



P R E S E N T S

Brentano Quartet
with Hsin-Yun Huang



photo by Juergen Frank

Mark Steinberg, *violin*

Nina Lee, *cello*

Hsin-Yun Huang, *viola*

Serena Canin, *violin*

Misha Amory, *viola*

Sunday, November 11, 2018
3:00 p.m.

John H. Williams Theatre
Tulsa Performing Arts Center

Today's performance is part of the annual Susan and Eduard Douze memorial concert weekend.

Brentano Quartet

Since its inception in 1992, the Brentano String Quartet has appeared throughout the world to popular and critical acclaim. "Passionate, uninhibited and spellbinding," raves the London Independent; the New York Times extols its "luxuriously warm sound [and] yearning lyricism."

Since 2014, the Brentano Quartet has served as Artists in Residence at Yale University, succeeding the Tokyo Quartet. The Quartet also currently serves as the collaborative ensemble for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Formerly, they were Artists in Residence at Princeton University for many years.

The Quartet has performed in the world's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York; the Library of Congress in Washington; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; the Konzerthaus in Vienna; Suntory Hall in Tokyo; and the Sydney Opera House. The Quartet had its first European tour in 1997 and was honored in the U.K. with the Royal Philharmonic Award for Most Outstanding Debut.

In addition to their interest in performing very old music, the Brentano Quartet frequently collaborates with con-

temporary composers. Recent commissions include a piano quintet by Vijay Iyer, a work by Eric Moe (with Christine Brandes, soprano), and a viola quintet by Felipe Lara (performed with violist Hsin-Yun Huang). In 2012, the Quartet provided the central music (Beethoven's Opus 131) for the critically-acclaimed independent film *A Late Quartet*.

The quartet has worked closely with other important composers of our time, among them Elliot Carter, Charles Wuorinen, Chou Wen-chung, Bruce Adolphs, and György Kurtág. The Quartet has also been privileged to collaborate with such artists as sopranos Jessye Norman, Dawn Upshaw, and Joyce DiDonato, and pianists Richard Goode, Jonathan Biss, and Mitsuko Uchida.

The Quartet is named for Antonie Brentano, whom many scholars consider to be Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved", the intended recipient of his famous love confession.

For more information on the quartet's upcoming performances and recordings, please visit their website, www.brentanoquartet.com.

Hsin-Yun Huang

Violist Hsin-Yun Huang has forged a career performing on international concert stages, commissioning and recording new works, and nurturing young musicians. She has been soloist with the Berlin Radio Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Taiwan Philharmonic, the Russian State Symphony, Zagreb Soloist International Contemporary Ensemble, the London Sinfonia, the NCPA Orchestra in Beijing among many others. She performs regularly at festivals including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Rome Chamber Music Festival, and Spoleto USA. She tours extensively with the Brentano String Quartet, most notably including performances of the complete Mozart string quintets at Carnegie Hall.

During the 2017-18 season, Huang gave concerto performances under the batons of David Robertson, Osmo Vänskä and Josef Cabelle in Beijing, Taipei and Bogota. She was the first solo violist to be presented in the National Performance Center of the Arts in Beijing, collaborating with Xian Zhang. Other appearances included at the Seoul Spring Chamber Music Festival, the Moritzburg Festival in Dresden, and collaborations with the Brentano String Quartet presented by Carnegie Hall among many others.

She has commissioned compositions from Steven Mackey (*Groundswell*, which premiered at the Aspen Festival), Shih-Hui Chen (*Shu Shon Key*) and Poul Ruders (*Romances*). Her 2012 recording for Bridge Records, titled *Viola Viola*, won accolades from *Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine*.

Ms. Huang first came to international attention as the gold medalist in the 1988 Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition. In 1993 she was the top prize winner in the ARD International Competition in Munich and was awarded the highly prestigious Bunkamura Orchard Hall Award. A native of Taiwan, she received degrees from the Yehudi Menuhin School, the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School. She was inspired to play the viola when she fell in love with Haydn's Quartets. She now serves on the faculties of Juilliard and Curtis and lives in New York City with her husband, Misha Amory of the Brentano String Quartet, and their two children, Lucas and Leah.

More information on her upcoming performances can be found on her website, hsinyunhuang.com.

Program

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 2 in C Major, Hob.III:32

Joseph Haydn
(Austrian, 1732–1809)

In four movements:

Moderato (In a moderate tempo)

Capriccio: Adagio (Slow)

Menuet: Allegretto – Trio (A bit fast)

Fuga a 4 soggetti: Allegro (Fugue with 4 themes: Fast)

String Quintet No. 1 in F Major, Op. 88

Johannes Brahms
(German, 1833–1897)

In three movements:

Allegro non troppo ma con brio (Fast, but not too fast, and with spirit)

Grave ed appassionato – Allegretto vivace (Somber and passionate – Quick and lively)

Allegro energico – Presto (Fast with energy – Very fast)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

String Quintet No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 87

Felix Mendelssohn
(German, 1809–1847)

In four movements:

Allegro vivace (Fast and lively)

Andante scherzando (Playful; at a walking pace)

Adagio e lento (Slow and unhurried)

Allegro molto vivace (Fast and very lively)

We ask that the audience please hold their applause until after the last movement of each work.

