Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival

Classical Music with a View

Aloysia Friedmann, Artistic Director

The Complete Sixteen String Quartets of Beethoven

performed by the

Miró Quartet

June 23-25 & 28-29, 2014

Concert Programs

Artistic Director's Message

To our dear music lovers!

Welcome to the **Miró Quartet's Epic Journey** of performing the **complete Beethoven String Quartets** on Orcas Island.

String quartets are considered to be the pinnacle of a composer's art. Beethoven's cycle of quartets is universally acknowledged to be the greatest of them all. The Miró Quartet will perform Beethoven's quartets in chronological order, giving us the rare opportunity to experience Beethoven's artistic and emotional journey through 16 compositions performed in five concert programs.

A project of this magnitude could not have been accomplished without the great outpouring of support and love from so many. Annie Moss Moore's well-known passion for Beethoven gave us much courage. Members of our fabulous Board immediately recognized the musical importance of such an event on Orcas. Thank you Carl de Boor, Barbara Bentley, Glenn Prestwich, Annie Moss Moore, Laila Storch and Martin Friedmann for your additional sponsorships of this unique series. Thank you to our fine Festival staff, Laura Gibbons, Festival Production Manager; Joyce Stone, Festival Office and Marketing Manager; and Victoria Parker, Executive Director and my partner at the helm.

As with any undertaking of this size, and particularly one that is in addition to our August Festival dates, several angels have come forward to underwrite the concert series.

David and Amy Fulton make their home in Seattle. In his retirement David has devoted his time to collecting what is now known as the greatest private string instrument collection in the world today – the Fulton Collection – consisting of the finest Cremonese violins, violas and cellos by Guarneri Del Gesu and Stradivari, and equally impressive bows. When David heard the Miró Quartet play in his living room last year he knew he was in the presence of something great. I approached David about the idea of performing all the Beethoven String Quartets on Orcas Island, and he immediately and enthusiastically offered to help underwrite these concerts. Thank you David and Amy.

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Thank you to OICMF's President Emeritus, Valerie Anders, who, with her husband Bill, also shares in underwriting these concerts. Beginning with our first Summer Festival in 1998, Valerie and Bill have been my ardent supporters, trusting my artistic vision. I remain eternally grateful.

As Artistic Director of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, presenting these amazing artists will be something I remember forever. To learn the 16 Quartets is a mammoth undertaking, and to perform them – particularly in back-to-back concerts – is a milestone that only the bravest and the best of string quartets achieve.

Thank you Daniel, Will, John and Josh for being here, for being such a special part of all of our lives, and for giving us the gift of this incredible music.

So now, I will take a seat with you in the audience, as we embark on our Beethoven journey.

Aloysia Friedmann

Aloysia Friedmann, Artistic Director

P.S. *The August Chamber Music Festival is just around the corner! Tickets and concert details available at www.oicmf.org*

Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival

Aloysia Friedmann, *Artistic Director*

The Miró Quartet Plays
The Complete Beethoven String Quartets

Miró | Beethoven | An Epic Journey

June 23–25 & June 28-29, 2014
Orcas Center

Miró QUARTET

Daniel Ching, *violin*
William Fedkenheuer, *violin*
John Largess, *viola*
Joshua Gindele, *cello*

About the front cover: Background image by **Peter Fromm**, Beethoven portrait by **Joseph Karl Stieler**, Miró Quartet photo by **Michael Carter**. Composite image and Program design by **Wade Campbell**.

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John Largess, Program Notes

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and our **OICMF Volunteers**

Concert 1 of 5

June 23, 2014 • 7:00 PM

All pieces by Ludwig Van Beethoven *(1770–1827)*

String Quartet No. 3
in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3

Allegro
Andante con moto
Allegro
Presto

String Quartet No. 2
in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2

Allegro
Adagio cantabile – Allegro
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro molto, quasi Presto

String Quartet No. 1
in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1

Allegro con brio
Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Allegro

— Intermission —

String Quartet No. 5
in A Major, Op. 18, No. 5

Allegro
Menuetto
Andante cantabile – Variazioni 1-5 – Poco Adagio
Allegro

String Quartet No. 4
in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4

Allegro ma non tanto
Scherzo: Andante scherzoso quasi Allegretto
Menuetto: Allegretto
Allegro – Prestissimo

String Quartet No. 6
in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6

Allegro con brio
Adagio ma non troppo
Scherzo: Allegro
La Malinconia: *(Questo pezzo si deve trattare colla piu gran delicatezza.)*
Adagio – Allegretto quasi Allegro

Thirteen-year-old Ludwig van Beethoven.
By an unknown Bonn master, circa 1783.

Opus 18 — Beethoven at 30

Why are Beethoven's Opus 18 quartets not performed in the numerological order of No. 1 – No. 6?

The story of the order of composition of the Opus 18 quartets is particularly interesting, as is the existence of two different versions of Op. 18, No. 1; what we can piece together reveals a lot about Beethoven's personality and his process as a composer during the two years that he worked on this project.

What we know comes primarily from two of Beethoven's surviving composition sketch books from 1798–99: the first (called Grasnick 1) contains sketches for all the movements of No. 3, which is clearly the first quartet of the set, and seems to be in the style of his idol, Mozart. The second sketchbook (Grasnick 2) contains ideas for all four movements of No. 1, followed by all of No. 2, and then by all of No. 5 (and possibly a line from No. 4), amongst bits and pieces of several other compositions that were also being written at the same time. Scholars theorize that there was a lost third sketchbook which could have contained the early ideas for quartets No. 4 and/or No. 6 among other pieces. There is also a group of mixed loose manuscript sheets (some of which are sketches of Op. 18, No. 6, but no sheets exist of Op. 18, No. 4) forming the so called "Autograph 19E" from spring of 1800; but any conclusions about the timeline of No. 4 and No. 6 drawn from what little we have today are suspect at best.

