

The Red Bank  
Chamber Music Society

*presents*

Manhattan Chamber Players

Luke Fleming, Violist

Katie Hyun, Violin

Ayane Kozasa, Viola

Grace Park, Violin

Brook Speltz, Cello

ADVANCE NOTES

Mozart • Shostakovich • Brahms

Sunday Afternoon

September 17, 2017 • 4:30 PM

Trinity Church Auditorium

Red Bank, NJ

# PROGRAM

String Quintet in G minor, K. 516 (1787)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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

String Quartet No. 7 in F# minor, Op. 108 (1960)

Dmitri Shostakovich

- I. Allegretto
- II. Lento
- III. Allegro - Allegretto - [Adagio]

## INTERMISSION

String Quintet No. 2 in G major, Op. 111 (1890)

Johannes Brahms

- I. Allegro non troppo, ma con brio
- II. Adagio
- III. Un poco Allegretto
- IV. Vivace, ma non troppo presto

# Notes on the Program

## Chiaroscuro

Though generally known to visual artists and art aficionados as an oil painting technique that developed during the Renaissance (Rembrandt being a notable practitioner), Chiaroscuro—literally, light (*chiaro*) and dark (*oscuro*)—was a juxtaposition of opposites that influenced a number of different art forms. In Classical music, this can be observed most dramatically in works from the Classical period (roughly 1750–1830) and especially skillfully employed by Franz Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Being a composer that looked to past Classical masters to inform his Romantic sensibilities, Johannes Brahms was undoubtedly influenced by this subtle shading in many of his compositions, and certainly in the one heard on this afternoon’s program. In the music of Dmitri Shostakovich, a composer whose life was fraught with tragedy, hardship, and oppression, one has no trouble finding music filled with weighty pathos. And yet, there is rarely absent his own sarcastic—even sardonic—sense of humor, making his works often seem two-faced and even schizophrenic at times. This afternoon’s program brings the music of these three masters together under the banner of this art form, which is still studied and continues to influence artists of all disciplines today.

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)** **String Quintet in G minor, K. 516 (1787)**

(~35 minutes)



Mozart is all about shading with subtlety and simplicity, and in the case of String Quintet in G minor, K. 516 (1787) these qualities can best be seen when considering the work’s historical context. Mozart wrote the work immediately following his father’s death, yet rather than wear his emotions out on his sleeve with an anguished, impassioned work,

this music reflects a more measured and deeply pensive response. In the brooding first movement, it is as though every phrase is a heavy sigh, and yet rays of light continually shine through, as though depicting a thick curtain that is unable to completely block out that sun. One can hardly imagine dancing to the minuet that serves as the second movement, as biting, anguished chords continually jump out just as the tension seems to be easing up. Though the third movement is set in a major key, it somehow communicates his mourning most vividly. Tchaikovsky (as emotional a composer as one can find) would later say of this movement: “No one has ever known as well how to interpret so exquisitely in music the sense of resigned and inconsolable sorrow.” Following this, a melancholy introductory aria seems to be setting up a finale that will continue in this now familiar vein, but instead the writing is as light and jovial as music can be. This complete foil to the rest of the piece continues to be a mystery to scholars and musicians alike: is it mere throwaway light entertainment, or is it Mozart thumbing his nose at his audience in an endearingly ironic twist?



**Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)**  
**String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, Op. 80 (1960)**

*(~13 minutes)*



The traditional view one has of Dmitri Shostakovich is as the tortured artist, living in constant fear of the Communist censors sending the police to beat down his door and take him away for writing music that went against the requirements of that regime. While knowing this is certainly an important part of understanding Shostakovich’s life and work, it is not necessarily the lens through which we should necessarily view all of his compositions. His String Quartet No. 7 in F# minor, Op. 108

(1960), for example, was composed in memory of his first wife, Nina, who had died six years before. His choice of the key of F# minor for this work is conspicuous for a number of reasons: for one thing, it broke a pattern that was established and rigorously maintained by Shostakovich of composing each of his fifteen string quartets in the submediant key of the preceding quartet, and for this reason, on paper, it sticks out like a sore thumb in the cycle. In addition, F# minor—an awkward, unusual key—had long been associated with grief and suffering: Bach conspicuously uses it in his St. John Passion when the penitent Peter cries out in remorse after denying Christ three times. Mozart used it only once in all his compositions (the slow movement of his Piano Concerto No. 23, K. 488) in a context that is perhaps the most heartbreakingly beautiful of all his works. It is also the key of Gustav Mahler's tortured, unfinished Tenth Symphony.

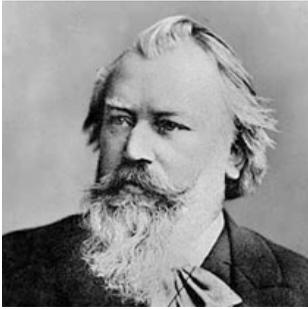
True to form, Shostakovich creates a work filled not with pathos, but generally with light simplicity. Performed without pause and at a mere thirteen minutes, it is by far the shortest of his string quartets, and it constantly jumps back and forth from F# minor to major—so much so that it is scarcely fair to say it is in one key or another. Minimalist throughout the almost cute first movement and eerie second movement, Shostakovich suddenly erupts into an abrasive, angry, and lightning quick fugue in the third movement, as though he is finally able to show his true feelings and the lingering pain of the memory of Nina's death from six years before. This gives way to a return to themes from both the first and second movements, with the piece closing as sparsely as it started, now in F# major. The work is an oddity when placed among Shostakovich's best-known works, but like the art form of chiaroscuro, its subtle shading and economy of means places it among his finest compositions.



