

The Red Bank
Chamber Music Society
presents

Grace Park, Violin
Katie Hyun, Violin
Luke Fleming, Viola
Brook Speltz, Cello

The Manhattan Chamber Players

Webern • Schubert • Ravel
Sunday Afternoon
November 20, 2022 • 4:30 PM
Trinity Church Auditorium
Red Bank, NJ

ADVANCE NOTES

PROGRAM

Langsamer satz (1905)

Anton Webern

String Quartet No. 13 in a minor, D. 804, "Rosamunde" (1824)

Franz Schubert

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Andante
- III. Menuetto. Allegretto
- IV. Allegro moderato

INTERMISSION

String Quartet in F Major (1903)

Maurice Ravel

- I. Allegro moderato - Très doux
- II. Assez vif - Très rythmé
- III. Très lent
- IV. Vif et agité

Program Notes

Anton Webern (1867-1944) **Langsamer satz (1905)**

(~10 minutes)



Anton Webern is known primarily as a great exponent of atonal composition and, later, twelve-tone serialism. It is, therefore, always a little surprising to hear early works of his (and of his mentor, Arnold Schoenberg) that are decidedly tonal and unabashedly Romantic. It is telling that in rehearsals of even his most seemingly esoteric and mathematical twelve-tone compositions, Webern would ceaselessly admonish the musicians to play his music passionately and richly, as though they were playing Brahms or Wagner. Among his chamber compositions, there is no better work to show this side of Webern than his *Langsamer Satz*.

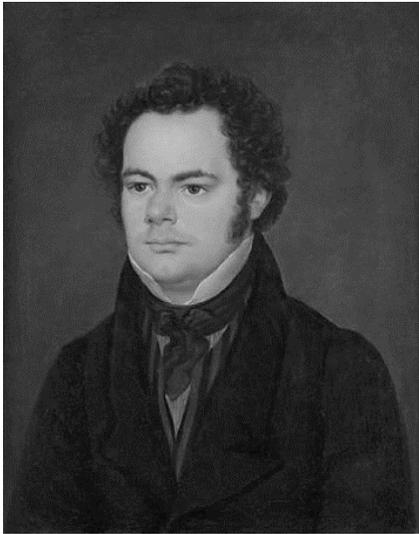
Meaning “slow movement” (or, literally, “slower movement”), *Langsamer Satz* was composed following a spring he had spent hiking in Lower Austria with his cousin Wilhelmine. During this trip, he had fallen desperately in love with her, and they would eventually marry. Very much in the late Romantic style of Schoenberg’s *Verklarte Nacht* for String Sextet, *Langsamer Satz* is unabashedly Romantic, and, while brief, is packed with sumptuous melodies and juicy climaxes. While admittedly not quite the masterpiece Schoenberg had composed in 1898, it is nevertheless an affecting love song that has, understandably, had lasting appeal for lovers of the string quartet repertoire.



Franz Schubert (1797-1828) **String Quartet No. 13 in a minor, D. 804, "Rosamunde" (1824)**

(~35 minutes)

Franz Schubert idolized Ludwig van Beethoven, who was in many ways all the things Schubert was not. Beethoven was famous, controversial, and influential in his own day. Having essentially ushered in the age of Romanticism in music with the compositions of his “heroic” middle period, Beethoven composed very little in the 1810s and early 1820s, which happened to be Schubert’s formative years. It was



during the early 1820s that Schubert truly developed his own unique musical style, with most of his music receiving its only public performances in salon concerts in his family home, and much of it never performed at all. (The “Rosamunde,” in fact, was the only one of Schubert’s fifteen string quartets performed and published in his own lifetime.)

Considering the fact that he lived only to the age of 31, to call Schubert’s mature compositions “late” works seems a bit of a misnomer, but there are few genres of his compositional output that highlight his maturation as a composer better than his string quartets. The first eleven of these are decidedly youthful works – not without their charms by any means, but they are far more Classical, even Haydnesque, and certainly briefer than his final three works in this genre. After giving up on the twelfth string quartet, which exists only as the one “Quartettsatz” movement (performed by MCP here at RBCMS years ago), Schubert found his way back to the medium four years later in 1824 during a year devoted almost entirely to chamber music composition.

