

The Red Bank
Chamber Music Society

presents

The Aizuri Quartet

Emma Frucht, Violin

Miho Saegusa, Violin

Ayane Kozasa, Viola

Karen Ouzounian, Cello

Hildegard von Bingen • Strozzi • Giddens • Beethoven

Concert Available for Viewing

Sunday, February 14, 2021 • 4:00 PM

This concert was pre-recorded because of COVID-19.

*Brookdale Community College will air it on its community access TV channel
(Comcast 21 and Verizon Fios 46) on Sunday, February 14 at 4:00 PM, and
again on Monday, February 15 at 2:30 PM and 8:00 PM.*

The concert will also be available online via the Society's website,

<http://www.rbcms.org>,

at your convenience starting at 4:00 PM on February 14, 2021

Recording Engineer: Ryan Streber

Videography: Xuan Films

Final Editing and Titling: Glass Bottom Studios

PROGRAM

Columba aspexit, sequence for St Maximinus (~1175)

Hildegard von Bingen
(arranged. Alex Fortes)

L'amante modesto (1644)

(from *Il Primo Libro de Madrigali; a due, tre, quattro, e cinque voce, no. 13*)

Barbara Strozzi
(arranged. Alex Fortes)

At the Purchasers Option with Variations (2016)*

Rhiannon Giddens
(arranged by Jacob Garchik)

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Op. 127 (1825)

Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Maestoso - Allegro
- II. Adagio, ma non troppo e molto cantabile
- III. Scherzando vivace - Presto
- IV. Finale

*This piece was commissioned for Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire, a project of the Kronos Performing Arts Association. The score and parts are available for free online. kronosquartet.org

Notes on the Program

Hildegard von Bingen ((1098 - 1179)

Columba aspexit, sequence for St Maximinus (~1175) (arranged by Alex Fortes)

(~7 minutes)



From the Wellcome Collection: Line engraving by W. Marshall

Heard alongside the music of her contemporaries, the compositions of Hildegard von Bingen stand out as extraordinary departures from the aesthetics of her time. Hildegard, a 12th-century mystic whose chants differed from contemporary practice in their extended range, unusually large leaps, and extended melismata on unstressed syllables and seemingly unimportant words, depicts a sonic world much like her famous vision of an egg-shaped, fiery cosmos. The arrangement of “Columba Aspexit” performed tonight attempts to recreate the drones, antiphons, and textural variety that might exist in vocal performances of these monophonic works.

-Alex Fortes

Columba aspexit

Columba aspexit
per cancellos fenestreae,
ubi ante faciem eius
sudando sudavit balsamum
de lucido Maximino.

Calor solis exarsit
et in tenebras resplenduit,
unde gemma surrexit
in edificatione templi
purissimi cordis benivoli.

Iste, turris excelsa
de ligno Libani et cipresso facta,
iacincto et sardio ornata est,
urbs precellens artes
aliorum artificum.

Ipse, velox cervus,
cucurrit ad fontem purissime aque
fluentis de fortissimo lapide,
qui dulcia aromata irrigavit.

O pigmentarii!
qui estis in suavissima viriditate
hortorum regis,
ascendentes in altum
quando sanctum sacrificium
in arietibus perfecistis:

The dove peered in

The dove peered in
through the latticed window,
where before her gaze
raining, a balm rained down
from the brightness of Maximinus.

The sun's heat blazed
and streamed into the darkness
from which blossomed the gem
—in the building of the temple—
of the purest generous heart.

He, the sublime tower
made of Lebanon's tree,
made of cypress,
is decked with jacinth and sardonyx,
city that no architect's skill can match.

He, the swift hart
ran up to the fountain
of purest water
bubbling from the mightiest stone
whose moisture made the sweet perfumes flow.

You perfumers
who live in the gentlest greenness
of the king's gardens,
you who mount into the heights
when you have consummated
the holy sacrifice among the rams,

Inter vos fulget hic artifex,
paries templi,
qui desideravit alas aquile,
osculando nutricem Sapientiam
in gloriosa fecunditate
Ecclesie.

O Maximine, mons et vallis es,
et in utroque alta edificatio appares,
ubi capricornus
cum elephante exivit, et Sapientia
in deliciis fuit.

Tu es fortis et suavis
in cerimoniais
et in chorusatione altaris,
ascendens ut fumes aromatum
ad columpnam laudis:

Ubi intercedis pro populo
qui tendit ad speculum lucis,
cui laus est in altis.

