

PUC

2025/26

Debut



PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY
CONCERTS

Marmen String Quartet



25/26 SEASON



Dear Friends,

It is a particular pleasure to welcome you tonight as we introduce you to the Marmen String Quartet. For 132 years—since we first brought the famed Kneisel Quartet to Princeton—string quartets have formed the backbone of our series, and that remains as true today as ever.

I love to think of quartets as hand-knit sweaters: each one is distinct, shaped by the people who make it. The Marmen Quartet has been generating extraordinary attention across Europe, earning top prizes at major international competitions and a reputation for performances of striking intensity and imagination—qualities that made us eager to invite them to Princeton. Even as we enjoy ongoing relationships with many of the great quartets who return here regularly, it is a special joy to add such a distinctive new voice to our quartet family.

So settle in, get cozy, and enjoy meeting the newest hand-knit addition to the family: the Marmen Quartet.

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 long, trailing flourish at the end.

Marna Seltzer
Director of Princeton University Concerts

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 7:30PM • Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

MARMEN STRING QUARTET

Johannes Marmen, Violin

Laia Valentin Braun, Violin

Bryony Gibson-Cornish, Viola

Sinéad O'Halloran, Cello

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

(1732-1809)

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 76, No. 4 "Sunrise"
Allegro con spirito
Adagio
Minuet. Allegro
Finale. Allegro ma non troppo

BÉLA BARTÓK

(1881-1945)

String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor
Moderato
Allegro molto capriccioso
Lento

INTERMISSION

CASSANDRA MILLER

(b. 1976)

Leaving

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

(1862-1918)

String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10
Animé et très décidé
Assez vif et bien rythmé
Andantino, doucement expressif
Très modéré

*Out of respect for the artists and enjoyment of your fellow concertgoers,
please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before the concert.
Photographs and audio/video recording are prohibited during the performance.*



About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2026 • Program Annotator

*Lucy Caplan is Assistant Professor of Music at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Her first book is *Dreaming in Ensemble: How Black Artists Transformed American Opera* (Harvard University Press, 2025).*

When Béla Bartók's friend and fellow composer Zoltán Kodály heard Bartók's String Quartet No. 2, he perceived the music as expressing a series of "life episodes:" quiet, then joy, then sorrow. Kodály's assessment invokes the power of the string quartet to convey profound emotional states through the sheer power of instrumental sound. None of the works on this evening's program is linked to a specific narrative program. Yet each one evokes an entire affective world. The first half of the program is a study in contrasts: the gentle splendor of Haydn's "Sunrise" Quartet against the melancholic desolation of Cassandra Miller's *Leaving*. In the second half, quartets by Bartók and Debussy both offer more variegated and abstract emotional landscapes, characteristic of the modernist era in which these composers worked. Their music tends not to wear its heart on its sleeve; it is more overtly interested in breaking formal convention and crafting new and surprising textures. But its jagged edges surround deeply felt compositions. In fact, in their ability to convey a multitude of emotional textures in such a relatively short time, these works demonstrate the remarkable ability of string quartets to concentrate the inevitable complexity of "life episodes" within the parameters of music alone.

Franz Joseph Haydn, String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 76, No. 4 "Sunrise" (1799)

Twenty-first-century listeners might hear a hint of the movie soundtrack in the opening to Haydn's "Sunrise" Quartet. We can just about imagine the camera fixed on a warm-hued sky as we hear the first violin's melody floating upwards against a background of gently sustained chords. Echoes of this initial melodic gesture—rising half-steps, sped-up bits and pieces of the violin's melody—shimmer throughout the movement. The second movement is an oasis. Repeated notes in the supporting voices, coupled with serene and hymnlike melodies, offer a sense of abiding calm. The third movement is a high-energy minuet which sees the players pairing up, phrase by phrase, for back-and-forth volleys. The fourth minuet begins with deceptive simplicity, a folk song-like melody ornamented by grace notes and trills. But then this melody reveals itself to be the basis of an unpredictable series of variations, capped off with an energetic extended coda.