The result is rather surprising, especially considering the fact that the ever popular “Death and the Maiden” String Quartet – virtuosic, impassioned, tragic, and bombastic – was composed in the same year. Rather, Schubert’s “Rosamunde” Quartet by and large is elegant, demure, understated, and charming. The work begins with a melancholy atmosphere created by ostinato figures in the lower three voices. The plaintive melody in the first violin begins in the same character, but becomes increasingly wistful and even hopeful, before being brought down to Earth again by a loud outburst in the viola and cello. This serves as a template for much of the first two movements, as stated by Kai Christeson: “Using multiple themes, flexible textures, strong dynamics and briefly alarming swatches of fugato, the music rises and falls, each new positive gesture thwarted by an ever-stronger darkness.”

The second movement’s limpid theme is responsible for this work’s nickname, as it is taken from Schubert’s incidental music for a play of the same name. This “long-short-short” rhythmic structure is undoubtedly a nod to the famous second movement of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, whose character and structure was no doubt also very much in Schubert’s mind here. But where Beethoven would surely place a lightning quick, unpredictable scherzo next, Schubert’s thoughtful, otherworldly third movement is a fascinating character piece, and one feels grounded in the real world only briefly in its gently rolling waltz-like middle section.

After all the emotional weight of the first three movements, the lightness and grace of the Finale is much needed. Again, in stark contrast to the “Death and the Maiden” Quartet’s wild, unhinged tarantella, Rosamunde’s Finale is a more moderately-paced and even folksy delight, ingeniously rounding out one of Schubert’s most subtle creations. Though the work clearly owes much to Beethoven’s looming influence (it was even dedicated to Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the same violinist who premiered all of Beethoven’s String Quartets), one might say that while Beethoven’s music is about the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, Schubert’s music is about humanity’s connection to the metaphysical. Perhaps none of Schubert’s other chamber works is better representative of this.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
String Quartet in F Major (1903)

(~30 minutes)



It is difficult to imagine how a 27-year old Maurice Ravel managed to write one of the most enduringly popular string quartets in history with the amount of pressure he was under at the time of its composition. The public had already begun to recognize that Ravel was one of the great composers of his day, but at the Paris Conservatoire (where Ravel had done his studies), he was not well liked by the venerable institution’s director, as well as many conservative faculty members, by whom he was considered too radical and unconventional. Ravel’s teacher Gabriel Fauré had given him much encouragement, but it seemed that it was necessary at that time for Ravel to win the Prix de Rome, the most coveted musical award in France at that time, to solidify his career and reputation. Ravel tried five times to win this award, and when he was unsuccessful the final time—once again due to intervention from Paris Conservatoire faculty—it caused such a scandal that the whole administration at the institution had to be reorganized.

In any case, while unsuccessful in his attempts to win this prize with the submission of his only String Quartet, the work would go on to attain massive popularity in his own lifetime, despite being very controversial among critics upon its premiere. Though Ravel dedicated the work to his teacher, Fauré was not particularly enamored of the piece as a whole, and greatly disliked its Finale. And while one publication hailed Ravel after the String Quartet’s premiere as “one of the masters

of tomorrow," another found the music "chiefly remarkable for vagueness of significance, incoherence, and weird harmonic eccentricities."

The most common observation of it was its similarity to the lone String Quartet of Claude Debussy, premiered about a decade earlier (which had also caused a great deal of controversy at the time). And while Ravel undoubtedly based much of his quartet's structure and colorful effects on Debussy's masterpiece, and Debussy, perhaps unsurprisingly, greatly praised Ravel's work, there are some important differences in Ravel's style and execution here. As stated by Arbie Orenstein, Ravel's approach is "opposite to that of Debussy's symbolism," abandoning "the vagueness and formlessness of the early French impressionists in favor of a return to classic standards." Ravel's String Quartet can be considered a distillation of the radical ideas of Debussy's String Quartet into a perfect marriage of French impressionism and Austro-German structure and formal discipline.

