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Dvorák, *Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"*

Featuring piano soloist Bai Yang and conducted by Eduardo Leandro

Saturday, November 5

Vivian Fung, *Prayer*

Sibelius, *Violin Concerto*

Rachmaninov, *Symphonic Dances*

Featuring violin soloist So Jeong Kim and conducted by Jens Georg Bachmann

Saturday, December 10

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Saturday, February 18

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Shostakovich, *Cello Concerto No. 1*

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Zhihao Wu and conducted by Michelle Merrill

Saturday, March 25

James Lee III, *Niji Memories*

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Revisiting 5+1 at the Zuccaire Gallery
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EMERSON STRING QUARTET

TUESDAY, APRIL 11TH, 2023

Philip Setzer, violin
Eugene Drucker, violin
Lawrence Dutton, viola
Paul Watkins, cello

Chacony in G minor for String Quartet (arr. Britten) (c. 1678, arr. 1948, rev. 1963)
HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

Eugene Drucker, first violin

String Quartet in G Major, Op. 33, "Russian", No. 5, Hob. III:41, "How do you do?" (1781)
FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

- I. Vivace assai
- II. Largo e cantabile
- III. Scherzo: Allegro - Trio
- IV. Finale: Allegretto

Eugene Drucker, first violin

String Quartet No. 15 in D minor, Op. 10, "Haydn", No. 2, K. 421 (1783)
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

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

Eugene Drucker, first violin

-INTERMISSION-

String Quartet No. 8 in E minor Op. 59, No. 2, "Razumovsky" (1806)
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

- I. Allegro
- II. Molto adagio – Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento
- III. Allegretto – Maggiore (Thème Russe)
- IV. Finale: Presto

Philip Setzer, first violin

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EMERSON STRING QUARTET

ABOUT

The Emerson String Quartet has maintained its status as one of the world's premier chamber music ensembles for more than four decades. "With musicians like this," wrote a reviewer for *The Times* (London), "there must be some hope for humanity." The Quartet has made more than 30 acclaimed recordings, and has been honored with nine GRAMMYs® (including two for Best Classical Album), three Gramophone Awards, the Avery Fisher Prize, and Musical America's "Ensemble of the Year" award. The Quartet collaborates with some of today's most esteemed composers to premiere new works, keeping the string quartet form alive and relevant. The group has partnered in performance with such stellar soloists as Renée Fleming, Barbara Hannigan, Evgeny Kissin, Emanuel Ax, and Yefim Bronfman, to name a few.

In the 2021–2022 season, the Quartet gave the New York premiere of André Previn's *Penelope* at Carnegie Hall, alongside soprano Renée Fleming, actress Uma Thurman, and pianist Simone Dinnerstein, before reprising the program in a concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In addition to touring major American venues, the Quartet returned to Chamber Music Society of Louisville, where they completed a Beethoven cycle they had begun in spring 2020. Finally, the Quartet embarks on a six-city tour of Europe, with stops in Athens, Madrid, Pisa, Florence, Milan, and London's Southbank Centre where they presented the Emerson in a complete Shostakovich cycle, one of the staples in their repertoire.

The Quartet's extensive discography includes the complete string quartets of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bartok, Webern, and Shostakovich, as well as multi-CD sets of the major works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Dvorak. In 2018, Deutsche Grammophon issued a box of the Emerson Complete Recordings on the label. In October 2020, the group released a recording of Schumann's three string quartets for the Pentatone label. In the preceding year, the Quartet joined forces with GRAMMY®-winning pianist Evgeny Kissin to release a collaborative album for Deutsche Grammophon, recorded live at a sold-out Carnegie Hall concert in 2018.

Formed in 1976 and based in New York City, the Emerson String Quartet was one of the first quartets to have its violinists alternate in the first chair position. The Quartet, which takes its name from the American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, balances busy performing careers with a commitment to teaching, and serves as Quartet-in-Residence at Stony Brook University. In 2013, cellist Paul Watkins—a distinguished soloist, award-winning conductor, and devoted chamber musician—joined the original members of the Quartet to form today's group.