As far as the two versions of No. 1, Beethoven gave his friend Karl Amenda a completed copy of its score in June of 1799 (this copy is in the Beethovenhaus in Bonn today). However, later that year Beethoven wrote to his friend telling him to "show no one this quartet, as I am currently revising it, now that finally I know how to write quartets!" And actually, the later version which emerged (probably the following spring) has almost no bars of any movement that are identical to the earlier version and in particular, the first and last movements were substantially recomposed. Apparently Beethoven also threw out the original completed slow movement of No. 2 (as it was in the sketchbook), and wrote the interesting hybrid slow/fast movement we have today. This is maybe the first example of Beethoven's life-long trend of being perpetually dissatisfied with some works, constantly rewriting and revising them, often with no "final version."

On a different note, although we have sketches for all four movements of No. 5, we don't know much about its completion except for this interesting tidbit: his friends reported him spending hours copying out by hand the score of his favorite Mozart quartet, K. 646, also in A Major – and No. 5 does show many similarities to Mozart's quartet, especially in the variation movement.

It's also interesting to note that when it came to publication, Beethoven cared more about making a strong impression on his public than being truthful about the order of composition: the first edition came out in 1801 in two sets of three quartets each, and Beethoven put the most impactful and dramatic quartets first in each set (No. 1 and No. 4). But our order for tonight's program attempts to take the behind-the-scenes story more into account than the numbers themselves, in order to help you follow Beethoven's own creative mind and its process through the music: we begin with No. 3, then No. 2, and then No. 1 (which though begun slightly earlier than No. 2 took its final form much later), then No. 5, No. 4 and No. 6.

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Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven in 1801.
By Carl Traugott Riedel (1769–1832).

Opus 18 — Beethoven at 30

Envision the end of the 18th century: a time of war, tremendous social upheaval and incredible change. The Revolutions in America and France were forcing the entire world into a new way of thinking. Everywhere the old guard was struggling to hold on to unwieldy and outdated power in the face of a new society and a new conception of one's self. After all, didn't we all have a calling to be something better, to possess the freedom of a higher state in which no one could ever be a slave of the wealthy, the privileged or the powerful? All of Europe seethed with armed conflict while teetering simultaneously on the brink of a complete transformation. As things fell apart, the modern world as we know it was painfully being born.

Into this picture stepped a short and sickly 22-year-old kid, with curly coal-black hair (in our time he would be fresh out of college), coming to the big city of Vienna from the boondocks. He had a talent for playing the piano, and had become a child star back home in Bonn. Just like many child stars of today, his childhood had been trashed by a pushy (and alcoholic) father who was determined to make his talented little Ludwig into a famous wonder kid. His mother died when he was 17, and at 19 he found himself forced to take care of his younger brothers, while his father's own mediocre music career crashed and burned. Now at 22, Ludwig had finally broken free. Finally he had his opportunity to make the big time in the big city. This was his chance to prove to everyone, himself included, that he could be a star.

The next five years saw him climb up the career ladder step-by-step on his own. His musical talent was matched by a gift for self-promotion. He became the private pupil (almost like being an intern today) of famous "older guys" with big names in the business, such as Haydn and Salieri. Impatient with their discipline and authority, he felt he had to sometimes unwillingly follow their advice in order to learn what he still didn't know …and he used their connections to network even further. But what really got his career moving was his set of new friendships with the rich, the artsy, and the trendy. The wealthy and hip took him into their set: soon he was appearing at every soiree, going on vacations with diplomats, and creating scandalous scenes. He pursued women, many women: usually rich, beautiful, "unavailable" women. He made them feel faint at the intensely passionate way he improvised pieces at the piano. People just couldn't get enough!

He was a rock star, the it-guy, a tabloid success, but what he had always really wanted was just to write music. As a child he was beaten by his father when caught improvising his own music at the piano instead of practicing; now he could use the opportunity his fame presented to get his own music heard by an international audience. First, he published some showy solo pieces he had played live himself in concert and some fun ensemble pieces: serenades, songs, trios. He had been toying with most of the ideas for these pieces since his childhood. When this music sold crazily and the publishers clamored for more, Beethoven felt it was time to give them something else, something really new, something radical, something that people thought that a young pianist couldn't do.

And so the String Quartet became the first really serious form in which Beethoven took on the establishment, as he transformed himself from performer to composer. He wanted badly for his quartets to be absolutely new and outstanding, for now his career depended on them in more ways than one: he had been hiding from everyone for the last two years the terrible secret that he was going deaf. Fighting depression, he saw his social life starting to unravel, and by the age of 30, he knew for sure he wouldn't be able to perform live much longer. The question of the rest of his career, really the rest of his life, seemed to depend on the answers he gave in these six pieces.

Sculpture of Ludwig van Beethoven in Bonn, Germany.
By Klaus Kammerichs (1933–), based on the portrait
by Karl Josef Stieler (see page 16).

Concert 2 of 5

June 24, 2014 • 7:00 PM

All pieces by Ludwig Van Beethoven *(1770–1827)*

String Quartet No. 7 in F Major, "Razumovsky" Op. 59, No. 1

Allegro
Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando
Adagio molto e mesto –
Thème Russe: Allegro

— Intermission —

String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, "Razumovsky" Op. 59, No. 2

Allegro
Molto adagio *(Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento.)*
Allegretto; Maggiore (Thème Russe)
Finale: Presto

String Quartet No. 9 in C Major, "Razumovsky" Op. 59, No. 3

Introduzione: Andante con moto – Allegro vivace
Andante con moto quasi Allegretto
Menuetto (Grazioso) –
Allegro molto

Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven in 1804.
By Joseph Willibrord Mähler (1778–1860).