Source of the text in Latin: Fiona Maddocks, Hildegard of Bingen: The Woman of Her Age. New York: Doubleday, 2001, p. 195-197

Lucent among you
is this architect, wall of the temple,
he who longed
for an eagle's wings as he kissed
his foster-mother, Wisdom,
in Ekklesia's glorious fecundity!

Maximinus, you are mountain and valley,
and in both you appear, a pinnacle,
where the mountain-goat walked, and the elephant,
and Wisdom played in her delight.

You are both brave and gentle;
in the rites and in the sparkling of the altar
you mount as a smoke of fragrant spices
to the column of praise

Where you plead the cause of your people
who aspire to the mirror of light
for which there is praise on high.

Source of the English translation: The Medieval Lyric, Third Edition, edited by Peter Dronke. Suffolk, England: D.S. Brewer, 1996, p. 76-77.



Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677)

L'amante modesto (1644) (arranged by Alex Fortes)

(from *Il Primo Libro de Madrigali; a due, tre, quattro, e cinque voce*, no. 13)

(~5 minutes)



Many of the facts of Barbara Strozzi's life are obscured by centuries of romanticization and censorship to shape her story into the circumscribed expectations for women in various times and places, including her own seventeenth-century Venice. She was born out of wedlock to Isabella Garzoni, a servant to her adoptive (and probably also biological) father, Giulio Strozzi, a poet from a noble family. Even as she participated extensively in Venice's vibrant intellectual circles, she was rumored to be a courtesan, as was her mother, and Bernardo Strozzi's famous portrait of her depicts her this way. Her Opus 1 madrigals (1644) invited comparison to Claudio Monteverdi's *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, published just six years earlier. Opening with a madrigal containing the line, "crowned with the laurels of immortality I will perhaps

be considered a new Sappho,” her Opus 1 immediately established her as a preeminent composer in her own time and ever since.

This wordless arrangement of a madrigal for string quartet showcases Strozzi’s ability to vividly paint with sound alone, independent of her father’s evocative text.

“L’amante modesto,” or the modest lover, depicts a Dante-like distanced love. The narrator need not have his love consummated and accepts that another “more fortunate than me...may enjoy impure delights with you. For me it is enough only to know that I am loved by my Clori.”

Strozzi’s complete mastery of counterpoint and craft shines through, even as she champions and extends the spontaneous, hyper-expressive seconda pratica/stile moderno aesthetic pioneered by Monteverdi and Caccini.

-Alex Fortes

L’AMANTE MODESTO

Volano frettolosi i giorni e presto
un secolo sarà che t’amo, o Clori,
né de’ miei lunghi ossequiosi amori
un picciol guiderdone anco t’ho chiesto.
Amante son, ma candido e modesto;
voglio che taciturno il cor t’adori
e voglio disfogar gl’interni ardori
col muto fiato d’un sospir onesto.

Godati chi di me più fortunato
nacque ai dilette impuri.
A me sol basta saper
dalla mia Clori esser amato.

Così mai non guerreggia e non contrasta
rivalità; diverso è il nostro stato:
egli t’ama impudica, io t’amo casta.
(Giulio Strozzi)

THE MODEST LOVER

The days fly by in a hurry, and soon
it will have been a century that I’ve loved you,
O Clori, and yet in my unceasing subservient love
I’ve not asked for even one small reward.
I’m a lover, but purehearted and modest;
I want my heart to adore you silently,
and would relieve my internal burning
with the silent breath of an honest sigh.

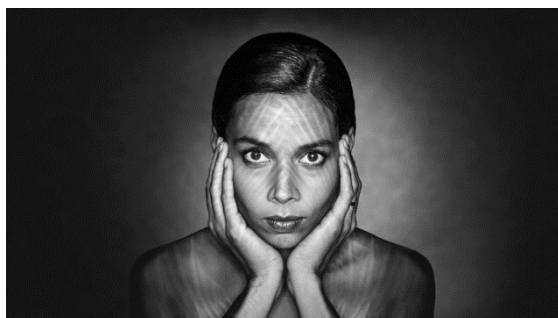
Let the one who is more fortunate than me enjoy you,
and invite you to licentious pleasures.
For me it is enough only
to know that I am loved by my Clori.

Thus our rivalry is without contention or quarrel;
our conditions differ:
he loves you lasciviously, I love you sincerely.
(translation Richard Kolb)



Rhiannon Giddens (1977 -) (arranged by Jacob Garchik) At the Purchasers Option with Variations (2016)*

(~4 minutes)



Rhiannon Giddens' At the Purchaser’s Option with variations is an instrumental variation of a song from her album Freedom Highway (Nonesuch, 2017), arranged by Jacob Garchik. She wrote the song after finding in a book a 19th-century advertisement for a 22-year-old female slave whose 9-month-old baby was also for sale, but “at the purchaser’s option.” This

piece comes from that advertisement, and from thinking about what that woman's life might have been like.

