

# TAOS CHAMBER MUSIC GROUP

presents

## **THE AMERICAN STRING QUARTET'S PROGRAM, "BONJOUR ET AU REVOIR"**



**This program is generously sponsored  
by Mary Burns.**

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27 September, 2024 | 5:30pm

Harwood Museum of Art

&

29 September, 2024 | 3:00 pm

Taos Center for the Arts



## **Program Details:**

**27 September, 2024, 5:30 p.m. at the  
Harwood Museum of Art**

**Josef Haydn**, Quartet in F Major, Op. 77 no.2

**Dmitri Shostakovich**, Quartet No. 13 in Bb Minor, Op. 138

Peter Winograd, violin; Laurie Carney, violin; Daniel Avshalomov, viola;  
Wolfram Koessel, cello

\*\*\*\*\*Intermission\*\*\*\*\*

**Felix Mendelssohn**, Quintet in Bb Major, Op. 87

Peter Winograd, violin; Laurie Carney, violin; Daniel Avshalomov, viola;  
Matthias Buchholz, viola; Wolfram Koessel, cello

**29 September, 2024, 3:00 p.m. at the  
Taos Center for the Arts with a short  
after-party to follow in the lobby**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**, Quartet in F Major, Op. 135, Muss es sein?

**Béla Bartók**, Third String Quartet

Peter Winograd, violin; Laurie Carney, violin; Daniel Avshalomov, viola;  
Wolfram Koessel, cello

\*\*\*\*\*Intermission\*\*\*\*\*

**Johannes Brahms**, Quintet in G Major, Op.111

Peter Winograd, violin; Laurie Carney, violin; Daniel Avshalomov, viola;  
Matthias Buchholz, viola; Wolfram Koessel, cello

## The Musicians of the American String Quartet

The Strad Magazine hailed **Daniel Avshalomov** (viola) as “one of the finest occupants of that chair, both instrumentally and musically, of any quartet now active.” Avshalomov appears in recital and as a featured performer and concerto soloist at festivals across the country. Before joining the Quartet, Avshalomov served as principal violist for the Aspen, Tanglewood, and Spoleto festival orchestras, as well as for the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Opera Orchestra of New York, and American Composers Orchestra. He also was a founding member of the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble. A frequent guest artist with the Guarneri Quartet, he has performed with such groups as the Da Camera Society, Marin Music Fest, and La Musica di Asolo. He has shared the stage with Norbert Brainin (first violinist of the Amadeus Quartet), Misha Dichter, Bruno Giuranna (a founding member of I Musici), Maureen Forrester, the Juilliard and Tokyo Quartets, and the Bolshoi Ballet (as solo violist). Avshalomov’s articles appear in Notes and Strings; he has edited several viola works for publication and contributed to ASTA’s Playing and Teaching the Viola. He has been the subject of two articles in The Strad magazine and one in Classical Pulse. Avshalomov developed a lecture-demonstration, “Inside Passages,” first presented to the New York Viola Society in 2000. He performed the world premiere of Giampaolo Bracali’s Concerto per Viola, which RAI has broadcast in Europe, and the American premiere of Alessandro Rolla’s Esercizio 3. On his CD, Three Generations Avshalomov, with pianists Robert McDonald and Pamela Pyle, Avshalomov performs works for viola and piano composed by his grandfather, father and brother. The CD was featured on NPR’s All Things Considered. Avshalomov has been on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music since 1984 and at the Aspen School since 1976. His viola is by Andrea Amati (Cremona, 1568).

And introducing the newest member of the American String Quartet....

**Matthias Buchholz** (viola) studied in his hometown Hamburg, in Cincinnati, Detmold and at the famous Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Among his teachers were Bruno Giuranna, Michael Tree, Alexander Schneider and Karen Tuttle. He won top prizes at the Deutscher Musikwettbewerb Bonn 1978, the Fischhoff and the Coleman competition in Los Angeles 1982 as well as the International Music Competition Budapest 1984.

Since 1976 Buchholz performed as soloist and chamber musician in most European countries, in Canada and the U.S.A., as well as in South America, Russia, India and throughout the Far East. He was a member of the Brahms Quartet Hamburg, the Ridge Quartet New York and the Heine Quartet in Cologne. Since 1991 he has performed in numerous concerts and recorded more than 25 CD’s with the Linos-Ensemble, who was awarded an ECHO- KLASSIK 2017 for their CD of the Quintet by Franz Schmidt.

From 1990-2024 he has held a position as Professor for Viola at the Hochschule für Musik Cologne and at the HEM Genève 2013-2018. A passionate teacher since very early on, he gave numerous masterclasses in the U.S., in Korea, China, Japan and most European countries. His former students are working today successfully as orchestra members, principal violists and teachers at major conservatories around the globe.

