

## 2024 Preview Notes • Week Five • Persons Auditorium

Friday, August 9 at 8 pm



**String Quintet in A Major, G. 316 (1779)**

**Luigi Boccherini**

Born February 19, 1743, Lucca, Italy

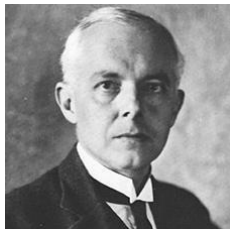
Died May 28, 1805, Madrid, Spain

Duration: approx. 21 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 1970

Boccherini's String Quintet in A Major consists of a traditional string quartet with the addition of an extra cello. This instrumentation, unusual at the time, was pioneered by Boccherini himself. He composed the work in 1779, while he was in the service of the Infante Don Luis, the brother of Charles III, the King of Spain. With Boccherini being both a cellist and a composer, the instrumentation of this string quintet with two cellos may have resulted from an opportunity for Boccherini to join Don Luis's quartet and make it a quintet. The addition of another cello also allows Boccherini to explore greater depths of the instrument, as well as the balance between the new instrumentation. Boccherini ended up creating over one hundred quintets with this instrumentation, going on to set a new standard in the repertoire. This Friday's performance will mark the first Marlboro performance of the work since its premiere in 1970.

Participants: Angela Sin Ying Chan, *violin*; Clara Neubauer, *violin*; Hiroki Kasai, *viola*; Ben Solomonow, *cello*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*



**Contrasts (1938)**

**Béla Bartók**

Born March 25, 1881, Sânnicolau Mare, Romania

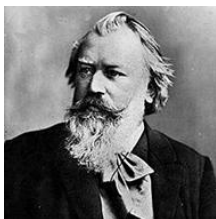
Died September 26, 1945, New York, New York

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

Commissioned by clarinetist Benny Goodman and violinist Joseph Szigeti, this three-movement work is based on Hungarian and Romanian dance melodies. The first movement opens with a lively violin pizzicato, followed by the clarinet which introduces the main theme. This theme is an example of the Hungarian dance and music genre "*verbunkos*", or recruiting dance. The genre of music was commonly played during military recruiting. The second movement is much more introspective and has a continuously shifting mood without a defined theme. The third is a frenzied dance that begins with a scordatura (G#-D-A-E $\flat$ ) violin section, after which the clarinet introduces the main theme. In the middle, there is a slower section in the time signature 3+2+3+2+3/8, after which the pattern of variations on the theme is resumed.

Participants: Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Randall Goosby, *violin*; Ieva Jokubaviciute, *piano*



**Piano Quartet in A Major, Op. 26 (1861)**

**Johannes Brahms**

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

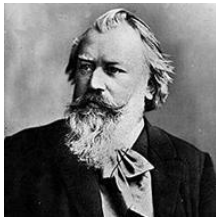
Duration: approx. 48 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

Brahms's Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major was written shortly after the first Piano Quartet, while Brahms still resided in his home-town of Hamburg. It was completed in 1861, and was premiered in November 1862 by the Hellmesberger Quartet and with Brahms himself at the piano. This premiere occurred in Vienna only a few months after Brahms made his first trip to the city, where he was introduced to its dynamic musical community by the likes of Clara Schumann and the prominent violinist and conductor Joseph Hellmesberger, Sr. The four-movement work is expansive in nature, representing the longest of all of Brahms's chamber works. In contrast to the tempestuous Piano Quartet No. 1, the A Major quartet is serene. It has been a favorite work at Marlboro over the years: tonight's performance is the 22nd time that the work has been heard at the festival, since its first appearance on a Marlboro program in 1960.

Participants: Cynthia Raim, *piano*; Clara Neubauer, *violin*; Misha Amory, *viola*; Annie Jacobs-Perkins, *cello*

## Saturday, August 10 at 8 pm



### **Sechs Quartette, Op. 112 (1891)**

**Johannes Brahms**

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 10 minutes

Last Marlboro Performance: 2012

Brahms' *Sechs Quartette* are written for a vocal quartet and piano. The work consists of two distinctly serious and introspective quartets named "Sehnsucht" (Desire) and "Nächtens" (In the Night) which explore themes of longing, unfulfilled desires, and death. The other section, titled "Vier Zigeunerlieder" (Four Gypsy Songs), are more representative of the lively characterization associated with the term "Gypsy," and create a stark contrast against the first two quartets in this Opus. The juxtaposition of these works creates a unique exploration into two distinct styles of Brahms, one more melancholic and contemplative, and the other more robust and lively. This Saturday's performance will be the third time the work has been performed at Marlboro since its premiere in 1965.

Participants: Bridget Esler, *soprano*; Chihiro Asano, *mezzo-soprano*; Patrick Bessenbacher, *tenor*; Evan Luca Gray, *bass-baritone*; Lydia Brown, *piano*



### **Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 110 (1851)**

**Robert Schumann**

Born June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Germany

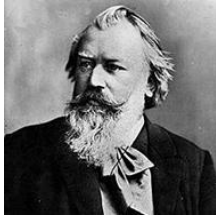
Died July 29, 1856, Bonn, Germany

Duration: approx. 28 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2021

Composed towards the end of his life, Schumann's Opus 110 Piano Trio in G Minor has been grouped with other later works of the composer's that are said to show signs of the deterioration of his mental health. However, the work is full of beauty, energy, and turbulence that are woven together in such a way that Schumann's wife, Clara, wrote, "It is original and increasingly passionate, especially the scherzo, which carries one along with it into the wildest depths." Though the work may seem to some to signify Schumann's deterioration, it serves as a suitable final Piano Trio, imaginative, personal, and expressive. It has been played at Marlboro numerous times since its premiere by Marlboro co-founders Rudolf Serkin, Blanche Honegger-Moyse, and Hermann Busch in 1956.