While Debussy's Quartet begins with a brash outburst, an opening movement of youthful vigor and virtuosity, Ravel's sweet elegance and ethereal calm could not be more different. Chant-like melodic figures are swept along by glassy accompaniments, allowing only one colorful outburst that serves as the movement's midpoint. The movement most closely resembling Debussy's in character is the second, punctuated by playful, highly rhythmic pizzicato figures. Again, chant-like melodies sing above crystalline, undulating figures, and precise interplay and trading off of motives creates a wondrous atmosphere. Different from Debussy's Quartet, however, is the fact that this movement has an entire contrasting middle section that the analogous movement from Debussy's quartet lacks. Clearly very much steeped in the emerging jazz influence in Parisian musical culture, it is as though we are transported to a smoke-filled bar, possibly even a burlesque show. Sexy, slinky figures create a wholly unique atmosphere before returning to the playful opening material.

The third movement returns to the intimate simplicity of the first, with a gentle, extended viola solo giving a delicate and understated quality to the outer sections of this movement. Its middle section contains some of Ravel's most "impressionist" writing, with washes of color splashing onto the canvas out of nowhere and thrilling figurations in each instrument punctuating the texture—but they dissipate as quickly as they arrive. Interestingly while the Finale of Debussy's Quartet begins slowly and gradually gathers steam, Ravel hits the ground running for his. In the rhythmically off-kilter 5/8 meter, a sense of unease is constant, with the overwhelming feeling of being on a train that is about to run off the rails. Fauré may

not have liked it, but it is surely an exciting conclusion, and its bombast is perhaps necessary after three movements of such delicate subtlety.

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The recording of the Manhattan Chamber Players concert is scheduled to be broadcast on the Brookdale Community College cable access channel on December 18, 2022, at 4:30 PM

Subsequent Broadcasts:

- December 19, 2022, 2:30 and 7:30 PM
- December 23, 2022, 7:30
- December 24, 2022, 7:30

The recording will premiere on YouTube starting Sunday, December 18, 2022, at 4:30. You can access the YouTube recording at www.rbcms.org

Artists

The **Manhattan Chamber Players** are a chamber music collective of New York-based musicians who share the common aim of performing the greatest works in the chamber repertoire at the highest level. Formed in 2015 by Artistic Director and violist Luke Fleming, MCP is comprised of an impressive roster of musicians who all come from the tradition of great music making at the Marlboro Music Festival, Steans Institute at Ravinia, Music@Menlo, Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival and Perlman Music Program, and are former students of the Curtis Institute, Juilliard School, Colburn School, and the New England Conservatory.

MCP has been praised in *Strings Magazine* for “A fascinating program concept...It felt refreshingly like an auditory version of a vertical wine tasting.” The article went on to applaud MCP for “an intensely wrought and burnished performance...Overall, I wished I could put them on repeat.” At the core of MCP’s inspiration is its members’ joy in playing this richly varied repertoire with longtime friends and colleagues, with whom they have been performing since they were students. Its roster allows for the programming of the entire core string, wind, and piano chamber music repertoire—from piano duos to clarinet quintets to string octets. While all its members have independent careers as soloists and chamber musicians, they strive for every opportunity to come together and again share in this special collaboration, creating “a mellifluous blend of vigorous intensity and dramatic import, performed with enthusiasm, technical facility and impressive balance, relishing distinctions...a winning performance.” (Classical Source)

Members of MCP are current and former members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Ensemble Connect, and the Aizuri, Attacca, Dover, Escher, Vega, and Ying Quartets, the Aletheia, Appassionata, and Lysander Piano Trios, and Imani Winds. They are top prizewinners in the Banff, Concert Artists Guild, Fischhoff, Melbourne, Naumburg, Osaka, Primrose, Queen Elisabeth, Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky, Tertis, and Young Concert Artists Competitions, and are some of the most sought after solo and chamber performers of their generation. The Manhattan Chamber Players have been featured multiple times on NPR’s *Performance Today*, and is the Ensemble-in-Residence at both the Festival de Febrero in Mexico and the Crescent City Chamber Music Festival in New Orleans. In addition to its numerous concerts across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, MCP regularly tours in Asia and the Middle East, and has led chamber music residency programs at institutions throughout the U.S. and abroad.



