



PRINCETON
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CONCERTS

Tetzlaff String Quartet



2022 Spring Season

Welcome back to Princeton University Concerts!
We've missed you!

Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 7:30PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

TETZLAFF STRING QUARTET

Christian Tetzlaff, violin

Elisabeth Kufferath, violin

Hanna Weinmeister, viola

Tanja Tetzlaff, cello

**FRANZ
JOSEPH
HAYDN**
(1732–1809)

String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 20, No. 5 (1772)
Allegro moderato
Minuet—Trio
Adagio
Finale: Fuga a due soggetti

**ALBAN
BERG**
(1885–1935)

String Quartet, Op. 3 (1910)
Langsam
Mässige Viertel

INTERMISSION

**FRANZ
SCHUBERT**
(1797–1828)

String Quartet No. 14 in D Minor, D. 810
“Death and the Maiden” (1824)
Allegro
Andante con moto
Scherzo: Allegro molto—Trio
Presto—Prestissimo

PLEASE NOTE: Wearing a mask over your mouth and nose is required while inside the venue. Thank you for keeping our community safe.



About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2022 • Program Annotator

Lucy Caplan is a Lecturer on History and Literature at Harvard University. In 2016 she received the Rubin Prize for Music Criticism.

I listened to Schubert's quartet "Death and the Maiden" probably dozens of times before I thought very deeply about the anonymous woman to whom the title alludes. In Schubert's song of the same title (from which the quartet's epithet is borrowed), she is in a terrifying predicament: Upon encountering Death, she begs to be spared. She implores him to leave her alone and let her enjoy her youth; he plays dumb, casting himself as friend rather than threat. It is a haunting scene. Yet it is somehow easy to downplay her presence, to focus instead on the music she inspired. In revisiting the quartet recently, I wondered more about this figure, imaginary though she was—about how she mattered to Schubert and about how her presence shapes the way we listen to this music.

"Gender" and "genre" share an etymological root; the Oxford English Dictionary notes that a now obsolete meaning of "gender" is "a class of things or beings distinguished by having certain characteristics in common." The string quartet is hardly unique among Western classical music genres in that its primary composers (and, until relatively recently, its primary performers) have been men. Yet women cluster around the string quartet's peripheries: Even as they have often been marginalized as composers and performers, they are plainly

“How might we listen more expansively for gender in the string quartet? Tonight's program offers a compelling opportunity to think through these questions.

significant as supporters, listeners, and interlocutors. How, then, might we listen more expansively for gender in the string quartet? Tonight's program offers a compelling opportunity to think through these questions. In addition to Schubert's quartet, which brings gender to the fore by way of its title, the other works on the program offer more oblique relationships to the topic. In each case, it is possible to think about how women—named or unnamed, real or imagined—inform the genre's history.

Franz Joseph Haydn, String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 20, No. 5 (1772)

“Papa” Haydn is also known as both the “Father of the String Quartet” and the “Father of the Symphony”—a bouquet of nicknames which collectively establish the string quartet, and classical music more broadly, as a male-authored art form. The composer garnered such praise due to his transformative role in the genre’s development, which is on full display in the set of six Op. 20 quartets. Whereas Haydn’s earlier works for this combination of instruments had been light in mood and intended to entertain the listener, these quartets are imbued with a previously unseen emotional seriousness and architectural complexity. Eventually, Haydn would compose nearly 70 quartets, many of which offer evidence of his profound influence upon the genre’s later trajectory.

Although the set as a whole is sometimes known as the “Sun” quartets, due to the cover art which accompanied an early published edition, the mood in Op. 20, No. 5 is decidedly stormy. The first statement of the opening movement’s theme is austere, but a sudden swerve into a major key ushers in a far gentler mood; the remainder of the movement veers uneasily between these two emotional poles. A similar dichotomy structures the second movement, whose dark-hued minuet acts as a sort of foil to a bustling, cheerful trio. The rocking, siciliana-like rhythms of the third movement offer a soothing backdrop for the highly ornamented melodic explorations of the first violin. A densely contrapuntal fugue caps off the piece, casting a backward glance toward Baroque style before a definitive closing gesture. (Some listeners might recognize the fugue’s first subject as a near-copy of “And with His Stripes We Are Healed,” from Handel’s *Messiah*—a work that Haydn evidently knew and loved.)

