

FAREWELL TOUR



PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS



Emerson String Quartet

with special guests **Calidore String Quartet**

2022/23 SEASON



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the final event in our 129th Concert Classics series! While this is always a bittersweet moment, tonight truly feels like the end of an era as the Emerson String Quartet completes the final tour of their venerated 47-year career and takes their final bow on our stage after twelve appearances on our series since 1979. I am grateful to share in this momentous occasion together as we experience the symbolic passing of the bow from one generation to the next—and from one season to the next.

As one patron wrote, “the Emersons surprised and thrilled us and opened up the world of quartets in multiple ways.” As we look ahead to our newly announced 2023-24 offerings, I feel that world is all the richer thanks to the groundbreaking work of this treasured ensemble—a quality that I hope you will feel in the diversity of spirit inhabited by the Danish, Doric, and Hagen String Quartets next season.

The legacy of the Emerson String Quartet is eternal, and to look forward to what awaits us in 2023-24 and beyond within the spell cast by these musicians one last, unforgettable time is such a gift.

Bravo, dear friends!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marna Seltzer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marna Seltzer

Director of Princeton University Concerts

Thursday, April 27, 2023 at 7:30PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

CHARLES S. ROBINSON MEMORIAL CONCERT

EMERSON STRING QUARTET

EUGENE DRUCKER *Violin* • PHILIP SETZER *Violin*

LAWRENCE DUTTON *Viola* • PAUL WATKINS *Cello*

with special guests

CALIDORE STRING QUARTET

JEFFREY MYERS *Violin* • RYAN MEEHAN *Violin*

JEREMY BERRY *Viola* • ESTELLE CHOI *Cello*

SARAH KIRKLAND

SNIDER

(b. 1973)

Drink the Wild Ayre (2023)—World Premiere

Drucker, Setzer, Dutton, Watkins

DMITRI

SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906–1975)

String Quartet No. 15 in E-flat Minor, Op. 144 (1974)

Elegy. Adagio—

Serenade. Adagio—

Intermezzo. Adagio—

Nocturne. Adagio—

Funeral march. Adagio molto—

Epilogue. Adagio

Setzer, Drucker, Dutton, Watkins

INTERMISSION

FELIX

MENDELSSOHN

(1809–1847)

String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20 (1825)

Allegro moderato con fuoco

Andante

Scherzo. Allegro leggierissimo

Presto

Drucker, Setzer, Myers, Meehan, Dutton, Berry, Watkins, Choi



About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2023 • Program Annotator

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

Few ensembles prompt such lyrical musings as the string quartet. The phenomenon of four players onstage, working in what appears to be leaderless collaboration, is celebrated as a model of egalitarian democracy. The similarities among the four instruments' timbres create a marvelously synthetic sound, in which multiple musical lines can combine seamlessly into one. Little surprise that it is the musical genre for which many composers have reserved their most beautiful music (Beethoven, for example, said that the Cavatina from his Quartet, Op. 130 was the only piece he'd written that could move him to tears). String quartets stand out, too, for the deep camaraderie that they require from the musicians who perform them.

“ Few ensembles prompt such lyrical musings as the string quartet. The phenomenon of four players onstage, working in what appears to be leaderless collaboration, is celebrated as a model of egalitarian democracy.”

This evening's concert, a farewell to the Emerson Quartet at the conclusion of an illustrious decades-long career, is a testament to the breadth and power of the string quartet repertoire. True to the late-spring spirit of commencement, it features much-loved works alongside new ones, and it welcomes the group's protégés, the Calidore Quartet, to the stage. Beginning with the new—a world premiere by Sarah Kirkland Snider—the program moves retrospectively to the final work in the genre by Shostakovich, then concludes with the exuberance of Mendelssohn's Octet, a piece beloved by musicians and audiences alike for its infectious spirit, grace, and joy.

Sarah Kirkland Snider, *Drink the Wild Ayre* (2023)

In 1867, Ralph Waldo Emerson published “Merlin's Song,” one of several poems that he wrote exalting the Arthurian legend in relation to Transcendentalist ideas about the natural world. The poem's best-known lines—“Live in the sunshine,

swim the sea, Drink the wild air’s salubrity”—have become deeply associated with Emerson, as they capture his signature embrace of natural beauty and celebration of the human capacity for wonder. If those qualities once inspired the group’s choice to honor Emerson via its name, they have also shaped the ensemble’s adventurous approach to music-making.