Praised by the San Francisco Chronicle as being “fresh, different and exhilarating” and Strings Magazine as “intensely wrought and burnished“, violinist **Grace Park** captivates audiences with her artistry, passion and virtuosity. Winner of the Naumburg International Violin Competition, she is one of the leading artists of her generation.

Ms. Park’s upcoming season includes her Carnegie Hall debut performing Barber's violin concerto at Stern Auditorium. She will also make recital appearances at the Schubert Club, Krannert Center, Weill Recital Hall, and Merkin Concert Hall, and giving her Mexico debut with the Mexico City Philharmonic.

This past year, Ms. Park recorded her first solo album with the Prague Philharmonia and their music director, Emmanuel Villaume, which will include concertos and solo works of Mozart and Dvorak. It is set to be released in the fall of 2022.

Ms. Park has appeared as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Canada at venues such as Walt Disney Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Rudolfinum in Prague, Schubert Club, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Jordan Hall. She has performed and participated in festivals such as Music @ Menlo, IMS Prussia Cove, Festival Mozaic, Yellowbarn, and Perlman Music Program, where she has performed with many of today's celebrated artists.

A devoted and passionate educator, Ms. Park is an alumna of Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect and has taught masterclasses and coached at Conservatorio de Musica de Cartagena, Mannes School of Music, Festival Mozaic, Arkansas University, Washington and Lee University, North Dakota State University, and Skidmore College.

As a native to Los Angeles, California, Ms. Park began violin at the age of 5 where she trained at the Colburn School of Music. She continued her studies at Colburn Conservatory and New England Conservatory for her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees. Principle teachers are Donald Weilerstein, Miriam Fried, Sylvia Rosenberg, and Robert Lipsett. She now resides in New York City.

Ms. Park plays on a 1717 Andreas Guarneri generously on loan from an anonymous patron.



A winner of Astral’s 2016 National Auditions, violinist **Katie Hyun** has appeared as soloist with the Houston Symphony, the Dallas Chamber Orchestra, the

Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Columbia Festival Orchestra, among others. Praised for her “sensitivity and top shelf artistry” (Cleveland.com), she has also been featured as concerto soloist with South Korea’s Busan Sinfonietta and Incheon Philharmonic. She has appeared in numerous festivals, including the Chelsea Music Festival (NY), Bravo! Vail (CO), Chamber Music Northwest Winter Festival (Portland, OR), Bright Sheng’s “The Intimacy of Creativity” Festival in Hong Kong, and the “New York in Chuncheon” and Busan Chamber Music Festivals, both in South Korea. On Baroque violin, Ms. Hyun has recorded and frequently appears with Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Sebastians, and New York Baroque Incorporated.

Ms. Hyun is the founder and director of Quodlibet Ensemble, a small chamber orchestra that debuted to great acclaim in 2008. The Ensemble has since performed at the Shepherd Music Series in Collinsville, the Yale British Arts Center, and at Drew University in Madison, NJ. Quodlibet Ensemble made its New York debut in March 2016, followed by an appearance at Rockefeller University. In the spring of 2014, the ensemble released its debut album.

Ms. Hyun was also a founding member of the award-winning Amphion String Quartet, which won the Concert Artists’ Guild Management in 2011, and a spot on the roster of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s CMS Two Program. The quartet’s debut CD was also featured among The New York Times’ “Best of 2015.” The ASQ has performed in Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and at Chamber Music Northwest, La Jolla Music Society’s SummerFest, the OK Mozart International Music Festival, the Chautauqua Institution, and the Caramoor Summer Music Festival. Ms. Hyun received an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music, where she studied Baroque violin with Robert Mealy and modern violin with Ani Kavafian. She holds a Master’s degree from SUNY Stony Brook, where she studied with Pamela Frank, Ani Kavafian, and Philip Setzer. She also studied with Aaron Rosand and Pamela Frank at the Curtis Institute of Music, where she earned a Bachelor of Music degree.



