



PRINCETON  
UNIVERSITY  
CONCERTS

# Hagen String Quartet



2023/24 SEASON



Dear Friends,

It is with great joy and anticipation that I extend to you a warm and heartfelt welcome as we come together for another captivating concert.

I am thrilled to welcome the celebrated Hagen String Quartet back to our stage. They are a hallmark of excellence and artistry, and I always eagerly await their return. They are what PUC is about at its heart, the reason that PUC was founded, and even with all of the ways we have expanded and diversified our programming in recent years, it is gratifying to return “home” to our roots.

For those familiar with the Hagen String Quartet, you know firsthand the depth of their artistry and sheer brilliance. And for those who are encountering them or any of the music on tonight’s program for the first time, you will witness a master quartet—the most senior and venerated of the European quartets celebrating their 42nd year!—playing some of the most revered repertoire of the string quartet literature.

It is with immense gratitude that I join with you in celebrating the much-anticipated return of the Hagen String Quartet.

Enjoy!

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 long, trailing flourish at the end.

Marna Seltzer  
Director of Princeton University Concerts

## HAGEN STRING QUARTET

**Lukas Hagen** Violin

**Rainer Schmidt** Violin

**Veronika Hagen** Viola

**Clemens Hagen** Cello

### JOSEPH

### HAYDN

(1732–1809)

Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2 “Fifths”

Allegro

Andante o più tosto allegretto

Minuetto

Finale. Vivace assai

### CLAUDE

### DEBUSSY

(1862–1918)

Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10

Animé et très décidé

Assez vif et bien rythmé

Andantino, doucement expressif

Très modéré

## INTERMISSION

### LUDWIG

### VAN

### BEETHOVEN

(1770–1827)

Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo—

Allegro molto vivace—

Allegro moderato—

Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile—

Presto—

Adagio quasi un poco andante—

Allegro



# About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2024 • Program Annotator

*Lucy Caplan is Assistant Professor of Music at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a winner of the Rubin Prize for Music Criticism.*

A palette of emotional intensity unites the three string quartets on this evening's program. While all three are in minor keys, it would be reductive to describe them simply as sad or troubled. Rather, in their extreme variety, they recall what was known during the Baroque era as the "doctrine of the affections:" the notion that music had the capacity to produce a vast range of responses in its listeners and that specific keys could be associated with particular emotional characteristics. D minor, for example, was melancholy and brooding, whereas C-sharp minor evoked what one theorist called "penitential lamentation." G minor, by contrast, was thought to be the key of unsettled discontent.

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“ [these three] quartets offer a compelling demonstration of instrumental music's capacious emotional range.”

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Although Haydn, Beethoven, and Debussy worked long after the years in which this theory was in vogue, their respective quartets offer a compelling demonstration of instrumental music's capacious emotional range. Haydn's quartet, Op. 76, No. 2, written late in his career, is both stormy and sophisticated, a striking departure from the levity that characterizes much of his work. Beethoven's Op. 131, though written just a few decades later, seems to come from another planet entirely: it stretches from earthbound anguish to celestial lightness, insisting on the listener's rapt attention at every step. Debussy's quartet is a *mélange* of beauty and vigor. Composed during a transitional era when late Romanticism was giving way to modernism, it dispenses with the formal conventions of the genre, instead circling around a single unifying theme. In its creative rethinking of what a string quartet can sound like, it foreshadows the upheavals of twentieth-century composition, which would eventually make logics like the "doctrine of the affections" seem quaint, even antiquated.

## **Joseph Haydn, Quartet in D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2 "Fifths" (c. 1797)**

Haydn the jokester—he of the "Surprise" Symphony, with its peaceful melodies interrupted by honking chords, and the "Joke" Quartet, whose last movement disintegrates into a

comedy of exaggerated pauses—is nowhere to be found in this quartet. Instead, the piece is characterized by an audacious seriousness. It is written in D minor, a key associated with such monuments as Bach’s *Art of the Fugue* and Mozart’s *Requiem*. Its opening four-note theme—one descending fifth, then another—has an arresting simplicity, yet it also catalyzes a display of impressive compositional prowess. Over the course of the first movement, those four notes speed up, stretch out, flip upside down, and morph into larger and smaller intervals. While Haydn’s typical charm remains, this is also a bold reminder that he is a serious composer in every sense of the term.