Thanks to Luke Fleming for the program notes for this concert.

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**  
**String Quintet No. 2 in G major, Op. 111 (1890)**

*(~30 minutes)*



Johannes Brahms had a very different upbringing than that of Mozart. He had grown up in the slums of Hamburg, the son of a double bassist locally known as the “beer fiddler.” From age 13 to 18, Brahms, a talented but largely untrained pianist, was forced to accompany his father’s band in local brothels and bars to help provide for his family. The long nights and sexual abuse that accompanied this period left him with an understandably skewed perception of women and society in general, but after a long period of recovery in the country with a relative of better means, he was able to go to Vienna and pursue a career in composition and as a concert pianist. Almost entirely self-taught, by the end of his life Brahms had long been regarded as the world’s most famous and respected composer, though old wounds had never healed and he had largely withdrawn from society.

Even so, when Brahms composed his String Quintet No. 2 in G major, Op. 111 (1890) as his intended final composition, he mustered every ounce of drama, pathos, and joy he had at his command to create one of his most impressive works. This piece has it all. It begins in glorious triumph, with an infamous solo that any serious cellist would give anything to play. Contrasting with the epic density of the first movement, the Adagio that follows begins very simply in the lower three voices, proceeding as a somber dirge. Just as the music seems to fade away entirely, a passionate outburst triggers an impassioned catharsis and resigned conclusion that make this movement a true emotional journey. An air of restlessness pervades in the outer sections of the third movement, but the middle section (like the second movement of Mozart’s Quintet) momentarily lets light shine through. This sets up the joyful release of the finale, which is every bit as complex as the first movement but with just enough folksy charm to round out an immensely satisfying work.

## In Memoriam

Over the summer, the Red Bank Chamber Music Society lost two cherished members of our volunteer family.

In June, we lost **Charlotte Schlosser**. Charlotte was an active volunteer for the Society for many years, involved in all aspects of concert planning and logistics. Many RBCMS members' first impression of the Society was shaped by Charlotte's warm and friendly greetings as she collected post cards and took attendance, but she did much, much more behind the scenes as well.

In August, **Laura Noll** passed away. In her many years on the RBCMS Board of Trustees, Laura brought a sunny and positive attitude to our meetings. She ably served as treasurer, handling the budgetary, tax, insurance, and other financial matters that kept RBCMS solvent and legal. Laura's unfailing dedication to detail and "get it done" approach has been a critical factor in the Society's success.

Please join us in remembering these two outstanding women and in offering the Schlosser and Noll families our sincerest condolences.



# 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 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, New England Conservatory, and Yale School of Music.

Members of MCP are current and former members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, ACJW, and the Amphion, Attacca, Dover, Escher, Vega, and Ying Quartets, and the Lysander, Madison, and Sheridan Piano Trios. They are top prizewinners in the Banff, Concert Artists Guild, Fischhoff, Melbourne, Naumburg, Osaka, Primrose, Queen Elisabeth, Rubenstein, Tchaikovsky, Tertis, and Young Concert Artists Competitions, and are some of the most sought-after solo and chamber performers of their generation. During its inaugural season, in addition to numerous concerts across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Europe, and Asia, the Manhattan Chamber Players has been featured multiple times on NPR's Performance Today, and is the Ensemble-in-Residence at both the Northern Lights Music Festival in Mexico and the Crescent City Chamber Music Festival in New Orleans. Upcoming seasons add tours of Israel, France, and China to MCP's busy concert schedule in NYC and across the U.S. Members of the Manhattan Chamber Players performing today are:

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, Festival Mozaic, and the Virginia Arts Festival, as well as concerts and

residencies across North and South America, Europe, and Asia. From 2009 – 2015, Mr. Fleming was violist of the internationally acclaimed Attacca Quartet, with whom he served as Quartet-in-Residence for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Graduate Resident String Quartet at the Juilliard School. Mr. Fleming was also awarded First Prize at the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition and top prizes at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, as well as the National Federation of Music Clubs Centennial Chamber Music Award. 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, a mission/outreach-centric festival held in his hometown, New Orleans.

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 appears with Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Sebastians, and New York Baroque Incorporated.

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. A violinist turned violist, she holds a Bachelor of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Artist Certificates from both the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and the Kronberg Academy Masters school in Germany. Ms. Kozasa's solo career took off when she won the 2011 Primrose International Viola Competition. 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 unearthed 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 cello, which they premiered in Washington DC at the S&R Foundation.

**Grace Park** is a dynamic violinist, dedicated chamber musician, and passionate pedagogue. Her diverse career has carried her from the world's foremost concert halls to universities around the country as a soloist, collaborator, coach, and educator. As a soloist, Ms. Park has been the featured soloist at The Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, Walt Disney Hall, Jordan Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Grace Rainey Auditorium in the Metropolitan Museum, the Rudolfinum in Prague, and Glinka Hall in St. Petersburg – with orchestras including North Czech Philharmonia, Russian Chamber Philharmonic, Napoli Chamber Orchestra, and, most recently, an engagement with Maxim Vengerov at the Cartegena Music Festival. For the 2016 – 2017 season, upcoming engagements include concerto debuts in Mexico and Poland.

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. As of May of 2015, he is the new cellist of the internationally renowned Escher String Quartet and an artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. 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.