

KEAN STAGE



*The Sixth Annual ASTA/NJ Chamber Music Institute
at Kean University Presents:*

The Daedalus String Quartet

Thursday, August 5, 2010

8 p.m.

Enlow Recital Hall

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Min-Young Kim, violin

Ara Gregorian, violin

Jessica Thompson, viola

Raman Ramakrishnan, cello

*Concert
Artist*
PROGRAM

Dr. Anthony Scelba, Director

Program

String Quartet No. 22 in B-flat major, K. 589 (1790) W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro

Larghetto

Menuetto: Moderato

Allegro assai

String Quartet No. 1 “The Kreutzer Sonata” (1923). Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Con moto

Con moto

Con moto

Con moto

-INTERMISSION-

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat major, Op. 74 (1809) Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Poco adagio - Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Presto

Allegretto con Variazioni

The Daedalus Quartet is represented by:

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www.daedalusquartet.com

Program Notes

W.A. Mozart

String Quartet No. 22 in B-flat major, K. 589 (1790)

The music scholar Maynard Solomon argues that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart suffered from depression, or, in Mozart's own words, a "constant sadness." This depression was exacerbated by his father's death in 1787. In addition, a drawn-out war with Turkey between 1788 and 1791 put the Viennese economy into recession, which meant that concerts and commissions were fewer. (In 1789, there were only 16 concerts presented in Vienna, a drop of over 50 percent from the previous year, and in 1790, there were only seven.) Personal depression and economic recession meant that Mozart's productivity was waning and his finances were deteriorating. And so, in the spring of 1789, he travelled to Berlin, by way of Prague, Dresden, and Leipzig, in an attempt to turn things around. He met with royalty and patrons, and he gave concerts. In particular, he hoped to make a good impression on the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II, who was an amateur cellist.

However, it is not clear that Mozart ever got to meet the King. On his first attempt, he was sent instead to the director of chamber music, the cellist Jean Pierre Duport. Following his second attempt, he wrote to his wife, Constanze, that he received 100 *friedrichs d'or* and commissions for six string quartets and six clavier sonatas after performing for the Queen. But there is no entry in the court records that accounts for this second visit, and it is quite possible that Mozart borrowed the money from friends and made up the visit (and the commissions) in order to return to Vienna and Constanze with something to show for his efforts. (It is also likely that he had a romantic entanglement during his travels, which Constanze no doubt suspected, so he definitely could not show up empty-handed.)

Out of the 12 allegedly commissioned pieces, only three were completed: the "Prussian" string quartets, K. 575, 589, and 590. The latter two of these, from 1790, were composed in an exceptionally fallow period for Mozart – he wrote only a few other pieces that year. In May, the month in which he composed K. 589, he wrote to his benefactor Michael Puchberg, "If only I had in hand 600 florins at least I should be able to compose with a fairly easy mind. And ah! I must have peace of mind." Paradoxically, at times like these, when he really needed money, he seemed to shy away from compositions which would have been lucrative – compositions that would be easy to play and easy to understand, for the amusement of light-hearted amateurs. Instead, he wrote now some of his most demanding chamber music, which was appealing only to the Viennese musical elite and hence was not lucrative at all.

More than two centuries later, we are not complaining. The "Prussian" string quartets were the culmination of Mozart's skill in the idiom. In giving the cello a larger role (acknowledging the Prussian King's – and Duport's – instrument), Mozart was forced by symmetry to give every voice a share of the spotlight, and the resulting democratic interplay makes the quartets feel, more than ever, like opera to perform.

Mozart reveals his genius in the first two phrases of K. 589. On the surface, they are a simple, tender question and answer formed by the first violin and cello, respectively. But through exquisite voice leading, canon, elision by way of an oscillating vamp, and canonic imitation of the vamp, Mozart makes the phrases sparkle. He shows exquisite sleight of hand later, in the beginning of the development section, when an angry statement of the exposition's closing theme in the parallel minor gives way, like a storm quickly passing, to a peaceful statement of the opening theme in D-flat major.

The second movement really feels like an Italian aria. Sweet, hushed melodies are passed between the cello and the first violin – including some of the most difficult passagework for the

Program Notes

cello that side of late Beethoven. The Menuetto is unusual in that its trio section functions as an extended (and somewhat emotionally fraught) development. A moment of silence is needed for the trio to collect itself and wander back, but even then there is a long way to go. There is something very Beethovenian about the whole thing.