Alban Berg, String Quartet, Op. 3 (1910)

Alban Berg’s reputation as a tradition-scorning rule-breaker derives largely from his membership in the Second Viennese School—the group of early—twentieth-century composers, anchored by Arnold Schoenberg, who upended the conventions of tonality. The *fin-de-siècle* moment at which these composers worked was also a moment of profound change in women’s societal and political status, in which feminist thinking began to challenge long-pervasive inequalities. Even as he embraced new aesthetic ideas, Berg did not seem especially susceptible to these new social politics: In a 1907 letter to a friend, Frida Semler, the 22-year-old engaged in what can only be described as mansplaining: “I imagine, and I know I am not wrong, that I know human nature in general, and the soul of woman in particular,” he wrote. “In these matters I have never been mistaken—on the contrary, I have always gotten it right.”

A somewhat more empathetic perspective emerges in Berg's correspondence with his wife, Helene, to whom the String Quartet is dedicated. Technically, this was a sleight of hand (the couple did not officially marry until the following year, due to Helene's family's opposition), yet it speaks to Berg's close association of this composition with his personal life. After an important 1923 performance of the quartet, he wrote to Helene, "I tell you—and I can tell only you—that I reveled in the sound and the solemn sweetness of my own music. The so-called wildest and riskiest passages were pure euphony in the classic sense." He was devastated that Helene could not be present, noting that he was "full of pain that you, you who have spent so many sad artistic decades at my side, and who are as invested in the Quartet as I am, to whom it belongs totally and utterly, cannot be a witness to it!!" The confidence that emerges in these impassioned lines can also be heard in Berg's music. From the moment of its dramatic opening flourish, the Quartet gives the impression of existing on the threshold between nineteenth-century Romanticism and twentieth-century modernism. Tied to tradition by its inclusion of two clear thematic subjects and a sonata-form-esque structure, the first movement also ventures into new territory by way of its harmonic ambiguity and densely layered sounds. The second movement is wilder and more extreme. Structured as a slightly unhinged rondo, it erupts forth from a boldly stated theme which then reappears in a variety of guises, ranging from the hauntingly delicate to the furiously intense.

Franz Schubert, String Quartet No. 14 in D Minor, D. 810

"Death and the Maiden" (1824)

Schubert was no stranger to despair by the time he composed his String Quartet No. 14. Although only 27 years old, he suffered from severe illness and was forced to confront his own mortality. In doing so, he returned to the string quartet, a genre he had largely neglected since his teenage years. In a burst of creativity, he composed two of his most celebrated quartets—No. 13, nicknamed "Rosamunde," and No. 14—in the span of just a few months in early 1824. For this quartet, Schubert turned to a song he had written years earlier: "Der Tod und das Mädchen," on a text by Matthias Claudius. This melody, by turns wistful and fervent, became the basis for the quartet's second movement. No doubt Schubert saw something of his own predicament reflected in this text and music.

After a dramatic first movement—characterized by a sense of deep foreboding, broken up by moments of real tenderness—there is an expansive set of variations on the song. Whereas the original poem detailed Death's dance with a number of different partners, Schubert narrows his focus to the Maiden, who is told, "Give me your hand, you lovely, tender creature. I am a friend and come not to

punish. Be of good courage, I am not cruel; you shall sleep softly in my arms.” The song is heard first in a somber, chorale-like setting. The first variation rustles with agitation; next, the melody moves to the cello, whose singing tone floats atop a ghostly accompaniment. Further variations offer a cycle of moods—rage, fear, peaceful acceptance—declining to suggest any singular response to Death’s presence. In the Scherzo that follows, Schubert begins in a sardonic, accent-laden mode before moving to a warmly imaginative trio. The final movement rushes to the brink, only increasing in speed and intensity as it reaches the end.

