Manhattan School of Music

MSM ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Peter Winograd and **Laurie Carney**, violin
Matthias Buchholz, viola
Wolfram Koessel, cello

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 | 3 PM
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770–1828)

String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95 (*"Serioso"*)
I. *Allegro con brio*
II. *Allegretto ma non troppo*
III. *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso — Trio*
IV. *Larghetto espressivo — Allegretto agitato*

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)

String Quartet No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 110
I. *Largo — attacca*
II. *Allegro molto — attacca*
III. *Allegretto — attacca*
IV. *Largo — attacca*
V. *Largo*

Intermission

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK
(1841–1904)

String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96 ("American")
I. *Allegro ma non troppo*
II. *Lento*
III. *Molto vivace — Trio*
IV. *Finale. Vivace ma non troppo*

PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95 (*"Serioso"*)
Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven's F minor string quartet of 1810, the last of his "middle" quartets, is one of a select group of works for which he provided his own descriptive title—other famous instances being his "*Pathétique" Sonata* and "*Eroica"* and "*Pastoral"* Symphonies. He marked his manuscript *"Quartett Serioso,"* a curious mix of German and quasi-Italian, which apparently meant a work devoid of ostentation whose inner conflicts were expressed by pared-down harmonic, motivic, and formal structures. Unfortunately it could imply that his Harp Quartet, Op. 74, written just a year before—and any of his other quartets for that matter—were not "serious," though surely he meant it as a way to separate his quartet production apart from the proliferation of showy and less weighty quartets by other composers that had begun populating the concert scene.

On another front, the work's "seriousness" has to do with his having written it without a commission because of a personal compulsion, and dedicating it to a friend, cello-player Nikolaus Zmeskall von Domanovecz, rather than to a highborn patron. This resonates with his late quartets, which, though instigated by a patron, ended up being composed out of sheer inner necessity. Beethoven had already begun using quartet-writing as the place for exploring his most forward-thinking ideas—which had led to such disappointing critical reception of his "Razumovsky Quartets," Op. 59—but now this testing ground took a turn toward privacy. He waited an unusually long time before having the "*Serioso"* Quartet performed and published.

The work received its first performance by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in May of 1814, for which occasion Beethoven apparently revised it. The *"Serioso"* was one of several pieces that Beethoven sold to publisher Anton Sigmund Steiner in 1815 in repayment of a debt. That debt must have been substantial because the batch also included the Opus 96 Violin Sonata, the "Archduke Trio," the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, and several smaller works.

A pivotal work, the *"Serioso"* takes a look back to the "Razumovsky" and Harp Quartets but just as clearly points to the late quartets, though it would be fourteen years before he took up the genre again. Concision and new harmonic relationships are paramount here, and often his compression of both boils down to single notes or pairs of notes.

The first movement's dark, furious unison opening suddenly breaks off, followed

by a leaping response characterized by dotted rhythms. The ensuing lyrical elaboration of the opening now pointedly highlights the remote Neapolitan harmony (based on the flatted second scale degree). A prominent pair of half steps in the lyrical passage sets up the somewhat unusual key of D-flat for the lovely second theme. Twice, once at the end of the second theme and once in the midst of the closing theme, explosive ascending scales and daring excursions to remote keys command our attention.

It stands to reason that in such a terse movement Beethoven would not repeat his exposition. Instead he shocks the listener again with a crashing major chord that seems to signal a development. Yet this turns out not to be a thorough "working-out" in the classical sense, rather a brief revisiting of the furious opening and the leaping dotted-rhythmic idea, followed by a suspenseful buildup. Beethoven then begins his drastically shortened recapitulation with the *fortissimo* unison of the transition to the second theme. A coda of the same length as the development balances out this remarkable rethinking of sonata form.

The *Allegretto ma non troppo* begins softly and mysteriously, with a melodic shape similar to the first movement's opening. Any idea of relaxed, lyrical contrast becomes entangled in a wavering between major and minor and an increasing influx of chromaticism that peaks in the middle section's fugue. This remarkable interior piece unfolds in two sections before the opening music returns in shortened form. Beethoven continues with a serene coda, but instead of ending peacefully makes a directs link to the ensuing tempestuous scherzo.

Beethoven asked that his third movement, a typical place for an irreverent scherzo, be played *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso.* Propulsive sections with an obsessive dotted rhythm alternate with two trio sections of more lyrical demeanor, which still transmit a restless sense with the first violin's figurations and unusual harmonic juxtapositions of distantly related keys.

