

The Red Bank
Chamber Music Society

presents

The Manhattan Chamber Players

Francesca dePasquale, Violin

Siwoo Kim, Violin

Luke Fleming, Viola

Michael Katz, Cello

Mozart • Beethoven

Schubert • Shostakovich

Sunday Afternoon

October 17, 2021 • 4:30 PM

Trinity Church Auditorium

Red Bank, NJ

ADVANCE NOTES

PROGRAM

String Quartet in B-flat Major, K. 589 "Prussian" (1790)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

- I. Allegro
- II. Larghetto
- III. Menuetto: Moderato
- IV. Allegro assai

String Trio in G major, Op. 9 No. 1 (1798)

Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Adagio - Allegro con brio
- II. Adagio, ma non tanto, e cantabile
- III. Scherzo. Allegro
- IV. Presto

INTERMISSION

Quartettsatz in C minor (1820)

Franz Schubert

String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110 (1960)

Dmitri Shostakovich

- I. Largo
- II. Allegro molto
- III. Allegretto
- IV. Largo
- V. Largo

Notes on the Program

Mozart Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791) **String Quartet in Bb major, K. 589 “Prussian” (1790)**

(~22 minutes)



Following his six best-known string quartets, which were dedicated to his best friend Franz Joseph Haydn (the last of which, the “Dissonance,” was heard at Red Bank last month), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart the following year composed an uncharacteristic “one-off” quartet (K. 499) dedicated to another friend, music publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister, followed four years later by a set of three (intended to eventually be six) works in the genre that were commissioned by Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia. Published posthumously, this royal commission is what gives the set of three works the nickname the “Prussian” Quartets.

W.A. Mozart made no secret of his dislike of the cello, and modern day cellists often bemoan the fact that so brilliant and prolific a composer did not compose a single cello concerto or sonata. In his many chamber works (such as Mozart’s seven earlier string quartets), Mozart’s cello parts are conspicuously lacking in melodic material; such is not the case in these final three string quartets, which instead prominently feature the King’s own instrument, the cello. Perhaps most in the second of these three, the String Quartet in Bb major, K. 589, the cello emerges from the ensemble as being far more than a textural necessity, frequently trading off melodies and motives with the first violin and the viola, Mozart’s own instrument.

Interestingly balanced, K. 589’s first two movements are both highly lyrical, melodic, and practically overflowing with Mozart’s signature “operatic” style, while the third and fourth movements are both light, intricate, and motive-driven. The first movement is as subtle an opening movement as exists in Mozart’s string quartets, gentle and singing throughout with scarcely any bombast or virtuosic display. The second movement stands out as one of the loveliest slow movements in all Mozart’s chamber music, with the opening, recurring cello melody capturing all the beauty and nobility of Mozart’s most gorgeous tenor arias from his later operas. The charming third movement boasts an interesting feature – its ABA structure, standard for a Minuet movement, contains a middle section more than twice as long as the A section, making it uncharacteristically rather disproportionate – but the music is so magical, how could anyone complain!

The brief last movement serves really as a coda to the sprawling three movements that precede it, but is nonetheless a brilliant homage to the Father of the String Quartet himself, Franz Joseph Haydn. (Would you really know this movement was composed by Mozart if it weren’t written in the program?) There is a wonderful anecdote that when playing one of Mozart’s string quartets together in their “composers’ quartet,” in a spot where Mozart was clearly imitating Haydn in his writing, Haydn stopped playing, got up out of his chair, walked over to Mozart, and kissed him on the head without saying a word. In this instance, Haydn was no doubt tickled pink.

The three “Prussian” quartets were praised after their publication one year after Mozart’s death for their still rather unique feature of giving the cello a greater role in the music making, and they were widely admired. Indeed, Haydn himself commented: “If Mozart had written nothing but these string quartets and his Requiem, they alone would have been sufficient to make him immortal.”



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) **String Trio in G major, Op. 9 no. 1 (1798)**

(~27 minutes)



By the time Ludwig van Beethoven had begun to publish some of his first mature compositions, Haydn had elevated the string quartet from being considered light background music to the place of highest prestige as a among chamber music genres. So, by 1785, chamber music was considered high art, and Mozart took that idea and ran with it, as evidenced in his string quartets dedicated to Haydn from 1785 and the aforementioned “Prussian” Quartets of 1790 (the second of which is on today’s program). Beethoven idolized Mozart and sought to emulate his prodigious talent as a young composer and virtuoso performer. He also studied composition with Haydn, so by his late 20s he was well positioned to “take up the baton” as a composer of serious chamber music. But the prospect of composing his first string quartet was intimidating, to say the least, after the standard had been set so high by the men Beethoven so revered.