Ways of Hearing Reflections on Music in 26 Pieces

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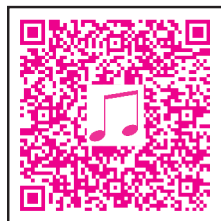


TETZLAFF STRING QUARTET

Their shared passion for chamber music led siblings Christian and Tanja Tetzlaff as well as Hanna Weinmeister and Elisabeth Kufferath, to form a string quartet in 1994. Since then, this ensemble has developed into one of the most sought-after quartets of the middle generation.

EXTEND THE LISTENING!

We asked the Tetzlaff String Quartet to share a musical playlist with you. Point your smartphone camera to this code to hear it.



Regular concerts take the Tetzlaff Quartet to all the important concert venues in Germany, as well as to France, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the United States. The ensemble is at home on the major international stages such as the Cité de la Musique in Paris, Wigmore Hall in London, the Société Philharmonique in Brussels, the Vienna Musikverein, and the Concertgebouw Amsterdam. The ensemble is a welcome guest at renowned festivals such as the Berliner Festwochen and the Heidelberger Frühling. A tour to the United States and concerts in Japan are planned for this season. In Europe, the quartet will perform in Oslo, Bergen, Paris, and Evian, among others. In Germany they have

a residency at the Schwetzingen SWR Festival; they will also give concerts in Berlin, Hamburg, Duisburg, Coesfeld, Freinsheim, and Warstein.

In 2010 the first CD with quartets by Schoenberg and Sibelius was released on the CAvi label; in 2013 a recording with works by Berg and Mendelssohn followed, awarded the “Diapason d’Or.” A CD with works by Haydn and Schubert was released on the Ondine label in 2017, and most recently in 2020 a recording of two late string quartets by Beethoven.

Violinist **Christian Tetzlaff** is equally at home in the repertoire of classical and romantic music as well as the 20th century. He has set standards with his interpretations of the great violin concertos. As a soloist and chamber musician, he regularly gives guest performances all over the world. Violinist **Elisabeth Kufferath** has held a professorship for violin at the University of Music and Drama in Hannover since 2009. She is a sought-after chamber music partner and is committed to contemporary music. Violist **Hanna Weinmeister** has been the First Concertmaster of the Zurich Opera Orchestra since 1998. Cellist **Tanja Tetzlaff** performs as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe as well as in the United States, Australia, and Japan, and is a regular guest at international festivals.

Christian Tetzlaff has appeared on the Princeton University Concerts series many times and his sister, Tanja, appeared with him in 2016 as part of the Tetzlaff Trio. This is the PUC premiere for the Tetzlaff String Quartet.

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Supporting Princeton University Concerts is critical to our future. Ticket sales cover less than half of the cost of presenting the very best in world-class music. Remaining funds come, in part, from our generous endowment, left to PUC by the Ladies' Musical Committee in 1929. We remain eternally grateful for the support of the Philena Fobes Fine Memorial Fund and the Jesse Peabody Frothingham Fund.

Other support comes from donors like you. We are grateful to the individuals whose support at all levels ensures that musical performance remains a vital part of Princeton, the community, and the region.

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2022

SPRING SEASON

Wednesday, April 27, 7:30PM

Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Sheku & Isata Kanneh-Mason

Cello/Piano

A photograph of Isata Kanneh-Mason and her brother Sheku Kanneh-Mason sitting on white marble stairs. Isata is on the left, wearing a bright red dress and white sneakers, smiling at the camera. Sheku is on the right, wearing a blue t-shirt and dark pants, holding a cello and smiling. The background shows a white wall and a staircase with dark green marble steps.

**Isata
Kanneh-
Mason**

**Sheku
Kanneh-
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with special appearance by the Trenton Youth Orchestra

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