A truly slow, reflective introduction prefaces the agitated sonata-rondo finale. Compact once again, the movement features a dancelike but disquieting main theme that Beethoven varies ingeniously on every recurrence. Its last appearance comes to a halt on a hushed major chord that unleashes one of the most talked about endings ever. A lightening quick coda in the major mode rockets forth in unimaginable contrast to the rest of the movement and to the entire piece. In this Beethoven parallels his own *Egmont Overture*, written just months before, also in a serious F minor with an F major coda, but whereas that ending represents a hard-won victory corroborated by the story, here Beethoven seems simply to be letting go, albeit in breathtaking style.

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String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110
Dmitri Shostakovich

The "Eighth" is probably the best known of Shostakovich's string quartets because of its compact drama, its quotations from his own earlier works, and its pervasive use of the motto D.SCH, drawn from the initials of his first and last names. (He used Dimitri Schostakowitsch, the German transliteration, which in German musical notation equates to D, E-flat, C, and B-natural.) This "autobiographical" quartet was composed in only three days, July 12–14, 1960, while the composer was in Dresden supposedly working on the score for a World War II film entitled *Five Days, Five Nights*. The quartet that occupied him instead was officially dedicated "to the memory of the victims of fascism and war," but it masked an inner dedication—to the composer himself.

Shostakovich had just been coerced to join the Communist Party and he viewed his submission with self-loathing. His deep depression prompted the contemplation of his own mortality; one scholar and friend of Shostakovich suggested that the composer thought of the Eighth Quartet not only as autobiographical but at the time as his final work. He had in essence written his own Requiem. On July 19, 1960, Shostakovich wrote to his friend Isaak Glikman:

> "I have been considering that when I die, scarcely anyone will write a work in my memory. Therefore I have decided to write one myself. Then on the cover they can print: 'Dedicated to the author of this Quartet.' The main theme of the Quartet is the notes D-S-C-H, my initials. The Quartet contains themes from my works and the revolutionary song 'Zamuchon tyazholoy nevoley' [Tormented by Heavy Captivity]. My themes are the following: from the First Symphony, the Eighth Symphony, the [Second Piano] Trio, the [First] Cello Concerto and from Lady Macbeth. I have made allusions to Wagner (Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung*) and Tchaikovsky (second theme from the first movement of the Sixth Symphony). Oh yes, I forgot my Tenth Symphony. A nice mish-mash."

His continuation described how much he had wept during and after the quartet's completion, but in terms of a pseudo-tragedy. Shostakovich was already able to distance himself enough from the emotional content to admire the form of the work as a whole. The quartet consists of five movements played without pause, unified by the D-S-C-H motto. The motto also announces the various quotations throughout the work—first played by the cello then imitated by the other instruments, it introduces his first self-quotation, from the First Symphony.

The second movement provides contrast by means of speed, texture, and constant loud dynamics. After the prominent intoning of the motto by viola and cello, Shostakovich quotes what he calls "the Jewish theme" from his Second

Piano Trio. The main theme of the third movement transforms the motto into a kind of grotesque waltz. Shostakovich quotes his First Cello Concerto in one of the episodes, and the extension of this quotation becomes the first theme of the fourth movement. Music from his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is quoted both in this and the fifth movement, but the most poignant quotation, again introduced by the motto, is the revolutionary funeral march for prisoners "Tormented by Heavy Captivity."

The fifth movement, a recapitulation-reminiscence of the first movement, closes the work in the tragic mood that pervades the entire quartet. Even without knowing the sources of the quotations or that Shostakovich was recalling works of special significance in his life, the listener is struck by the dark seriousness of the work and the soul-searching quality it conveys—a characteristic often associated with the late Beethoven quartets.

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String Quartet in F major, Op. 96 ("American")
Antonin Dvořák

Beginning in the fall of 1892, Dvořák served as artistic director and professor of composition at the National Conservatory of Music in America (in New York City) at the urging of the institution's president, Jeannette Thurber, who offered him twenty-five times the amount he was being paid at the Prague Conservatory. His life in the United States was hectic with teaching, public appearances, and engagements as a guest conductor, so he happily accepted an invitation to spend the summer of 1893 relaxing in a small farming community (300 residents) of Czech immigrants in Spillville, Iowa.

Overjoyed to be reunited with four of his children who had just arrived from Czechoslovakia with their aunt and a maid, Dvořák traveled to Spillville by train in a party that also included his wife, his two oldest children, and his secretary Josef Jan Kovařík who had grown up there. His delight at being in a rural setting among his countrymen immediately erupted in the composition of his "American Quartet," which he sketched in only three days, June 8–10. At the end of the sketch he wrote: "Thanks to the Lord God, I am satisfied, it went quickly. Completed June 10, 1893." Polishing the score occupied him until June 23, and members of the Kovařík family assisted in trying out the quartet with the composer himself making his way through the first violin part. The Kneisel Quartet gave the premiere in Boston on New Year's Day 1894 and in New York on January 12.