Opus 59 — The Razumovsky Quartets

The three string quartets of Beethoven's Opus 59, despite being three of his most enduringly popular pieces today, incited some of the most antagonistic and negative responses that his music would ever receive. His student Carl Czerny reported, "When Schuppanzigh's quartet first played the F Major Quartet, they laughed and were convinced Beethoven was playing a trick on them and that it was not the quartet he had promised." "Surely you do not consider this music?" asked the bemused violinist Felix Radicati. "Not for you," replied the confident composer, "but for a later age."

Revolutionary, visionary, unprecedented in their grand and sweeping scope, the three quartets of the Opus 59 trilogy made greater instrumental and emotional demands than any string quartet yet written at that time. Even two centuries after their premiere, they remain historical landmarks of the quartet genre. The birth of the touring professional quartet and the economy of the international chamber music scene can be said to begin historically with the appearance of these works. They are benchmarks by which all composers of string quartets since Beethoven have judged their own creations, and remain the standard by which quartet players today still measure their own acumen and achievement.

The six years (1800–1806) between the completion of the Opus 18 quartets and the completion of the Opus 59s, though perhaps the most creative and productive of Beethoven's entire life, were shot through with intense personal struggles. He endured a painfully failed love affair; he was shamed by his younger brother's shotgun wedding to a woman he loathed; his increasing deafness became ever more difficult to hide and was threatening to derail his professional and personal life. In 1802 he wrote a document, known today as the Heiligenstadt Testament, to be read like a will in the case of his untimely death. This declaration reads as a personal statement of his determination to overcome his personal sufferings, to conquer through music. Although addressed to his family and friends, it is a message to the world at large and to posterity: Beethoven the "hero" in the realm of art refuses to let his act of creation be defined by his suffering. In fact, the trials he faces only spur him on.

The years following this testament were studded with success as Beethoven literally conquered every important genre in music one by one, each time with a groundbreaking and perennially popular work: Ballet, *Creatures of Prometheus*, Solo Piano, *Waldstein* Sonata, Symphony, *Eroica*, Oratorio, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, Opera, *Fidelio*, Concerto, the Violin and the Piano Concerto No. 4; this list is by no means exhaustive. By the fall of 1806, while putting the finishing touches on this heroic series of quartets, Beethoven, no doubt looking back on all these triumphs at the moment of completion, writes in the margins of his Op 59, No. 3 sketch: "let your deafness be no longer a secret, even in art." He had truly triumphed, most especially in the face of his own fears, and left an enduring and personal message of struggle, hope and valor for anyone to listen to in the Opus 59 trilogy.

(continued next page)

These three quartets speak in a new language, which was to become the expected standard in years to come. At once intimate and revolutionary, personal yet accessible to all, unique yet universal, they have become the gold standard for which any professional quartet was and is to be judged. These works obtain their essential life from a deep understanding of the fundamental qualities of the four quartet instruments and their basic interaction, yet are endlessly demanding in their emotional subtlety. John Dalley of the Guarneri Quartet said, "In the Razumovsky quartets the whole sonority of the string quartet undergoes a change. The four parts are more nearly equal in prominence; the lower voices have more resonance. The melodies have a more sustained cantilena quality. There is more of a 'concerted' sound – one could say a true string quartet sound – fuller and richer than ever before." Moreover, the three quartets together form a triptych, almost a single great three act epic drama, linked as they are by continuous (yet surprising) references to each other's keys, motives, and structure, and by their various "Russian" themed movements. Even so, each piece on its own displays a strong but multifaceted individual persona: whether spacious, tragic, and rambunctious like No. 1; turbulent, combative, but with moments of tranquility like No. 2; or victorious, exotic, and playful like No. 3.

The demanding style of the Opus 59s, which required (and still require) months of specialized ensemble practice to adequately perform, truly heralded the birth of the professional touring string quartet as we know it today. The technical challenges demanded of each player, and the mastery of ensemble needed, placed them well beyond the reach of amateurs, and even beyond the scope of the professional "pick up" group. Shortly after their publication in 1808, such writers as George Thomson in Edinburgh already lamented their difficulty, claiming that there were fewer than a dozen people in Scotland who could take a part in them, and not even one who could play the first violin part in all three. It was on programs flaunting remarkably polished and brilliantly played Opus 59s that the Müller Quartet made the very first string quartet concert tours of Europe in 1833 and the years following; these four brothers, who "specialized" in quartet playing and in Beethoven, were providing for the many music lovers of the time the only "close to ideal" performances of this already famous music that they would ever hear. It was the challenge of the Opus 59s that drew new audiences from every walk of life to their concerts to hear these works for themselves. A new audience and a new type of musician were being born.

Perhaps more than any other pieces in the repertoire, the message of this music speaks for itself. This is truly music written by one to inspire all, despite suffering and setbacks, to great deeds; to be true to yourself and to the promise within. It is music that looks always with heroism and hope to the future. It is not about the past. In Beethoven's own words, this is music "for you," for each of us, now in this "later age," and for every later age to come.

Concert 3 of 5

June 25, 2014 • 7:00 PM

All pieces by Ludwig Van Beethoven *(1770–1827)*

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat Major, Op. 74, "Harp"

Poco Adagio – Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Presto – Più presto quasi Prestissimo –
Allegretto con Variazioni

String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95, "Serioso"

Allegro con brio
Allegretto ma non troppo –
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso
Larghetto espressivo – Allegretto agitato

— Intermission —

String Quartet No. 12 in E–flat Major, Op. 127

Maestoso – Allegro
Adagio, ma non troppo e molto cantabile –
Andante con moto – Adagio molto espressivo
Scherzando vivace – Presto
Finale – Allegro con moto

Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven.
Engraving from *Meyers Konversations-Lexikon*, circa 1905. Courtesy of Darvill's Rare Prints.