Praised by The Philadelphia Inquirer for his “glowing refinement,” violist **Luke Fleming**’s performances have been described by The Strad as “confident and expressive...playing with uncanny precision,” and lauded by Gramophone for their “superlative technical and artistic execution.” Festival appearances include the Marlboro Music School and Festival, the Steans Institute at Ravinia, Perlman Music Program, the Norfolk and Great Lakes Chamber Music Festivals, the Melbourne Festival, Bravo!Vail, and Festival Mozaic. Formerly the violist of the internationally

acclaimed Attacca Quartet, he has served as Artist-in-Residence for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received the National Federation of Music Clubs Centennial Chamber Music Award. He was awarded First Prize at the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition and top prizes at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

In 2015, Mr. Fleming became the Founding Artistic Director of both the Manhattan Chamber Players, a New York-based chamber music collective, and the Crescent City Chamber Music Festival. He currently serves as Adjunct Professor of Viola at the University of New Orleans School of the Arts. He is also a founding member of the Delaware-based Serafin Ensemble. He has performed as a guest artist with the Escher, Pacifica, Serafin, and Solera String Quartets, the Eroica, Lysander, and Gryphon Piano Trios, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Decoda, Ensemble Connect, Sejong Soloists, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and the New York Classical Players, and has given masterclasses at UCLA, Louisiana State University, Ithaca College, Columbus State University, Syracuse University, Melbourne University, and the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, among others. Mr. Fleming has served on the faculties of the Innsbrook Institute, Renova Music Festival, Festival del Lago, and Houston ChamberFest, and Fei Tian College and is Lecturer-in-Residence for the concert series Project: Music Heals Us.

Mr. Fleming holds the degrees of Doctor of Musical Arts, Artist Diploma, and Master of Music from the Juilliard School, a Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music in London, and a Bachelor of Music summa cum laude from Louisiana State University. He is represented with the Manhattan Chamber Players by Arts Management Group.



Praised for his “fluid virtuosity” and “soulful melodies,” Los Angeles native **Brook Speltz** has been inspired since childhood by the long tradition of deep musical mastery of artists such as Jascha Heifetz, Pierre Fournier, and the Guarneri String Quartet. Mr. Speltz is the cellist of the internationally renowned Escher String Quartet—Quartet-in-Residence at Southern Methodist University in Dallas—and an artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

An extremely versatile cellist, Mr. Speltz has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and recitalist throughout the US, Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. First Prize winner of the prestigious Ima Hogg Competition, he has performed as a soloist with the Houston Symphony, Colorado Music Festival Orchestra and International Contemporary Ensemble, among others, and is a regular performer at

England's IMS Prussia Cove and on tour with Musicians from Marlboro. An avid and sought after chamber musician, Mr. Speltz has been personally invited by musical giants such as Itzhak Perlman and Richard Goode to collaborate in chamber music recitals and tours throughout the country. As a result of these collaborations, he has been nominated for the inaugural Warner Music Prize, a newly established prize presented by Warner Music and Carnegie Hall.

A lover of all facets of the music world, Mr. Speltz has enjoyed performing on extensive tours with the cello rock band Break of Reality, whose online video of the Game of Thrones cover immediately went viral and has already received over 8.5 million views. Their recent U.S. tour raised funds and awareness for music programs in public schools all around the country. Mr. Speltz studied at the renowned Curtis Institute of Music with Peter Wiley and at the Juilliard School with Joel Krosnick, after his formative years of study with Eleanor Schoenfeld in Los Angeles. He performs on a 1756 J.C. Gigli on loan from his father, a cellist and his first inspiration in a family of professional musicians.