

## 2024 Preview Notes • Week Four • Persons Auditorium

Friday, August 2 at 8 pm



**Piano Trio in C Minor, Op. 1, No. 3 (1794-5)**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Born December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 28 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

Beethoven's great ambitions for his first published opus came to fruition with a set of piano trios that received high public approval, including the third of the set, this piano trio in C Minor. However, not everyone predicted that these trios would be successful. Haydn, whom Beethoven had been a pupil of in the years leading up to the publication of his trios, expressed to Beethoven his doubts about the inclusion of the C Minor trio. This likely well-intentioned comment was thought by Beethoven to be made out of jealousy, and thus he kept the trio. Whatever Haydn's reasons, the comment was not unfounded; the explosive C Minor trio stands apart not only within the set Beethoven composed, but also against the compositions of Haydn and Mozart. However, the qualities that Haydn feared would drive audiences away appeared to do the opposite, as the C Minor trio became the most popular of the set.

Participants: Juho Pohjonen, *piano*; Oliver Neubauer, *violin*; Minjoung Kim, *cello*



**Deux rapsodies (1901)**

**Charles Martin Loeffler**

Born January 30, 1861, Schöneberg, Germany

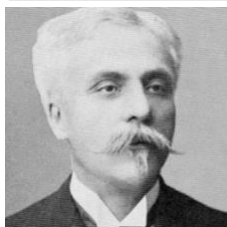
Died May 19, 1935, Medfield, Massachusetts

Duration: approx. 21 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2014

Loeffler's Deux rapsodies are revisions of previous settings of poetry he had made in 1898 for voice, clarinet, and piano. The poems, "L'Étang" (The Pond) and "La Cornemuse" (The Bagpipe) were written by French symbolist poet Maurice Rollinat. "L'Étang" and "La Cornemuse" both use rich symbolism and eerie language—the first describes a murky pond underneath a stormy sky, the latter a bagpipe-player whose melodies can be heard even after he dies. Described as a symbolist himself, Loeffler's settings offer a vivid impressionistic soundscape that mirrors the lyricism and tension that permeate the poetry itself. The melancholic explorations of Rollinat's texts have since become a staple of oboe repertoire, and this Friday's concert will mark its 11<sup>th</sup> Marlboro performance.

Participants: Donovan Bown, *oboe*; Misha Amory, *viola*; Juho Pohjonen, *piano*



**Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 45 (1885-6)**

**Gabriel Fauré**

Born May 12, 1845, Pamiers, France

Died February 16, 1899, Paris, France

Duration: 35 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

Fauré began his first piano quartet at the age of 31, after having spent the last sixth of his life wooing Marianne Viardot, daughter of the celebrated opera singer Pauline Viardot. Though Marianne accepted Fauré's proposal after five years of courtship, the engagement disintegrated, and Marianne broke it off. Despite this background and its C Minor designation, the quartet is not overly gloomy; it begins with a determined opening, featuring a particularly

virtuosic scherzo studded with vivacious pizzicato, an elegant adagio, and a finale that the composer revised in 1883 to completely replace the original movement, which he destroyed in his last days.

Participants: Sahun Sam Hong, *piano*; Julian Rhee, *violin*; Samuel Rosenthal, *viola*; Peter Myers, *cello*

## Saturday, August 3 at 8 pm



### **Grenzen der Menschheit, D. 716 (1821)**

**Franz Schubert**

Born January 31, 1797, Vienna, Austria

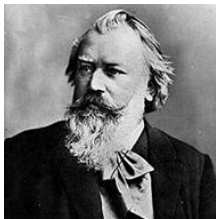
Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 7 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

Schubert's work is a setting of Goethe's poem, "Grenzen der Menschheit" (Human limitations). As the title suggests, the text explores the limits of humanity against the boundlessness of God. The serious nature of Goethe's conceptualization of humanity is understood and executed through Schubert's grand and weighty song. Ultimately, the work seeks to answer a question posed in the text: "What distinguishes Gods from humans?" Goethe answers this through imagery of waves that "lift us up" and "engulf us", which Schubert reflects on through the symphonic nature of this work for piano and bass-baritone. This Saturday's performance represents the work's premiere at Marlboro.

Participants: Evan Luca Gray, *bass-baritone*; Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*



### **Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115 (1891)**

**Johannes Brahms**

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 38 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

When Brahms composed his Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, only a handful of works for the same instrumentation had been composed, perhaps the most well-known being Mozart's (1789) and Carl Maria von Weber's (1815). Brahms wrote the work for the renowned clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, to whom Brahms was introduced by the likewise eminent German conductor Hans von Bülow, also a friend and supporter of Brahms's work. Reportedly, Brahms had retired from composing before hearing Mühlfeld perform in March of 1891 but was so enamored of his playing that he composed the Quintet during his summer holiday that year. It was also during that summer that Brahms wrote his Clarinet Trio Op. 114, and later composed his two Clarinet Sonatas, Op. 120, all of which were written for Mühlfeld. The Clarinet Quintet was first given a private, then a public premiere by Mühlfeld in late 1891. The Quintet was immensely popular and was subsequently given performances both by the original ensemble and others across Europe. The popularity of Brahms's Clarinet Quintet can be observed in its frequent presence on Marlboro programs; it was first performed here in 1955, and tonight's performance marks its twenty-second appearance on a Marlboro program since.

