



PRINCETON  
UNIVERSITY  
CONCERTS



# Brentano String Quartet

2022/23 SEASON



Dear Friends,

“The world’s most celebrated musicians among friends”—Princeton University Concerts’ tagline rings especially true tonight as we welcome back the Brentano String Quartet to Richardson Auditorium. Having served as Princeton University’s former Edward T. Cone Ensemble-in-Residence from 1999 to 2014, this deeply beloved ensemble will forever hold a special space in our community. The thoughtful program that they bring tonight extends this concept of musical friendship, fostering a musical dialogue from 19th century spirituals to the present day—including a work arranged by Princeton University Department of Music Professor Steven Mackey.

Music cannot exist in isolation—instead it is intricately interwoven into the fabric created by everyone who engages with it. Thank you for being a part of that vital communal spirit, and for your friendship.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marna Seltzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial 'M' and a stylized 'S' at the end.

Marna Seltzer  
Director of Princeton University Concerts

Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 7:30PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

**BRENTANO STRING QUARTET**

MARK STEINBERG *Violin* • SERENA CANIN *Violin*

MISHA AMORY *Viola* • NINA LEE *Cello*

**Dvořák and the American Identity**

*The quartet kindly requests that you reserve applause until the conclusion of each half.*

**SPIRITUAL**

| “Deep River”

**ANTONÍN  
DVOŘÁK**

(1841–1904)

| String Quartet No. 14 in A-flat Major, Op. 105 (1895)  
Adagio, ma non troppo—Allegro appassionato  
Molto vivace  
Lento e molto cantabile  
Allegro non tanto

**INTERMISSION**

**DVOŘÁK**

| “Lento” from String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96,  
“American” (1893)

**WILLIAM  
GRANT STILL**

(1895–1978)

| “The Quiet One” from the *Lyric Quartet*,  
“Musical Portraits of Three Friends” (1960)

**CHARLES IVES**

(1874–1954)

| “Prelude: Allegro” from String Quartet No. 1, Op. 57,  
“From the Salvation Army” (1902)

**GEORGE  
WALKER**

(1922–2018)

| *Lyric for Strings* (1946)

**ROBERT PETE  
WILLIAMS**

(1914–1980)

| “I’ve Grown So Ugly” (arr. Steven Mackey, b. 1956)

**SPIRITUAL**

| “Go Down Moses—Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”



# About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2022 • Program Annotator

*Lucy Caplan is a Lecturer on History and Literature at Harvard University and a winner of the Rubin Prize for Music Criticism.*

In 1893, just before the premiere of his *New World Symphony*, Antonín Dvořák made the now famous proclamation that “the new American school of music must strike its roots deeply into its own soil...I am now satisfied that inspiration for truly national music might be derived from the Negro melodies or Indian chants.” Dvořák’s words have often been taken to gesture toward a more racially inclusive future for American classical music, one which acknowledges and celebrates the indelible contributions of Black and Indigenous musicians.

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“These works offer a collective sense that “the American identity” is inseparable from the histories of racial exclusion... they also remind us of the remarkable breadth and beauty of the traditions that comprise American sound.”

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That future has not yet come into being. Throughout the twentieth century, and into the present, racism and white supremacy have continued to shape the experiences of composers of color. William Grant Still lamented in 1950 that “There is resentment against a Negro composer who doggedly insists that he can and will write abstract music of a non-racial nature. At the same time, if the Negro composer writes racial music, his opponents will say [white composers like] John Powell and George Gershwin did it better!” Still’s words identify a fundamental limitation of Dvořák’s vision, which insists upon the use of Black musical material without necessarily making space for Black composers. Half a century later, George Walker asserted in a 2000 interview that “Racism is alive and well in classical music.” While the systematic exclusion of Black composers might once have been viewed as a matter of “benign neglect,” Walker continued, “today, it is better described as arrogant disdain.”

Two decades later, musicians and cultural institutions are reckoning with this history of exclusion in a variety of ways. This evening’s program features the

music of Walker and Still—widely celebrated, yet still underperformed—alongside that of Dvořák; it also includes examples of African American spirituals, one of the traditions that inspired Dvořák’s commentary. Music by other American art music composers, which similarly draws upon popular and vernacular song, rounds out the program. These works offer a collective sense that “the American identity” is inseparable from the histories of racial exclusion that have so often fractured that seemingly unified term; they also remind us of the remarkable breadth and beauty of the traditions that comprise American sound.

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- How has music served as a healing force in your life or in the lives of those around you?
- How has your relationship with music changed since the start of the pandemic?

**CONTEST ENTRIES DUE**  
Monday, January 2, 2023

REGISTRATION AND CONTEST RULES  
AT **PUC.PRINCETON.EDU**



**Spirituals, “Deep River” and “Go Down Moses—Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”**

Spirituals—the vast body of sacred songs which originated among enslaved people in the United States—vary in tone, from the mournful (they are sometimes known as “sorrow songs”) to the resolutely hopeful. Whatever their mood, they are powerful. Indeed, abolitionist Frederick Douglass once wrote that “the mere hearing of these songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject would do.” After the Civil War, songs including “Deep River,” “Go Down, Moses,” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” were preserved and popularized by groups like the Fisk Jubilee Singers and concert singers including Harry T. Burleigh, a renowned baritone and composer who worked closely with Dvořák during their time at the National Conservatory of Music in New York City.