The string trio, however, was an almost completely unexplored genre of chamber music. In fact, the only substantial work that had been written for this chamber combination by the late 1790s was Mozart’s Divertimento in Eb major, K. 563, a brilliant yet sprawling, fiendishly difficult work that received very little attention in its own day. Mozart had written it largely as a gift to a friend and financial supporter of his who played the cello, the same cellist who would perform in the premiere of Beethoven’s answer to Mozart’s Divertimento – his String Trio in Eb, Op. 3, which was soon followed by his set of three string trios, the Op. 9.

Consequently, the Op. 9 trios are largely considered to be works Beethoven wrote in preparation for his first set of String Quartets, his Op. 18, composed the following year. While this is not a totally inaccurate statement (Beethoven would not compose any more trios after his Op. 9, devoting himself to the string quartet from then on), and many similarities can be found between these compositions, the importance of Beethoven’s Op. 9 should not be underestimated. For one thing, they are of a more manageable length than Mozart’s Divertimento and Beethoven’s own Op. 3. Rather than a six-movement, hour-long affair, the Op. 9 are each in four movements and under 30 minutes in length, streamlined and more user-friendly for both the performers and the audience. They also have a great deal of contrast: the second of the three is light and charming, the third emotional and stormy, and the first, the String Trio in G major, Op. 9 no. 1 (1798) is bold, confident, and even symphonic.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction, briefly introducing each of the three instruments individually after establishing the fuller group sound in the opening statement. This “democracy of parts” continues throughout the whole work, with each instrument featured prominently in the first movement’s boisterous, good-natured atmosphere. The second movement is a tender song, aria-like with a wonderfully nostalgic and intimate quality to counter the first movement’s grandeur. At first listen, the third movement seems to be a simple, playful minuet with the standard ABA format, but then Beethoven takes a surprising turn by adding an additional contrasting episode (making the format ABACA) that features the cello prominently in its high register above raucous accompaniment. The Finale is a *moto perpetuo*, with the relentless fast notes passed around the three instruments and scarcely stopping until the work’s final chords. Brilliant, dizzyingly virtuosic, yet also elegant, it is a fitting conclusion to this early masterpiece.



Franz Schubert (1797– 1828)
Quartettsatz in C minor, D. 703 (1820)

(~9 minutes)



It seems strange to discuss Schubert’s compositional periods as “early” and “late” when he lived to be only 31, but the *Quartettsatz in C minor, D. 703 (1820)* is widely regarded as one of Schubert’s first mature compositions. Schubert had intended to compose a standard four-movement work, as indicated by the additional presence of the first 40 measures of the planned second movement (an *Andante*) of this work, which he ultimately abandoned. The existing *Quartettsatz* is especially interesting for a planned first movement, taking off with a lightness, speed, and intensity more akin to a scherzo or finale movement. Schubert contrasts this with a lovely, gently rocking theme in Ab major cushioned by a gently undulating accompaniment, a juxtaposition of two distinct characters that continues throughout the movement.

The fact that this afternoon’s program contains works by both Beethoven and Mozart is entirely appropriate when considering the musical content of the *Quartettsatz*. Schubert worshipped both composers (particularly Beethoven), and the two contrasting characters in this short movement are so clearly influenced by each of them. The stormy opening character – motivic, dramatic, and angular – is so very Beethovenian, whereas the lyrical, even operatic second theme feels like it could be one of Mozart’s most elegant melodies. And yet, Schubert manages to maintain his own voice, never a copycat, creating a unique and, at times, even mystical sound world.

Schubert would not attempt another string quartet for four years after he abandoned this work, at which point he completed both the famous “Rosamunde” and “Death and the Maiden” quartets. Schubert never heard his *Quartettsatz* performed. It received its premiere in 1867 and was published three years later, largely through the efforts of Johannes Brahms.



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975) **String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110 (1960)**

(~20 minutes)



Practically anything having to do with Dmitri Shostakovich and his music is a like a masterclass in duality and contradiction. While he lived until 1975, and, unlike with the other three composers on this program, we actually have a great body of video footage, radio and written interviews, and personal correspondence of his, the conditions under which he lived his life in Soviet Russia require us to be skeptical about practically everything we think we might “know.”