The last movement, very light and dance-like, is in sonata form but has rondo tendencies. Its main theme is derived from the first movement's theme, and, as in the first movement, there is a magical modulation to D-flat major in the development section. Mozart seems to have great fun inserting duple rhythms within 6/8 meter, and near the end of the movement, he even staggers two sets of duples an eighth note apart to really confuse us. Never fear, though: the first violin, playing what could be the climactic passage of an aria, to tremolandi accompaniment in the inner voices, brings us safely home.

It is unlikely that King Friedrich Wilhelm II ever saw K. 589. Mozart himself did not live long enough to see it published – he died the following year.

Leoš Janáček

String Quartet No. 1 “Kreutzer Sonata”

Leoš Janáček's first string quartet was written in 1923, in the composer's 70th year. It was inspired by a novella by Leo Tolstoy called “The Kreutzer Sonata.” The novella, written in 1889 and banned in 1890, is a provocative and violent portrayal of the relationship between the sexes. While on a night train, the narrator encounters a peculiar man, Pozdnyshov, who identifies himself as a notorious criminal. Over cups of incredibly intense tea, he decries the current state of affairs, in which young men are encouraged by society to debauch themselves and young women are encouraged to do all they can do to attract young men. He holds forth against modern medicine and contraception, which support this situation, and claims that love between a man and a woman is nothing more than a base sexual attraction. He says that chastity is the only way to live a truly Christian life, but that if a man finds himself having sinned, he must marry the woman and raise the child to be a chaste adult.

Pozdnyshov then tells his story. After spending his youth in debauchery, he married an attractive woman because of the way a dress clung to her. The couple was soon caught in a cycle of fiery passion alternating with icy hatred. After having numerous children, his wife was told by her doctor to have no more, and was taught to use contraception. As a result, she became more aware of her beauty, and of her power over men. She met a bachelor violinist, an acquaintance of Pozdnyshov's, and, at her husband's encouragement, accompanied him on the piano. One evening, they performed Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata together at a small house concert, and Pozdnyshov was overcome by the joyful emotions the music stirred in him. Upon replaying the concert in his mind, however, he suspected them of having an affair. Returning early from a business trip, he discovered them dining together, late at night. He stabbed his wife to death while the violinist scrambled under the piano and made his escape.

In an essay following the novella's publication, Tolstoy wrote, in no uncertain terms, that Pozdnyshov's opinions on chastity, medicine, love, and marriage were essentially his own. But Janáček, in his musical adaptation of the work, clearly identified more with the woman, whom he compared to Kamila Stoslova, his unrequited extra-marital love and the object of his “Intimate Letters.” The piece was originally conceived as a piano trio, perhaps with the three instruments playing the roles of Pozdnyshov, his wife, and the violinist (or, Janáček, Kamila, and Kamila's husband; or, Janáček, Kamila, and Janáček's wife). This trio form existed for over a decade, until Janáček rewrote it as a string quartet and destroyed the piano trio version.

Program Notes

The motive in the first two bars of the piece, which returns many times, seems to mimic the sound that Pozdnyshv makes before speaking, an aural tic. The narrator at first thinks that it is between a “broken laugh or a sob,” but he soon realizes that it is not a laugh. The ubiquity of this gesture, and the frequent train sounds, set the stage for the drama that unfolds. But the exact way in which Janáček’s music depicts Tolstoy’s story should be left for the audience to interpret. The novel ends with Pozdnyshv begging forgiveness for the murder as the narrator leaves the train; the quartet ends with Poznyshv’s forlorn aural tic in the second violin.

Ludwig van Beethoven

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat major, Op. 74 “Harp” (1809)

Beethoven’s Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 74 was written in the summer and fall of 1809, a difficult time for all the residents of Vienna, which was under attack by the French. (Haydn died during this siege.) In late July, Beethoven complained to his publisher about his inability to compose amidst the noise and chaos of the invasion. However, as is so often the case with composers under duress, Beethoven set to work and composed a quartet that completely belies the unhappy circumstances of its composition. Beethoven’s Op. 74 is full of optimism and sunny warmth. While it is impossible to know what prompted the composition of this quartet, it is possible that Beethoven, having revolutionized the medium of the string quartet with his three epic “Razumovsky” quartets published in 1806 (Op. 59), was somewhat at a loss of how to proceed and turned to the past for inspiration. Perhaps he recalled the Haydn Op. 20, No. 1 that he had copied out 15 years earlier, and found in it the humor and inventiveness that lifted his spirits and sparked his creativity.

