

The Red Bank
Chamber Music Society

presents

The American String Quartet

Peter Winograd, violin

Laurie Carney, violin

Daniel Avshalomov, viola

Wolfram Koessel, cello

With Richard Stoltzman, clarinet

Haydn • Beethoven • Brahms

Sunday Afternoon

October 15, 2023, • 4:30 PM

Trinity Church Auditorium

Red Bank, NJ

Advance Notes

PROGRAM

String Quartet in F, Op. 77 No. 2 Hob. III: 82 (1799)

Joseph Haydn

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Menuetto. Presto ma non troppo
- III. Andante
- IV. Finale. Vivace assai

String Quartet No. 16 in F, Op. 135 (1826)

Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Allegretto
- II. Vivace
- III. Lento assai, cantate e tranquillo
- IV. *Der schwer gefasste Entschluss* – Grave, ma non troppo tratto
Muss es sein? – Allegro
Es muss sein! – Grave, ma non troppo tratto – Allegro

INTERMISSION

Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115 (1891)

Johannes Brahms

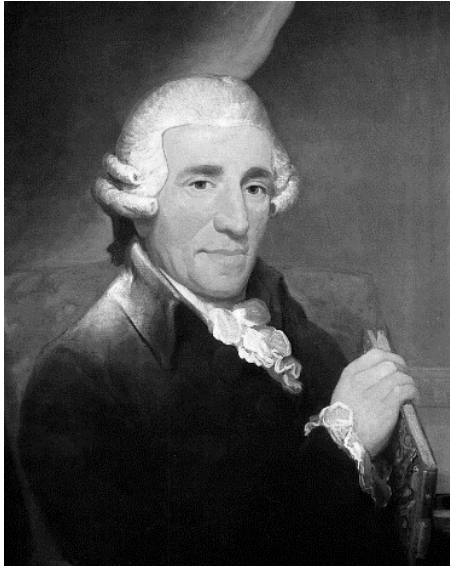
- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Andantino – Presto non assai, ma con sentimento
- IV. Con moto – Un poco meno mosso

Program Notes

Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

String Quartet in F, Op, 77 No. 2 Hob.III:82 (1799)

(~26 minutes)



In the spring of 1799 Haydn had a lot of irons in the fire: he was completing the *Theresienmesse*, the first two of six quartets commissioned by Prince Lobkowitz, starting on *The Seasons* - and he had promised Count Fries six quintets. Impressive at any age, much less approaching seventy and in declining health. But in the Quartet in F Major, Op. 77 no. 2, we find Haydn at the peak of his powers. Abundant wit, inspired innovation, heartfelt expressivity, and his keen sense of the democracy inherent in the ensemble - all shaped by the wisdom of experience.

The opening good cheer persists through a *subito* piano which almost camouflages an important detail: the apparent accompaniment in the second violin soon emerges as a second theme, to the accompaniment of the first theme. Democratic *and* deft. And then there are a few (inaudible) inside jokes between composer and players: an ominous motive in the cello, first written with Eb and Fb followed by the prompt *l'istesso tuono* ("the same pitch") and repeated as D# and E natural; then a tip for the first violin to play the open A string in advance of a raucous *subito* forte; and he calls for both *sotto voce* ("under the voice") and *mezza voce* ("half-voice").

Breaking his habit in the previous nine quartets, Haydn places the scherzo next, alerting the adept listener that both this movement and the next will be unusual. Although marked *Menuet* as were most of his earlier, slower dance movements, this one is clearly a joke (Scherzo) because it constantly tricks the ear into believing that the meter is 2/4 while remaining in 3/4. As if that were not enough, the trio section drifts into the murk of Db major, the rare-for-Haydn dynamic of *pianissimo*, and with all four instruments in their low registers. Not to mention that there is a coda, which teases the listener who knows the Menuet must return.

The noblest of *Andantes* begins with the outer voices alone until the middle two join, adding warmth without volume. A variation where the theme belongs to the second violin and the arabesques to the first follows. By the time the theme appears in the cello, the first violin waxes virtuosic in order to re-establish primacy, when the lower

three accompany in rhythmic unison and ever-increasing dynamic, culminating in a very rare *fortissimo* race to the top of the stairs. The subsequent return to the opening theme, this time in *pp*, gives the viola its due, with a woven accompaniment leading to a soothing and satisfying close.