Opus 74, Opus 95, and Opus 127 – Beethoven in Transition

Tonight's three pieces cross the greatest time span of Beethoven's life as any in our cycle. They are perhaps the three most diverse pieces of the cycle stylistically, and definitely represent the most difficult and challenging years personally that Beethoven was to experience in his lifetime. Perhaps this program can be viewed as the "mid-life crisis concert." They also represent a gradual inward turning of the composer's focus away from "impressive" music for the public, towards expressing his unique inner personal vision.

The year 1809 marked an important change in Beethoven's life: he was awarded a perpetual annuity by three wealthy patrons (Archduke Rudolf, Princes Lichky and Lobkowitz), so he would no longer have to live month-to-month solely off his commissions. In a very real sense, he had "arrived." His status as the leading Viennese composer of his day had already been firmly established in the European cultural scene, and now, as he neared forty, Beethoven had hopes for a calmer life; he even began looking seriously for a wife. The fair hopes of this year were quickly dashed by the invasion of Vienna by the French that May, and the destruction and hardship they brought with them. Beethoven reportedly spent much of the bombardment with his head wrapped in a pillow in his brother's cellar to protect what remained of his hearing. His no longer robust general health was shaken by the experience, and once it was all over and Vienna fell, he wrote absolutely no music for the next three months. When he did begin writing again, it was with the familiar and intimate form of the string quartet, in the form of Opus 74, "the Harp." This piece can be seen as an attempt to return to normalcy, the recapturing of a happy dream; the form and length are very similar to the three Opus 59s of a few years previous, yet the general mood is more warm and gentle than these more heroic pieces. Beethoven no longer had something to prove; but for the first time his goal was rather to attempt to bring into being a dream for something better into our harsh world. Grace and playfulness (especially the harp-like plucked arpeggios of the first movement) rule the day, and a new intimacy of expression is felt. Perhaps the scars of the bombardment can be heard in the explosive scherzo, but even this tempestuousness melts quickly into the playful, almost tongue-in-cheek theme and variations finale.

Though he planned to follow the Opus 74 with a least one other quartet (sketches for a never-written C Major quartet exist), life, full of publishers and business as usual, got in his way, and it wasn't until 1810 that he settled down seriously to write the next quartet in F minor.

The Opus 95 quartet, subtitled "Serioso," is one of the best known of all Beethoven's quartets, and truly it encapsulates the stereotyped personality of his middle-aged years that we most associate with the composer today. Terse (it is one of the shortest quartets), shocking, angry, unpredictable, impetuous, and dramatic are all words that could describe the wild-haired man himself as well as this music. Gone is the dream world of Opus 74; in its place is raw emotion. Each movement is very short, almost compressed – so much coming through in such very little time. The drama of the first movement, the mystic song of the second, the heroic anger of the third and the pleading anxiety of the last all whirl by at breakneck speed. The fact that the last movement ends with some of the swiftest and most exhilarating music ever written for quartet seems in seconds to whisk the listener off his feet and into the air in a way only the middle-aged Master could accomplish.

Beethoven was clear in his letters that Opus 95 was "written for a small circle of connoisseurs, and never meant to be heard by the general public." Indeed, though complete, Beethoven did not even pursue publishing the work until a few years later, in 1816.

If Opus 74 represents Beethoven the idealist, and Opus 95 represents Beethoven the expressionist, Opus 127 represents the fusion of these two poles: in the late quartets the mature composer has become the Master of The Expressive Ideal.

It wasn't until twelve years after the completion of Opus 95 that Beethoven returned to the quartet genre. Much of these twelve years are what is commonly termed Beethoven's "dry" period, in which he barely wrote anything at all. Unsuccessful in finding a wife, and with an annuity rapidly diminishing in value through post-war inflation, he was emotionally embroiled in money troubles, his brother's death, a failed lawsuit with his sister-in-law, and continued conflict with his nephew and ward, Karl. Despite earlier career success, by age 50 the grueling trials of real life had caught up to him with a vengeance. To top it off, the new tastes of the Viennese public had moved on to the frothy music of Italian bel canto opera, and held little new interest in his brand of serious Germanic expression. Worst of all, he seemed to have nothing more to say musically in any case. Though still revered, perhaps the grizzled old composer was all written out. In this context it is even more astonishing that Beethoven could seemingly rebound overnight almost out of nowhere, creating in the last years of his life some of the greatest, most inspiring and monumental works of art music of all time: the Missa Solemnis, the Ninth Symphony and the Late Quartets.

In 1822 a young Russian Prince and chamber music fan named Nikolas Galitsin first brought up the idea of a new set of quartets to the famous yet completely deaf Beethoven, promising to pay handsomely for three new ones. Busy as Beethoven suddenly was with the Ninth Symphony, the first sketches for a quartet weren't even begun until 1824. Nonetheless, the work progressed quickly and was ready for a public performance and publication later that year.

In a way the Opus 127 quartet in E-flat parallels the earlier Opus 74 quartet in E-flat: it too is the capturing of the form of a dream, yet now on an unprecedented scale of grandeur. The work was truly something entirely new and unheard of as a quartet at that time: it can be viewed almost as an inspirational symphony in scope, but with an uttermost intimacy of expression unparalleled by any other music yet written by anybody. The quartet has a majesty and glory, and even a mysterious strangeness about it that is truly otherworldly. It is a glimpse into the mind of a visionary, or rather a visionary's glimpse into the mind of God. It is the experience of a man's spirit dancing on the edge of the beyond.