In the spring of 2016, the State University of New York awarded full-time Stony Brook faculty members Philip Setzer and Lawrence Dutton the status of Distinguished Professor, and conferred the title of Honorary Distinguished Professor on part-time faculty members Eugene Drucker and Paul Watkins. The Quartet's members also hold honorary doctorates from Middlebury College, the College of Wooster, Bard College, and the University of Hartford. In January of 2015, the Quartet received the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award, Chamber Music America's highest honor, in recognition of its significant and lasting contribution to the chamber music field.

PROGRAM NOTES

Purcell, *Chacony in G Minor* for Strings

Arranged by Benjamin Britten

When the English restored their monarchy in the early 1660s (the “Restoration”), London’s theaters were re-opened after a hiatus of nearly 30 years. There followed a great demand for theatrical entertainment, which lasted for decades. England did not want Italian opera; instead, it developed a style of spoken musical theater that employed large amounts of music. Most music was “incidental” — overtures, dances, entrance music, and entr’actes — and inserted songs. Yet entire scenes involving ritual or pageant might be set to music.

Henry Purcell (1659–1695) came along at just that time. He made greater musical contributions to Restoration theater than any other musician of the period.

The *Chacony in G minor* is believed to have originated as theater music. The *chaconne* procedure was a series of variations built on a short repeated bass line (a “theme,” sometimes only four notes long). One popular example is the Pachelbel *Canon*, developed on top of a repeated eight-note bass pattern. In many chaconnes, the repeated pattern may move temporarily to some of the higher instruments.

In this six-minute work for strings, Purcell left very few markings or instructions for the players. Thus, it was left to British composer-arranger Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) to bring the work up to date with interpretive markings in an arrangement for string orchestra (or string quartet). In his introduction, Britten writes:

The theme, first of all in the basses, moves in a stately fashion from a high to a low G. It is repeated many times in the bass with varying textures above. It then starts moving

around the orchestra [or, quartet]. There is a quaver [8th note] version with heavy chords above it, which provides the material for several repetitions. There are some free and modulating versions of it, and a connecting passage leads to a forceful and rhythmic statement in G minor. . . . The conclusion of the piece is a pathetic variation, with drooping semi-quavers [16th notes], and repeated “soft” — Purcell’s own instruction.

Haydn, *String Quartet in G Major, Op. 33, no. 5 (Hob. III:41),* “How Do You Do?”

The six string quartets of Op. 33 were published around Christmas of 1781. When writing to noblemen of his acquaintance that year, asking each to become a subscriber to the printing, Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) stated that the works “are written in a new and special way (for I have not composed any [quartets] for ten years).” During that time, a new Viennese master composer had emerged — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart — who composed 14 quartets by early 1782. Haydn was very interested in the brilliant youngster and no doubt had studied some of his music. In addition to an overall spirited style in Op. 33, Haydn titled its minuet movements either *Scherzo* or *Scherzando* (witty or jovial).

But what exactly did Haydn mean by “a new and special way”? In his Op. 33 quartets, the composer employed what music critic Alan M. Kriegsman termed, “. . . a greatly increased democratization in part-writing; all the instruments . . . were now to participate in the thematic elaboration.”

This work’s nickname was derived from the first movement’s opening (and closing) short musical idea, which simulate this greeting. It dominates the opening movement’s first theme, which is full of verve. In contrast, the second and third themes are smoother and more “personable.” The whole Exposition

is repeated. Then Haydn takes us on a journey of musical development that begins in minor keys. Further, turning to the major, fragments of each theme are explored in interesting rhythmic configurations. The recapitulation seems at first to be a literal reiteration of the two main themes. However, Haydn steers us into developmental territory, taking us to a remote key before settling back for a coda based on the original theme.

Largo/Cantabile marks the second movement with the first violin playing an opening melody including long-short-short-long rhythms that echo the “How do you do” idea. Gradually, this melody takes flight in its own distinct way. Similar to a vocal aria, the solo violin plays a few unaccompanied passages, leading to the ending.