After excursions to Db major and D major, Haydn reminds us that F major is still the home key with a bold, bald chord to start the Finale. What follows is a boisterous dance of Slavonic or ,perhaps Croatian origin, replete with off-beat accents, seeming meter changes, wild syncopation, and combative counterpoint - all in fun, of course. All four parts contribute to the commotion until a fermata stills the momentum. The first violin tries to find its way off the fingerboard before a four-way unison signals the romp to the finish line. Not bad for a 67-year-old.



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
String Quartet No. 16 in F, Op. 135 (1826)

(~25 minutes)



The Quartet in F Major, Op. 135 is the sound of Beethoven thinking about Haydn.

After expanding the dimensions of the string quartet from the four-movement standard established by Haydn (and adhered to by Beethoven in his first twelve quartets), the composer looked beyond his 5-, 6-, and 7-movement works, returning to the original and making all his innovations within each of the four movements.

Although dismissed as a student by Haydn after one lesson, Beethoven continued to learn from the master through a life-long study of Haydn's scores. He absorbed the older master's matchless wit, his deft structural economy, and the musical democracy implicit in the ensemble. Cast against type, the viola opens with pure mischief which proves to be contagious. Phrases in collage, accented weak beats, sudden dynamic changes, starts and stops: Haydnisms all, and all employed gleefully by Beethoven, whose harmonic freedom overtakes even Haydn's wide-ranging language.

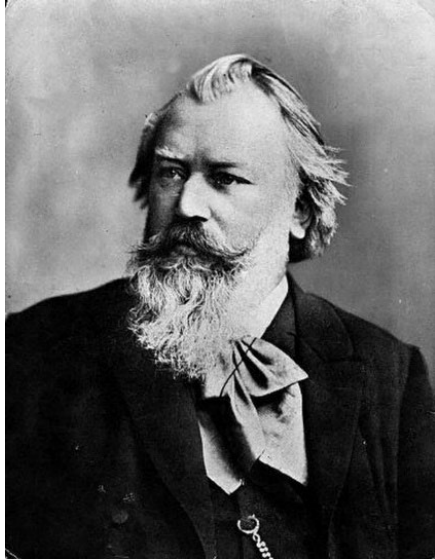
Where the first movement is capricious and free, the subsequent scherzo verges on mania. A brisk triple-meter dance begins on the wrong beat, and the responsibility for 1-2-3 changes hands so rapidly as to blur the line between illusive and elusive. But nothing prepares the listener for the trio section where the first violin goes berserk on a tangled trapeze while the lower three repeat a single rhythmic figure nearly fifty times at six different dynamic levels. Beyond caffeinated. Which only deepens the effect of the following Db Major slow movement. In the sketches Beethoven referred to it as a "sweet song of Rest or Peace", and he originally intended it as the finale for the C# Minor Op. 131 (Db and C# being the same note). These moving variations are the heart of Op. 135, and he called its mood "smiling through tears".

How to follow Mischief, Mania, and Mixed Emotions? With Mystery. Written above the opening of the Finale we find » *Der schwer gefasste Entschluss* « ("The Difficult Resolution") with a three-note motive in Grave tempo beneath, and the Allegro answer » *Es muss sein! Es muss sein!* « ("It must be! It must be!") The interpretation of these words (and notes) ranges from a profound, existential juxtaposition of free will versus destiny, to a laughable story about a hapless concert-goer named Dempster who owed Beethoven the price of a subscription ticket. We resolve the question without explaining it: the answer is that both choices are correct. This is, after all, the man whose "Ode to Joy" proclaims that all men must live as brothers and whose thoughts often lingered on the philosophical; at the same time, he dashed off a canon at Dempster's expense with the words » *Es muss sein, es muss sein, ja ja ja! Heraeus mit dem Beutel!* « ("It must be, it must be, yes yes yes! Hand over the wallet!") What seem to be mutually exclusive ideas coexist here, and the result is magical.



Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)
Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115 (1891)

(~38 minutes)



It is a performer's particular delight to inspire. To stir the listener is a goal in each performance; to stimulate a great composer even annually is a high standard; but to relight the creative fires of an all-but-retired Johannes Brahms -- well, Richard Muhlfeld must have been some clarinetist.

Over the summer of 1891, Brahms completed the Trio op.114 and the Quintet in B minor for Clarinet and Strings, op.115 after hearing Muhlfeld perform for the first time, (and the two Sonatas op.120 came soon after).