One associates Shostakovich’s music with his career-long struggle with the very real fear of public censorship of his work (which did happen more than once). A great deal of his writing is clearly an example of him begrudgingly giving the Soviet regime the music it demanded of him, and yet he is almost always somehow able to preserve his artistic integrity and unique voice. Sometimes this even manifests itself in an apparent jab at or criticism of Stalinist totalitarianism in his music; but, at the same time, in almost every one of these instances, such an association can only be speculation on our part. What cannot be denied, however, in experiencing Shostakovich’s music, is that his musical language is wholly unique and deeply personal. Few pieces exemplify this quite as dramatically as his String Quartet in C minor, Op. 110 (1960).

Composed in only three days immediately following a visit to the city of Dresden (the Allied firebombing of which in the Second World War killed more people than the bombing of Hiroshima) to work on music he was required to write for a Soviet propaganda film, the inscription on this work is “In memory of the victims of fascism and war.” However, in an interview conducted some years later—granted, an interview whose veracity has been called into extreme question—Shostakovich said that this dedication was only to fool the censors (“you would have to be blind and deaf [to believe the inscription]”), and that the work is purely autobiographical. There is certainly a great deal of musical material to back up this claim.

Shostakovich’s personal “motto” theme D-Eb-C-B (which in German musical spelling is D-S-C-H) begins and ends the work, and is present in some form throughout its five movements. On top of that, Shostakovich quotes copiously from his own previously composed works spanning his entire career up to that point. On the other hand, what Shostakovich himself called the “Jewish” theme presented at the climax of the second movement certainly speaks to the work’s official dedication. In his own words: “Jewish folk music has made a most powerful impression on me. It can appear to be happy while it is tragic. It's almost always laughter through tears. This quality is close to my ideas of what music should be. There should always be two layers in music. Jews were tormented so long that they learned to hide their despair. They express despair in dance music.” Furthermore, the fourth movement contains a dramatic setting of the Russian funeral anthem “Tormented by the weight of bondage, you glorify death with honor.”

The work is composed in five short movements played without pause. Its first movement begins with the aforementioned four-note “motto” theme based on Shostakovich’s name, which is given

fugal treatment, passed around all four instruments. This evolves into a prayerful elegy played by the first violin on top of a drone-like accompaniment in the lower three voices. The second movement interrupts like a gunshot, becoming a virtuosic spectacle—a chaotic and raucous buildup to the Jewish “dance” theme. The third movement functions as a perfect foil to this: a grotesque waltz whose playfulness seems almost macabre, like someone dancing on a battlefield filled with corpses.

The fourth movement is comprised of a series of quotations from different songs and themes from Shostakovich’s previous works, separated by a three-note “knocking” motive, long thought to represent either the KGB or Gestapo (who knows which, maybe both?) pounding loudly on one’s door in the middle of the night. Shostakovich brings it all home at the end – the “motto” theme returns, here developing into more of an elegy than a prayer, arriving at a climax that, for a moment, seems like the briefest ray of light before succumbing to dark resignation to close the work.

There is so much about Shostakovich’s musical intentions, hidden meanings, and true feelings that we will never know the truth of, but, despite the extreme hardship and pressure put on his art, he nevertheless left a massive body of work that is intimate yet powerful, heartbreaking yet triumphant, and full of both despair and hope.

Program Notes by Luke Fleming



The Red Bank Chamber Music Society is happy to welcome our musicians and members to in-person concerts.

Based on your responses to our membership survey, most of our members have been vaccinated COVID-19, but for everyone’s safety, **we are requiring that all attendees wear masks** while inside the Trinity Church building.

For those who might not be comfortable attending a live concert, we also plan on video recording all our concerts for broadcast on the Brookdale Community cable channel and for posting on YouTube. The recordings will likely be available 2-3 weeks following the concert date. We will notify you when the recorded concerts will be aired and posted.

Finally, as a favor to your fellow concertgoers, **please remember to turn off your cell phones.** If you feel you might have a cough coming on, please try to unwrap any lozenges before the concert begins or between movements.

Enjoy the concert!

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.



Described by critics as “scintillating” and celebrated for her “rich, expressive playing” (*Musical America*), violinist **Francesca dePasquale** is the First Prize winner of the 2010 Irving M. Klein International String Competition and recipient of the prestigious 2014 – 2016 career grant from the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship Fund for the Performing and Visual Arts. Earning her the 2015 Classical Recording Foundation Young Artist Award, her self-titled debut album and accompanying recital tour was praised for “sincerity, intensity” and “individual voice” (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*) and “immaculate and discreet phrasing” (*The Strad*). Additionally, she was featured in *Strings* magazine and on SiriusXM, WNYC, WQXR, WRTI (Philadelphia), and WFMT (Chicago).