Titled *Scherzo* and marked *Allegro*, the third movement presents a clever game of shifting accents to throw us off of any expectation of a traditional minuet. The Trio section is, likewise, shifty but in new, fresh ways, preparing for an abbreviated recap of the main *Scherzo* segment.

The *Finale*’s playful theme is followed by a set of variations on it. The first two feature the first violin. Then, in the third variation the other players come to the fore. The focus now centers on the viola and cello, as they alternate playing passages in quicker notes. A fluffy *Presto* variation brings the Quartet to a jolly, satisfying ending.

Mozart, *String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421 (417b)*

“Before God and as an honest man, I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me in person or by name. He has taste, and, what is more, the profound knowledge of composition.” In those words, Josef Haydn expressed his feelings about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) to Mozart’s father, Leopold. The year was 1785, and the occasion was the playing of some of Mozart’s six “Haydn” quartets. These had been

composed over the years 1782-1785, and Mozart would soon dedicate them in print to the “Father of the String Quartet.”

Haydn’s deep compliment was emblematic of the close friendship, mutual respect, and exchange of influences Haydn and Mozart shared during the latter’s “Vienna years,” the last ten of his life. Equally as heartfelt as Haydn’s remark was Mozart’s motivation for writing the “Haydn” quartets. Unlike nearly everything else Mozart set his hand to at that time, these works were neither commissioned, nor for the composer’s own professional needs, nor were they directed toward a particular nobleman. Mozart set about the project both for his own satisfaction and to honor the composer he held in the highest esteem. In addition, the quartets could not help being influenced by Haydn’s evolutionary Op. 33 quartets published in 1781.

The Quartet in D minor is the second of the set, dating from the summer of 1783, and it is the only one written in a minor key. The entire work, but particularly its first movement, displays the broad palette of expressive possibilities that Mozart could shape out of the minor mode. The range runs from passion to melancholy and from agitation to pathos with flashes of dramatic “Storm and Stress.”

The *Andante* is a model of grace cast in the major mode. However, drama is not altogether forgotten here, as shown by the plunging pairs of *forte* chords in the development section. The second group of these is noteworthy for the three-note chords required of the violins—quite rare in Mozart.

The *Menuetto* returns to the original minor key and intensity. Release from the tension is found briefly in the Trio section, written in the parallel major key. Here, the “Scotch snap” rhythm of the first violin’s melody played against the *pizzicato* of the ensemble is a unique effect.

The finale is in the form of theme and

variations. Mozart authority Alfred Einstein has referred to the character of this movement as “deep fatalistic brooding.” Perhaps more important, however, is Einstein’s observation that Mozart derived his main idea from the finale theme in Haydn’s Quartet in G Major (Op. 33, no. 5). Thus, Mozart’s concluding movement, like his initial dedication, pays loving homage to Joseph Haydn.

Beethoven, *String Quartet in E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2*

On February 27, 1807 the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* of Vienna reported:

Three new, very long and difficult Beethoven quartets, dedicated to the Russian Ambassador, Count Razumovsky, are also attracting the attention of all connoisseurs. The conception is profound and the construction excellent, but they are not easily comprehended — with the possible exception of the third in C major, which cannot but appeal to the intelligent lovers of music because of its originality, melody and harmonic power.

The three “Razumovsky” quartets were already creating something of a stir among the Viennese musicians who were attempting to rehearse them. On the first reading of Op. 59, No. 1, the performers burst out laughing at one point, believing that the composer was playing some joke on them. Others later labeled the quartets “crazy music” and “patchwork by a madman.” Even Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) himself recognized that it would require considerable time for people to comprehend certain portions of these quartets, which so typify the experimental spirit of his middleperiod works, such as the Emperor Concerto or the Fifth Symphony.

When writing the second “Razumovsky” quartet, Beethoven seemed more than usually obsessed with the idea of unity. Every movement of the work is in E, either minor or major. Moreover, an

embellishing note immediately above or below a principal note seems to be a dominating melodicharmonic motto in all the movements. This most often gravitates to either E or B. Nonetheless, the movements stand in sharp contrast to one another. The taut, profound nervousness of the first movement gives way to a broad expansiveness in the second. Of this movement, Beethoven’s intimate friend, Carl Czerny, claimed that it had “occurred to him when contemplating the starry sky and thinking of the music of the spheres.”