This piece was commissioned for Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire, a project of the Kronos Performing Arts Association. The score and parts are available for free online. kronosquartet.org



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)
String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Op. 127 (1825)

(~38 minutes)



Beethoven worked on the E-flat Quartet from May of 1824 until March of 1825, a relatively long time since the six quartets of the Late Period were all completed in two-and-a-half years. The result of this labor is superficially modest, but beneath its seemingly traditional surface is a work of incredible genius and invention, one that Schoenberg and Bartók would look to for inspiration. About the work, there is a kind of magnificent understatement, an elegant modesty, if you will.

For example, the first movement's outer reserve veils an inner strength, tension, and power. The opening chordal statement would seem simple except that it serves as a motto for the movement and the point of return from the complexity of the Allegro that quickly follows it. Nor is the movement without the distinct lyricism that pervades the entire Quartet.

The long second movement Adagio is touched with the tragedy but not the tears of Op. 59, No. 1. Here lyricism blossoms slowly through the subtle chromaticism of the theme and variations. Things brighten briefly with the suggestion of a dance, but Beethoven is cautionary in this as he was in the slower section marked "slow, but not too slow." His consistent demand in the movement is to sing, *molto cantabile*. Robert Schumann said of this movement, "One seems to have lingered not fifteen short minutes but an eternity."

Modesty persists even in the third movement Scherzando, which does not have the usual fury of many Beethoven scherzos. It seems in many ways an older and wiser Beethoven.

Nor does the Finale burst upon us in the manner of many Beethoven last movements. Before we take the idea of modesty and simplicity too far, however, we need to be reminded that what seems simple here is highly complex. Multiple themes are developed, some related and some entirely new. There is no real recapitulation in the traditional sense, but there is a subtle suggestion of the first movement in the coda-like conclusion. Is there a happy ending? Perhaps, if one can find it in the complexity of voices and rhythmic patterns.

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Artists

Praised by The Washington Post for “captivating” performances that draw from its notable “meld of intellect, technique and emotions,” the **Aizuri Quartet** was awarded the Grand Prize and the CAG Management Prize at the 2018 M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition, along with top prizes at the 2017 Osaka International Chamber Music Competition in Japan, and the 2015 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition in London. The Quartet’s debut album, *Blueprinting*, featuring new works written for the Aizuri Quartet by five American composers, was released by New Amsterdam Records and nominated for a 2019 GRAMMY Award.

Through its engaging and thought-provoking programs, branded by The New York Times as “genuinely exciting” and “imaginative,” the Quartet has garnered critical acclaim for bringing “a technical bravado and emotional power” to bold new commissions, and for its “flawless” (San Diego Union-Tribune) performances of the great masterpieces of the past. In the 2019-20 season the group will tour extensively across North America giving both debut appearances at Lincoln Center and at Carnegie Hall as part of CAG Winner’s Series.

Based in New York City, the Aizuri Quartet was the 2017-2018 MetLiveArts String Quartet-in-Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where they presented five unique programs throughout the season, leading The New York Times to applaud them as “a quartet of expert collaborators, who cogently traverse a range of repertoire staples and modern works.” Previous residency engagements include: the 2015-2016 Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts; resident ensemble of the 2014 Ravinia Festival’s Steans Music Institute; and, from 2014-2016, the String Quartet-in-Residence at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

The Quartet has performed extensively throughout North America, as well as in Europe, Japan, Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, and Abu Dhabi, and has commissioned and premiered new works by Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw, Lembit Beecher, Paul Wiancko, Yevgeniy Sharlat, Gabriella Smith, Rene Orth, Michi Wiancko, and Alyssa Weinberg. Its critically acclaimed debut album, *Blueprinting*, which showcased many of these new pieces, was nominated for a 2019 GRAMMY award in the category of “Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance.”

Formed in 2012 and combining four distinctive musical personalities into a unique collective, the Aizuri Quartet draws its name from “aizuri-e,” a style of predominantly blue Japanese woodblock printing that is noted for its vibrancy and incredible detail.