**Antonin Dvořák, String Quartet No. 14 in A-flat Major, Op. 105 (1895)  
“Lento” from String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96, “American” (1893)**

Dvořák’s Quartet No. 14 has an elusive relationship to place. Dvořák began initial sketches for the piece while in the United States, then completed it shortly after his three-year sojourn there came to an end. It has been interpreted either as reminiscent of Dvořák’s fondness for America or as an expression of relief to be back in his Bohemian homeland. Whichever psychological state it represents, the quartet is a remarkably vivacious work. A sinuous, minor-key introduction precedes a lively first movement. The whirling scherzo that follows has echoes of the furiant, a Czech folk dance. Its trio section features a sustained duet between two voices—a favorite technique of Dvořák’s across his chamber music. The preternaturally calm opening of the third movement eventually gives way to a harmonically adventurous middle section, capped off by an elaborate return to the movement’s opening theme. A rumbling in the cello introduces the final movement, an energetic romp which alternates between forward-driving intensity and moments of playful lyricism before coming to a triumphant close. The celebrated slow movement of another of Dvořák’s quartets, the “American,” offers a poignant counterweight to the optimism of the Quartet No. 14. The first violin and cello’s elongated melodic lines unspool over a rippling texture in the inner voices, joining together in a plaintive duet filled with nostalgic longing.

**William Grant Still, “The Quiet One” from the Lyric Quartet (1960)**

Still’s chamber music is often evocative in nature; for instance, his Suite for Violin and Piano (recently featured on the Concert Classics Series) takes its inspiration

from three works of sculpture by African American artists. The *Lyric Quartet* follows in this pattern: subtitled “Musical Portraits of Three Friends,” it depicts three distinct personalities. “The Quiet One,” the quartet’s middle movement, is somewhat subdued in tone but still pervaded by warmth and generosity. The four instruments begin in rhythmic unison, then expand into a busier texture anchored by occasional pizzicato interjections.

### **Charles Ives, “Prelude: Allegro” from String Quartet No. 1, Op. 57 (1902)**

Charles Ives’ experience of American identity could hardly have been more different from that of William Grant Still. Born twenty years apart and separated by race and region, the two composers nonetheless found themselves similarly intrigued by the possibility of melding vernacular and classical influences. Ives’ first string quartet, written while he was a student at Yale, mixes, reimagines, and resets a variety of Protestant hymn tunes, which the composer encountered often while working as a church organist in New Haven. While much of this movement retains the harmonic simplicity of that original material, it also presages some of the lively experimentalism that would come to characterize Ives’ later work.

### **George Walker, *Lyric for Strings* (1946)**

2022 marks the centennial of George Walker’s birth, and *Lyric for Strings* links the composer to much deeper American histories. Written while he was in his twenties and still a student, the piece was initially conceived as a memorial to his maternal grandmother, Malvina King. Born into slavery, King emancipated herself and went on to become the matriarch of a sprawling family in Washington, D.C. Walker’s tribute to her is alternately mournful and optimistic, reaching an impassioned climax before turning to a more tranquil conclusion. Like the spirituals and other folk traditions it evokes, it insists on finding beauty within struggle.

### **Robert Pete Williams (arr. Steven Mackey), “I’ve Grown So Ugly”**

In “I’ve Grown So Ugly,” the Louisiana-born blues musician Robert Pete Williams embraces the genre’s characteristic mixture of the tragic and the comic: “Got so ugly,” he sings, “that I don’t even know myself.” Written while Williams was incarcerated in the Jim Crow South during the 1950s, the song’s seemingly humorous lyrics actually reflect on the dehumanizing and debilitating experience of imprisonment. Mackey’s arrangement of the song emphasizes its original instrumentation, with sliding pitches that evoke the blues singer’s assertive timbre and a forceful repeated riff that takes the place of the guitar.

# About *the* Brentano String Quartet



Since its inception in 1992, the Brentano String Quartet has appeared throughout the world to popular and critical acclaim. Within a few years of its formation, the Quartet garnered the first Cleveland Quartet Award and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and was also honored in the U.K. with the Royal Philharmonic Award for Most Outstanding Debut. Since then, the Quartet has concertized widely, performing in the world's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall in New York City; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; the Konzerthaus in Vienna; Suntory Hall in Tokyo; and the Sydney Opera House.

In addition to performing the entire two-century range of the standard quartet repertoire, the Brentano Quartet maintains a strong interest in contemporary music and has commissioned many new works. Their latest project, a monodrama for quartet and voice called “Dido Reimagined,” was composed by Pulitzer-winning composer Melinda Wagner and librettist Stephanie Fleischmann, and premiered in the spring 2022 with soprano Dawn Upshaw. Other recent commissions include the composers Matthew Aucoin, Lei Liang, Vijay Iyer, James Macmillan, and a cello quintet by Princeton faculty member Steven Mackey.