For Snider, who listened devotedly to the Emerson Quartet’s recordings while writing her first string quartet more than twenty years ago, returning to the genre was something of a full-circle moment. She reflects, “I’m a more relaxed composer now; I trust myself more, so I had more fun writing this one than my first (which took a grueling two years).” The piece playfully replaces the “air” of Emerson’s quotation with the musical “ayre,” a term for a song-like, lyrical piece. This aria-esque, melodic work is underscored by a “wild” sense of pulse, described by the composer as “imitative rhythmic asymmetry that leads to lilting, off-kilter rhythms.”

**Dmitri Shostakovich, String Quartet No. 15
in E-flat Minor, Op. 144 (1974)**

By the time he wrote his final string quartet in 1974, Shostakovich had directly endured many of the political horrors of the twentieth century, falling squarely in the sights of Soviet repressive forces. Ever since his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was officially denounced in the publication *Pravda* in 1936, he had lived in a climate of fear and surveillance, stepping in and out of political favor. Much of the music that Shostakovich composed under these taxing circumstances is ambiguous, even cagey: are we meant to hear a note of sarcasm in that jaunty, patriotic march? Is that tragic cry as overt as it seems to be? Is that hint of a folk song meant to be a veiled allusion, or is it simply a lovely tune?

Given the interpretive obscurities that cloud so much of Shostakovich’s music, though, his final string quartet stands out for the uncommon clarity of its emotional palette. Mortality was on his mind: in addition to living under an oppressive political regime, Shostakovich also contended with years of ill

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The Emerson played at WBAI’s Free Music Store in New York in the ‘70s. Many folks then thought that only the Juilliard and Guarneri Quartets were of highest quality. The Emerson surprised and thrilled us and opened up the world of quartets in multiple ways, especially to (then) young audiences.”

—Judy Klotz

health, and by the time he wrote his final three string quartets in the 1970s, he was battling the cancer that would eventually cause his death in 1975. The piece is comprised of six adagios, to be played without pause. Its ceaselessly slow pace is matched by its insistent attachment to the key of E-flat minor. Rather than offering a narrative of progress or evolution, the work plumbs the depths of its fundamental ideas. Within movements titled “Elegy,” “Funeral March,” and “Nocturne,” it offers a profound meditation on tragedy. There

“ Joyous wishes for your upcoming retirement, and deepest thanks for your many years of touring and recordings. Besides enjoying your presence at Princeton, I was your presenter at Lafayette’s Williams Center several times, beginning with the Edgar Meyer Quintet. A memorable evening it was, with David and Edgar opening with a bare-stage cello-bass duo and a vigorous spree through Beethoven’s Op. 59, No. 3 following the Meyer Quintet. Eugene afterwards confided, ‘A damned exhausting piece to play!’ So grateful that your 2023 victory lap included Lafayette with the Escher String Quartet.”
—In gratitude, *Ellis Finger*

are fleeting references to other, sunnier times and places—a snippet of a half-remembered waltz, a solo violin’s flight of fancy, a vigorous set of chords—but the work’s abiding focus is on coming to terms with tragedy. Even after so much mournfulness, the closing Epilogue retains an ability to shock the listener. After a frenetic opening passage for solo violin; an answer in the cello accompanied by vigorous pizzicato; and a progression of melancholy melodic lines, we enter a landscape of eerie, high-pitched chromatic passagework—a chill-inducing gust of wind whistling by in the dark.

Felix Mendelssohn, String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20 (1825)

If Shostakovich’s quartet can feel unrelenting in its despair, Mendelssohn’s octet displays a polar-opposite commitment to exuberance. A prodigiously talented sixteen-year-old when he wrote the piece, the composer chose to write for the unusual ensemble of four violins, two violas, and two cellos—as if a single quartet’s

worth of players couldn't possibly contain so much vivacity. The first violinist he had in mind as he wrote, Eduard Rietz, was a friend and mentor just a few years older than the composer, and Mendelssohn's admiration for Rietz's talents shines through in the bravura gestures that he offers to this player throughout the piece.

