts**

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## PROGRAM

FRANZ SCHUBERT  
(1797–1828)

String Quartet No. 13 in A Minor, D. 804, Op. 29  
("Rosamunde")

I. *Allegro ma non troppo*

II. *Andante*

III. *Menuetto: Allegretto – Trio*

IV. *Allegro moderato*

CAROLINE SHAW  
(b. 1982)

*Blueprint*

VIVIAN FUNG  
(b. 1975)

*Pizzicato*

## *Intermission*

JOHANNES BRAHMS  
(1833–1897)

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 67

I. *Vivace*

II. *Andante*

III. *Agitato (Allegretto non troppo) – Trio – Coda*

IV. *Poco Allegretto con Variazioni*



# PROGRAM NOTES

## **String Quartet No. 13 in A Minor, D. 804, Op. 29 (“Rosamunde”) Franz Schubert**

Schubert wrote his first string quartets—seven or eight of them not counting lost or incomplete works—between 1812 and 1814 while he was a student at the Kaiserlich-königliches Stadtkonvikt (Imperial and Royal City College), Vienna’s principal boarding school for non-aristocrats. Already an excellent violinist and pianist, Schubert had begun playing viola in his family’s string quartet from about 1811 on during school vacations—with his brothers Ignaz and Franz on violin and his father on cello. Then, between 1814 and 1816, during his so-called “song years,” he wrote only three more quartets, followed by a hiatus of four years until he began writing a string quartet in C minor. He abandoned this work after writing just one movement, known as the *Quartettsatz*, and a few bars of a slow movement. Finally, in the spring of 1824 he took up quartet writing again with the A minor Quartet, which along with his next quartet in D minor, “Death and the Maiden,” are some of the best in the repertoire.

Two events impacted Schubert’s writing of the A minor Quartet, which he completed very quickly in February and March 1824. One was that he met violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who led the quartet that had premiered Beethoven’s recent quartets. When the Schuppanzigh Quartet premiered the A minor Quartet on March 14 that year, it was the first public performance of any of Schubert’s quartets. Dedicated to Schuppanzigh, the work received only minimal though at least not negative notice in the press. Schubert immediately began composing the D minor Quartet, but that work was not performed until two years later, and he gave up on his idea of writing a third quartet to publish in a set of three. He later did compose the G major Quartet as a separate work, but only the D minor was published during his lifetime—many of his works remained unpublished for decades.

The other life event was that his health had taken a turn for the worse. Schubert had contracted syphilis in late 1822, and this recent intensification of his illness brought extreme dejection as he realized his time was limited. Surely the poignantly beautiful A minor Quartet shows some of that despair. On March 31, shortly after the premiere of the work, he poured out his misery in a letter to his friend Leopold Kupelweiser:

I find myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who

in sheer despair continually makes things worse and worse instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most brilliant hopes have perished, to whom the felicity of love and friendship have nothing to offer but pain at best, whom enthusiasm (at least of the stimulating variety) for all things beautiful threatens to forsake, and I ask you, is he not a miserable, unhappy being? “My peace is gone, my heart is sore, I shall find it nevermore.” I might as well sing every day now, for upon retiring to bed each night I hope that I may not wake again, and each morning only recalls yesterday’s grief.

The quote in his letter is from his 1814 song *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, with words by Goethe, and it seems more than coincidence that the first movement of the A minor Quartet begins much like the song that deals with Gretchen’s forlorn state—a restless opening accompaniment figure topped by the violin’s lyrical outpouring of the main theme. The repetition of the theme in the major mode does not banish the mood, nor does the major-mode second theme. Schubert’s development section is a masterpiece of thematic and harmonic construction, exploring several minor keys in a dramatic arc, and the recapitulation takes some unexpected harmonic turns, ending in the minor mode.

Schubert borrowed the theme of the slow movement from his incidental music to Wilhelm von Chézy’s ill-fated play *Rosamunde, Fürstin von Zypern* (*Rosamunde, Princess of Cypress*), which closed after only two performances in December 1823. Schubert employs the tender, memorable theme—originally the entrance music for a shepherdess and her flock—not as the subject for variations but for a simple A-B-A-B-coda form in which the coda expressively combines the music of the two sections. Schubert would return to the *Rosamunde* theme yet again in his B-flat major Impromptu. The characteristic long–short–short rhythm was a favorite with many composers, but it seems especially striking that Beethoven uses it so memorably in the Allegretto of his Seventh Symphony, which Schubert greatly admired.

The Menuetto opens with another self-remembrance, in this case from his song *Die Götter Griechenland* (*The Gods of Greece*) in which he set Schiller’s words “Schöne Welt, wo bist du?” (Beautiful world, where are you?). It soon swings into a lilting dance rhythm, though still tinged with melancholy. Schubert carries the opening motive into the trio section, which provides major-mode though short-lived contrast.

The finale gives the impression of a rustic peasant dance, though it does not project the kind of exuberance of, say, the last movement of Mendelssohn’s A minor Italian Symphony. Schubert constructed an ingenious sonata-rondo form

in which the main theme does not return in complete form as a refrain. Instead Schubert has the first part return before the development section and the second part after. The A major tonality of this movement, as is customary in Schubert's hands, is a very fluid affair; he eventually ends solidly in the major home key in some delightful delicacy topped off with two emphatic cadential chords.