In a sense, for me personally, this is the most powerful concert of the entire cycle. In the course of two hours on the concert stage a transformation takes place; it's as if the composer crosses from our normal world (Opus 74) through the fire (Opus 95) and into the next world (Opus 127), bearing witness as he goes in a most powerful way to the ultimate transformative power of the human spirit, to hope itself. Perhaps it is only in the face of harshest adversity that the best of our human nature is truly revealed in all of its freedom and joy. And it is in the music of the Late Quartets that Beethoven shows us the way.

Concert 4 of 5

June 28, 2014 • 7:00 PM

All pieces by Ludwig Van Beethoven *(1770–1827)*

String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

Assai sostenuto – Allegro
Allegro ma non tanto
Molto Adagio (*Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart.)* – Andante *(Neue Kraft fühlend.)*
Alla Marcia, assai vivace –
Allegro appassionato

— Intermission —

String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130

Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro
Presto
Andante con moto ma non troppo: Poco scherzoso
Alla danza tedesca: Allegro assai
Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo

Große Fuge, Op. 133 (in B-flat Major)

Overtura: Allegro – Meno mosso e moderato – Allegro –
Fuga – Meno mosso e moderato – Allegro molto e con brio

1820 portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven.
By Joseph Karl Stieler (1781–1858).

Opus 132, Opus 130 and Opus 133 — The Last Years (1825)

The last two years of Beethoven's life were almost completely given over to the writing of string quartets. The two monumental works that make up tonight's program represent almost the entirety of the year 1825. Opus 132 and Opus 130 are the remaining two works of the three written for and dedicated to Prince Nikolai Galitzin (Opus 127, which we heard previously, being the first of the set). These two remarkable quartets also represent the pinnacle of Beethoven's Late Style dramatic language, and are perhaps the two most enduringly popular of Beethoven's Late Quartets. They are each the longest of Beethoven's quartets (49 and 51 minutes respectively) and both can be said to represent the ultimate expansion of the string quartet to the possible limits of its scope. Instead of the expected four movements, Opus 132 has five, and Opus 130 has six. Indeed, these pieces were completely unprecedented works in their time, and remain truly inimitable in their depth and profundity by any compositions in any genre written by anyone since.

Opus 127 was the last quartet to be published in Beethoven's lifetime, and so rather confusingly, the opus numbers of the Late Quartets that follow it as we have them today do not represent the order in which they were composed, but rather the order that they were posthumously published (by several different publishing companies). In order to bring to life more vividly the flow of Beethoven's creative experience during the last two years before his death, all the works on tonight's and tomorrow's programs will be presented in the order in which Beethoven composed them, not in the order of the opus numbers.

Let's follow the timeline for tonight's pieces for a moment. The A minor Quartet Opus 132 was written during the first 5 months of 1825, closely following the completion of Opus 127 in December 1824. The Quartet in B flat Opus 130 and the Great Fugue Opus 133 followed Opus 132 almost immediately, being written in the months from May to September. During most of these ten months Beethoven was seriously and dangerously ill, suffering from an intestinal inflammatory disease that alarmed both the patient and his doctor. To make matters worse, the extremely stressful family situation involving Beethoven's 18-year-old ward Karl was also coming to an explosive head during this time: these ten months were full of personal confrontations, recriminations, mutual personal threats and outright rebellions (by both uncle and nephew). The high pitch of Beethoven's personal emotions, the rollercoaster of his physical health, and his morbid premonitions of death, were strangely balanced by the sheer positive success the composer was receiving after the premiere of the Ninth Symphony the previous year and the resulting flood of new business offers, as well as the remarkable feeling of almost limitless creative power and inspiration he was experiencing in the afterglow. In such a context, it's no wonder that these two quartets cover the tremendous emotional ground that they do, but it's even more astonishing that under such circumstances they could be so quickly written and coherently organized.

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Opus 132 opens with a four-note germ motif in the cello, immediately and eerily echoed in each of the other three parts. Pay close attention to these four notes: a half-step up, a leap, half-step down. This simple yet ominous theme forms the backbone of the entire quartet, and it is hidden like strands of DNA inside every tune and melody of each of the five movements to come. In fact, Beethoven was so taken with the possibilities of these four notes that they form not only the basis for this quartet, but also the basis (in slightly varied form) for Opus 130 and 133 and even 131! (Listen carefully to the opening the final movement on tonight's program: the Grand Fugue opens with almost exactly the same four notes/intervals that you heard at the beginning of the concert opening the first movement of Opus 132.)

The drama and struggle, the joy and the sorrow of the Opus 132 quartet clearly speak for themselves from beginning to end and need no verbal explanation of their "story," but special mention must be made of the movement labeled "Holy Song of Thanks from a Convalescent to the Godhead (in the Lydian Mode)." In this slow movement, Beethoven chooses to set a fragment of Gregorian plainchant that would have been familiar to every Catholic churchgoer of the time: *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come Holy Spirit Creator), and using the primitive sound of the ancient Lydian church mode, he weaves three variation sections that float ethereally through space, evoking transcendent visions of God's very presence. In between each of these sections we return to earth in two passages labeled *Neue Kraft fühlend* (Feeling new strength), in which Beethoven captures a remarkable feeling of musical exhilaration, as if feeling the sun on your face and the fresh breeze on your skin for the first time after months sick in bed. It is an astonishing movement, one that never ceases to move me to tears.

Opus 130 is a very different work entirely: its wit and charm, and sheer variety of characters it contains remind me of watching an opera full of ever changing sets and costumes; the constant contrasts keep the listener entertained and guessing from beginning to end. Opus 130 contains Beethoven's shortest movement of the cycle (II, Presto: 3 minutes), the longest movement (VI, the "Grand Fugue": 20 minutes), two folk dances, his own avowed "favorite" slow movement the Cavatina (an operatic aria), an overture, an intermezzo….What doesn't this composition have up its sleeve? It even has TWO finales!