The self-assured grace and sophistication of the "Sunrise" speaks to Haydn's expertise in the genre. By the time this quartet was published in 1799, as part of a set of six, he had been writing string quartets for more than four decades. Although even his very

first works for the ensemble demonstrate his signature elegance, his compositions only increased in emotional and formal complexity over time. A cluster of highly dramatic works from the early 1770s seem to flow directly from his newfound interest in vocal music, while those written in the 1780s are the genial output of a hugely successful composer. By the 1790s, he had turned his attention to sacred vocal music; the quartets of this period reflect a more mature and ambitious persona. In all, Haydn wrote 68 string quartets which, individually and collectively, make for fascinating listening: a thorough panorama of the development of a singular voice.

Béla Bartók, String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor (1917)

For Béla Bartók, the earth-shaking horrors of World War I were felt close to home. Although he was excluded from military service due to his medical history, he was acutely distressed by the inescapable threats of violence and instability. His musical life was also impacted: the sudden closure of national borders meant that he had to cease his ethnomusicological work collecting folk music in the central and eastern European countryside. With his research curtailed and few opportunities to perform during wartime, he turned more of his energies to composition. His style underwent a marked change as he was able to integrate his longstanding fascination with and respect for folksong with a more intense, momentum-driven approach to composition.

The String Quartet No. 2, composed during the war, is a perfect example of this new approach. It is crafted in three movements, which each seem to cascade inevitably from one another. The opening interval of a seventh, in the first violin, sets the tone for the work: searching, intense, audaciously modern. Throughout, folk music is present without being quoted directly, a shaper of the work's melodies rather than a source of them. The most striking example of this comes in the middle movement, marked *Allegro molto capriccioso*. Based on north African drumming that Bartók had heard during a 1913 trip to the town of Biskra (in present-day Algeria), it is churning and raucous, with only brief moments of tranquility. The final movement seems to stop cold: sustained passages and moments of silence give it an air of tragic inevitability.

Cassandra Miller, *Leaving* (2011)

Leaving has what composer Cassandra Miller calls an “unusual origin.” She explains, “Years ago, in order to leave my home on the west coast of Canada to study composition in Europe, I raised money for my travel by selling as-yet unwritten bars of music to everyone I’d ever met.” At the time, Miller was living on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia, and she found many enthusiastic supporters within her community. One of

them, the fiddler Zav RT, wrote the melody that eventually became the basis of *Leaving*. In sound and structure, the piece reflects the wild beauty of the place where it originated. Miller invites the players to embrace a “loosely proportional” sense of rhythm, and to maintain their own independence in placing particular notes vis-à-vis the other members of the ensemble. The result is a flowing, abundant, continuous well of sound, which evokes the natural resources of both folksong and birdsong in equal measure.

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.

**FREE
FOOD!**

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS!

Join Internoshin’! Meet your fellow student attendees at intermission in the Richardson Lounge (basement level) over free snacks. *Hosted by the Student Ambassadors of PUC.*



MARMEN STRING QUARTET

Highlights of the Marmen String Quartet's 2025–26 season include concerts at Konzerthaus Dortmund, Rotterdam's De Doelen, Boulez Saal, Wigmore Hall, The Library of Congress, as well as its debut at Beethovenfest Bonn. Commissions have included Garth Knox's *Secret Letters* (written for the group as a companion piece to Janáček's *Intimate Letters*, Salina Fisher's *Heal* and Benjamin Staern's *String Quartet No. 1*. In January, the quartet returned to String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam for several performances. The Marmen records for BIS. Their debut album featured music by Bartók and Ligeti and won the prestigious accolades of Diapason d'Or and Gramophone's Editor's Choice and was selected as a BBC Music Magazine Chamber Choice. First prize winners at the prestigious Bordeaux and Banff International String Quartet Competitions, the quartet formed at the Royal College of Music in 2013 and has returned there as Quartet in Association. The group held a Guildhall School of Music String Quartet Fellowship (2018–20) and studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Hannover with Oliver Wille, as well as in London with Simon Rowland-Jones and John Myerscough (Doric Quartet). They were mentored by the late Peter Cropper and have received support from the Musicians Company/Concordia Foundation, Hattori Foundation, Help Musicians, and Royal Philharmonic Society.

This is the Marmen Quartet's Princeton University Concerts debut. For their official biography, please visit www.marmenquartet.com.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Your help is critical to our future. Ticket sales cover less than half the cost of presenting the finest world-class music. The remaining support comes from a visionary endowment established by the Ladies' Musical Committee in 1929; the Philena Fobes Fine Memorial Fund and the Jesse Peabody Frothingham Fund; and, most importantly, from donors like you. We are deeply grateful to the individuals whose support at every level ensures that live musical performance continues to enrich Princeton, the community, and the region.

