

MSM ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Peter Winograd and **Laurie Carney**, violin

Daniel Avshalomov, viola

Wolfram Koessel, cello

With guest artist **Matthias Buchholz**, viola

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024 | 7:30 PM
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

JOSEPH HAYDN
(1732–1809)

String Quartet in F Major, Hob. III/82, Op. 77, no. 2
Allegro moderato
Menuetto. Presto ma non troppo
Andante
Finale. Vivace assai

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)

String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Minor, Op. 138
Adagio — Doppio movimento — Tempo primo

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

String Quartet in F Major, Hob. III/82, Op. 77, no. 2 **Joseph Haydn**

In 1799 the young Prince Lobkowitz commissioned Haydn, the most celebrated composer in Europe, to write a set of six quartets, at the same time commissioning six from Beethoven, Vienna's rising star. Haydn completed two, one in G major and the present one in F major, and even wrote the middle two movements of the next, which was to have been in D minor, but then he stopped. The two quartets were published in 1802 as Opus 77 with a dedication to the prince, and the two separate movements appeared in 1806 as Opus 103.

After composing some eighty-three quartets—trailblazing works that greatly defined the genre—why did Haydn abandon the commission and quartet writing altogether? It is likely, as scholar Robbins Landon suggests, that he didn't want to compete with Beethoven, his former pupil, whose response to the commission was his wonderful Opus 18 set. Now known as his "early" quartets in view of his later contributions, these were nevertheless considered groundbreaking in their day. Haydn had nothing to apologize for in his masterful two Opus 77 Quartets, but he was feeling his age and wanted to invest his energy in large vocal works, an area in which Beethoven could not yet compete.

The Opus 77 Quartets represent Haydn at his mature best—well-proportioned sonata forms sometimes based on a single theme, frequent use of harmonies related by the interval of a third, weighty slow movements, fast minuets that are essentially scherzos, and reliance on folk idioms. And yet they also show him still stretching his creative powers.

Haydn begins his first movement with a stately theme that gives prominence to the first violin, then fashions a second theme infused by snippets from that theme, first injected into the second violin part. In his masterful development section, which skillfully traverses a wealth of keys, he devotes particular attention to an idea from the connecting material between the two themes.

The scherzo-like Menuetto shows Haydn at his witty best, with its rhythmic play between groups of two and three beats, fascinating harmonic shifts, and jocular timpani-like leaps in the cello. A grand pause precedes the dramatic shift of key and tender mood of the trio. In a novel move, he unites the trio with the return of the minuet section by adding an impish coda that begins in the trio's key and prepares the home key's return, but already reintroduces the minuet's thematic material.

The contrast of another harmonic adventure contributes to the unusual impression made by the lean-textured violin-cello duet that opens the slow

third movement. This gently marching theme begets a series of three elegant, imaginatively configured variations. Haydn allows himself free, episodic connections from one variation to the next, so that a dramatic, cadenza-like climax emerges out of the second variation—a perfect foil for the quiet restatement of his final variation.

A grand chord boldly reinstates the home key to launch the finale's cheerful, dancelike main theme. All of Haydn's experience shows in this masterful sonata form, whose second theme arises out of the first, both full of rhythmic play. His development is a contrapuntal tour de force without sounding academic, and his conclusion uses silences and dynamic contrasts to compelling effect.

Haydn had no idea this would be his last completed quartet. If he had, would he have written something more imposing, monumental, or summing-up? As it is, the F major Quartet shows his wealth of experience and creativity as a matter of course—he and his audiences expected no less.

String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Minor, Op. 138 Dmitri Shostakovich

The mood of Shostakovich's Thirteenth String Quartet is desolate. It is surpassed in darkness perhaps only by the tragic Fifteenth Quartet, which consists of six slow movements. Alan George went so far as to say, "The Thirteenth Quartet is indeed a harrowing experience for all involved; many listeners have been truly frightened by it, and even the most resilient emotional temperament could hardly fail to be at least uncomfortably disturbed by it." (Alan George was the violist of the Fitzwilliam Quartet, a young English quartet which befriended the composer in the last years of his life after writing for permission to perform the Thirteenth.)