## ***Blueprint***

### **Caroline Shaw**

Composer, producer, violinist, and vocalist Caroline Shaw is always “trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed.” She began learning violin at age two from her violinist mother, who was also a singer. At age ten she began writing pieces in the style of classical compositions, and she formed her own string quartet in high school, all the while singing in church choirs. She earned degrees in violin from Rice and Yale Universities and, without composition training, earned a fellowship to write string quartets in England. After moving to New York, she embraced the contemporary music scene that had evolved away from dissonant serialism. In 2009 she joined the experimental vocal group Roomful of Teeth, for which she began composing her Partita for Eight Voices, adding bits over several years. Meanwhile she began studying composition at Princeton, finding teachers who fostered her exploratory, collaborative ideas.

In 2013 Shaw became the youngest ever to win the Pulitzer Prize in Music—for Partita. Since then, commissions and opportunities have poured in. She has composed more than one hundred works—ranging from those for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Yo-Yo Ma, and Renée Fleming to works for television and film, such as *Mozart in the Jungle*, in which she also made her acting debut as herself. She has also collaborated as a producer and won several Grammy Awards.

Shaw's projects for this and last season alone—mind boggling in their scope and variety—include the scores to *Fleishman Is in Trouble* for FX/Hulu and Josephine Decker's *The Sky Is Everywhere* for A24/Apple, music for the National Theatre's production of *The Crucible*, Justin Peck's Partita with New York City Ballet, the premiere of *Microfictions, Vol. 3* for the New York Philharmonic and Roomful of Teeth, tours of the performance installation *Graveyards and Gardens* created with choreographer Vanessa Goodman, and tours with So Percussion featuring songs from *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part* (Nonesuch). She also makes occasional chamber music appearances as violist for the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota and the La Jolla Music Society.

The composer explained how the inspiration for *Blueprint* arose out of a commission for the Aizuri Quartet, which gave the premiere on April 8, 2016 at the Barns at Wolf Trap in Vienna, Virginia.

The Aizuri Quartet's name comes from "aizuri-e," a style of Japanese woodblock printing that primarily uses a blue ink. In the 1820s artists in Japan began to import a particular blue pigment known as "Prussian blue," which was first synthesized by German paint producers in the early eighteenth century and later modified by others as an alternative to indigo. The story of aizuri-e is one of innovation, migration, transformation, craft, and beauty. *Blueprint*, composed for the incredible Aizuri Quartet, takes its title from this beautiful blue woodblock printing tradition as well as from that familiar standard architectural representation of a proposed structure: the blueprint.

This piece began its life as a harmonic reduction—a kind of floor plan—of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 18, No. 6. As a violinist and violist, I have played this piece many times, in performance and in joyous late-night reading sessions with musician friends. (One such memorable session included Aizuri's marvelous cellist, Karen Ouzounian.) 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* of his Op. 18, No. 6. —*Caroline Shaw*

## ***Pizzicato***

### **Vivian Fung**

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 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."

## **String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 67**

### **Johannes Brahms**

Brahms composed his third and last quartet, Op. 67, in 1875 at Ziegelhausen, near Heidelberg, on one of his extended summer holidays. Completed and published the following year, it received its first public performance by the celebrated quartet led by his friend Joseph Joachim at the Berlin Singakademie on October 30, 1876. Brahms dedicated the work to his musical friend Professor Theodor Wilhelm Engelmann, a physiologist in Utrecht.

The B-flat major Quartet differs greatly in character from its two preceding quartets, Op. 51, nos. 1 and 2, both minor-key works of a more serious nature. Brahms's last quartet, a predominantly sunny work, may have served as a kind of release after the completion of his weighty First Symphony, and the piece abounds in unusual touches. The Vivace has a dance-like character more often reserved for last movements. The opening hunting call in 6/8 meter is frequently likened to Mozart's "Hunt Quartet" (K. 458) but may also recall the Scherzo of Brahms's own B-flat Sextet (op. 18). In the second theme area Brahms ingeniously juxtaposes and combines another dance type in 2/4 with the preceding 6/8 rhythms.

The Andante contains another unusual rhythmic feature in its middle section: two bars of 5/4 interrupting the 4/4 meter reflect the improvisatory character of the phrase development. Another striking feature is the return of the opening theme, disguised in an elaborate variation on itself and beginning in the third-related "wrong" key of D major.

The third movement shows the composer's fondness for "scherzo alternatives," since a scherzo would have seemed redundant after the first movement. Brahms's innovative color scheme of un-muted viola in combination with the three other muted instruments has often been noted; equally memorable is the viola's absence when the Trio (so marked) begins as a true trio of violins and cello, which then become the background for another viola melody.

The finale, one of Brahms's great achievements in variation form, provides the weight one might have expected from the opening movement. The crowning glory of the movement, and indeed of the work, is the recall of two themes from the first movement in the last two variations, not as mere cyclic reminiscence, but exhibiting their close ties with the variation theme itself.

—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 50th season in 2023–24. 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.

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The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a highly competitive and professionally oriented Saturday music program, dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 5 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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