If you wish to make a donation to Princeton University Concerts or inquire about planned giving or sponsorship opportunities, please call Marna Seltzer at 609-258-2800 or visit puc.princeton.edu.

Checks can be sent to:
Princeton University Concerts,
Woolworth Center
Princeton, NJ 08544.



NEW INITIATIVE: ***Sponsor a Concert***

The costs of presenting concerts have risen sharply and recent federal taxes on university endowments will constrain our resources for years to come. For those who wish to make an even greater impact, please consider sponsoring a concert. For information about being a Founding Member of this initiative, contact Marna Seltzer at 609-258-2800.

The list below acknowledges gifts of \$150 or more, received between April 1, 2025 and February 1, 2026. If you see an error or would like to make a change in your listing, please contact the Concert Office at 609-258-2800.

Planned Gifts

John H. Burkhalter III
The Estate of Joanne Elliott
Lor & Michael Gehret
Thomas & Trudy Jacoby
The Estate of Lucy Anne Newman
Robert & Caroline Phinney
Anonymous

Concert Sponsors

Bob & Marion Pollack
Michael & Jeanette Timmons,
in memory of Wendy Idelson Levine

“Admit All”— Ticket Access Program Sponsors

Reba Orszag
Patricia Patton & Eric White

Luminary (\$2500+)

Bonnie Bassler & Todd Reichart
Constance W. Hassett &
James Richardson
Stanley, Derek, & Marion Katz,
in memory of Adria Katz
Reba K. Orszag
Bob & Marion Pollack
Michael & Jeanette Timmons,
in memory of Wendy Idelson Levine
Anonymous

Visionary (\$1000-2499)

John & Leigh Constable Bartlett
Nancy Becker
Barbara L. Birdsall
Douglas Blair & Ann Reichelderfer
Anna Chave & William N. Taylor
Elliot Cohen
Andrea Immel & John Bidwell
Norman R. Klath
Ginny Mason
Ruth Miller
Andrew Moravcsik & Anne-Marie Slaughter
Jill Nusbaum, *in memory of Sandy Nusbaum*
Joyce Carol Oates

Julie Denny Clark
Melanie & John Clarke
William & Angela Creager
Brandon Gaines
Lor & Mike Gehret, *in honor of Marna Seltzer*
Roe Goodman & Enriqueta Carrington
Sam Hamill
Abe Hsuan & Liang Shuang
Judith Johnston
Sarah Jones
Susan & Allen Kallor
John Kim & Ashley Lyu
Michele L. Koenig
Larissa Korwin

“ In a period of economic difficulty or social
strife the arts don’t just help us to cope, they
call into question the way we live our lives.”

—Pianist Stephen Hough,
who appeared with the Takács Quartet (2024/25 Season)

Ferris Olin
Pamela Patton & Eric White
Anne & Mitch Seltzer
Harold T. Shapiro
Jane Silverman & Robert Karlin
Kay Simon
Frances Fowler Slade & Rainer Muser
Bill Stowe & Karin Trainer
Ralph & Joan Widner
Anonymous

Devotee (\$500-999)

William Alper & Kathleen Lynn
Sanjeev Arora & Silvia Weyerbrock
Katherine Benesch & Thomas Romer
John Brown & Irene Shannon
Lou Chen

Harold & Joan Kuskin
Stephen Lin & Carol Anderson
Pallavi Nuka & Frederik Simons
Kelly & Glen Ragins
Rachel & John Salapatas
Joe & Alice Small
Rosalie S. Wolarsky
Anonymous

Enthusiast (\$100-499)

Martha Ackerman
Kathy Ales & Richard Levine
Ellen Arian
Nathan & Celeste Arrington
Connie & Vladimir Ban
Gisella Berry
Jane Borns