The slow introduction that opens the Op. 74 quartet finds Beethoven in a questioning mood. There are pregnant pauses and a feeling of mystery, but the questions that Beethoven poses are not larger than life, even when they are punctuated by strong chords. Rather, Beethoven asks where we should go, and after a few dark, wandering moments, the quartet bursts into the sunlight with the four opening chords of the Allegro. This Allegro is playfully inventive, particularly with Beethoven’s extensive use of pizzicato, which earned this quartet its nickname, the “Harp.” The pizzicati are passed off between the different instruments in a little riff on the opening chords of the Allegro, and they return at key moments in the movement — right before the recapitulation, and during the coda, which is a virtuoso display for the first violinist. Despite the drama of the first violin pyrotechnics, Beethoven chooses to end the movement with humor and yet another playful riff on the opening chords.

The slow movement of this quartet contains one of Beethoven’s longest and most cantabile melodies. This beautiful melody appears three times, each successive time with gentle variations, and in between these statements are episodes which wander to darker keys, but never too far or for too long. Before the second statement of the theme and at the close of the movement, Beethoven seems to return to his question.

Biographies

A graduate of Harvard University and the Juilliard School, **violinist Min-Young Kim** has toured extensively with Musicians from Marlboro, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and American Chamber Players, and has collaborated with members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, Cleveland, and Takács Quartets. She made her New York recital debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 2001 as a winner of Artists International Competition and has performed as a soloist with Apollo's Fire, the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra, the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. With interests ranging from Baroque to contemporary music, Ms. Kim has performed and recorded with Apollo's Fire and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and has premiered numerous works in the Boston and New York areas as well as at new music festivals in Spain and Greece. She is also strongly committed to education, and was one of the first recipients of the Morse Fellowship at Juilliard, teaching music in inner city classrooms through creative activities. Ms. Kim has served on the faculties of Columbia University and the School for Strings, and her principal teachers have been Donald Weilerstein, Robert Mann, and Shirley Givens.

Jesse Mills is replacing Ara Gregorian for this performance. Grammy-nominated violinist **Jesse Mills** enjoys performing music of many genres, from classical to contemporary, as well as composed and improvised music of his own invention. In 2004, Mills made his professional concerto debut with the Ravinia Festival Orchestra conducted by Nicholas McGegan in a unique partnership with Salsa trombonist, Jimmy Bosch. As a chamber musician Mr. Mills has performed at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie's Weill Hall, Columbia University's Miller Theater, Boston's Gardner Museum, the CooperArts Series at Cooper Union, and at the Marlboro Music Festival. An avid performer of contemporary works, Mr. Mills was for two years a member of the FLUX Quartet. Through his collaboration with cellist Fred Sherry, Mr. Mills has performed various compositions of Zorn, Wuorinen, Webern, Schoenberg, among others, and they have made recordings on NAXOS, Tzadik, and Stretch records. He can also be heard on New Spirit, a new recording for the Verve label by jazz pianist, Makoto Ozone. Mr. Mills is a graduate of the Juilliard School, where he was a student of Robert Mann.

Biographies

Violist **Jessica Thompson** is an accomplished and versatile performer who has appeared throughout the U.S. and abroad. A passionate chamber musician, she spent several summers at the Marlboro Music Festival and has toured with Musicians from Marlboro. While a student at the Curtis Institute, she was a member of the Grancino Quartet and participated in Isaac Stern's Chamber Music Seminar in Jerusalem. As a result she was chosen for the singular honor of performing at the Isaac Stern Memorial Concert at Carnegie Hall. Before joining the Daedalus Quartet, Ms. Thompson was a member of the Chester String Quartet, resident ensemble of Indiana University South Bend, where she served as Associate Professor of Viola. Ms. Thompson has appeared as soloist with the Minnesota Orchestra and in recital in cities such as Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Washington, D.C. In 2004, she was invited to perform at the International Viola Congress on a program of works by American women composers. Her principal teachers have been Karen Tuttle, Korey Konkol, and Alice Preves.