Starting in September 2024, Buchholz will join the American String Quartet as their new violist and he will be teaching chamber music at the Manhattan School of Music.

## The Musicians of the American String Quartet continued...

A founding member of the American String Quartet, **Laurie Carney** (violin) holds the distinction of performing quartets longer than any other woman in this elite field. The American String Quartet began concertizing while she was still an undergraduate at Juilliard. Apart from the Quartet, she has performed trios with her husband, cellist William Grubb, and pianist Anton Nel; duos with violist Michael Tree; and as an ensemble partner to such artists as Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, Salvatore Accardo, Cho-Liang Lin, Joshua Bell, Yefim Bronfman, Misha Dichter, Ralph Kirshbaum, Alain Meunier, and Frederica von Stade. Carney's concerto appearances include performing Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with the Bournemouth Symphony, Basque National Orchestra, and the Welsh National Orchestra. She gave the premiere of Gianpaolo Bracali's Fantasia for violin and piano. Most recently, Robert Sirota composed his Violin Sonata No. 2 for her, and in addition to performing the premiere last spring, she will record the work later this season. A faculty artist at the Aspen Music Festival and School since 1974 and the Manhattan School of Music since 1984, Carney has held teaching positions at the Mannes College of Music, Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, University of Nebraska, University of Michigan, Shepherd School at Rice University, and the Taos School of Music. Her dedication to the development of young players brings frequent invitations to offer master classes, most recently in California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, and New Mexico. Carney is a member of a prodigious musical family: her father was a trumpeter and educator, her mother a concert pianist, and all three siblings are professional violinists. Her violin is by Carlo Tononi (Venice, 1720).

Since his Carnegie Hall debut in 1994, **Wolfram Koessel** (cello) has performed as a chamber musician, recitalist and soloist throughout the world. The Strad praised his "exceptionally attractive cello playing." As a soloist he has performed concertos throughout the United States as well as with Japan's Osaka Symphony Orchestra and orchestras in Germany and South America. He also has appeared often with the New York Metamorphoses Orchestra, which he cofounded in 1994. His collaborations include performances with legendary tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain, distinguished dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, and cellist Yo Yo Ma, among many others. Koessel also appears with a wide range of ensembles, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Trio+ (a group he formed with violinist Yosuke Kawasaki and pianist Vadim Serebryani), which performs creative and collaborative concerts throughout Japan, the United States, and Canada. Koessel served as music director of the Mark Morris Dance Group from 2004 to 2008 and has toured extensively with the company both nationally and internationally, performing in several world premieres. In the fall of 2009, he was the featured performer in a new dance work, performing Beethoven's Cello Sonata in C. His cello is by Giovanni Cavani (Modena, 1917).

**Peter Winograd** (violin) joined the American String Quartet in 1990. He gave his first solo public performance at the age of 11, and at age 17 he was accepted as a scholarship student of Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School. Recognized early as an exceptionally promising young artist, Winograd was a top prize winner in the 1988 Naumburg International Violin Competition. He then made his New York debut to critical acclaim and has since appeared as a guest soloist with numerous orchestras and in recital across the country and abroad, including annual collaborative performances with cellist Andrés Díaz at the Florida Arts Chamber Music Festival. In 2002 Winograd performed the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Hartford Symphony; his father, Arthur Winograd, was the featured guest conductor. Winograd has been a member of the violin and chamber music faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and the Aspen Music School (where the American is Quartet-in-Residence) since 1990. Born into a gifted musical family, Winograd began his studies with his parents. His mother was a professional pianist, and his father was the founding cellist of the Juilliard Quartet and a conductor of the Hartford Symphony in Hartford, Connecticut, where Winograd grew up. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Juilliard. His wife, violinist Caterina Szepes, is a regular participant in the Marlboro Festival and a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. His violin is by Giovanni Maria del Bussetto (Cremona, 1675).

## Daniel Avshalomov's Program Notes for the Harwood Concert

In the spring of 1799, **Josef Haydn** had a lot of irons in the fire: he was completing the *Theresienmesse*, the first two of six quartets commissioned by Prince Lobkowitz, starting on *The Seasons* - and he had promised Count Fries six quintets. Impressive at any age, much less approaching 70 and in declining health.

But in the **Quartet in F Major, Op. 77 no. 2** we find Haydn at the peak of his powers. Abundant wit, inspired innovation, heartfelt expressivity, and his keen sense of the democracy inherent in the ensemble - all shaped by the wisdom of experience.