The second movement is more relaxed. Bearing the unusual tempo marking “*Andante o più tosto allegretto*,” (indicating that it lies somewhere between the two paces), it is unfailingly elegant. The first theme floats atop a subtle pizzicato accompaniment, which later warms into sustained underlying chords. The first violin takes center stage throughout the movement, which culminates in a cadenza-like passage followed by a rippling close. The minuet that follows has been called the “*Witches’ Minuet*” due to its mischievous air. A simple figure is presented in canon, with one voice chasing after another; the trio features extreme dynamic contrasts and excursions into the highest part of the first violin’s range. In the fourth movement, Haydn finally offers a hint of his more comical side by way of quick syncopated figures, dramatic pauses, and rustic accompaniments. Yet even this movement has a somewhat restrained affect, never quite lapsing into uncontrolled disorder.

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FOOD!**

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:  
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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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### **Claude Debussy, Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10 (1893)**

The young Debussy was a restless conservatory student, who chafed against the Germanic traditionalism of his teachers. He sought alternative inspiration in creative realms beyond Western art music, from painting to literature to the musical traditions of other cultures (including the Indonesian gamelan, which entranced him when he heard it at the Paris Exposition in 1889). He was especially intrigued by the prospect of leaving form behind, unmooring music from its conventional structures. When it came to the string quartet, he found himself intrigued by the conversational intimacy among players that the genre offered, while also eager to depart from its well established structural norms.

Debussy's first and only foray into the genre, composed in 1893, stages a tug of war between tradition and the future. The entire piece is governed by a single, forceful theme: presented by all four voices at the outset, it is rhythmically complex, vaguely modal-sounding, and robust in character. But rather than putting this theme through the usual paces, Debussy takes it on a meandering journey. Throughout the first movement, it shares space with a variety of other melodic gestures, recurring at what feel like unpredictable moments. The effect is labyrinthine: we know that we will eventually return to this theme, yet the pathway back is never obvious. The second movement begins with a sped-up, rather frenetic version of the theme played by the viola. It becomes an ostinato, above which the other instruments offer energetic pizzicato commentary (along with a striking, glamorous passage low in the first violin's range). The third movement is stunningly tranquil. The muted inner voices set the tone, and the theme is cast briefly aside, with all four players wandering about a serene landscape. After a delicate beginning, the fourth movement revs up to offer a fugue-like treatment of the guiding theme. Vivid and vigorous, it builds up to a dramatically drawn-out rendition of the theme before snapping back into a unified texture.

### **Ludwig van Beethoven, Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131 (1826)**

Profound admiration for Beethoven is a constant of Western musical culture. Yet there is a special degree of exaltation reserved for his Quartet Op. 131, which an array of critics and listeners have singled out as his most impressive composition. (Igor Stravinsky called it "perfect, inevitable, inalterable;" Beethoven himself reputedly considered it his best work.) This extraordinary praise might be attributed to the quartet's remarkable sense of self-contained cohesion: it has a floating-out-of-time quality that seems to locate it outside the typical trajectory of musical evolution. Anything but predictable, it is often

likened to a stream of consciousness—yet one that is meticulously crafted, entirely free of clutter or digression.