Violinist **Emma Frucht**’s favorite way of communicating with the world has been music for as long as she can remember. A native New Yorker, she grew up in a musical family. Her mother is a violist, her father plays violin and piano, and her two younger sisters play cello and violin. Ms. Frucht completed her undergraduate studies at Harvard University, majoring in Art History with a focus on Modern and Contemporary Art. When graduating from Harvard, she received the Robert Levin prize for excellence in musical performance. Ms. Frucht recently finished her Master of Music degree at the Juilliard School. She was a recipient of Juilliard’s Kovner Fellowship, and studied with Naoko Tanaka and Daniel Phillips. Her other primary teachers include Lynn Chang, and Louise Behrend.

Summers immersed in chamber music have become a persistent habit for Ms. Frucht. Over the past decade she has been a fellowship student at the Aspen Music Festival, the Music Academy of

the West, the Taos School of Music, and Yellow Barn. She has also been an artist at the Halcyon Music Festival, the Kyoto International Music Festival, and the Manchester Summer Chamber Music series in Ipswich, MA. Collaborating with countless artists, some recent partnerships have been with Natasha Brofsky, Jerry Grossman, David Hardy, Michael Kannen, Alan Kay, Seth Knopp, Thomas Kraines, Katherine Murdock, Heng-Jin Park, Daniel Phillips, Melissa Reardon, Roger Tapping, Jessica Thompson, and Marcus Thompson.

It was as a young musician at Juilliard Pre-College that Ms. Frucht first had the opportunity to sit concertmaster, igniting her passion for orchestral leadership. She has served as co-concertmaster and co-principal second violin of the Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra, the Music Academy of the West Festival Orchestra, and most recently the Juilliard Orchestra. Her work as concertmaster has taken place under the batons of conductors such as John Adams, Federico Cortese, Gustavo Dudamel, Alan Gilbert, Gerard Schwarz, and Osmo Vänska. Ms. Frucht frequently performs with New York-based orchestras, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, New York Classical Players, New York Pops, and the Sejong Soloists.

A fierce advocate of new music, Ms. Frucht has had the pleasure of collaborating with many living composers. She participated in numerous premieres during her time at Harvard, and has since worked closely with composers such as Brett Dean, Laura Karpman, Steve Mackey, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, Caroline Shaw, and Jörg Widmann. Ms. Frucht has enjoyed giving many chamber music performances around New York City, most notably at Alice Tully Hall, Bruno Walter Auditorium, The Guggenheim Museum, National Sawdust, and Scandinavia House.



Violinist **Miho Saegusa**, a versatile chamber musician and orchestral leader, has built a multifaceted career that allows her to cherish the spirit of collaboration. Her passion for chamber music was ignited and nurtured through memorable summers at the Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia Steans Institute, and Music@Menlo as well as on tours with Musicians from Marlboro. During these summers she had the opportunity to collaborate with venerated musicians such as Mitsuko Uchida, Richard Goode, Arnold Steinhardt, David Soyer, and Miriam Fried.

In addition to chamber music, Miho loves the energy and intimacy of chamber orchestras. She is a member of the celebrated Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and currently is serving as one of its three Artistic Directors. For five seasons she was Concertmaster of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, and since 2001 is a member of IRIS Orchestra, where she has held the Isaac Stern Concertmaster Chair on numerous occasions. In addition, Miho has been a guest with A Far Cry, East Coast Chamber Orchestra, and NOVUS.

Miho has been featured as soloist with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, IRIS Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Aspen Concert Orchestra, Juilliard Orchestra, and the Yale Symphony Orchestra. As the first recipient of the Aspen Music Festival and School's Dorothy DeLay Fellowship, Miho performed in the Festival's memorial tribute to Miss DeLay with the Aspen Chamber Symphony and conductor David Zinman. Additional honors include prizes at the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Auditions, Wieniawski--Lipinski International Competition, Yehudi Menuhin International Competition, Juilliard Concerto Competition, and Yale University's William Waite Competition. Miho is a Music Scholarship Award recipient from the Japanese American Association of New York.

Born in Kitakyushu, Japan, Miho has played the violin since the age of five. She is very grateful to her principal teachers Masao Kawasaki and Dorothy DeLay for their generosity and for encouraging curiosity. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University, and completed graduate work at The Juilliard School, earning her Master of Music and Artist Diploma. When not playing the violin, Miho can be found wandering around farmers' markets or exploring restaurants recommended by friends.



Hailed for her "magnetic, wide-ranging tone" and her "rock solid technique" (Philadelphia Inquirer), violist **Ayane Kozasa** enjoys a career that spans a broad spectrum of musical personas. Winner of the Primrose International Viola Competition, her two additional awards at the competition defines her passion for music: the best chamber music and best commissioned work performances. Following the competition, she joined the Astral Artists roster, and became a grant recipient from the S&R Foundation, an organization recognizing and supporting young, aspiring artists of all mediums. Her international solo opportunities have been a platform to unearth seldom heard works and commission new pieces, an aspect of viola playing that she loves. Most recently, she commissioned a work by Brooklyn composer Paul Wiancko for viola and piano, which she premiered at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Evermay Chamber Series in Washington, D.C. with pianist Amy Yang.

