

the PROGRAM9
JUNE*Friday*

8 PM

JUPITER STRING QUARTET

Nelson Lee, *violin* Liz Freivogel, *viola*
 Megan Freivogel, *violin* Daniel McDonough, *cello*
 &

JASPER STRING QUARTET

J Freivogel, *violin* Sam Quintal, *viola*
 Sae Chonabayashi, *violin* Rachel Henderson Freivogel, *cello*

Pre-concert talk with Dr. Andrew Shryock, 7 PM

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QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 77, NO. 2/HOB III:82 (1799)

Josef Haydn (1732-1809)

Allegro moderato
 Menuetto: Presto
 Andante
 Finale: Vivace assai

Jasper Quartet

QUARTET NO. 1: MÉTAMORPHOSES NOCTURNES (1953-54)

György Ligeti (1923-2006)

Allegro grazioso
 Vivace, capriccioso
 Adagio, mesto
 Presto
 Andante tranquillo
 Tempo di Valse, moderato, con eleganza, un poco capriccioso
 Allegretto, un poco gioviale
 Prestissimo

Jupiter Quartet

:: INTERMISSION ::

OCTET IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 20 (1825)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Allegro moderato con fuoco
 Andante
 Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
 Presto

Jupiter Quartet and Jasper Quartet

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ON THE
PROGRAM

BY
Sandra Hyslop

QUARTET IN F MAJOR, OP. 77, NO. 2/HOB III:82

Josef Haydn (b. Rohrau, Lower Austria, March 31, 1732; d. Vienna, May 31, 1809)

Composed 1799; 27 minutes

Prince Franz Joseph Maximilian Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven's devoted patrons, was an excellent amateur violinist and chamber musician who kept an orchestra on the staff of his palace home in Vienna. In 1799 he commissioned the young Beethoven and the elder Haydn each to compose six string quartets for performances at the Lobkowitz Palace musicales. Beethoven responded with the Opus 18, Nos. 1-6 Quartets; Haydn composed two quartets, which would appear as Opus 77.

Why Haydn wrote only two quartets has puzzled scholars. The biographer H. C. Robbins Landon has suggested a hidden motive: that Haydn, after hearing some of the Beethoven Opus 18, was hesitant to have his work compared with that of his former student.

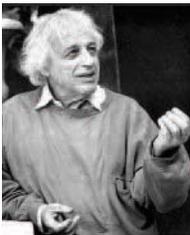


Lobkowitz Palace, 1760, detail of an oil painting by the Venetian artist Canaletto (1697-1768)

A practical explanation—that Haydn, in fragile health, did not want distraction from his current work on the big oratorio *The Seasons*—seems perfectly reasonable. Except for an unfinished string quartet, Op. 103, which Haydn began in 1803, the two of Opus 77 were Haydn's last in the genre.

They are strong works, with skillfully etched melodic, harmonic, and contrapuntal materials. Op. 77, No. 2, begins with a lyrical Allegro, somewhat wistful in its grace. The Menuetto—here in second position, to lend more emotional weight to the final two movements—is a cheerful dance with

displaced accents of twos and threes; its Trio, in D-flat major, has a more serious cast. The main theme of the Andante, a duet for violin and cello, is treated to three variations. Haydn ends the quartet with an ebullient dance in folk style.



*György Ligeti
1923-2006*

QUARTET NO. 1: MÉTAMORPHOSES NOCTURNES

György Ligeti (b. Târnăveni, Romania, May 28, 1923; d. Vienna, June 12, 2006)

Composed 1953-54; 21 minutes

Only a few composers have earned the admiration and respect that were accorded György Ligeti in his lifetime, nor have many people inspired such heartfelt memorial tributes after their deaths. Even though he was relatively unknown by the general public (the widespread familiarity with his music, which Stanley Kubrick used in his film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, did not register his name in society at large), Ligeti's reputation among his colleague composers and other musicians was pure gold.

That Ligeti survived the worst cruelties that the twentieth century offered is almost incomprehensible; that he did so with a will to live, really to live, made of his life a model of grace. The German Nazi occupiers in Hungary pressed him, as a young Jewish man, into forced labor, even as several family members were sent to extermination camps. Resuming his music studies at the end of WWII, Ligeti attempted to keep a low profile under the Communist Russian occupation of his country. In 1956, as the Soviets put down the Hungarians' attempt at freedom, the 33-year-old composer escaped his country under bags of mail in a postal train car and began his new life abroad.

Throughout his life, Ligeti evinced a burning curiosity to explore all fields of learning, from philosophy to the sciences to the visual and musical arts. Although that curiosity led him to association with various schools and movements in composition, he always continued on his own path, insistently organizing sounds into fresh, expressive, and personal ways while—and this was important to him—maintaining connections to his musical roots.

“There is another way of continuing the work of the great masters of the past,” Ligeti said in a 1983 interview, “composing at the same level as represented, say, by the late Beethoven sonatas, but in a new language, a new style. There is a task for you! Going back to the same musical idiom will not do...Knowing how to analyze traditional forms is indispensable, but God save us from atonal sonatas.” In 1993, he was holding resolutely to his intention to walk that fine line: “We must find a way of neither going back nor continuing the avant-garde. I am in a prison: one wall is the avant-garde, the other wall is the past, and I want to escape.”