The quartet is structured in seven linked movements. The first, startlingly, is a fugue, based on a slow subject of a wrenchingly somber character. Music for string instruments in C-sharp minor is rare, as the key does not resonate naturally given their tuning, and this only adds to the opening movement's sense of unease. But in the second movement, Beethoven elevates the quartet to the more resonant key of D major, bringing sunlight in by way of a rustic, elegant dance. The third movement surprises again: recitative-like and ominous, it is extremely brief, yet compresses a diverse array of ideas into barely a minute's worth of music. The fourth movement, which lies at the work's core, is an expansive set of variations—a favorite form of Beethoven's. The opening theme is presented as a conversation among equals, with the two violins trading phrases. The ensuing variations have the feeling of a leisurely tour of a museum: we peer into gallery after gallery, each one full of new types of beauty. After such extended contemplation, the fifth movement, a scherzo, has an intense feeling. While it initially appears straightforward in design, it soon veers off-kilter, as interruptions, pauses, and elongated phrases disrupt its flow. The sixth movement, much like the third, is brief and astonishing: it is a chorale-like adagio, full of introspective anguish. In closing, Beethoven offers a severe, galloping movement that returns to the home key of C-sharp minor. The arpeggiated theme stands its ground, even as moments of relative serenity attempt to break through. After such overarching intensity, the movement's abrupt turn to major chords at the very end of the piece comes as a shock. Perhaps this is less a declaration of triumph or satisfaction than it is a reminder of the work's overall unpredictability—its commitment to taking the path less traveled at every possible turn.



# About *the* Artists

For nearly four decades, the Hagen Quartet has performed throughout the world and amassed a storied discography of nearly fifty recordings. Based in Salzburg, the Hagen Quartet recently celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2021. In addition to its stunning performances, the quartet's approach to the business of quartet-playing sets it apart: the Hagen's focus is purely on the music it makes, which has been reflected in the group's enormous success.

The quartet's previous seasons featured performances in the world's major music capitals, including multiple concerts at Wigmore Hall in London and Cité de la Musique in France. The Hagen has traveled to Amsterdam to open the Concertgebouw's First Biennial String Quartet Festival, to Asia for a tour that included three performances in Tokyo, and collaborated in programs together with cellists Sol Gabetta and clarinetist Jörg Widmann. In addition, a long-awaited Brahms recording together with the pianist Kirill Gerstein was released by Myrios Classics.

The Hagen Quartet has performed regularly in North America for decades. Recent highlights include a complete Beethoven cycle at 92Y in New York; a Brahms program together with the pianist Kirill Gerstein at Duke University; and concerts in Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Montreal, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.

The Hagen Quartet's most recent recording, featuring Mozart String Quartets K. 387 and K. 458, was awarded the Diapason d'Or and the Choc de Classica, as well as the coveted German ECHO Klassik Prize (2016). In 2011, The Hagen celebrated its 30th anniversary with two recordings for Myrios Classics featuring Mozart, Webern, Beethoven, Grieg, and



Brahms. The same year, the Hagen won the ECHO Klassik Prize as Ensemble of the Year; in 2012, the quartet was named Honorary Member of the Vienna Konzerthaus. Soon after its founding in 1981, the Hagen Quartet signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon that resulted in forty-five albums over the next twenty years featuring a wide array of repertoire, a project that has resulted in some of the iconic quartet recordings.

Lukas, Veronika, and Clemens Hagen are siblings and have been performing together nearly their whole lives; Rainer Schmidt joined the group in 1987. The Hagen has collaborated regularly with celebrated artists including pianists György Kurtág, Maurizio Pollini, Krystian Zimerman, and Mitsuko Uchida, clarinetists Sabine Meyer and Jörg Widmann, cellist Heinrich Schiff, and the late Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

“ One of the finest quartets of our time, the Hagen [Quartet] ... comes too rarely to our shores.” –The Washington Post

Younger musicians regard the Hagen Quartet as the archetype of sound quality, ensemble playing, and genuine commitment to the works and composers of the genre. As teachers and mentors at the Salzburg Mozarteum and the Hochschule in Basel—as well as in international masterclasses—the quartet’s members take great pride in passing on their wealth of experience and their old-fashioned craftsmanship to younger colleagues.

This is the Hagen Quartet’s fourth performance at Princeton University Concerts. We are thrilled to welcome them back.