Chamber music has also been a vital part of Ayane's musical career, and her interests have led her to appearances at numerous festivals including the Marlboro Music Festival, the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, the Olympic Music Festival, and the Ravinia Festival. In addition to being a founding member of the Aizuri Quartet, her passion for chamber music has blossomed in the form of "Ayane & Paul," a viola/cello duo that is known for their creative programming and intimate connections with their audience. She is also a member of Quodlibet Ensemble, an early/modern music mixed ensemble.

From 2012 to 2016, Ayane served as the principal violist of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. She is also a member of the IRIS Orchestra, and has played with notable ensembles such as the Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, The Philadelphia Orchestra, East Coast Chamber Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, A Far Cry, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Most recently, much of her musical work has involved being a mentor to aspiring young musicians, including being guest faculty at the Green Lake Chamber Music Camp and a mentor at the Olympic Music Festival and Musikiwest Summer Festival.

Ayane is deeply grateful for the mentorship she received from her past teachers, Nobuko Imai, Kirsten Docter, Roberto Diaz, Misha Amory, and Michael Tree. Outside of music, she loves to perfect her pie baking skills, create fonts, go camping, and run into ocean waves.



Described as "radiant" and "expressive" (The New York Times) and "nothing less than gorgeous" (Memphis Commercial Appeal), cellist **Karen Ouzounian** approaches music-making with a deeply communicative and passionate spirit. Winner of the S&R Foundation's 2016 Washington Award and at home in diverse musical settings, she is especially drawn towards unusual collaborations and eclectic contemporary repertoire.

In addition to her work with the Aizuri Quartet, Karen performs around the globe with the Silkroad Ensemble, the Grammy award-winning group founded by cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 2000. Her commitment to adventurous repertoire and the collaborative process has led to her membership in the innovative chamber orchestras The Knights and A Far Cry, and the critically-acclaimed new music collective counter)induction.

Highlights of Karen's recent and upcoming seasons include solo appearances with the Orlando Philharmonic, Greater Bridgeport Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestra of Santiago, recitals at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts with pianist Ieva Jokubaviciute, chamber music at the Ravinia, Scrag Mountain Music and Portland Chamber Music Festivals and on tour with Musicians from Marlboro, and international tours with the Silkroad Ensemble, Mark Morris Dance Group, The Knights and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Additionally she has performed as guest principal of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, IRIS Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia.

Born to Armenian parents in Toronto, Karen holds Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees from The Juilliard School, where she was a student of Timothy Eddy. She resides in New York City with her husband, composer Lembit Beecher.



Singer-songwriter **Rhiannon Giddens** is the co-founder of the GRAMMY Award-winning string band Carolina Chocolate Drops, in which she also plays banjo and fiddle. She began gaining recognition as a solo artist when she stole the show at the T Bone Burnett-produced *Another Day, Another Time* concert at New York City's Town Hall in 2013. The elegant bearing, prodigious voice, and fierce spirit that brought the audience to its feet that night is also abundantly evident on Giddens' critically acclaimed solo debut, the Grammy-nominated album *Tomorrow Is My Turn*, which masterfully blends American musical genres like gospel, jazz, blues, and country, showcasing her extraordinary emotional range and dazzling vocal prowess.

Giddens' follow-up album *Freedom Highway* releases in February 2017. It includes nine original songs Giddens wrote or co-wrote along with a traditional song and two civil rights-era songs, "Birmingham Sunday" and Staple Singers' well-known "Freedom Highway," from which the album takes its name.

Giddens' televised performances include *The Late Show*, *Austin City Limits*, *Later...with Jools Holland*, and both CBS Saturday and Sunday Morning, among numerous other notable media appearances. She performed for President Obama and the First Lady on a White House Tribute to Gospel, along with Aretha Franklin and Emmylou Harris; the program was televised on PBS. Giddens duets with country superstar Eric Church on his powerful anti-racism song "Kill a Word," which was in the top 15 on country radio; the two have performed the song on *The Tonight Show* and the CMA Awards, among other programs. Giddens received the BBC Radio 2 Folk Award for Singer of the Year and has won the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Bluegrass and Banjo in 2016. In 2017, Giddens was named a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant Winner.

