

2024 Preview Notes • Week Two • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, July 20 at 8 pm



Mehrstimmige Lieder: selections (1815-1822)

Franz Schubert

Born January 31, 1797, Vienna, Austria

Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

Schubert's *Mehrstimmige Lieder*, or polyphonic songs, account for an extensive amount of Schubert's compositional output. Saturday's concert will include three of these works: *An Die Sonne*, *Des Tages Weihe*, and *Hymne an den unendlichen*, each for vocal quartet and piano. *An Die Sonne*, translating as "to the sun," explores the concept of mortality in contrast with the cyclical parts of nature. *Des Tages Weihe*, "to consecrate the day", was composed for Anna Fröhlich, a pianist, and member of a notable family of musicians in Austria with whom Schubert often played. The work was written specifically with the idea of displaying respect after recovery from an illness. *Hymne an den Unendlichen* or "hymn to the infinite one," is a setting of text by poet Friedrich von Schiller that juxtaposes the human experience with the vastness and unpredictability of some higher entity represented through natural metaphor. Uniquely personal and contemplative, the selected songs allow for the musicians to embody the complexity of the themes within a rich texture, at times grand, at others solemn, and always powerful.

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



Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 49 (1839)

Felix Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany

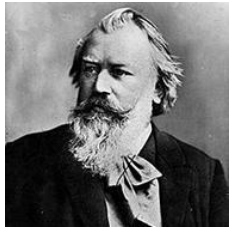
Died November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

Duration: approx. 28 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2019

The piano trio came a long way from the time that it was championed by Haydn, who wrote 45 of them, to the time when it was further expanded by Beethoven, whose ever-evolving trio output exemplified the stages of his artistic growth at large. Mendelssohn only wrote two piano trios, but this one, his first, is one of his most beloved chamber works of any genre. Pablo Casals selected the piece for his performance at the White House at the invitation of President John F. Kennedy alongside longtime Marlboro participants Mieczysław Horszowski and Alexander Schneider in 1961. The trio begins with a searching theme that quickly becomes impassioned and sets the tone for a masterwork that has no shortage of lyricism, but which nevertheless moves actively from its animated beginning to a flowing second movement, a playful scherzo, and a fervent and unforgettably tuneful finale.

Participants: Jonathan Biss, *piano*; Yebin Yoo, *violin*; Oliver Herbert, *cello*



String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 67 (1876)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

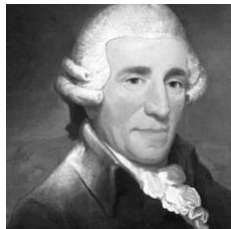
Duration: approx. 34 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2017

Most people would be overjoyed to be deemed a successor of an influential figure in their life, but this was not the case for Brahms, who was declared Beethoven's heir by Robert Schuman. Ever the perfectionist, being named Beethoven's successor likely only increased the feelings of pressure and inadequacy that weighed on his mind. These feelings are attributed by scholars as the reason why the composer felt the need to destroy many of his works throughout his compositional career. Fortunately, despite the large shadow Beethoven cast over the genre of string quartets, three works made it through to publication. Of these, the Opus 67 is acknowledged as a strikingly innovative and passionate work, and demonstrates Brahms' intentionality and creativity through explorations in cyclical composition that drive the variations of the final movement. The work is respected and beloved by many, even Brahms's harshest critic, himself. He described the third movement as "the tenderest and most impassioned I have ever written."

Participants: Julian Rhee, *violin*; Itamar Zorman, *violin*; Cara Pogossian, *viola*; Taeguk Mun, *cello*

Sunday, July 21 at 2:30 pm



Piano Trio in E-flat Minor, Hob. XV:31 (1774-1776)

Joseph Haydn

Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Austria

Died May 31, 1809, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 13 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2003

Haydn's Piano Trio in E-flat Minor, Hob. XV:31 has a shorter nickname, "Jacob's Dream," coined by the composer himself in reference to the second movement. The violin part in this movement demands an extreme amount of technical control and precision in the higher registers, mirroring the passage from the Book of Genesis which inspired the nickname, "And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." The title was later scratched out, though not for lack of relevancy. Haydn had initially written the part as a prank on an amateur German violinist with immense talent but an unfortunate habit of playing too close to the bridge in the higher register. The reason why he scratched out the name is up for speculation, but perhaps Haydn had the foresight to consider how the work would later be regarded—not as a prank, but as a charming, if eccentric work that allows the violinist to stretch the capacity of the instrument.

Participants: Solomon Ge, *piano*; Oliver Neubauer, *violin*; Judith Serkin, *cello*



String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1 (1842)

Robert Schumann

Born June 8, 1810, Saxony, Germany

Died July 29, 1856, Eendenich, Germany

Duration: approx. 26 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2019

The three String Quartets, Op. 41, are the only works of that genre that Schumann composed. Written in his so-called “chamber music year,” which followed his “song year” in 1840 and “symphony year” in 1841, Op. 41 was the product of Schumann’s focused study of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven quartets. All three quartets were completed in less than two weeks, dedicated to his friend Felix Mendelssohn, and first performed in honor of his wife Clara’s 23rd birthday. This quartet in A Minor, though published as No. 1, was actually the last piece to be completed in this opus. However, its lengthy introductory movement, which opens with a delicate and expressive canon, positions it well to be considered the beginning of the entire group of three quartets.

Participants: Leonard Fu, *violin*; Angela Sin Ying Chan, *violin*; Hsin-Yun Huang, *viola*; Annie Jacobs-Perkins, *cello*



Octet in F Major, D. 803 (1824)

Franz Schubert

Born January 31, 1797, Vienna, Austria

Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 60 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2016

The unusual combination of instruments in Schubert’s octet (string quartet, double bass, clarinet, horn, and bassoon) add one extra violin to the Beethoven septet model said to have in part inspired the work. The octet can also credit Count Ferdinand von Troyer, an amateur clarinetist, for the work’s existence. Count Troyer commissioned the piece, and the clarinet part was written for, and later premiered by him. The work also suited Schubert’s compositional goals; he wrote in a letter at the time, “I have tried my hand at several instrumental works, for I wrote two quartets [...] and an octet, and I want to write another quartet; in fact I intend to pave my way towards a grand symphony in this manner.” The motivations behind the Octet are certainly brought to life here in this epic 60-minute work. Sunday’s concert marks its 23rd Marlboro performance.

Participants: Sang Yoon Kim, *clarinet*; Joshua Butcher, *bassoon*; Ryan Williamson, *horn*; Itamar Zorman, *violin*; Angela Sin Ying Chan, *violin*; Ao Peng, *viola*; Annie Jacobs-Perkins, *cello*; Tobias Vigneau, *double bass*