The B minor opening provides a melancholy ground for the meeting of clarinet and strings. And while the mood is autumnal, the vigor and richness of musical language, the thorough mastery of texture, the ideal proportions - all portray Brahms at the summit of his powers. He follows Mozart in muting the strings for the slow movement, where the gently undulating outer sections presume players who study scores, and the rhapsodic central portion requires that we all play the clarinet part - at least in the mind's ear. The third movement is shaped like the middle of a three-movement work; on occasion Brahms melds slow movement with scherzo. Yet in this case the change from *Andantino* to *Presto non assai, ma con sentimento* is perceived simply as a change of character, since the basic pulse of the movement is constant. Having achieved so much with developmental variation, Brahms is completely at home with traditional theme and variations, the finale here. In fact that form's inherent self-reference makes a return to the very opening of the Quintet so natural a conclusion, the closing of a somber circle.

Program Notes by Daniel Avshalomov



Artists

Internationally recognized as one of the world's finest quartets, the American String Quartet has spent decades honing the luxurious sound for which it is famous. The Quartet celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2019, and, in its years of touring, has performed in all fifty states and has appeared in the most important concert halls worldwide. The group's presentations of the complete quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, Schoenberg, Bartók, and Mozart have won widespread critical acclaim, and their MusicMasters Complete Mozart String Quartets, performed on a matched quartet set of instruments by Stradivarius, are widely considered to have set the standard for this repertoire.

Recent seasons featured performances of the Quartet's major project together with the National Book Award-winning author Phil Klay and the poet Tom Sleigh, which offers a groundbreaking program combining music and readings that examines the effects of war. The Quartet also collaborated with the renowned author Salman Rushdie in a work for narrator and quartet by the film composer Paul Cantelon built around Rushdie's novel *The Enchantress of Florence*. These tremendously imaginative collaborations cement the American String Quartet's reputation as one of the most adventurous and fearless string quartets performing today, as comfortable with the groundbreaking as with the traditional.

The Quartet's diverse activities have also included numerous international radio and television broadcasts, including a recent recording for the BBC; tours of Asia; and performances with the New York City Ballet, the Montreal Symphony, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Recent highlights include performances of an all-sextet program with Roberto and Andrés Díaz, many tours of South America, and performances of the complete Beethoven cycle of string quartets at the Cervantes Festival in Mexico and the Tel Aviv Museum in Israel.

The American's additional extensive discography can be heard on the Albany, CRI, MusicMasters, Musical Heritage Society, Nonesuch, and RCA labels. Most recently the group released "Schubert's Echo," which pairs Schubert's monumental last quartet with works bearing its influence by Second Viennese masters Alban Berg and Anton Webern. This repertoire posits that the creative line from the First to the Second Viennese Schools is continuous – and evident when these works are heard in the context of each other.

As champions of new music, the American has given numerous premieres, including George Tsontakis's Quartet No. 7.5, "Maverick," Richard Danielpour's Quartet No.

4, and Curt Cacioppo's *a distant voice calling*. The premiere of Robert Sirota's *American Pilgrimage* was performed around the U.S. in the cities the work celebrates. The Quartet premiered Tobias Picker's String Quartet No. 2 in New York City in celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Manhattan School of Music.

Formed when its original members were students at The Juilliard School, the American String Quartet's career began with the group winning both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award in the same year. Resident quartet at the Aspen Music Festival since 1974 and at the Manhattan School of Music in New York since 1984, the American has also served as resident quartet at the Taos School of Music, the Peabody Conservatory, and the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.



Peter Winograd (violin) joined the American String Quartet 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 prize winner 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. 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's and master's 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).



A founding member of the American String Quartet, **Laurie Carney** (violin) holds the distinction of performing quartets longer than any other woman in this elite field.

