



MSM ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

Peter Winograd and **Laurie Carney**, violin

Matthias Buchholz, viola

Wolfram Koessel, cello

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2026 | 3 PM
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PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770–1827)

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, no.6

Allegro con brio

Adagio, ma non troppo

Scherzo. Allegro — Trio

La Malinconia. Adagio

Allegretto quasi Allegro

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906–1975)

String Quartet No.8 in C Minor, Op. 110

Largo

Allegro molto

Allegretto

Largo

Largo

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797–1828)

String Quartet in D Minor, D. 810

("Death and the Maiden")

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo. Allegro molto — Trio

Presto — Prestissimo

PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, no. 6, “La Malinconia”

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, baptized December 17, 1770; died in Vienna, March 26, 1827

Beethoven had been approached about writing string quartets by Count Apponyi in 1795, but no works surfaced as a direct result. When he began composing quartets in 1798 he was well aware that he was entering a hallowed and well-populated arena, represented at its best and therefore most daunting by Mozart and Haydn. He was particularly cognizant of the six quartets Mozart had dedicated to Haydn, as well as Mozart's *Prussian* Quartets and Haydn's own Opus 20, 71, 74, and 76 quartets. Only after he had composed and published piano trios, piano sonatas, cello sonatas, string trios, and violin sonatas did Beethoven feel ready to begin writing quartets in earnest. His sketchbooks show that he composed Quartets Nos. 3, 1, 2, and 5 in that order; there is some indication that No. 6 was composed last, but little information exists as to where No. 4 fits into the scheme.

These Opus 18 Quartets were commissioned by Beethoven's new patron Prince Lobkowitz, a man Beethoven's age and a talented violinist who loved music and drama so intensely that he squandered his income on them; in twenty years he was reduced to bankruptcy. He and Beethoven were very close—often quarreling, but then making up their differences. At the same time, the prince commissioned six quartets from the aging Haydn, who was unable to produce more than two and part of another. Inevitably Beethoven must have felt the heat of competition, and the task, which took him two years to complete, involved much revision. He is famously quoted as saying in 1801 that he has “just now learned how to write quartets properly.”

The Quartets were published in 1801 by Mollo, one of three publishers kept busy by Beethoven that year. As a measure of how far Beethoven had come by the time he wrote the Opus 18 Quartets we should remember that his First Symphony, also published in 1801, came into existence alongside the Quartets.

Beethoven labeled the fourth movement of his Quartet, op. 18, no. 6, “La Malinconia,” which then became the nickname of the entire Quartet. It is not a freestanding movement, but rather a slow introduction to the finale. This advanced style of ending is possibly the most remarkable feature of the six quartets that make up Opus 18.

Melancholy, however well portrayed in this “movement,” is not the overriding impression of the work. To this listener at least, it is one of Beethoven’s most fun and witty quartets. The *Scherzo* (third movement) is especially merry as a unique display of triple-time ambiguity, resulting in constant syncopation and hemiola.

The first movement, to which Beethoven later added a notorious absurdly fast metronome marking, is in conventional sonata form, and somewhat less expansive than the early Opus 18 first movements. Beethoven’s contrapuntal techniques (in part indebted to Haydn and Mozart but also to his recent counterpoint studies with Albrechtsberger) are abundant in the Opus 18 quartets; examples occur in this movement’s development section and later in the “Malinconia” movement.

The slow movement is in ternary form of the pattern A-A'-B-A", a pattern typically used by Haydn. The complex harmonic essay, “La Malinconia,” which Beethoven directs “must be played with the greatest delicacy,” ends on a half cadence to introduce the *Allegretto quasi Allegro*. This finale is in the style of a “*danza alla tedesca*” or German dance, popular in Viennese ballrooms at the time. The “Malinconia” interrupts twice but cannot quell the gaiety of the dance.