Today's concert is preceded by a lecture by composer and CMT Board member Dr. Noam Faingold.

Chamber Music Tulsa's concerts and educational outreaches are presented with the assistance of the Oklahoma Arts Council and Arts Alliance Tulsa.



About the Program

by Jason S. Heilman, Ph.D., © 2018

Joseph Haydn

Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Lower Austria

Died May 31, 1809, in Vienna

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 2 in C Major, Hob.III:32

Composed in 1772; duration: 20 minutes

Joseph Haydn's long career as a composer spanned a pivotal era in the history of European music. When he began his training as a choirboy at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna in 1740, the Baroque era was just coming to an end. Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel were both still actively composing, but their styles were already seen as old fashioned. Over the next thirty years, European music transformed itself as established genres fell out of favor and new ones took their place. After getting expelled from the cathedral choir in 1749, Haydn worked as a freelance musician in Vienna, where he frequently played as part of an *ad hoc* chamber ensemble of two violins, viola, and cello. The ensemble, which recalled the four-part choirs Haydn had studied at St. Stephen's, instantly seized his imagination. After gaining an appointment to the musical staff of the Esterházy family in the 1760s, he received permission to publish some of his compositions for this newfangled string quartet in sets of six. His Opus 1 and Opus 2 sets were simplistic, resembling divertimentos or even Baroque dance suites, but his subsequent Opus 9 (1769) and Opus 17 (1771) quartets show the genre beginning to take shape. Haydn's next six string quartets would ultimately help to cement the ensemble's place in music history.

Though they were written just a year after his Opus 17 set, Haydn's six Opus 20 string quartets were considerably more sophisticated than any of his previous works in the genre. Here, the four instruments start to move towards equality, with Haydn often assigning prominent melodies to the viola or cello. Yet at the same time, the Opus 20 quartets still have a close relationship to the Baroque past, with three of the six concluding with contrapuntal fugues. The Opus 20 set later became known as the "Sun Quartets" quite by accident – an early edition had an engraving of a rising sun on the cover – but the image is nonetheless apt, as in many ways, Haydn's Opus 20 represents the dawning of the string quartet tradition.

The second of the six Opus 20 pieces, in C major, was one of Haydn's most democratic string quartets to date. The *moderato* ("in a moderate tempo") first movement begins with the melody in the cello before being taken up by the violins. Haydn's formal technique was still developing at this time, and the remainder of the movement shows him exploring a range of key areas before recapitulating the main themes. Haydn called the *adagio* ("slow") second movement a *capriccio* and, true to that term's operatic roots, it opens with a bold unison statement before unfolding as a sectional aria, "sung" in turn by the cello and

the violin over a dramatic background. The *allegretto* ("a bit fast") third movement juxtaposes the genteel minuet dance against a rustic, almost bagpipe-like accompaniment. The brief finale is an *allegro* ("fast") fugue based on four short themes, or subjects, which are introduced by the instruments in pairs. The movement opens in a tense *sotto voce* before exploding into a tangle of intertwined melodies to bring this revolutionary quartet to a close.

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg

Died April 3, 1897, in Vienna

String Quintet No. 1 in F Major, Op. 88

Composed in 1882; duration: 28 minutes

When Robert Schumann declared Johannes Brahms the heir apparent to Ludwig van Beethoven himself in 1853, he probably thought he was doing the 20-year-old composer a favor. For Brahms, however, it proved to be more of a curse: almost immediately, he became so self-conscious about the comparison that he avoided composing in any of the genres in which Beethoven excelled. Unable to write a string quartet, Brahms instead produced two string sextets. After one early attempt at a piano trio (which he revised heavily later in life), Brahms switched his attention to the piano quartet, composing a pair of them in 1861. Instead of writing a symphony, he wrote two orchestral serenades. This pattern continued for nearly two decades before Brahms felt himself able to rise to the challenge of being Beethoven's successor. It was not until after he moved to Vienna in 1869 that Brahms was finally able to silence the incessant footsteps of the "giant" he had heard trudging behind him and complete his first two string quartets and his First Symphony.

Immediately after the successful premiere of his First Symphony in 1876, Brahms's career entered a new, more self-assured phase. Three more symphonies followed, as well as another string quartet and two more piano trios. Yet in an interesting parallel to his early years, Brahms also composed a few more non-standard chamber ensembles late in life, including his quintet for clarinet and strings as well as two string quintets with two violas. Again, these were not ensembles closely associated with Beethoven, but they were indelibly linked to another Viennese composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who created the model for both late in his short life.