By far the most popular of Dvořák's fourteen quartets, the "American" reflects

his aim "to write something really melodious and simple." As several scholars have pointed out, however, his effortless-sounding result masks remarkable unifying and thematic procedures. The first, second, and fourth movements all begin with an accompanimental backdrop before the main thematic material emerges. The first movement's viola solo rising confidently over bass pedal and upper-string shimmer specifically brings to mind the opening of another famous Czech string quartet, Smetana's "From My Life," which Dvořák knew well.

Dvořák chose the "pastoral" key of F major for his work, in which pedals or drones and permeating pentatonic themes (based on five "white-key" notes, F, G, A, C, D) help transmit a rural, "simple" flavor. We should note, too, that these traits relate to American, Slavic, and many other folk traditions. Just one example, however, shows the kind of sophistication at work: the lovely pentatonic melody in the violin that closes the exposition begets the related but altered expressive theme for the cello just after the start of the recapitulation.

Many commentators have singled out the nostalgic Lento as the crowning movement of the quartet, and Dvořák scholar Michael Beckerman has drawn attention to the Schubertian quality of its endless melody. Unfolding in a broad arch that comes to one of chamber music's most exquisite climaxes, the movement relies primarily on the simple texture of the violin or cello carrying the melody with constant undulating support from the other instruments. Occasionally the second violin joins the first in a melodic role, as at the poignant climax. The final keening of the main theme by the cello against simple repeated chords rather than the former busy accompaniment lends an air of tragedy.

Dvořák bases his entire scherzo on the same theme, with a variant serving as the contrasting section, which appears twice. Kovařík suggested that the quiet high violin tune that enters shortly after the opening was inspired by a bird call Dvořák heard outside his home in Spillville. Though the exact species of bird has never been determined beyond question, the most likely candidate is the scarlet tanager.

The composer offsets the cheerful main theme of the rondo finale with episodes of more reflective quality. Toward the center, one of these quieter passages suggested to Dvořák scholar John Clapham an occasion when the composer enchanted the St. Wenceslas congregation of Spillville by spontaneously playing the organ during their typically music-less morning mass. The ebullient high spirits cannot be suppressed for long and the movement ends with a plethora of affirmative phrases.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

American String Quartet

Internationally recognized as one of the world's foremost quartets, the American String Quartet marks its 51st season in 2024–25. 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, *Summermusic*, 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).

Matthias Buchholz, viola

Matthias studied in his hometown Hamburg, in Cincinnati, Detmold, and at the renowned Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Among his teachers were Bruno Giuranna, Michael Tree, Alexander Schneider, and Karen Tuttle.

He won top prizes at the Deutscher Musikwettbewerb Bonn 1978, the Fischoff and the Coleman competition in Los Angeles 1982, as well as the International Viola Competition Budapest 1984.

Since 1976, Buchholz has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in most European countries, in Canada and the U.S.A., as well as in South America, Russia, India, and Asia. He was a member of the Brahms Quartet (Hamburg), the Ridge Quartet (New York), and the Heine Quartet (Cologne). Since 1991 he has performed in numerous concerts and recorded more than 25 recordings with the Linos-Ensemble, who was awarded an ECHO-KLASSIK 2017 for their recording of the Franz Schmidt Quintet.

He was invited to perform at the Marlboro Festival, at the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, the Salzburg Festwochen, Rheingau Festival, Library of Congress (Washington D.C.), Tokyo- and Seoul Spring Festival, Hitzacker, Mondsee, Este, Lyon Musicades and Warsaw Spring Festival, where he shared the stage with the Vermeer-, the Petersen-, the Auryn- and Fine Arts Quartet, as well as being inspired by musicians like Benny Goodman, Heinz Holliger, Rainer Kussmaul, Anner Bylsma, Viktor Tretjakov, Christian Polterá und Cecile Licad and members of the Guarneri Quartet.

From 1990-2024 he held a position as Professor for Viola at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne and at the HEM Genève 2013-2018. A passionate teacher since very early on, he has given masterclasses in the United States, Korea, China, Japan, and most European countries. His former students are

working today successfully as orchestra members, principal violists, and teachers at major conservatories around the globe.

In September 2024 he joined the American String Quartet as their violist and as part of the quartet's residency at Manhattan School of Music. He is also a member of the teaching faculty at Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

Matthias plays on a viola made by Pietro Ferati in Siena from 1785, as well as an anonymous instrument from 1730, presumably made by a Flemish luthier.

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.

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its 1,025 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from 54 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 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

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.

Manhattan School of Music