The story of its two finales does deserve special mention here as well. Beethoven's original idea was to crown this third and final Galitzin quartet with a remarkable final movement: the "Grosse Fuge" or Grand Fugue. This ground-breaking movement is a 20 minute exploration of contrapuntal techniques, dissonance and titanic emotional extremes, but it also thematically and emotionally ties together the various movements of Opus 130 that precede it. It was a revolutionary way to end a string quartet, and Beethoven was very satisfied with his achievement; he sent Galitzin a copy of it in this form and made arrangements with the publishing house Artaria to have it published this way as well.

A year later, in March 1826, the quartet received its first live performance (though it was still yet to be published) by Beethoven's friends the Schuppanzigh Quartet – and although the piece generally was a success (the Presto and Alla danza tedesca were encored), the Grand Fugue completely mystified the audience, and from all reports the performers too, who struggled to play it accurately. This is no surprise, as this music sounds contemporary and is challenging to play even today – but the gossip about its difficulty and strangeness began to circulate around Vienna. Alarmed, Beethoven's publisher grew concerned that he wouldn't be able to sell the work with the Grand Fugue as finale, and enlisted Beethoven's friends to try to convince him to make a substitution. Artaria offered to pay Beethoven an additional fee and publish the Fugue separately if he would write a different (and easier to play) final movement. After five or six months of back and forth, and the strong persuasion of friends and the exchange of cash, Beethoven agreed to separate the Grand Fugue out as Opus 133, and set to work on writing another, lighter finale.

But this was already a year in the future! At the time of its completion in 1825 it is clear that there existed no doubt in Beethoven's mind as to the effectiveness of the Fugue as the finale of Opus 130; and frankly it is clear that composing a substitute ending was not his own idea at all. There is no denying that separating out the Fugue in 1826 as its own Opus 133 meant that it was hardly heard again in the century following Beethoven's death – and consequently it was not until the 20th century that it was recognized as the masterpiece it truly is. Tonight in our chronologic cycle of Beethoven Quartets the Miró Quartet chooses to present the Opus 130 quartet in its original daring form as conceived by Beethoven, with the Grand Fugue as its ending. In our humble opinion, to do otherwise only cheats the audience of the grandness and revolutionary quality of Beethoven's tremendous 1825 achievement, not only in the context of his time, but in the context of all time.

Concert 5 of 5

June 29, 2014 • 4:00 PM

All pieces by Ludwig Van Beethoven *(1770–1827)*

String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 131

(All movements performed without pause)

No. 1: Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
No. 2: Allegro molto vivace
No. 3: Allegro moderato – Adagio
No. 4: Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile
No. 5: Presto
No. 6: Adagio quasi un poco andante
No. 7: Allegro

— Intermission —

String Quartet No. 16 in F Major, Op. 135

Allegretto
Vivace
Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo
Der schwer gefaßte Entschluß (The conclusion grasped with difficulty):
Grave, ma non troppo tratto (Muß es sein?/Must it be?) –
Allegro (Es muß sein!/It must be!)

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130

Finale: Allegro (Substitute finale)

Bust statue of Ludwig van Beethoven based on his life mask.
By Hugo Hagen (1818–1871).

Opus 131, Opus 135 and the Last Finale — The Last Years (1826)

Despite finishing the three quartets of the Galitzin commission, miraculously Beethoven found he had not yet exhausted his ideas for the string quartet, and by the beginning of 1826 he had already begun on yet another one, the Opus 131, which was written from January to July of that year. Upon its completion, Beethoven considered the Opus 131 to be his greatest achievement in the quartet form: it is a work completely unified and uninterrupted, based on a single theme (the four notes it opens with might remind you once again of the opening of Opus 132 from last night). Its seven movements are played together without pause, and in fact the movements are given numbers only and no true titles; each one is only a stage in the endless flow of the work. This string quartet is the longest uninterrupted piece that the Miró Quartet plays in our entire performing repertoire. When we play it we are onstage without a pause in the playing for over 40 minutes, with barely a second to turn the pages until the end.

Opus 131 is often considered the apex of the Beethoven string quartet cycle, and it is in fact my own personal favorite quartet of the sixteen. No single word can sum up this ineffable work for me better than the word "Revelation." Like a mysterious vision of another universe, this work seems complete in and of itself, containing its own natural evolution, forces and laws, its own life and development. Like our own universe, its deepest meaning is hidden from us yet at the same time everywhere evident; the keys to understanding its own unique life lie completely within itself and itself alone. To verbalize what Beethoven meant by this work is impossible, as the music itself says so much that is utterly beyond words. As a listener you must give yourself completely to this piece and allow it to reveal its mysteries in its own time and in its own way. It makes no compromises and will not meet you halfway. Yet what it has to share with you about the very nature of existence is a priceless secret that cannot be apprehended this way in any other art form. It repays your investment of attention one hundred-fold, and as such is the very definition of "Art."

By August of 1826 the situation with Beethoven's nephew had reached its own desperate climax. Beethoven had forcibly wrested the guardianship of his nephew from his sister-in-law Johanna several years previously after the untimely death of his brother. Beethoven had brought up this teenage boy to have the strongest antipathy to Karl's mother, but at the same time the boy rebelled against the harsh strictness and even cruelty of his uncle,

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clearly feeling estranged from both. Now, at age eighteen, this young man was a simmering stew of resentment and anger, and his sanity had reached a breaking point. On August 5, Karl snapped: he pawned his watch, bought a pistol, and having written a suicide note, climbed a hill and shot himself in the head. Unbelievably, he failed to kill himself, and wounded with a bullet in his skull, he was taken by a stranger to his mother's house in Vienna, where his uncle found him. This is perhaps the most shocking incident of Beethoven's entire personal life, all the more so because he held himself emotionally responsible for this boy he thought of as his son. His last dream of family happiness lay in bloody ruins at his feet, and at long last Beethoven was forced to see himself and his family in a harsh, but mercilessly truthful light. It was time for Beethoven to let go.