The opening good cheer persists through a *subito* piano which almost camouflages an important detail: the apparent accompaniment in the second violin soon emerges as a second theme, to the accompaniment of the first theme. Democratic *and* deft. And then there are a few [inaudible] inside jokes between composer and players: an ominous motive in the cello, first written with Eb and Fb followed by the prompt *l'istesso tuono* ["the same pitch"] and repeated as D# and E natural; then a tip for the first violin to play the open A string in advance of a raucous *subito forte*; and he calls for both *sotto voce* ["under the voice"] and *mezza voce* ["half-voice"].

Breaking his habit in the previous nine quartets, Haydn places the scherzo next, alerting the adept listener that both this movement and the next will be unusual. Although marked *Menuet* as were most of his earlier, slower dance movements, this one is clearly a joke [Scherzo] because it constantly tricks the ear into believing that the meter is 2/4 while remaining in 3/4. As if that weren't enough, the trio section drifts into the murk of Db major, the rare-for-Haydn dynamic of *pianissimo*, and with all four instruments in their low registers. Not to mention that there is a coda, which teases the listener who knows the *Menuet* must return.

The noblest of *Andantes* begins with the outer voices alone until the middle two join, adding warmth without volume. A variation where the theme belongs to the second violin and the arabesques to the first follows. By the time the theme appears in the cello, the first violin waxes virtuosic in order to re-establish primacy, when the lower three accompany in rhythmic unison and ever-increasing dynamic, culminating in a very rare *fortissimo* race to the top of the stairs. The subsequent return to the opening theme, this time in *pp*, gives the viola its due, with a woven accompaniment leading to a soothing and satisfying close.

After excursions to Db major and D major, Haydn reminds us that F major is still the home key with a bold, bald chord to start the Finale. What follows is a boisterous dance of Slavonic or perhaps Croatian origin, replete with off-beat accents, seeming meter changes, wild syncopation, and combative counterpoint - all in fun, of course. All four parts contribute to the commotion until a fermata stills the momentum. The first violin tries to find its way off the fingerboard before a four-way unison signals the romp to the finish line. Not bad for a 67-year old.

**Dmitri Shostakovich's** favorite ensemble was the Beethoven Quartet ["Quartet named Beethoven", translated literally]. He dedicated the Third Quartet to them, and beginning in the late 1960s he composed four more, each dedicated to one of the original members.

The **Quartet No. 13 in Bb Minor, Op. 138** was written for Vadim Borisovsky, the towering artist who was the Beethoven's violist for forty-two years, during which they premiered all but the first and last of Shostakovich's fifteen quartets. Borisovsky was the most influential viola teacher in Russia, training and inspiring generations of violists; he was an active soloist on both viola and viola d'amore, and he arranged and transcribed hundreds of works for both instruments.

When Shostakovich imagined the sound of the viola, it was Borisovsky in his mind's ear. So, it is no surprise that the 13th Quartet begins and closes with viola solos: brooding at first and haunting at the end. Between those poles the music is by turns dark, brutal, jazzy, angry, and mysterious - and brief: the entire piece lasts seventeen minutes.

By the 1970 premiere, Borisovsky had retired, and the part was played by his prize pupil Fyodor Druzhinin, who succeeded him in the Beethoven Quartet.

The first "triple-threat" to appear after Mozart, **Felix Mendelssohn** toured Europe appearing as soloist, conductor, and composer. He was acclaimed for reviving many of the great choral-orchestral works of Bach and Handel, and he was quite a success as a concert organizer; but from one point of view all these achievements were eclipsed by a singular habit: Mendelssohn played the viola.

Small wonder, then, that he returned to the viola quintet after twenty years to produce the **String Quintet in Bb Major, Op. 87**, one of the pinnacles of his final years. The first movement revisits the ebullience of his *Octet*, while the finale demonstrates his effortless natural facility now polished by a (soon-to-be-brief) lifetime of success. In the middle we find not the *Mid-summer Night's Dream* style scherzo, but an echo of the more intimate *Canzonetta* from the *Quartet Op. 12*, while the *Adagio e lento* admits us to his most private world. If Mendelssohn wrote a more touching slow movement, I'd like to hear it.

## Daniel Avshalomov's Program Notes for the Taos Center for the Arts Concert

The *Quartet in F Major, Op. 135* is the sound of **Ludwig van Beethoven** thinking about Haydn. After expanding the dimensions of the string quartet from the four-movement standard established by Haydn [and adhered to by Beethoven in his first 12 quartets], the composer looked beyond his 5-, 6-, and 7-movement works, returning to the original and making all his innovations within each of the four movements.

Although dismissed as a student by Haydn after one lesson, Beethoven continued to learn from him through a life-long study of Haydn's scores. He absorbed the older master's matchless wit, his deft structural economy, and the musical democracy implicit in the ensemble.