It was in the summer of 1882 that Brahms composed his First String Quintet. By this time, it was his custom to spend his summers away from Vienna in the spa town of Bad Ischl. Located in the Salzkammergut region near Salzburg, Bad Ischl had become a fashionable resort since the Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth began vacationing there. Yet for Brahms, these summer holidays were a chance to compose free from distraction, and the

summer of 1882 was especially productive. In addition to the string quintet, Brahms also completed his *Song of the Fates* for chorus and orchestra as well as his Second Piano Trio, all while beginning to conceive the outlines of his heroic Third Symphony.

In a letter to Clara Schumann, Brahms called his F-major string quintet “one of my finest works.” He cast the piece in only three movements instead of the customary four – and this would not be Brahms’s only bending of tradition in the piece. The first movement opens with a cheerful melody marked to be played *allegro non troppo ma con brio* (“not too fast, but with spirit”). This segues into an equally pleasant second theme, led by the first viola over plucked strings, which is rather unusually in the key of A major instead of the customary dominant C. After a repetition of this exposition, these two themes are developed in often dramatic ways, and Brahms even throws in a false recapitulation of the opening music before the final statement. The second movement seems to have been based on a pair of dances Brahms had previously written for an abandoned neo-baroque suite: a lugubrious sara-bande and a lively gavotte. These contrasting inspirations give rise to a strikingly bipolar movement that alternates between a *grave ed appassionato* (“somber and empassioned”) mood and much perkier *allegretto vivace* (“a bit quick and lively”) melodies. After these two substantial movements, the fleeting *allegro energico* (“energetically fast”) finale puts a kind of exclamation point on the quintet. Channeling Beethoven, Brahms interpolates a fugue into this breathless movement, with whirling contrapuntal melodies that build toward a frenetic climax.

Felix Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg

Died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig

String Quintet No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 87

Composed in 1845; duration: 29 minutes

By the 1840s, Felix Mendelssohn was at the height of his career – and he was finding that being in demand all over Europe can take its toll. He had been music director of the venerable Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for five years when, in 1840, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia invited him to come back home to Berlin to direct a planned new music conservatory. Slow progress on the conservatory gave Mendelssohn the opportunity to make another of his many visits to London in 1842, where he was received by Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, who each flattered him by singing one of his songs. By 1843, Mendelssohn had given up on the Berlin conservatory project and returned to Leipzig to start his own school. His Leipzig Conservatory, which still operates today as the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy University of Music and Theatre, quickly began to attract distinguished faculty members, including Robert Schumann and violinist Joseph Joachim. Victoria and Albert received Mendelssohn again in 1844, when he returned to London to conduct Joachim in a performance of Ludwig

van Beethoven’s Violin Concerto – an experience that inspired Mendelssohn to compose his own Violin Concerto in E minor that same year.

By 1845, the strain of being an international composer, conductor, conservatory director and teacher, piano soloist, husband and father of four (with a fifth on the way) was becoming apparent. Mendelssohn had never been particularly healthy to begin with, and his habit of throwing himself into his work only contributed to his growing exhaustion. Recognizing this, he spent much of the spring and summer of 1845 with his family in the German spa town of Bad Soden, just outside of Frankfurt. There, he found some time to compose for himself, rather than for his many looming deadlines. And rather appropriately for someone looking to recharge his creative batteries, he returned to a genre he had not attempted since his teenage years: the two-violin string quintet.

Mendelssohn composed his Second String Quintet in B-flat major nearly two decades after his First. The earlier quintet was a product of a particularly fruitful time in Mendelssohn’s young life, coming just a few months after his celebrated Octet in E-flat. In some ways, the Second String Quintet looks back to that simpler time, while at the same time showing how much he had grown as a composer in the intervening years. Like many of Mendelssohn’s later works, the B-flat major quintet was not published until years after his death, and some have suggested that Mendelssohn may have deliberately withheld it from the public for his own reasons.

The B-flat string quintet is in four movements, the first of which opens with a rising *allegro vivace* (“lively and quick”) violin melody that recalls a similar opening movement in his earlier Octet. The viola responds with more lyrical music, which only briefly restrains the movement’s exuberance, and the two contrasting themes are developed before returning. The second movement is marked *andante scherzando* (“playfully, at a walking pace”), but for the master of the light and breezy *scherzo*, the music is surprisingly subdued. Here we have our first hints of a more mature and introspective Mendelssohn, making his sudden death just two years later even more poignant. This introspective mood reaches sublime heights in the *adagio e lento* (“slow and unhurried”) third movement; here, Mendelssohn abandons his typical “song without words” model and writes an almost elegiac movement that achieves a shattering emotional climax before subsiding. A flurry of notes in the first violin announce the opening of the *allegro molto vivace* (“very lively and quick”) finale and its perpetual-motion theme, which is interrupted only briefly by more subdued music. As the movement races towards its coda, Mendelssohn displays his gifts at counterpoint – and defies the expectations of his time by not giving us a full recapitulation of the hushed second theme at the appropriate time. Instead, after a brief pause, we hear a fleeting echo of this melody before the triumphant ending.

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Gryphon Trio

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