For the next three months Beethoven and Karl retired to the village of Gneixendorf in the Vienna countryside, to talk and to heal; it is a tentative time of reconciliation and rediscovery. As Karl's wounds scar and his hair grows back, arrangements are made to save him from the personal scandal created by his suicide attempt: he will leave Vienna and enlist in the military, an idea that he himself embraced with excitement. It is also during these suddenly quiet months of personal reflection that the last works of Beethoven's last year were written: the Opus 135 quartet and the replacement finale for the Opus 130 quartet. Perhaps unsurprisingly under the circumstances, both these pieces share a lightness and a sense of release that was not heard in the quartets of the previous year; one might even hear in them a return to a certain pastoral spirit and simplicity. Nonetheless, the slow movement of Opus 135 is weighty with a sense of farewell, perhaps both to his nephew and to his own dreams. The final movement of Opus 135, entitled *Muss es sein?* (Must it be?) is saturated with both deep pain and a giddy sense of final relief. To my ear, the replacement finale of Opus 130 shares far more stylistically with the Opus135 quartet than with the year-old Opus 130 quartet, which it was meant to complete. The twinges of humor, the feeling of release, the playful acceptance, and the simplicity of this lone movement echo the final bars of *Es muss sein!* in its joyful mystery. There is even a sense of miraculous expectation that the two movements share…we are turning the final corner, and what is about to come next? The substitute finale of Opus 130 is a brilliant movement in its own right, and stands on its own as Beethoven's final composed work.

The emotional drain of these months was to prove the final straw that broke the camel's back as far as Beethoven's health was concerned. By December Beethoven was coughing up blood, having difficulty breathing, progressively less able to move, with swollen painful limbs and abdomen. It was clear to his doctors and friends that there was nothing to be done, and that years of poor physical health and emotional strain were coming to their inevitable climax. Each week that passed brought the composer greater weakness and greater physical suffering, and by March 26th, 1827, Beethoven at age 56 was dead.

Tonight, as we review the final year of Beethoven's life, the final compositions of Beethoven's string quartet cycle, and the absolutely final compositions of this great man's creative output, it is impossible not to hear the tragic elements of this music in their sad context. Yes, these works mark the difficult end of a fellow human being's life, and yes, the thoughts and emotions that the end of life provokes in each one of us are integral to the understanding of these pieces. Yet these works are so much more than ruminations on death and suffering. They are much more even than simple exhortations of hope in the face of death. Beethoven the man has much, much more to say about his own life than simple despair and hope. These final great pieces of music are the true explorations of a great human soul, one who suffered much, failed at much, and yet despite it all, achieved so much. As works of art they answer no questions, nor do they provide facile solutions to the many uncertainties our human lives pose. These pieces *are,* however, the triumphs of a flawed person like ourselves, who, despite shortcomings and great odds, lived his dream to its fulfillment. They are messages, created for us at a great cost, meant to provoke and to inspire every human to truly consider what is most challenging and mysterious about our own lives. They contain in total honesty the ultimate contradictions of human existence, and form a priceless mirror in art of our very selves: what we feel, what we are and what we could be.

On behalf of Ludwig van Beethoven, thank you for coming on this great journey with us.

Photo by Michael Carter

Daniel Ching, *violin*

Daniel Ching, a founding member of the Miró Quartet, began his violin studies at the age of three under the tutelage of his father. At age five, he entered the San Francisco Conservatory Preparatory Division on a full twelve-year scholarship, where he studied violin with Serban Rusu and Zaven Melikian, and chamber music with Susan Bates. At the age of ten, Daniel was first introduced to string quartets.

A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Daniel studied violin with Kathleen Winkler, Roland and Almita Vamos, and conducting with Robert Spano and Peter Jaffe. He completed his Masters degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with former Cleveland Quartet violinist Donald Weilerstein. He also studied recording engineering and production with Thomas Knab of Telarc, and subsequently engineered the Miró Quartet's first promotional disc.

Daniel is on faculty at the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches private violin students and coaches chamber music. He concurrently maintains an active international touring schedule as a member of the Miró Quartet.

William Fedkenheuer, *violin*

Winner of the Lincoln Center Martin E. Segal Award, violinist William Fedkenheuer distinguished himself as a versatile artist with international performances as soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician. William's touring in the United States has included performances at The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall Presents, San Francisco Performances, and the National Gallery. Abroad, he has performed at the American Academy in Rome, Fountainbleu, Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds, the Taipei National University of the Arts, and in Austria at the famed Esterhazy Castle for the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt.

Making his solo violin debut with the Calgary Philharmonic in 1994, William went on to receive a Bachelor of Music from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music under the tutelage of Kathleen Winkler and continued his graduate studies with Miriam Fried at Indiana University. From 2000–2006, William was a member of the Borromeo String Quartet and on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Most recently, William has served as the first violinist of the Fry Street Quartet and was on the teaching faculty of the Caine College of the Arts at Utah State University.

John Largess, *viola*

Violist John Largess began his studies in Boston at age twelve in the public schools, studying with Michael Zaretsky of the Boston Symphony, and later as a student of Michael Tree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In 1995, he graduated from Yale University to join the Colorado String Quartet as interim violist with whom he toured the United States and Canada teaching and concertizing. The following year he was appointed principal violist of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra in South Carolina, a position he held until joining the Miró Quartet in 1997. Also an active speaker and writer about all things chamber-musical, in 2004 John was invited to give a week-long audience lecture series as a part of the Eighth International String Quartet Competition at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada; he repeated this series in 2007 and again in 2010.