Cast against type, the viola opens with pure mischief which proves to be contagious. Phrases in collage, accented weak beats, sudden dynamic changes, starts and stops: Haydnisms all, and all employed gleefully by Beethoven, whose harmonic freedom overtakes even Haydn's wide-ranging language.

Where the first movement is capricious and free, the subsequent scherzo verges on mania. A brisk triple-meter dance begins on the wrong beat, and the responsibility for 1-2-3 changes hands so rapidly as to blur the line between illusive and elusive. But nothing prepares the listener for the trio section where the first violin goes berserk on a tangled trapeze while the lower three repeat a single rhythmic figure nearly fifty times at six different dynamic levels. Beyond caffeinated.

Which only deepens the effect of the following Db Major slow movement. In the sketches Beethoven referred to it as a "sweet song of Rest or Peace", and he originally intended it as the finale for the C# Minor, Op. 131 [Db and C# being the same note]. These moving variations are the heart of Op. 135, and he called its mood "smiling through tears".

How to follow Mischief, Mania, and Mixed Emotions? With Mystery. Written above the opening of the Finale we find *Der schwer gefasste Entschluss* ["*The Difficult Resolution*"] with a three-note motive in Grave tempo beneath, asking *Muss Es sein?* ["*Must it be?*"], and the Allegro answer *Es muss sein! Es muss sein!* ["*It must be! It must be!*"]. The interpretation of these words [and notes] range from a profound, existential juxtaposition of free will versus destiny, to a laughable story about a hapless concert-goer named Dembscher who owed Beethoven the price of a subscription ticket. We resolve the question without explaining it: the answer is that both choices are correct. This is, after all, the man whose "*Ode to Joy*" proclaims that all men must live as brothers and whose thoughts often lingered on the philosophical; at the same time, he dashed off a canon at Dembscher's expense with the words "*Es muss sein, es muss sein, ja ja ja ja! Heraus mit dem Beutel!*" ["*It must be, it must be, yes yes yes yes! Hand over the wallet!*"] What seem to be mutually exclusive ideas coexist here, and the result is magical.

The neutron star of **Bela Bartok's** string quartets, the *Third* is similarly small, dense, and packed with explosive energy. The single, fourteen-minute movement comprises four distinct sections reflecting the purest expression of a form which fascinated the composer during the 1920s. Lyrical music is followed by a vigorous dance, and both return, but in such complex modification as to blur the resemblances. As Bartok wrote: "I do not like to repeat a musical idea without change, and I do not bring back one single part in exactly the same way."

The Kolisch Quartet gave one of the first performances of the Third, and we studied the work with their violist Eugene Lehner. In fact it was the first of Bartok's six which the ASQ learned, playing it at every opportunity from our Tully Hall debut onward. Its eerie beauty never dims, and its technical challenges are exhilarating.

It was composed for Bartok's first trip to the U.S. in 1927, and it split first prize in the Music Fund Society of Philadelphia competition with a now-forgotten work by Alfredo Casella.

Who would deny that Italy is inspiring? **Johannes Brahms** visited there in the spring of 1890, returning to Bad Ischl where he completed his *Quintet in G Major, Op. 111* that summer. He expected it to be his last work - in fact, he commented that his next "composition" would be his will. The music is not a summing-up, nor does it betray any weakness. Instead, it shows Brahms as he intended: at the height of his powers. His own severest critic, he did not wish to preside over the waning of his empire.

The first movement is a telling example of a composer's expectations of performers. Some imagine no problems at all in the works they write; at the other extreme are those who anticipate every challenge and fill the page with instructions for their avoidance; still others compose, admit interpretive hurdles and are content to let the performers make their way --- and Brahms was one of these. Like much of his music, the opening is so rich and so active in all parts that the melody (in the cello, as you will hear) can be swamped by the enthusiasm of the violins and violas. Brahms's second thought was to thin the accompanimental texture by alternating ripples from violins to violas, and though this is a good solution, he discarded it on third thought, cutting us all loose to project vigor and yet protect the cello's audibility. We like to think of it as an expression of trust.

Brahms does everything to make the second movement gorgeous: he begins with a viola melody and ends with a viola cadenza. What could be better? As for the trio of the third movement, the composer's friend Kalbeck likened it to an image of Brahms strolling in Vienna's broad, scenic park, the *Prater*. "You've hit it!" admits Brahms, (a pause), "--all those pretty girls there, eh?" And a quote from one such (his life-long friend Elisabeth Herzogenberg) sums up the spirit of the finale: "(you) must have felt very lighthearted. One feels you must have been celebrating -- say, your thirtieth birthday!" Brahms was fifty-seven.

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