The Brentano Quartet has worked closely with other important composers of our time, among them Elliot Carter, Charles Wuorinen, Chou Wen-chung, Bruce Adolphe, and György Kurtág. They have also been privileged to collaborate with such artists as soprano Jessye Norman, mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, and pianists Richard Goode, Jonathan Biss, and Mitsuko Uchida. The Quartet has recorded works by Mozart and Schubert for Azica Records and all of Beethoven's late Quartets for the Aeon label. In 2012, they provided the central music for the critically acclaimed independent film *A Late Quartet*. Since 2014, the Brentano Quartet has served as Artists-in-Residence at the Yale School of Music. They were formerly the Ensemble-in-Residence at Princeton University and were twice invited to be the collaborative ensemble for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

The Quartet is named for Antonie Brentano, whom many scholars consider to be Beethoven's “Immortal Beloved,” the intended recipient of his famous love confession.



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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.

**If you wish to make a donation to Princeton University Concerts**, please call us at 609-258-2800, visit [puc.princeton.edu](http://puc.princeton.edu), or send a check payable to Princeton University Concerts to: Princeton University Concerts, Woolworth Center, Princeton, NJ 08544.

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## THANK YOU!

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# HEALING WITH MUSIC



**Living with Long COVID as a Musician:**  
A Conversation/Concert

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**Joshua Roman, Cello**  
*in conversation with* **Clemency Burton-Hill**

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**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2022 | 7:30PM**

**TICKETS:** 609.258.2800 | [puc.princeton.edu](https://puc.princeton.edu)

**We are happy to thank all of our staff and volunteers for their support.**

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# 22/23

## SEASON



JESS GILLAM  
Saxophone

### CONCERT CLASSICS

Thursday, October 13 | 7:30PM

**GENEVA LEWIS\*** Violin  
**AUDREY VARDANEGA\*** Piano

Thursday, November 3 | 7:30PM

**BRENTANO STRING QUARTET**

Sunday, November 20 | 3PM

**VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON\*** Piano

Pre-concert talk by Professor Scott Burnham at 2PM

Thursday, February 16 | 7:30PM

**ALEXI KENNEY** Violin

Wednesday, March 8 | 7:30PM

**LAWRENCE BROWNLEE** Tenor  
**KEVIN J. MILLER\*** Piano

Thursday, March 30 | 7:30PM

**JUPITER ENSEMBLE\***

Thursday, April 6 | 7:30PM

**ALINA IBRAGIMOVA\*** Violin  
**CÉDRIC TIBERGHIE** Piano

Thursday, April 27 | 7:30PM

**EMERSON & CALIDORE STRING QUARTETS**

### PERFORMANCES UP CLOSE

Wednesday, October 26 | 6PM & 9PM

**JESS GILLAM** Saxophone  
**THOMAS WEAVER\*** Piano

Tuesday, December 13 | 6PM & 9PM

**tenTHING BRASS ENSEMBLE\***

Sunday, March 26 | 3PM & 6PM

**CHIAROSCURO STRING QUARTET\***

Wednesday, April 12 | 6PM & 9PM

**CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT\*** Vocals  
**SULLIVAN FORTNER\*** Piano

### RICHARDSON CHAMBER PLAYERS

Sunday, November 13 & Sunday, March 5 | 3PM

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Wednesday, February 1 | 7:30PM

**JOYCE DiDONATO** Mezzo-soprano  
**IL POMO D'ORO\*** Orchestra

Tuesday, February 21 | 7:30PM

**MITSUKO UCHIDA** Piano

### HEALING WITH MUSIC

Thursday, September 29 | 7:30PM

**INTRODUCING CLEMENCY BURTON-HILL**

Exploring music's role in brain injury recovery

Wednesday, November 9 | 7:30PM

**JOSHUA ROMAN** Cello  
Living with Long COVID as a musician

Thursday, February 9 | 7:30PM

**FRED HERSCH\*** Piano  
Exploring music's role after an AIDS-related coma

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

Featuring The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Saturday, October 22 | 1PM

**MEET THE MUSIC**, for ages 6–12

Saturday, May 20 | 1PM & 3PM

**CMS KIDS**, for neurodiverse audiences ages 3–6

### AT THE MOVIES

Tuesday, October 11 | 7:30PM

**FALLING FOR STRADIVARI**

Wednesday, February 8 | 7:30PM

**THE BALLAD OF FRED HERSCH**

### LIVE MUSIC MEDITATION

Matthew Weiner, Meditation Instruction

Thursday, September 29 | 12:30PM

**ALEXI KENNEY** Violin

Wednesday, October 26 | 12:30PM

**JESS GILLAM** Saxophone

Thursday, February 9 | 12:30PM

**FRED HERSCH** Piano

\*Princeton University Concerts debut

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