Apparently, the inclusion of Russian folk tunes was a condition of the Razumovsky commission, although Beethoven used them in only the first two quartets of the set. In the present work, the promise is fulfilled in the Scherzo’s playful Trio section. The melody selected was the hymn, *Bogu ne nebe, Slava! (Glory to God in Heaven, Glory)*, which would be used prominently again nearly 70 years later in the Coronation Scene of Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*. The quartet’s finale, with its insistent Turkish march rhythms, seems to signal one of Beethoven’s characteristic triumphal endings. However, the composer reaffirms E minor, making this the only Beethoven quartet to end in the minor mode, “driving relentlessly,” as cellist Paul Katz puts it, “to a dark, frenzied conclusion.”

Program Notes by Dr. Michael Fink.

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CHAMPION (Blanchard)

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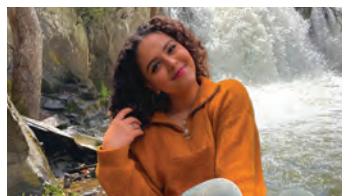
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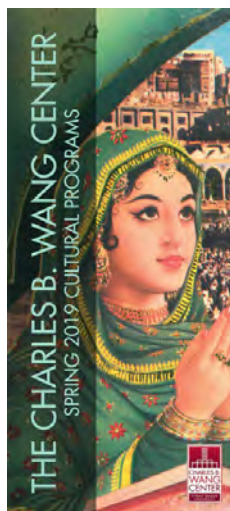
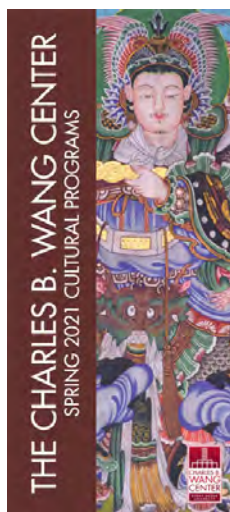
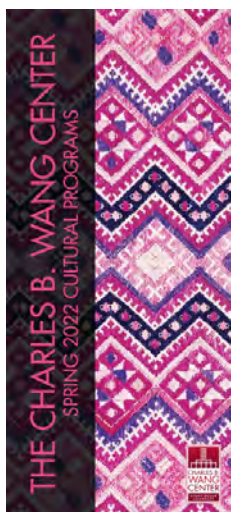


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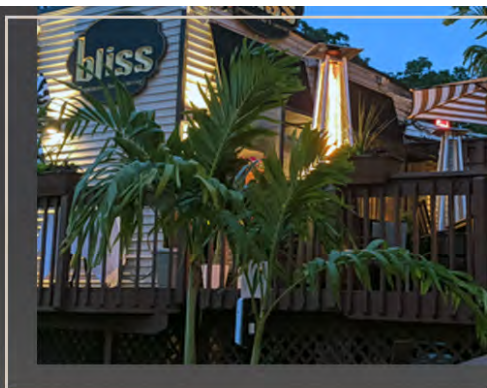
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LIL BUCK - MEMPHIS JOOKIN
Sat. Feb. 4 @ 8pm

KRISTIN CHENOWETH
Sat. Feb. 11 @ 8pm

EMERSON STRING QUARTET #2
Mon. Feb. 13 @ 7pm

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Sat. March 25 @ 8pm

PROKOFIEV'S PETER & THE WOLF - FOR KIDS
Sun. March 26 @ 3pm

STARRY NIGHTS - SPRING
Wed. March 29 @ 7pm

MIKE E. WINFIELD - COMEDY
Thurs. March 30 @ 8pm

42ND STREET in HD - FROM THE LONDON STAGE
Fri. March 31 @ 8pm

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Tue. April 11 @ 7pm

DIABOLO - ARCHITECTURE IN MOTION
Sat. April 15 @ 8pm

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Sat. April 22 @ 8pm

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