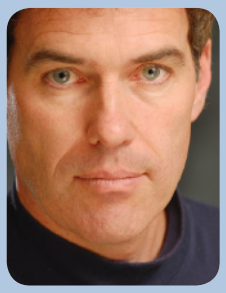
With his training in Greek and Latin Literature and his Bachelor's degree in Archeology from Yale University, as well as studies at the Hebrew University in Israel, he has participated in excavations in Greece, Israel, and Jordan. John serves as Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of String Chamber Music at the University of Texas at Austin Butler School of Music.

Joshua Gindele, *cello*

Cellist Joshua Gindele, a founding member of the Miró Quartet, began his cello studies at the age of three playing a viola his teacher had fitted with an endpin. As cellist for the Miró, Joshua has won numerous international awards including an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the Cleveland Quartet Award and has shared the stage with Pinchas Zuckerman, Joshua Bell, Midori, Matt Haimovitz, Eliot Fisk, Leif Ove Andnes, and The Oak Ridge Boys. He continues to perform across four continents and on some of the world's most prestigious concert stages.

Joshua serves as Senior Lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin where he teaches a select number of private cello students and coaches chamber music.

Music Lovers Seminar June 23, 2014



Stephen Rumph

Music Lovers Seminar lecturer

Stephen Rumph, Associate Professor of Music History at the University of Washington, is an internationally recognized scholar. He teaches and publishes on a wide range of topics, including opera, film music, French art song, Mozart, and Beethoven. Professor Rumph has lectured widely on Beethoven's music, and published a prominent study of the composer's political thought, *Beethoven After Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (University of California Press, 2004). His seminar will explore Beethoven's sixteen quartets as a microcosm of the composer's entire oeuvre, tracing the changing stylistic, aesthetic, and ideological landscape of Beethoven's music from his early Viennese years until his death. Professor Rumph's observations will combine biographical and historical information with close musical readings, and will offer music lovers of every level an accessible and stimulating introduction to these masterpieces of the chamber music repertory.

Professor Rumph has served as Reviews Editor for *Beethoven Forum,* 2005-2008. He joined the UW School of Music faculty in 2002, after studying voice at Oberlin Conservatory and earning a Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley. Rumph also sings professionally as a lyric tenor, performing widely in concert, oratorio, and opera.

The Seventeenth Season of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival is well underway! As this week unfolds we are honored to be enjoying the inspiring mastery of the renowned Miró Quartet as they perform Beethoven's complete sixteen string quartets. Unforgettable. Yet there is more.

Founded in 1998 by Aloysia Friedmann, Artistic Director, and Jon Kimura Parker, Artistic Advisor, the first Festival was comprised of a few small concerts with family and musical friends over a Labor Day weekend. Since those early days the Festival has gracefully and dynamically grown, providing year-round access to world-class musicians and performances.

The centerpiece is the eagerly anticipated Summer Chamber Music Festival, an annual island classic marked by artistic excellence and innovative and visionary programming. The Summer Concert Series is further enhanced by a unique collaboration among musicians, patrons and a strong tradition of community volunteer participation. The result: a truly remarkable musical two weeks in August amidst the natural beauty of Orcas Island.

Music in the summer is our cornerstone; however, we are busy throughout the year. With a robust Music Education Program, intimate Salon Concerts and vibrant Community Concerts, the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival is deeply involved in the life and times of Orcas Island. Musicians-in-Residence work with K-12 students, their teachers and community musicians. Noted experts provide Music Lovers Seminars and pre-concert lectures. Specially trained music educators visit our young ones and coach their teachers in our four island preschools.

The seed was sown one Labor Day weekend, seventeen years ago, with a few small concerts. It has been nurtured with care and passion by all of us, helping to assure the Festival's long-term sustainability and growing impact.

Thank you for being with us tonight. Please plan to join us again and continue to share in the music and memories of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, *Classical Music with a View*.

Theater Courtesy

Thank you in advance!
Theater Courtesy adds to everyone's enjoyment.

Mechanical and Recording Devices

Out of consideration for musicians and audience, please turn off cell phones, pagers, electronic watches, and other devices. No recording, videotaping, texting or photography is allowed. *Thank you.*

Leaving the Theater and Returning

Please note that if you must leave your seat during the performance, you will be seated at the beginning of the next piece or during applause, at the House Manager's discretion.

Latecomers

Evening concerts will begin at either 7:00 PM or 4:00 PM. Latecomers will be admitted at the conclusion of the first movement or during applause, at the House Manager's discretion.

Gifts of Tickets

If you cannot use your tickets, please consider donating them back to the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival as a gift in support of our Festival and annual programs. OICMF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Tickets are in high demand; we appreciate your generosity and would like to have all seats occupied! Refunds are not offered. Acknowledgement of the value of your gift of tickets is available for tax reporting purposes. *Thank you!*

Services

For assistance as you enter the performance hall and to find your seat, please ask an usher. Wheelchair seating and wireless headphones are available through the Orcas Center Box Office.

ORCAS ISLAND CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

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Directions to Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival Office and Concert Venue

On I-5, travel north from Seattle, or south from Bellingham. Take the WA-20 exit – exit 230 – toward Anacortes. Follow the signs to the Anacortes-San Juan Islands-Sidney Ferry. Plan to arrive at least one hour before ferry sailing time. Seasonal schedules are available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/schedules/current/.

From the ferry landing at Orcas Village turn left to travel 15 miles to Eastsound. Rather than turning right into Eastsound Village, continue on Lover's Lane for 1 mile. Lover's Lane will curve to the right or east to become Mt. Baker Road. You will see the Eastsound Airport on your left. Continue traveling east.

The Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival Concert Venue is located within the Orcas Center facility. Turn right at the large orca whale sculpture at 917 Mt. Baker Road. The Festival Office is located on the west side of the Orcas Center building. Follow the black and white OICMF signs around the building, bearing right.

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