

2018 Preview Notes • Week Four • Marlboro Dining Hall

Friday, August 3 at 8:00pm



String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 13 (1827)

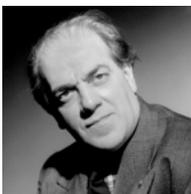
Felix Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809 • Died November 4, 1847

Duration: approx. 30 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2009

Though just 18 years old when he wrote this quartet, Mendelssohn had nevertheless already written landmark pieces such as the String Octet and the *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*. Mendelssohn uses a nod to his own song, "Ist es wahr?" [Is it true?], in order to nod towards the cyclic form of Beethoven's late quartet writing. Mendelssohn's song quotation appears as a unifying device from the quartet's romantic beginning through its pensive second movement, elegant but lively intermezzo, and wide-ranging finale. This technique recalls the final movement of Beethoven's Op. 135, serendipitously programmed for Saturday night, in which the opening chords of the manuscript are accompanied by the question "Muß es sein?" [Must it be?]. In the same piece, Beethoven answers with the phrase "Es muß sein!" [It must be!]; Mendelssohn answers the legacy of his predecessor with his own question, wonderfully worked out throughout this early string quartet.

Participants: Stephen Tavani, *violin*; Amy Lee, *violin*; Zhanbo Zheng, *viola*; Christoph Richter, *cello*



Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 (1938, 45)

Heitor Villa-Lobos

Born March 5, 1887 • Died November 17, 1959

Duration: approx. 7 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 1958

Villa-Lobos called Bach the "mediator among all races" and regarded him as a lifelong idol. Both Villa-Lobos's love of Bach and his fluid employment of Brazilian musical forms can be heard in this suite scored for soprano and eight cellos, the instrument that Villa-Lobos himself played. The suite of two movements begins with a sumptuous *Aria* with its famous wordless vocalise as well as lyrics that dreamily describe the moon's ascent. The second movement, marked *Dança*, takes the form of the Brazilian *embolada*. Villa-Lobos stated that it "represents a persistent and characteristic rhythm much like the *emboladas*, those strange melodies of the Brazilian hinterland. The melody suggests the birds of Brazil." The piece has only been performed at Marlboro once before—Benita Valente, who returns every year to Marlboro to work with the young vocalists, sang *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 5 in 1958, just 13 years after the work was completed.

Participants: Lauren Pearl Eberwein, *soprano*; Alice Yoo, *cello*; Matthew Zalkind, *cello*; Peter Wiley, *cello*; Yi Qun Xu, *cello*; Alexander Hersh, *cello*; Brannon Cho, *cello*; Sayaka Selina, *cello*; Tony Rymer, *cello*



Divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563 (1788)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born January 27, 1756 • Died December 5, 1791

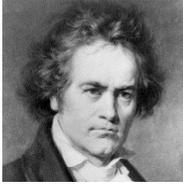
Duration: approx. 45 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

The Divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563, for violin, viola, and cello, is Mozart's only work for this combination of instruments. Dedicated to Mozart's Masonic brother Johann Michael Puchberg, the piece's novel instrumentation is set to a mixture of six movements: two minuets, three movements in sonata form, and another introducing a theme with variations. The composition's scope and depth, with equal and profound involvement of all of its three parts, exceeds the expectations of its genre. It is often remarked that the composition is far from being a mere diversion, and indeed it was premiered not in a drawing room but in public halls alongside Mozart's final symphonies.

Participants: Joseph Lin, *violin*; En-Chi Cheng, *viola*; Brannon Cho, *cello*

2018 Preview Notes • Week Four • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, August 4 at 8:00pm



String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135 (1826)
Ludwig van Beethoven
 Born December 16, 1770 • Died March 26, 1827
 Duration: approx. 25 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

Beethoven's last completed work is notably shorter and more compact than the monumental quartets that preceded it. Looking back towards the scale and proportion of the classical age, this quartet conforms to the four movement convention from which the composer had departed in his earlier sprawling, iconoclastic works. This quartet's airy first movement precedes an amicable second movement that flashes by in under five minutes. The piece finds a moment of repose in the tranquility of the third movement before the struggle that is presented in the finale. In the manuscript of the fourth movement, Beethoven marked the tense, three note gesture at its beginning with the words "Must it be?" The tenseness dissipates, and a carefree melody bursts out for the majority of the movement, spearheaded by an answer to the question posted at the beginning: three boisterous notes and the inscription "It must be!"

