

## 2024 Preview Notes • Week Three • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, July 27 at 8 pm



**The Naming of Birds (2001)**

**Sally Beamish**

Born August 26, 1956, London, United Kingdom

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

“I wrote this piece while also working on *Knotgrass Elegy*, an oratorio which uses text by Donald Goodbrand Saunders describing the threat that modern farming methods pose to birds. The birds’ Latin names are chanted by a children’s chorus. While making the sketches for this large scale piece, I became fascinated by the close relationship that Latin names (and often common names too) have with the actual sound of the bird. I began to notate the birdsongs with that in mind, and these five short movements for wind quintet emerged, each featuring a different member of the quintet as a soloist.” —*Sally Beamish*

Participants: Denis Savelyev, *flute*; Donovan Bown, *oboe*; Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Ryan Williamson, *horn*; Natalya Rose Vrbsky, *bassoon*



**Sechs Gedichte und Requiem, Op. 90 (1850)**

**Robert Schumann**

Born June 8, 1810, Saxony, Germany

Died July 29, 1856, Endenich, Germany

Duration: approx. 13 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

Also known as the “Lenau-Lieder,” Schumann’s *Sechs Gedichte und Requiem* originally consisted of just six settings of poetry by Nikolaus Lenau. Lenau was a poet who often examined themes of love and despair; his work is characterized by a melancholic attitude that likely resonated with Schumann, who was known himself for reflecting his layered moods within his music. The addition of the seventh song, *Requiem*, came after Schumann mistakenly thought Lenau had died. Although this was incorrect at the time, Lenau did end up dying by the time of the work’s premiere three weeks later. Thus, the song cycle, already a powerful exploration of love and suffering, also serves as a tribute to Lenau.

Participants: Bridget Esler, *soprano*; Jonathan Biss, *piano*



**String Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1 (1798-1800)**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Born December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: 28 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2004

Beethoven’s *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1* was dedicated to Karl Amenda, as a “small memorial of our friendship.” Amenda was a violinist and theologian who had come to Vienna to work for the Prince of Lobkowitz, who had commissioned the *Opus 18* quartets. This quartet is also the first of Beethoven’s string quartets, which would come to be regarded as some of the most beloved works in the repertoire. In this quartet, Beethoven expertly employs his understanding of the composers who came before him, namely Mozart and Haydn, while also delivering

a work of uniquely emotional and technical complexity. This will be the second time the quartet is performed at Marlboro; it was first performed at Marlboro in 2004.

Participants: Julian Rhee, *violin*; Abi Fayette, *violin*; Beth Guterman Chu, *viola*; Zlatomir Fung, *cello*

## Sunday, July 28 at 2:30 pm



### **Allegro in A Minor, D. 947 “Lebensstürme” (1828)**

**Franz Schubert**

Born January 31, 1797, Vienna, Austria

Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

Schubert’s *Allegro* in A Minor, subtitled *Lebensstürme* (“Storms of Life”), was composed towards the end of the composer’s life, but it was not published until 1840, 12 years after his death. It is one of three works for piano duet, along with the *Fantasie* in F Minor and the *Grand Rondeau* in A Major, that are thought to resemble a more experimental period in Schubert’s career. *Lebensstürme* serves as a particularly poignant representative of these works, as Schubert, perhaps aware that his death was drawing near, employs a dramatic blend of tranquility and turbulence as if he is composing a reflection of his own “stormy life” before his death.

Participants: Jonathan Biss, *piano*; Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*



### **Piano Trio in A Minor (1914)**

**Maurice Ravel**

Born March 7, 1875, Ciboure, France

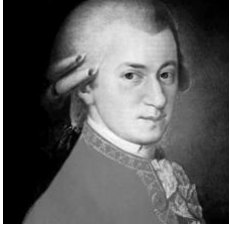
Died December 28, 1937, Paris, France

Duration: approx. 28 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2023

When composing the Piano Trio in A Minor, Ravel had a unique compositional challenge before him: how to reconcile the contrasting sonorities of the piano and the string instruments, and how to achieve balance between the three instrumental voices—specifically, how to make the cello stand out from the others, which are more easily heard. Ravel used an orchestral approach: making extensive use of the extreme ranges of each instrument, creating a texture of sound unusually rich for a trio. He employed effects such as trills, tremolos, harmonics, glissandos, and arpeggios, thus demanding a high level of technical proficiency from all three musicians. To achieve clarity in texture and to secure instrumental balance, Ravel frequently spaced the violin and cello lines two octaves apart, with the right hand of the piano playing between them. Inspiration for the work came from a variety of sources, from Basque dance (a heritage of which Ravel was very proud) to Malaysian poetry. The trio follows a common structure for a four-movement work, with the outer movements flanking a scherzo and trio and a slow movement. Nevertheless, Ravel manages to introduce his own innovations within this conventional framework.

Participants: Ieva Jokubaviciute, *piano*; Oliver Neubauer, *violin*; Minjoung Kim, *cello*



**Quintet in E-flat Major, K. 452 (1784)**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria

Died December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2017

At the time of this quintet's composition, the work was a unique curiosity among the more common instrumentations for quintet (string quintet, piano quintet, and the wind quintet consisting of flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon). However, in characteristic Mozart fashion, this venture set a new standard considered by some to still be unsurpassed. This quintet has been a favorite at Marlboro, and it is easy to see why—it features a variety of instruments in an ensemble of a size that might prove challenging to assemble and study in-depth elsewhere, not to mention the classical beauty of Mozart's writing. He himself deemed it, upon the piece's premiere, to be "the best work" he had ever written.

Participants: Jonathan Biss, *piano*; Donovan Bown, *oboe*; Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Carys Sutherland, *horn*; Joshua Butcher, *bassoon*

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