Participants: Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Yebin Yoo, *violin*; David Bernat, *violin*; Yuchen Lu, *viola*; Alice Neary, *cello*



**Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2 (1809)**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Born December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: 31 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

Beethoven's E-flat Trio is one of the most lovable, as well as one of the most subtle, of all of his chamber works, with a mellow, intimate tone that recalls the contemporary A Major Cello Sonata, Op. 69. The first performance of the piece took place in Vienna at the home of Countess Marie Erdödy. The intimate setting of the work's premiere and its dedication to the Countess herself may account for the gentle character of its four movements. Notable in its formal layout is the lack of a deeply emotional slow movement, the inner core of the work being comprised instead of two allegrettos. With its square symmetrical phrasing and decorative piano textures, the compositional style of this trio is distinctly 'retro', looking back to the period of Mozart and Haydn, with the formal procedures of Haydn, in particular, being an important point of reference. This is the 18<sup>th</sup> summer that the E-flat Trio has been heard at Marlboro. It was first performed here in 1954, by Rudolf Serkin, Felix Galimir, and Hermann Busch, and most recently in 2023 by Evren Ozel, Isabelle Durrenberger, and Peter Stumpf.

Participants: Solomon Ge, *piano*; Leonard Fu, *violin*; Alice Neary, *cello*

**Sunday, August 4 at 2:30 pm**



**Hommage à R. Sch., Op. 15/d (1992)**

**György Kurtág**

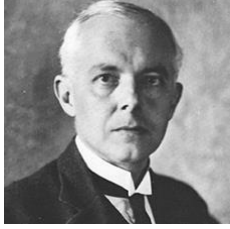
Born February 19, 1926, Lugoj, Romania

Duration: approx. 10 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2019

Kurtág has written several works in homage to others, from Tchaikovsky to Nancy Sinatra. His tribute to Schumann takes the same instrumentation as the earlier composer's *Märchenerzählungen*, or Fairytale Narrations. Comprised of six short movements, this collection of miniatures can feel like a series of stories that reference earlier music using Kurtág's own language. Of particular interest is the final movement, titled 'Farewell (Master Raro discovers Guillaume de Machaut)'. Raro was a character that Schumann used in his writing as a music journalist; Machaut was a 14<sup>th</sup> century composer who used repeating rhythms to influential effect in his motets. Kurtág assigns a characteristic rhythm to each instrument and lets them conclude his tale.

Participants: Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Hsin-Yun Huang, *viola*; Filippo Gorini, *piano*



**String Quartet No. 6, BB 119 (1939)**

**Béla Bartók**

Born March 25, 1881, Sânnicolau Mare, Romania

Died September 26, 1945, New York, New York

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2010

Composed in a time of personal and political turmoil, Bartók's sixth string quartet would be the final composition he would complete in Hungary. Written in 1939, the work is representative of not only Bartók's own period of composition, but the greater sounds of war at the time. The work begins, and ends, in a melancholic, contemplative manner that is reflective of the frustration Bartók felt towards the Nazis. The inner movements proceed with a kind of strained lightheartedness, appearing to mock Hungarian folk melodies through a cello part in an awkward register that clashes with the surrounding harmonies, and asking the violins to alternate playing a quartet flat. It is believed this infusion of crudeness is intended not so much to be humorous, but to represent Bartók's disillusionment with the political situation in Hungary. Rather than disrupt the deep despair of the outer movements, the inner movements provide a striking satire that examines them from another angle. Originally meant to have a fiercer finale, the work is ultimately consumed by the brooding despair of the beginning, a melancholic end to not only the work itself but to Bartók's time in Hungary.

Participants: Joseph Lin, *violin*; Anna Göckel, *violin*; Samuel Rosenthal, *viola*; Zlatomir Fung, *cello*



**Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81, B. 155 (1887)**

**Antonín Dvořák**

Born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Czechia

Died May 1, 1904, Vysoká u Příbramě, Czechia

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

The year Dvořák composed his Piano Quintet in A Major, 1887, was a markedly reflective year for the composer, who had spent the preceding years touring around England and working intensively on commissions such as the 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony, Op. 70. Though Dvořák's original ventures into the Quintet format a decade prior were not successful, this period allowed Dvořák an opportunity to revise one such attempt, leading to the finalization of his Op. 81 in 1887. Today, the Quintet stands on its own as one of the finest chamber music works of the late Romantic Period, showcasing Dvořák's musical depth and ability to shift seamlessly between a multitude of moods, balancing playful passages, rich melodies, and somber ballads throughout. The beloved work is a particular favorite at Marlboro; this performance marks its nineteenth performance here since its Marlboro premiere in 1954.

Participants: Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*; Anna Göckel, *violin*; Clara Neubauer, *violin*; Cara Pogossian, *viola*; Alice Neary, *cello*