Participants: Robyn Bollinger, *violin*; Stephen Waarts, *violin*; Zoë Martin-Doike, *viola*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*



The Curlew (1920-22)
Peter Warlock
 Born October 30, 1894 • Died December 17, 1930
 Duration: approx. 20 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

Though he was born Philip Arnold Heseltine and used that name to write combative critiques of others' music, Warlock assumed his pseudonym in order to write music of his own. *The Curlew* is a setting of four W.B. Yeats poems and was written during some of Warlock's most productive years in "wild Wales [which] holds an enchantment for me stronger than wine or woman." The piece features the *cor anglais* in the evocative instrumental writing in which the reed instrument imitates the cry of the curlew, a large wading bird of the sandpiper family. Though it is said that Yeats disapproved of the composition and tried to block its publication, claiming that his poetry had music enough in itself, the piece nevertheless garnered critical acclaim and was even selected to represent contemporary British music at the 1924 Salzburg Festival.

Participants: Miles Mykkanen, *tenor*; Joshua Smith, *flute*; Emily Beare, *cor anglais*; Joseph Lin, *violin*; David McCarroll, *violin*; Beth Guterman Chu, *viola*; Sayaka Selina, *cello*



Horn Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 40 (1865)
Johannes Brahms
 Born May 7, 1833 • Died April 3, 1897
 Duration: approx. 30 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2005

Composed just months after his mother's death, Brahms's horn trio is the last chamber piece he wrote before taking an eight-year break from chamber composition. At once inventing a new trio instrumentation and providing what would become the most beloved example of it, Brahms scored the piece for natural horn rather than the more modern valved horn, prizing the open tones of the natural horn and having learned the instrument under his father's tutelage. Rife with references, the piece quotes the folk song that he had learned from his mother, "Dort in den Weiden steht ein Haus" in the second movement. The third movement features a quotation of the funeral chorale "Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten," which Brahms would use in his *German Requiem*, which was begun in the same year the horn trio was completed.

Participants: Richard King, *horn*; Christine Lim, *violin*; Juho Pohjonen, *piano*

2018 Preview Notes • Week Four • Persons Auditorium

Sunday, August 5 at 2:30pm



String Quartet in A Minor, D. 804, "Rosamunde" (1824)

Franz Schubert

Born January 31, 1797 • Died November 19, 1828

Duration: approx. 35 minutes • Last Marlboro Performance: 2001

Though Schubert wrote at least 15 string quartets, including the 12 early quartets composed for domestic performance as well as the three mature works that are frequently performed today, the String Quartet in A Minor, D. 804, was the only one published during his lifetime. It is a bitter irony that this publishing happened when he was already beset by the illnesses that would contribute to his death at the age of 31.

The quartet begins with a substantial first movement, whose length would exceed any two of the other movements combined. This first movement vacillates between two primary moods. Outbursts of anxiety recall Schubert's song "Gretchen am Spinnrade," whose lyrics "My peace is gone, my heart is heavy/I can never find it again," seem especially fitting. The emotional turmoil of this music is interspersed with a lyrical theme in the major mode, woven by the two violins and tinged with melancholy despite the sweetness of its melody. The second movement provides the quartet's namesake material, integrating a theme from Schubert's incidental music for the play *Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus*. Continuing with references to his own compositions, Schubert includes a fragment of his song "Die Götter Griechenlands" in the third movement, nodding to a setting of a Schiller ode that bemoans the lost Golden Age. The final movement again alternates between lighter music and fretfulness, but finally ends, with relish, on the happier theme.

Participants: Christine Lim, *violin*; Joseph Lin, *violin*; Wenting Kang, *viola*; Alice Yoo, *cello*



Piano Trio in B Major, Op. 8 (1854, rev. 1889)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833 • Died April 3, 1897

Duration: approx. 35 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2017

It is sometimes quipped that the Piano Trio in B Major is at once Brahms's first piano trio and his last. Initially written when Brahms was only 20 years old, his first piano trio was the one to which he returned at the age of 56, making revisions so significant that its second form is regarded by some as his fourth and final piano trio. In a letter to Clara Schumann, Brahms wrote "With what childish amusement I whiled away the beautiful summer days you will never guess. I have rewritten my B major Trio.... It will not be as wild as before—but will it be better?" Interestingly, Brahms, famous for his self-criticism and propensity for destroying works that did not measure up to his standards, let both versions of the trio circulate after his revisions, which offered a unique glimpse into the maturation of his compositional process.

As in his other piano trios, Brahms includes a fourth movement. In this case, the added movement is the *Scherzo*, which suffered the fewest revisions in 1889 and whose presence augments the scope of the piece beyond expectations inherited from the classical age. Also unexpected, the trio begins in the title key of B Major with an open, comforting melody but alternates modality from movement to movement such that when it arrives at the fourth movement, the piece tumbles to its end in B Minor. This turn in modality is not unheard of in Brahms's output: his third symphony and the G Major Violin Sonata, Op. 78, both conclude in the minor despite otherwise finding their home in their identifiably major namesake keys.

Though shortened in its revised form, the piece yet enjoys references to *Lieder* by Schubert, in its third movement, and Beethoven and even some Hungarian folk influences in its fourth and final movement.

Participants: Andrew Hsu, *piano*; Abigail Fayette, *violin*; Peter Wiley, *cello*