Ligeti escaped again and again, holding himself to the standards of his forebears while finding idiosyncratic and honest musical means of expression. He repeatedly asserted his musical independence, from the deceptively simple sounding piano writing of the first of the *Musica Ricercata* movements, to the thick and complex vocal/orchestral writing of such works as his fabulous *Requiem*, the micropolyphonic *Lontano*, and the ethereal clouds of *Atmosphères*.

Ligeti composed his String Quartet No. 1 in 1953-54, while he was still engaged as professor of composition at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. Isolated from the music of his contemporaries in other countries, Ligeti did have knowledge of Béla Bartók’s work—not from performances, which were banned at the time in Soviet bloc countries, but from the scores.

The String Quartet No. 1 is one of Ligeti’s compositions that shows direct influence from Bartók, who had died in exile only eight years earlier. The seventeen sections of the Quartet No. 1 (see sidebar) constitute short, contrasting movements, which are performed without interruption. The Quartet received its premier performance in the Vienna Musikverein on May 8, 1958, by the Ramor Quartet. Like Ligeti, the four members of the Ramor ensemble had fled Hungary into exile in the wake of the 1956 Soviet crushing of a citizens’ uprising against Russian oppression. This time, Ligeti had escaped a literal prison, his own country, in order to discover himself in the relative artistic freedom in the West.

OCTET IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 20

Felix Mendelssohn (b. Hamburg, February 3, 1809; d. Leipzig, November 4, 1847)

Composed 1825; 32 minutes

In their elegant Berlin residence, Felix Mendelssohn’s family hosted bi-weekly musicales, to which the elite of Europe’s intellectual and artistic societies vied for invitations. Fanny and

The seventeen sections of Ligeti’s String Quartet No. 1 are played in a continuous flow of contrasting moods and tempos (includes more details than program page):

Allegro grazioso
Vivace, capriccioso
A tempo
Adagio, mesto
Presto—Prestissimo
Molto sostenuto—Andante tranquillo
Più mosso
Tempo di Valse, moderato, con eleganza, un poco capriccioso
Subito prestissimo
Subito: molto sostenuto
Allegretto, un poco gioviale
Allargando—Poco più mosso
Subito allegro con moto, stringendo poco a poco sin al prestissimo
Prestissimo
Allegro comodo, gioviale
Sostenuto, accelerando—
Ad libitum, senza misura
Lento



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Felix, the oldest children, happily took part in the performances from their earliest years. By the time Felix was eleven, he was regularly performing at the piano, conducting the private house orchestra, and playing violin in chamber music. Many of his compositions received their first hearings at these Sunday matinees.

In contrast to the *mélange* of Italian, German, and French musical influences that Wolfgang acquired in his travels, young Felix received his principal musical tutoring at the conservative hands of the composer Carl Friedrich Zelter. Through Zelter's strict training and his own penchant for puzzles and mental games, the youngster easily conquered the compositional intricacies of fugue and counterpoint.

Young Felix received instruction in keyboard and strings. At the age of eleven, he began studying with his second violin teacher, Eduard Rietz (1802-1832), a protégé of the eminent

French violinist and composer Pierre Rode. Their work together in music soon developed into a sturdy friendship, as Rietz, only seven years older than his pupil, became a regular fixture in the Mendelssohn household and musicales.



Drawing by Wilhelm Hensel of the thirteen-year-old Felix Mendelssohn, who had already composed significant works for strings

By the time he essayed his String Octet, Mendelssohn had already composed and conducted performances of several string symphonies. At the age of thirteen, he had created for Rietz a Violin Concerto (in D minor), and in 1823 presented him with a violin sonata. A competent violinist, Mendelssohn understood stringed instruments. Still, the mind reels in trying to comprehend that a sixteen-year-old youth could create this complex string Octet. By all accounts, he finished the work quickly, presenting it to Rietz on the occasion of his teacher's 23rd birthday, in October 1825. Teacher and pupil performed in the premiere of the Octet at one of the Mendelssohn family Sunday musicales that month.

The Octet features high and bright passages for the principal violin that no doubt reflect Rietz's strengths. Already in the extraverted opening theme of the first movement, an arpeggiated motive in E-flat that sweeps from the violin's depths to its heights, Mendelssohn establishes a self-confident, almost orchestral spirit. (He instructed that the "octet must be played by all the instruments in the manner of a symphony.") The Andante, by contrast, is a sweetly flowing *Siciliano*.

Unlike Wolfgang Mozart, whose father hustled the child around Europe in search of prestige and income, Felix Mendelssohn was the son of a stable, elite banking family. Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn raised their four children with close attention to the development of mind, spirit, and body. Except for pleasurable vacations, the Mendelssohns stayed home. And what a home...

According to his sister Fanny, Mendelssohn took his inspiration for the Scherzo from a passage in Goethe's *Faust*, Part I (the Walpurgis night scene). "Trails of cloud and wisps of mist brighten from above; the breeze in the grove and the wind in the reeds—and everything is scattered." He wrote onto the score that the movement "must be played *pianissimo* and *staccato* throughout." Sir Donald Francis Tovey said of it that "eight string players might easily practice it for a lifetime without coming to an end of their delight in producing its marvels of tone-color." The Octet concludes with a joyous perpetual motion in eight-part counterpoint, led triumphantly by the first violin.