An active chamber musician, Ms. dePasquale is the violinist of the Aletheia Piano Trio alongside pianist Fei-Fei Dong and cellist Juliette Herlin. She is a member of the artist roster for Manhattan Chamber Players and Noree Chamber soloists, and performs with Marinus Ensemble, Chameleon Arts Ensemble, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

Ms. dePasquale is a member of the violin faculty at Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts as well as Assistant Violin and Chamber Music faculty for the Juilliard School Pre-College Program. She joins the faculty of Oberlin Conservatory in the Fall of 2020. Additionally, she is a member of the violin faculty at the Heifetz International Music Institute. Previously, Ms. dePasquale served as the Starling Fellow

teaching assistant to Itzhak Perlman from 2013 – 2016 and teaching assistant to Catherine Cho from 2013 – 2018 at the Juilliard School, as well as Visiting Assistant Professor at Oberlin Conservatory of Music during the fall of 2018.

A graduate of the Juilliard and Colburn Schools, Ms. dePasquale studied with Itzhak Perlman, Catherine Cho, and Robert Lipsett. Previous teachers include Hirono Oka and William dePasquale, with additional mentorship from Norman Carol and Arnold Steinhardt. Ms. dePasquale performs on a 1968 Sergio Peresson violin and a Jean “Grand” Adam bow.

Siwoo Kim is an “incisive” and “compelling” (Zachary Woolfe, *The New York Times*) violinist who performs as soloist and chamber musician. Mr. Kim is also the founding co-artistic director of VIVO Music Festival in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio. He is the recipient of the 2012 King Award for Young Artists and has been prizewinner of the Corpus Christi, Chengdu, Hellam, Ima Hogg, Juilliard, Schadt, and WAMSO competitions. As a soloist, Mr. Kim made his New York concerto debut with the Juilliard Orchestra in Carnegie Hall’s Stern Auditorium, made his Walt Disney Concert Hall debut shortly after, and gave the world premiere performance of Samuel Adler’s only violin concerto. Next season, Mr. Kim will be recording the work in Berlin and making his South African debut with the KZN Philharmonic, Cape Town Philharmonic, and the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestras.

As a chamber musician, Mr. Kim has been a violinist for Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect and Marlboro Music Festival for the past several seasons. Aside from founding his own chamber music festival, Siwoo also founded Quartet Senza Misura. They have taken their “whip-smart performances” (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*) from Lincoln Center and Kennedy Center to South Korea, Spain and Venezuela. Mr. Kim has also shared the stage with Itzhak Perlman, Joyce DiDonato, Jeremy Denk, Kim Kashkashian, Stefan Jackiw, Richard O’Neill, and Anna Polonsky. Mr. Kim studied with Roland and Almita Vamos at the Music Institute of Chicago. He went on to receive both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from The Juilliard School, where he studied under Robert Mann, Donald Weilerstein and Ronald Copes. Mr. Kim Performs on the 1690 “Stephens” Stradivarius violin on generous loan from Florian Leonhard Fine Violins.

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 execute on.” 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 has performed as a guest artist with the Pacifica, Solera, Serafin, and Canterbury Quartets, the Eroica Trio, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Sejong Soloists, Ensemble Connect, 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. He 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.

Hailed by the press for his “bold, rich sound” (The Strad) and “nuanced musicianship,” (The New York Times), Israeli cellist **Michael Katz** has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in venues such as Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, Tokyo’s Oji Hall, and Jerusalem’s Henry Crown Auditorium. His musicianship has been recognized with many awards, among them all three prizes at the 2011 Aviv Competition, and First Prizes at the Juilliard School’s 2010 Concerto Competition and the 2005 Turjeman Competition.

High in demand as a chamber musician, Mr. Katz has collaborated and performed with artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Midori, Anthony Marwood, Donald Weilerstein, Peter Frankl, Roger Tapping, Charles Neidich, and others. As the cellist of the Lysander Piano Trio, Mr. Katz was a winner of the 2012 Concert Artists Guild Competition, and was awarded first prize in the 2011 Coleman Competition and 2011 J.C. Arriaga Competition. His festival appearances include performances at Ravinia, Music@Menlo, Lucerne, Yellow Barn, Sarasota, Malaga Clasica, and the Holland Music Sessions. Deeply committed to audience engagement and community outreach, Mr. Katz was a Fellow in Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect from 2014 – 2016

Born in Tel-Aviv, Mr. Katz began his cello studies at age seven, and his early teachers included Zvi Plesser, Hillel Zori and the late Mikhail Khomitzer. Mr. Katz received his Bachelor of Music degree from the New England Conservatory as a student of Laurence Lesser and his Master of Music from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Joel Krosnick. He has completed a Doctor of Music degree at SUNY Stony Brook as a student of Colin Carr.