Participants: Sahun Sam Hong, *piano*; Clara Neubauer, *violin*; Christoph Richter, *cello*



**Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 25 (1861)**

**Johannes Brahms**

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

Duration: 40 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

Brahms's Piano Quartet in G Minor served as an introduction for the then twenty-nine-year-old composer to the musical elite of Vienna, notably leading to the proclamation, "This is the heir of Beethoven!" from violinist Joseph Hellmesberger after a reading with his quartet. The work is best known for its final movement, "Gypsy Rondo" (*Rondo alla Zingarese*), which displays the rousing, percussive style associated with the cross-cultural blend of Hungarian and Romani folk music (at the time, these cultures were mistakenly grouped as one through the outdated term "Gypsy", despite modern distinctions between the two cultures). The captivating finale explores Brahms's perception of "Gypsy people" as capable and fascinating musicians through his uniquely powerful integration of the Romani-Hungarian style. It also foreshadows future works of Brahms that carry this influence, such as *Hungarian Dances*. This Piano Quartet is just one of many outstanding chamber works Brahms composed but is a particular favorite at Marlboro, with this performance marking the 23<sup>rd</sup> time it has been performed here since 1953.

Participants: Juho Pohjonen, *piano*; Meesun Hong Coleman, *violin*; Cara Pogossian, *viola*; Taeguk Mun, *cello*

## Sunday, August 11 at 2:30 pm



**Thomas Adès (2020)**

**Shanty – Over the Sea**

Born March 1, 1971, London, United Kingdom

Duration: approx. 8 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

2024 Composer-in-Residence Thomas Adès's first work for string orchestra, *Shanty – Over the Sea*, was written in 2020 at the height of a worldwide pandemic. Adès had originally planned for his first work for string orchestra to be larger, multi-movement work. However, Adès says, "I don't know whether it's because of the weirdness that's been happening all over the world since I started writing it, but it was just determined to be one statement." The work is inspired by shanties, which Adès describes as "repetitive, communal rituals, which are designed to create a kind of protective mantra around people embarking on great peril." He sees the human desire to "embark" as "one of the most human tendencies," saying, "This piece is about that desire." This performance marks the work's Marlboro premiere.

Participants: Marlboro Chamber Strings



**Canticle IV: Journey of the Magi (1971)**

**Benjamin Britten**

Born November 22, 1913, Lowestoft, England

Died December 4, 1976, Aldeburgh, England

Duration: approx. 11 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

Britten wrote five works which he titled 'canticle,' and each are settings of texts of a spiritual nature and scored for a different instrumentation. Canticale IV, *Journey of the Magi*, is a setting of a T. S. Eliot poem of the same name which explores themes of birth and death through the allusion of Jesus's birth. The poem itself is not so overt in traditional Christian imagery, exploring instead the reactions of the magi, as Eliot appears to imply they would not be able to understand the miracle of the moment itself. Britten also uses the Antiphon melody, "Magi videntes stellam," to tie together the Christian material. Although Britten's other canticles have been performed at Marlboro, this will be the premiere of his fourth.

Participants: Daniel Moody, *countertenor*; Daniel McGrew, *tenor*; Evan Luca Gray, *bass-baritone*; Lydia Brown, *piano*

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**Divertissement Op. 36 (1896)**

**Émile Bernard**

Born November 28, 1843, Marseilles, France

Died September 11, 1902, Paris, France

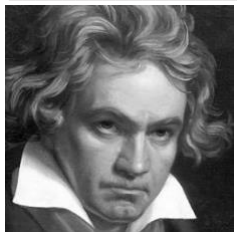
Duration: approx. 22 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 1961

Bernard's *Divertissement* for wind instruments was dedicated to Paul Taffanel, a flutist and conductor involved in multiple musical societies in France, including the *Société de Musique de Chambre pour Instruments à Vent* which he founded, and which premiered the work. The *Société* resembled the classical style *Harmonie* ensembles, which were small wind bands. Thus, Bernard's *Divertissement* resembles classical *Harmoniemusik* in instrumentation, yet reflects the Romantic time period in which it was written. This will be the third time the work has been programmed at Marlboro, and the first time since it was conducted by Marlboro co-founder and flutist Marcel Moyse in 1961.

Participants: Denis Savelyev, *flute*; Joshua Smith, *flute*; Frank Rosenwein, *oboe*; Donovan Bown, *oboe*; Javier Morales-Martinez, *clarinet*; Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Joshua Butcher, *bassoon*; Natalya Rose Vrbsky, *bassoon*; Ryan Williamson, *horn*; Carys Sutherland, *horn*

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**Choral Fantasy, Op. 80 (1808)**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Born December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

The Choral Fantasy began with Beethoven's own improvisation at the keyboard during the finale to a titanic concert that premiered both his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. The Choral Fantasy's history with Marlboro began as the season finale of 1957 with Alexander Schneider conducting, Rudolf Serkin as soloist, and a chorus made up of Blanche Honegger Moyse's chorale. Serkin's last appearance in the Choral Fantasy was in 1989, two summers before his death. For two years after, Peter Serkin performed the solo part in his father's memory, but then the tradition ended until 2003. As then-Co-Director Richard Goode told Alex Ross, "Many people felt that Serkin playing the Choral Fantasy was a unique experience that could never be duplicated. After he died, the work was retired, and I thought that was the right decision. To my surprise, a few years later people said, 'You know, I think we have to have a Choral Fantasy.' We needed the catharsis." This year the tradition continues with Co-Artistic Director Mitsuko Uchida as soloist and Thomas Adès conducting.

Participants: Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*; Marlboro Festival Orchestra