### Tickets Still Available for These PUC Debuts:

Monday, April 8, 2024 at 7:30PM

**GOLDA SCHULTZ Soprano** (PUC DEBUT)

*This Be Her Verse, Exploring the Female Perspective*

“strength and assurance...thrilling radiance...” –*The Financial Times*

Thursday, May 2, 2024 at 7:30PM

**DORIC STRING QUARTET** (PUC DEBUT)

*Music of Beethoven, Brett Dean, and Schubert*

“Luminous beauty of sound...” –*The Daily Telegraph*

We are deeply grateful for the support we have received and thank all of our donors and volunteers. The list below acknowledges gifts of \$100 or more, received between May 1, 2023 and March 1, 2024. If you see an error or would like to make a change in your listing, please contact the Concert Office at 609-258-2800.

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

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Princeton 2024

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The first concert in what is known today as Princeton University Concerts was presented on October 29, 1894, thus establishing one of the oldest continuous series of musical events in the country. From 1894 to 1914, the “Ladies Musical Committee” presented concerts by the Kneisel Quartet. After 1914, the programs diversified. In 1929, the Ladies Committee became the Princeton University Concerts Committee—a town and gown group of interested and knowledgeable music lovers—which has guided the University Concerts to date.

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PRINCETON  
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CONCERTS

# 23/24

## SEASON



◀ **GOLDA SCHULTZ**  
Soprano

### CONCERT CLASSICS

Thursday, October 12, 2023 | 7:30PM  
**CHANTICLEER VOCAL ENSEMBLE\***

Thursday, November 2, 2023 | 7:30PM  
**DANISH STRING QUARTET**

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD\*** Piano

Thursday, February 15, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**ISABELLE BISS** Violin  
**JEAN-GUIHEN QUEYRAS** Cello  
**ALEXANDER MELNIKOV** Piano

Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**HAGEN STRING QUARTET**

Wednesday, April 3, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**JONATHAN BISS** Piano  
**MITSUKO UCHIDA** Piano

Monday, April 8, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**GOLDA SCHULTZ\*** Soprano  
**JONATHAN WARE\*** Piano

Thursday, May 2, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**DORIC STRING QUARTET\***

### PERFORMANCES UP CLOSE

Sunday, October 8, 2023 | 3PM & 6PM  
**DREAMERS' CIRCUS\*** Violin, Cittern, Accordion

Thursday, October 26, 2023 | 6PM & 9PM  
**THÉOTIME LANGLOIS DE SWARTE\*** Baroque Violin  
**JUSTIN TAYLOR\*** Harpsichord

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 | 6PM & 9PM  
**JEAN RONDEAU\*** Harpsichord

Thursday–Sunday, January 18–21, 2024  
**MAHLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** in virtual reality

### RICHARDSON CHAMBER PLAYERS

Sunday, February 22, 2024 | 7:30PM: *Les Six*  
Sunday, March 24, 2024 | 3PM: *A French Afternoon*

\*Princeton University Concerts debut

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Thursday, February 1, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**BRAD MEHLDAU** Piano

Thursday, February 8, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON** Piano

### 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®** A Mark Morris Dance Group Program  
Exploring the intersection of music, dance, and Parkinson's Disease.

Wednesday, April 24, 2024 | 7:30PM  
**JONATHAN BISS** Piano  
**ADAM HASLETT\*** Writer  
Anxiety, Depression, and Music

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

Featuring **The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**

Saturday, October 14, 2023 | 1PM & 3PM  
**CMS KIDS** sensory-friendly program for ages 3–6

Saturday, March 16, 2024 | 1PM  
**ADVENTURES IN CHAMBER MUSIC** for ages 6–12

### AND THERE'S MORE...

Join us for concert-related events, many of them free: **Live Music Meditation, Do-Re-Meet Social Events, Movies at the Garden Theatre, Book Groups at the Princeton Public Library, Embroidery Circles, Dance for Parkinson's Disease Classes**, and more.

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