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String Quartet No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 110

Dmitri Shostakovich

Born in St. Petersburg, September 25, 1906; died in Moscow, August 9, 1975

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 Shostakowitsch, 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 tyazholy 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 from 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-remembrance 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 D Minor, D. 810, “Death and the Maiden”

Franz Schubert

Born in Vienna, January 31, 1797; died in Vienna, November 19, 1828

Schubert composed two of his most powerful works in an amazingly short time—the A minor Quartet between February and March 1824, and the D minor Quartet by the end of that March. He intended to add a third quartet and publish them together, but he did not return to the medium until 1826 when he wrote the equally masterful G major Quartet, and only the A minor was published during his lifetime. The D minor Quartet was not taken up by a publisher until three years after Schubert’s death, perhaps because his contemporaries were not ready for the intense world this Quartet projects.

The *Schuppanzigh Quartet*, which premiered many of the Beethoven quartets, did rehearse the work in January 1826 at the home of Schubert’s friend Franz Lachner, and performed it privately on February 1 at the home of Josef Barth. Lachner reported, however, that Ignaz Schuppanzigh’s rendering of the first violin part left much to be desired and that he exclaimed to Schubert, “My dear fellow, this is no good, leave it alone; you stick to your songs!” Undaunted, Schubert went on to compose the third of his projected group, but the D minor’s trial performance may have had a negative effect on publication prospects.

The Quartet’s nickname “*Der Tod und das Mädchen*” (Death and the Maiden), though not used by Schubert, stems from the theme of the slow movement, which he had refashioned from his 1817 song of that title (D. 531). The text, a Matthias Claudius poem, is actually a scene from a *Totentanz* (dance of death) in which Death dances with a number of human partners, one of whom is the Maiden. The dancers characteristically show the widely divergent attitudes of defiance and acceptance. There has been considerable discussion, however, about how far one can take the death imagery, especially since the other movements are musically unrelated, and the source for the powerful *Scherzo* is one of Schubert’s hundreds of innocuous German dances for piano.

On the other hand, Schubert did reach a nadir of low spirits and ill health in March 1824, culminating in his famous letter to Leopold Kupelweiser on March 31. Expressing his despair in a manner similar to Beethoven’s “Heiligenstadt Testament,” Schubert says he might as well sing “My peace is gone, my heart is sore, I shall find it never and nevermore” (from his *Gretchen am Spinnrade*) since every night he goes to bed hoping not to wake again. Throughout the month he

also jotted random thoughts in a notebook, which make it clear that through all his pain and suffering the ability to compose is his shining light. If his despair is in fact reflected in the dark intensity of the Quartets from that month, they also project the sheer glory of significant musical achievement.

The D minor Quartet's urgently driven first movement presents a defiant mood at the outset with a dramatic opening gesture. Many times during the movement Schubert seems to imagine an entire orchestra at his disposal, an idea reinforced by his statement to Kupelweiser that his three-quartet project was part of his intent to "pave my way towards grand symphony." Despite a lilting second theme, a dark atmosphere permeates, and the coda seems to close in musical sobs.

Schubert fashioned the theme for the slow movement's variations not from the vocal melody of *Death and the Maiden* but from the piano prelude and part of the accompaniment. The simplicity of his grief-laden pulsing chords lends itself extremely well to variations, throughout which he maintains his basic harmonic progression. Schubert's fertile imagination provides the first violin with passages that rank far above mere decoration and the cello with some wonderful acrobatics. He is also able to turn his somber chords into lively "hunt music" at one point. The minor-mode casts a certain seriousness over much of the movement, but the luminous contrast of the G major variation and the coda's peaceful ending suggest a kind of transfigured quality—acceptance?—amid the darkness.

The *Scherzo* again suggests defiance with its syncopations and *sforzando* jabs. It is utterly remarkable how Schubert was able to transform the sixth German Dance, D. 790, into a movement of such forceful energy. The Trio provides a sweet respite, in which the first violin takes a delicate flight of fancy.

The Finale, a dark-hued saltarello (leaping dance), has been characterized as a *Danse macabre* and its galloping main theme may bring to mind another of Schubert's legendary treatments of Death—his earlier song *Erlkönig*. These associations, however, may never have been made without knowing the song origin of the slow movement. This movement, a grand sonata form with touches of rondo, is one of Schubert's most riveting and energetic with its several tempestuous climaxes and breathless *Prestissimo* conclusion.

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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 Fischhoff 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 Aurn- 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.