Cellist **Raman Ramakrishnan** has given solo recitals in New York and Boston and performed chamber music at Alice Tully Hall, for Caramoor's "Rising Stars" series, at Bargemusic, and at the Marlboro, Bravo! Vail, Charlottesville, Lincolnshire, Mehli Mehta, and Four Seasons Chamber Music Festivals. He has toured with Musicians from Marlboro, and has performed frequently with such ensembles as the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, the International Sejong Soloists, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, and the contemporary chamber ensemble Proteus 5. As a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, he has collaborated with musicians from the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra and performed in New Delhi and Agra, India, for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture ceremony. Mr. Ramakrishnan holds a Bachelor's degree with honors in physics from Harvard University and a Master's from The Juilliard School. His principal teachers have been Fred Sherry, Andrés Diaz, and André Emelianoff.

Daedalus Quartet

Praised by *The New Yorker* as “a fresh and vital young participant in what is a golden age of American string quartets,” the **Daedalus Quartet** has established itself as a leader among the new generation of string ensembles. In its nine years of existence the Daedalus Quartet has received plaudits from critics and listeners alike for the security, technical finish, interpretive unity, and sheer gusto of its performances – and this in cannily selected repertoire ranging from the classicism of Haydn to the complexities of Elliott Carter. “Polished and vigorous” (*The New York Times*); “a young quartet whose moment has arrived” (*The New York Sun*); “jet-propelled rockets of blistering virtuosity...the music rang gloriously” (*The Washington Post*) — these are only a few of the accolades garnered by the Daedalus Quartet in recent seasons.

On October 14, 2008, senior critic Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* wrote:

It is hard to imagine a more inviting place to hear a Haydn string quartet than Philosophy Hall at Columbia University, especially at noontime with your lunch on your lap. On Monday the excellent Daedalus Quartet, in residence at Columbia, opened the second season of free Lunchtime Concerts at the university by playing Haydn’s Quartet in C (Op. 20, No. 2), one of the six “Sun” Quartets from that opus. The performance was insightful and vibrant, and the setting ideally intimate. Hearing such an excellent, up-close performance made this Haydn piece seem even more monumental. And what a splendid way to spend your lunch hour.

In 2007 critic Steve Smith of *The New York Times* took particular notice of the refined musicality of Daedalus’s performance of Debussy’s String Quartet at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center:

The Daedalus players... underscored the work’s formal elegance with impeccable balance and articulation, while also emphasizing its elusive passion and wit through imaginative management of phrasing and dynamics. (January 19, 2007)

More recently, the Quartet received high praise from Peter Dobrin of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in a review of a Daedalus performance for The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society in January 2009:

In Haydn’s String Quartet in F Major, Opus 77, No. 2, Hob. III:82, each member bent the tempos of short, interlocking figures so subtly you could only marvel at the finesse. But it was Stravinsky’s Three Pieces for String Quartet from 1914 that was the best marriage between ensemble and composer... Some pizzicati popped like balloons, other like gentle soap bubbles. But with a haiku-like economy and density of ideas, you never had the suspicion that impressive technique was dictating the music itself. (January 19, 2009)

During the 2009-10 season the Daedalus Quartet is heard at Woodstock, NY (Maverick Concerts); New York’s Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall; Brooklyn’s Bargemusic; Eureka Chamber Music Series, CA; Cleveland Chamber Music Society; University of Pennsylvania, PA; Tuscaloosa, AL; Wolf Trap, Vienna, VA (featuring the world premiere of Lawrence Dillon’s String Quartet No. 4); Winston-Salem, NC; Storioni Music Festival, Eindhoven, Holland (with pianist Peter Frankl); University of Buffalo, NY; the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Cen-

Daedalus Quartet

ter, NY; Drew University, Madison, NJ; Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY; Haverford College, Haverford, PA; Coastal Concerts, Lewes, DE; Friends of Chamber Music, Stockton, CA; Philharmonic Society of Orange County, Irvine, CA; Mainly Mozart Festival, San Diego, CA (with David Shifrin, clarinet); Purchase College Performing Arts Center, Purchase, NY; Chicago Chamber Music Society, Chicago, IL; Islip Arts Council, Brentwood, NY; Howland Chamber Music Circle, Beacon, NY (with Benjamin Hochman, piano), and the MIT Guest Artist Series, Cambridge, MA.