The quartet's first movement begins with a splash, as a bold, climbing arpeggiated gesture is introduced in the first violin and then passed around the ensemble. Written in sonata form, it is consistently kinetic, with an undercurrent of restlessness underlying even its sweet second theme. The mood changes in the second movement, a lyrical, minor-key Andante which features plaintive solo melodies interspersed with stormier chromatic passages that are voiced by various combinations of players. The third movement is an early example of the fantastical, rapid-fire approach to scherzos which would go on to become a hallmark of the composer's style; his sister, the composer Fanny Hensel, would later write that when listening to this movement, "one feels close to the world of spirits lightly carried up into the air." And the finale is fittingly capacious: a gigantic fugal piece whose busy, eighth-note subject is introduced in the cello's low register before bouncing up and around the ensemble, finally landing in the first violin's stratosphere. Like the octet as a whole, the movement bubbles over with generosity and warmth, ultimately reaching a high-octane close.

**FREE
FOOD!**



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Tonight, at intermission, meet your fellow student attendees in the Richardson Lounge (basement level) and share your thoughts about the concert over free snacks.

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About THE ARTISTS

EMERSON STRING QUARTET

The 2022-23 season is the Emerson String Quartet's final one, disbanding after more than four decades as one of the world's premier chamber music ensembles. "With musicians like this," wrote a reviewer for *The Times* (London), "there must be some hope for humanity." The Quartet has made more than 30 acclaimed recordings and has been honored with nine GRAMMYs® (including two for Best Classical Album), three Gramophone Awards, the Avery Fisher Prize, and Musical America's "Ensemble of the Year" award. As part of their larger mission to keep the

“ I feel very honored to have been in the audience myriad times to listen to the Emerson String Quartet. One of my earliest concert memories was over thirty years ago, on May 16, 1987 at the Baird Auditorium/ National Museum of Natural History. I live close to Caramoor (Katonah, NY) so I took full advantage in hearing them. Watching them interact with each other was an added treasure. I purchased their book, *Converging Lines*, and they all signed it! My most recent experience was this past year, September 2022 in Sleepy Hollow, NY with the phenomenal Paul Watkins, cello. Thank you Eugene, Philip, Lawrence, David, and Paul. You have filled my heart again and again with much joy.” – *Judith Benjamin*

string quartet form alive and relevant, they have commissioned and premiered works from some of today's most esteemed composers and have partnered in performance with leading soloists such as singers Renée Fleming and Barbara Hannigan, pianists

Evgeny Kissin, Yefim Bronfman, Menahem Pressler, Leon Fleisher, André Previn, and Emanuel Ax, cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, flutist James Galway, bassist Edgar Meyer, and violinist Isaac Stern.

In its final season, the Quartet will give farewell performances across North America and Europe, including San Francisco's Herbst Theater, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, Vienna's Musikverein, Prague's Rudolfinum, London's Southbank Centre for the completion of its acclaimed cycle of Shostakovich quartets, and more, before coming home to New York City for its final series there with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, in a trio of programs entitled "Emerson Dimensions" where the Quartet will perform some of its most storied repertoire. They will give several performances of André Previn's *Penelope* with soprano Renée Fleming and actress Uma Thurman, including at the Los Angeles Opera, and they will appear at Carnegie Hall with pianist Evgeny Kissin to perform the Dvořák Quintet as part of a benefit concert for the Andrei Sakharov Foundation. The final performance as the Emerson String Quartet will take place in October 2023 in New York City and will be filmed for a planned documentary by filmmaker Tristan Cook.

The Quartet's extensive discography includes the complete string quartets of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bartók, Webern, and Shostakovich, as well as multi-CD sets of the major works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Dvořák. In its final season, the Quartet will record Schoenberg's Second Quartet with soprano Barbara Hannigan for release in 2023, with the sessions video documented by Mathieu Amalric for a short film. Deutsche Grammophon will also reissue its box set of the Emerson complete recordings on the label, with two new additions. In October 2020, the group released a recording of Schumann's three string quartets for the Pentatone label. In the preceding year, the Quartet joined forces with GRAMMY®-winning pianist Evgeny Kissin to release a collaborative album for Deutsche Grammophon, recorded live at a sold-out Carnegie Hall concert in 2018.

Formed in 1976 and based in New York City, the Emerson String Quartet was one of the first quartets whose violinists alternate in the first violin position. The Quartet, which takes its name from the American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, balances busy performing careers with a commitment to teaching, and serves as Quartet-in-Residence at Stony Brook University. In 2013, cellist Paul Watkins—a distinguished soloist, award-winning conductor, and devoted chamber musician—joined the original members of the Quartet to form today's group.