One should not assume, however, that Shostakovich's many tragic works are primarily embodiments of a pessimistic preoccupation with death as some writers have found. He expressed his view of tragedy in 1970, the year of the Thirteenth Quartet:

Sometimes Beethoven is considered excessively tragic. And tragedy is often equated with pessimism, while it is forgotten that the greatest tragic works in world art are also the most life-asserting. Take for example the tragedies of Shakespeare and Goethe. . . . But can it really be said that the progressive humanist art of a century ago responds any less acutely to all the sufferings and sorrows of mankind now than it did then? No, and by responding to them, it loudly protests against evil and violence. This is why we consider Beethoven our contemporary.

Later in the essay Shostakovich makes clear his great indebtedness to Beethoven, saying, "Many of my compositions came about under the direct influence of his genius." Like Beethoven, Shostakovich often showed his desire for a work to be understood as a single experience by conjoining movements or having movements

refer to one another. Shostakovich seems to have been particularly influenced by Beethoven's late quartets and followed his example in breaking away from the traditional four-movement pattern.

The Thirteenth Quartet is a highly unified, one-movement work—an Adagio with a middle section at double speed. The center section itself contains an inner section—a middle within the middle—adding an extra layer of symmetry. The Quartet's most striking sonorities, perhaps, are the percussive effects that are achieved by knocking the bow against the body of the instrument and the eerie high conclusion. The viola is particularly featured—notably in the opening twelve-tone solo and in the coda—in keeping with the dedication to Vadim Borisovsky, violist of the Beethoven Quartet. The group regularly performed Shostakovich's quartets, and each member received a similar dedication. By this time, however, Borisovsky had given up his position in the Quartet due to ill health; his replacement, his own student Fyodor Druzhinin, was thus the violist for the premiere on December 13, 1970.

Though the Quartet begins with a twelve-note theme, as did the Twelfth Quartet and the Violin Sonata, Op. 134, like them it is not a serial composition. Shostakovich once said that he used dodecapronic elements in his works “as he saw fit,” never as his sole approach. The Thirteenth Quartet shows a vocabulary widened by twelve-tone techniques, but one in which tonality, though often obscured, is affirmed in the end.

String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111 **Johannes Brahms**

In the summer of 1890 the esteemed, decorated, feted Brahms decided he might be content to rest on his laurels. He had been working on a number of pieces but nothing was coming to him the way it used to, he told his friend Eusebius Mandyczewski, exclaiming, “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 short-lived—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 fifty-seven) 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 Zingaresse” 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 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.

Matthias Buchholz, viola

Matthias Buchholz was born in Hamburg in 1957, where he also began his musical training, and continued his studies at the University of Cincinnati, the Musikhochschule in Detmold, and the Curtis Institute of Music. His major teachers were Bruno Giuranna, Karen Tuttle and Michael Tree. Chamber-music studies with Felix Galimir, Alexander Schneider, and the LaSalle Quartet are sources of inspiration to this day.

He has been violist with the Brahms Quartet in Hamburg (1975–1980) and with the Ridge Quartet in New York (1981–1984) and has toured since 1976 throughout Europe, the U.S. and Canada, South America, and Asia. Since 1991, he has been a member of the Linos Ensemble, recording recording numerous CDs for cpo and Capriccio and touring throughout Europe and Southeast Asia. He was a founding

member of the Heine Quartet (2003–2008), which performed the world premiere of the *Adagio for String Quartet (In Memory of Schumann)* by Aribert Reimann at the Schumannfest in Düsseldorf in 2006.

He has been invited to major European music festivals such as Avignon, Berlin, Warsaw, Lyon, Korsholm, Slovenia, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hitzacker, as well as the Marlboro Festival and Washington D.C.'s Summer Music, where he enjoyed working and performing with Salvatore Accardo, Norbert Brainin, Rainer Kussmaul, Benny Goodman, Heinz Holliger, Truls Mørk, Frans Helmerson, Anner Bylsma, and members of the Guarneri Quartet. As guest violist he has frequently joined the Aurnyn Quartet, the American String Quartet, the Petersen Quartet, the Fine Arts and the Vermeer Quartet.

Matthias Buchholz was principal viola with the Stuttgart Radio Orchestra from 1986 to 1990, when he was appointed professor of viola at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne. In 2013 he was appointed Professor of Viola at the Haute école de musique (HEM) of Geneva, succeeding Nobuko Imai. He has been invited to hold master classes in many European countries, as well as in the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea.

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

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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Land Acknowledgment

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