The American String Quartet began concertizing while she was still an undergraduate at Juilliard. Apart from the Quartet, she has performed trios with her husband, cellist William Grubb, and pianist Anton Nel; duos with violist Michael Tree; and as an ensemble partner to such artists as Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, Salvatore Accardo, Cho-Liang Lin, Joshua Bell, Yefim Bronfman, Misha Dichter, Ralph Kirshbaum, Alain Meunier, and Frederica von Stade. Carney's concerto appearances include performing Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with the Bournemouth Symphony, Basque National Orchestra, and the Welsh National Orchestra. She gave the premiere of Gianpaolo Bracali's Fantasia for violin and piano. Most recently, Robert Sirota composed his Violin Sonata No. 2 for her, and in addition to performing the premiere last spring, she will record the work later this season. A faculty artist at the Aspen Music Festival and School since 1974 and the Manhattan School of Music since 1984, Carney has held teaching positions at the Mannes College of Music, Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, University of Nebraska, University of Michigan, Shepherd School at Rice University, and the Taos School of Music. Her dedication to the development of young players brings frequent invitations to offer master classes, most recently in California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, and New Mexico. Carney is a member of a prodigious musical family: her father was a trumpeter and educator, her mother a concert pianist, and all three siblings are professional violinists. Her violin is by Carlo Tononi (Venice, 1720).



The Strad Magazine hailed **Daniel Avshalomov** (viola) as “one of the finest occupants of that chair, both instrumentally and musically, of any quartet now active.” Avshalomov appears in recital and as a featured performer and concerto soloist at festivals across the country. Before joining the Quartet, 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, and American Composers Orchestra. He also was a founding member of the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble. A frequent guest artist with the Guarneri Quartet, he has performed with such groups as the Da Camera Society, Marin Music Fest, and La Musica di Asolo. He has shared the stage with Norbert Brainin (first violinist of the Amadeus Quartet), Misha Dichter, Bruno Giuranna (a founding member of I Musici), Maureen Forrester, the Juilliard and Tokyo Quartets, and the Bolshoi Ballet (as solo violist). Avshalomov's articles appear in Notes and Strings; he has edited several viola works for publication and contributed to ASTA's Playing and Teaching the Viola. He has been the subject of two articles in The Strad magazine and one in Classical Pulse.

Avshalomov developed a lecture-demonstration, "Inside Passages," first presented to the New York Viola Society in 2000. He performed the world premiere of Giampaolo Bracali's Concerto per Viola, which RAI has broadcast in Europe, and the American premiere of Alessandro Rolla's Esercizio 3. On his CD, Three Generations Avshalomov, with pianists Robert McDonald and Pamela Pyle, Avshalomov performs works for viola and piano composed by his grandfather, father and brother. The CD was featured on NPR's All Things Considered. Avshalomov has been on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music since 1984 and at the Aspen School since 1976. His viola is by Andrea Amati (Cremona, 1568).



Since his Carnegie Hall debut in 1994, **Wolfram Koessel** (cello) has performed as a chamber musician, recitalist and soloist throughout the world. The Strad 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. He also has appeared often with the New York Metamorphoses Orchestra, which he cofounded in 1994. His collaborations include performances with legendary tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain, distinguished 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 world premieres. In the fall of 2009, he was the featured performer in a new dance work, performing Beethoven's Cello Sonata in C. His cello is by Giovanni Cavani (Modena, 1917).



Richard Stoltzman's virtuosity, musicianship and sheer personal magnetism have made him one of today's most sought-after concert artists. As soloist with more than a hundred orchestras, as a captivating recitalist and chamber music performer, as an innovative jazz artist, and as a prolific recording artist, two-time GRAMMY® Award winner Stoltzman has defied categorization, dazzling critics and audiences alike throughout many musical genres.

Stoltzman graduated from Ohio State University with a double major in music and mathematics. He earned his Master of Music degree at Yale University while studying with Keith Wilson, and later worked toward a doctoral degree with Kalmen Opperman at Columbia University. As a ten-year participant in the Marlboro Music Festival, Stoltzman gained extensive chamber music experience, and subsequently became a founding member of the noted ensemble TASHI, which made its debut in 1973.

Since then, Stoltzman's unique style of playing the clarinet has earned him an international reputation as he has opened up possibilities for the instrument that no one could have predicted. He gave the first clarinet recitals in the histories of both the Hollywood Bowl and Carnegie Hall, and he became the first wind player to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize. He was featured in the International EMMY® Award-winning series "Concerto!" with Dudley Moore and Michael Tilson Thomas, and was awarded the prestigious Sanford Medal by the Yale School of Music. In 2013, Stoltzman was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Richard Stoltzman resides in Massachusetts and is a passionate Boston Red Sox baseball fan. He is also a Cordon Bleu trained pastry chef.