In the spring of 2016, the State University of New York awarded full-time Stony Brook faculty members Philip Setzer and Lawrence Dutton the status of Distinguished Professor and conferred the title of Honorary Distinguished Professor on part-time faculty members Eugene Drucker and Paul Watkins. The Quartet's members also hold honorary doctorates from Middlebury College, the College of Wooster, Bard College, and the University of Hartford. In January of 2015, the Quartet received the Richard J. Bogolmony National Service Award, Chamber Music America's highest honor, in recognition of its significant and lasting contribution to the chamber music field.

“As a Hartt School (class of 2001) Violin Performance Alumni, not only did I have the unique experience of hearing the Emerson String Quartet more times than I can count, during their lengthy residency, I had the incredible opportunity to take lessons and chamber music with them. I will never forget the powerful experience of hearing them perform every single Shostakovich String Quartet, or being coached for an entire semester by Mr. Dutton, working on intonation, the intricacies of phrasing, and depth and range of tone. These experiences shaped my deep love of chamber music forever. Thank you, Emersons!!!!”

—*Elizabeth Guerriero*

The Emerson String Quartet has appeared on the Princeton University Concerts series 13 times since 1979, including in 2017 when they brought us the unique, multi-disciplinary “Shostakovich and The Black Monk,” a semi-staged theatrical and musical event based on a short story by Anton Chekov. We are grateful to the Emerson String Quartet for the many extraordinary moments they brought to our community and for their myriad contributions to the field.

CALIDORE STRING QUARTET

For more than a decade, the Calidore String Quartet has enjoyed performances and residencies in world's major venues and festivals, released multiple critically acclaimed recordings and won numerous awards. Based in New York City, the quartet has appeared in venues throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. During the current 2022-23 season they make debuts in the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Prague, Madrid, and Vancouver. They return to Wigmore Hall,

Kennedy Center, Copenhagen, Florence, Montreal, St. Paul, Houston, and Los Angeles. In September 2022, the Calidore performed at Carnegie Hall with violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, in a memorial concert honoring the late composer André Previn. They also enjoy collaborations this season with the Emerson String Quartet, clarinetist Anthony McGill, bassist Xavier Foley, violist Matthew Lipman, and harpist Bridget Kibbey.

In their most ambitious recording project to date, the Calidore will release the complete Beethoven's String Quartets for Signum Records. Volume I, containing the late quartets, was released in February 2023 to great critical acclaim. *BBC Music Magazine* says the Calidore's performances "penetrate right to the heart of the music" and "can stand comparison with the best."

Recipient of a 2018 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award, the Calidore String Quartet first made international headlines as winner of the \$100,000 Grand Prize of the 2016 M-Prize International Chamber Music Competition. The quartet was the first and only North American ensemble to win the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, and is currently in residence with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York City.

The Calidore String Quartet was founded at the Colburn School in Los Angeles in 2010. Within two years, the quartet won grand prizes in virtually all the major U.S. chamber music competitions, including the Fischhoff, Coleman, Chesapeake, and Yellow Springs competitions, and it captured top prizes at the 2012 ARD International Music Competition in Munich and the International Chamber Music Competition Hamburg. An amalgamation of "California" and "doré" (French for "golden"), the ensemble's name represents its reverence for the diversity of culture and the strong support it received from its original home: Los Angeles, California, the "golden state."

Dedicated teachers and passionate supporters of music education, the Calidore String Quartet is committed to mentoring and educating young musicians, students, and audiences. In 2021 the Calidore joined the faculty of the University of Delaware School of Music and serve as artistic directors of the newly established Graduate String Quartet Fellowship Residency and the University of Delaware Chamber Music Series. Formerly, they served as artist-in-residence at the University of Toronto, University of Michigan, and Stony Brook University.

This concert marks the Calidore String Quartet's fourth appearance at Princeton University Concerts.

SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER

Composer Sarah Kirkland Snider writes music of direct expression and vivid narrative that has been hailed as “rapturous” (*The New York Times*), “groundbreaking” (*The Boston Globe*), and “poignant, deeply personal” (*The New Yorker*). Recently named one of the “Top 35 Female Composers in Classical Music” by *The Washington Post*, Snider’s works have been commissioned and/or performed by the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, the Birmingham Royal Ballet; for mezzo-soprano Emily D’Angelo, percussionist Colin Currie, vocalist Shara Nova, eighth blackbird, A Far Cry, and Roomful of Teeth. The winner of the 2014 Detroit Symphony Orchestra Lebenbom Competition, Snider’s recent projects include *Forward Into Light*, an orchestral commission for the New York Philharmonic inspired by the American women’s suffrage movement, *Mass for the Endangered*, a Trinity Wall Street-commissioned prayer for the environment for choir and ensemble, and an opera on 12th-century polymath St. Hildegard von Bingen, commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects. The 22/23 season will see world premieres for soprano Renée Fleming and baritone Will Liverman, Decoda Ensemble, and the Emerson String Quartet, in their final commission, to premiere on their farewell tour. *Penelope and Unremembered*, her two genre-defying LP song cycles, earned critical acclaim. In Fall 2020, Nonesuch Records and New Amsterdam Records co-released Snider’s third LP: *Mass for the Endangered*, performed by PUC fan favorites, the English vocal ensemble Gallicantus. In Fall 2022, Nonesuch Records and New Amsterdam Records will release *The Blue Hour*, a collaborative song cycle with composers Rachel Grimes, Angélica Negrón, Shara Nova, and Caroline Shaw for vocalist Shara Nova with A Far Cry string orchestra, on text by Carolyn Forché. A founding Co-Artistic Director of Brooklyn-based non-profit New Amsterdam Records, Snider has an M.M. and Artist’s Diploma from the Yale School of Music, and a B.A. from Wesleyan University. Her music is published by G. Schirmer. Sarah lives in Princeton with her husband, composer Steven Mackey.

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PRINCETON
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23/24

S E A S O N

CONCERT CLASSICS

Thursday, October 12, 2023

CHANTICLEER VOCAL ENSEMBLE*

Music of a Silent World

Thursday, November 2, 2023

DANISH STRING QUARTET

Purcell, Haydn, Shostakovich,
Scandinavian Folk Music

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD* Piano

Beethoven, Brahms, Bach/Busoni

Thursday, February 15, 2024

ISABELLE FAUST Violin

JEAN-GUIHEN QUEYRAS Cello

ALEXANDER MELNIKOV Piano

Beethoven, Elliott Carter, Dvořák

Thursday, March 7, 2024

HAGEN STRING QUARTET

Haydn, Debussy, Beethoven

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

JONATHAN BISS Piano

MITSUKO UCHIDA Piano

All Schubert

Monday, April 8, 2024

GOLDA SCHULTZ* Soprano

JONATHAN WARE* Piano

This Be Her Verse—exploring
the female perspective

Thursday, May 2, 2024

DORIC STRING QUARTET*

Brett Dean, Beethoven, Schubert

PERFORMANCES UP CLOSE

Sunday, October 8, 2023 | 3PM & 6PM

DREAMERS' CIRCUS* Violin, Cittern, Accordion

Nordic Folk/Classical Band

Thursday, October 26, 2023 | 6PM & 9PM

THÉOTIME LANGLOIS DE SWARTE* Baroque Violin

JUSTIN TAYLOR* Harpsichord

The Flamboyant Baroque: Music of the 18th century

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 | 6PM & 9PM

JEAN RONDEAU* Harpsichord

*Gradus Ad Parnassum: Beethoven, Clementi, Fux,
Haydn, Mozart*

Thursday–Sunday, January 18–21, 2024

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Thursday, February 1, 2024 | 7:30PM

BRAD MEHLDAU Piano

14 Reveries for Piano (Premiere)

Thursday, February 8, 2024 | 7:30PM

VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON Piano

J. S. Bach Goldberg Variations

HEALING WITH MUSIC

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 | 7:30PM

SULEIKA JAOUAD* Writer

JON BATISTE* Musician

Healing from Cancer through Music

Sunday, March 3, 2024 | 3PM

DANCE FOR PD®

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Wednesday, April 24, 2024 | 7:30PM

JONATHAN BISS Piano

ADAM HASLETT* Writer

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Sunday, November 19, 2023 | 3PM: *Les Six*

Sunday, March 24, 2024 | 3PM: *A French Afternoon*

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