Since its founding the Daedalus Quartet has performed in many of the world's leading musical venues; in the United States and Canada these include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center (Great Performers series), the Library of Congress, the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., and Boston's Gardner Museum, as well as on major series in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Abroad the ensemble has been heard in such famed locations as the Musikverein in Vienna, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Cité de la Musique in Paris, and in leading venues in Japan.

The Daedalus Quartet has won plaudits for its adventurous exploration of contemporary music, most notably the compositions of Elliott Carter, George Perle, György Kurtág and György Ligeti. Among the works the ensemble has premiered is David Horne's *Flight from the Labyrinth*, commissioned for the Quartet by the Caramoor Festival. The Quartet has also collaborated with some of the world's finest instrumentalists: these include pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Simone Dinnerstein, Awadagin Pratt, Joyce Yang and Benjamin Hochman; clarinetists Paquito D'Rivera and Alexander Fiterstein; and violists Roger Tapping and Donald Weilerstein.

To date the Quartet has forged associations with some of America's leading classical music and educational institutions: Carnegie Hall, through its European Concert Hall Organization (ECHO) Rising Stars program; and Lincoln Center, which appointed the Daedalus Quartet as the Chamber Music Society Two quartet for 2005-07. The Daedalus Quartet has been Columbia University's Quartet-in-Residence since 2005, and has served as Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Pennsylvania since 2006. In 2007, the Quartet was awarded Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award. The Quartet won Chamber Music America's Guarneri String Quartet Award, which funds a three-year residency in Suffolk County, Long Island, beginning with the 2007-08 season.

The award-winning members of the Daedalus Quartet hold degrees from the Juilliard School, Curtis Institute, Cleveland Institute, and Harvard University. Founding members violinist **Min-Young Kim** and cellist **Raman Ramakrishnan** grew up in East Patchogue, Long Island; they met violist **Jessica Thompson**, a Minneapolis native, at the Marlboro Festival. Violinist **Ara Gregorian** joined the Daedalus Quartet in early March, 2010.

The Concert Artist Program

The Concert Artist Program of Kean University, in its 12th season, brings world-renowned performing musicians onto the faculty of the Kean University Conservatory of Music. While maintaining successful careers as professional performers, Concert Artists present solo, chamber music, and jazz recitals at Kean; teach private, weekly studio lessons to Kean students; and conduct masterclasses and other community outreach services in the public schools and junior colleges. Some Concert Artists also coach ensembles and teach classroom courses related to their specialties.

Dr. Anthony Scelba first proposed the Program in 1998 (then called the “Affiliate Artist Program”) as part of an overall plan for advancement of the Conservatory. Since then the Program has expanded from three to 20 Concert Artists. Musicians are chosen for the Program after a regional search. Eminent artists with high reputations for excellence and thriving careers, who are eager to devote themselves to Kean as performers and teachers, and who would contribute to the Program’s outstanding chamber music series are selected.

The CAP Concert Series includes performances throughout the school year. In 2008, the CAP appointed Frank Ezra Levy its first Composer-in-Residence. Its 2009-2010 Composer-in-Residence is the Brazilian, Liduino Pitombeira. In 2010-2011 it will be Samuel Zyman of the Juilliard School. In 2009, the Program offered three performances in Merkin Concert Hall, New York. The Concert Artist Series and Enlow Recital Hall—its new state-of-the-art home—are helping to realize President Dawood Farahi’s vision to make Kean University an artistic and cultural center for the region.

Since the Program’s inception, Kean’s Concert Artists individually have performed as soloists and chamber musicians here and abroad, recorded CDs, been nominated for a Grammy and several Latin Grammys, performed on *Live from Lincoln Center* and Kennedy Center broadcasts, won glowing reviews (including 4½ stars from *Down Beat Magazine*), debuted at prestigious venues and received numerous awards and recognitions. In 2004, “Concert Artist” was recognized by Kean University as a distinct category of adjunct faculty.

Information about these wonderful musicians, about the Concert Artist Performance Series, and about their two CDs— *Schubertiana* and the crossover album *The Great Kean Way: Concert Artists on Broadway*—can be found at <http://www.keanconcertartists.com>.

Acknowledgements

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A PASSIONATE
SUPPORTER
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