Allen Brown & Carol Ann Welsch
John H. Burkhalter III
Scott Burnham & Dawna Lemaire
Adam & Piper Burrows,
in honor of Anya & Andrew Littauer
Theodore Chase Jr.
Patricia Costigan
Patricia & Eliot Daley,
in honor of Marna Seltzer
Larry & Mimi Danson
Anne & Gadi Dechter
H. Ellis & Phyllis Finger
Sam Fleischacker
Fred & Gael Gardner
Mort Gasner & Debbi Kanter
Joan Girgus
Sally Goldfarb & Joseph Straus
Fred & Selma Goldstein
Anita Gordon
Ruth & András Hámori
Olga Hasty
Jim Herring
Zaki & Elizabeth Hosny
Alexander Jodidio
Florence Kahn
Terry Kent
Everett Kline & David Wald
Dick Kraeuter
Jeff Lazar & Charlene Rendeiro
Phyllis & Paul Lehrer
Steve Lestition & Beth Morgan
Marsha Levin-Rojer
Dan & Bobette Lister
Anya Littauer
Edward Martinsen
Cecilia Mathews
Jane McCarty & Michael Bell
Ted & Louise McClure
Michelle McKenna & Patrick Bernuth,
in honor of Marna Seltzer

Jan & Rebecca Meurer
David & Eri Millrod
Jacqueline Mislow
Ira Mowitz
Kerry Perretta
Robert & Caroline Phinney
Barry V. Qualls
Ruth Randall
Marlene Rathnum
Charles & Suzanne Rebick
Paul & Sandy Reider
Irina Rivkin
Janice & Tom Roddenbery
Naomi Rose
Leslie & Clancy Rowley
Margaret Schleissner
Dan Schwarzkopf
Joan W. Scott
Inez & Richard Scribner
Marcia Snowden
Ellen Sorrin & David York
Benjamin Soskis, *in memory of Adria Katz*
Roy Sparrow
Eugene & Mary Speer
Caralien & Jim Speth
Suzanne Staggs
Andrea & Rick Stine
Caren Sturges
Eriko Kawai Taguchi
Jeffrey B. Tener
Alec Tsuo & Xiaoman Chen
Carolyn Williams & Michael McKeon
Eric & Inge Wimmers
Elizabeth & William Wolfe
Marcia Wood
Mario Yepes-Baraya & Jean V. Yepes
Jack Zamboni
Anne Zeman & Mark Peel
Judy Zimmerman & Marylu Simon
Anonymous (7)

We thank our staff and volunteers for their support.

Princeton University Concerts**Marna Seltzer**

Director

Alexis Branagan

Communications & Events Coordinator

Kerry Heimann

Operations & Patron Services Manager

Dasha Koltunyuk

Marketing & Outreach Manager

Deborah Rhoades

Accounts Manager

Stephanie Whetstone

Interim Communications & Events Coordinator

Lukas Arenas '26**Isabella Bustos '27****Yuri Lee '27****Jakub Respekta '27**

Concert Office Assistants

2025-2026 Student Ambassadors of Princeton University Concerts

Undergraduates:

Jason Kim '27, Chair**Amy Baskurt '26****Ashley George '26****Antian Jiang '29****Annie Kim '26****Julie Kim '28****Kelly Kim '26****Romit Kundagrami '26****Jisang Kymm '28****Ukyung Nam '27****Andrew Park '26****Ian Peiris '26****Marvel Jem Roth '28****Liam Silverberg '28****Sarah Yuan '27**

Graduates:

Lynn Hirose**Seungju Lee****Sophia Lee****Nina Sachdev****Jiayi Zhang****2025–2026 Princeton University Concerts Committee**

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

Leslie Rowley, Chair**Ann Reichelderfer**, Vice Chair**Paula Alekson****Nancy Becker****Lou Chen****Gadi Dechter****Christine Gage****Jason Kim '27****Norman Klath****Jonah Lankys****Ruth Miller****Thomas Romer****Charles Tennyson****Dan Trueman**

Presenting the world’s leading classical musicians at Princeton University since 1894, Princeton University Concerts aims to enrich the lives of the widest possible audience. We are grateful to Lisa Margulis, Interim Chair and Professor of Music, and the Department of Music for its partnership in and support of this vision. For more information about the Department and its vibrant student- and faculty-led programming, please visit music.princeton.edu.



Spring 26

At the Princeton Public Library

Thursday, January 22 | 12PM | Book Group

**“HARD BY A GREAT FOREST”
BY LEO VARDIASHVILI**

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, February 5 | 7:30PM

**BENJAMIN BERNHEIM Tenor*
CARRIE-ANN MATHESON Piano***

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, February 12 | 7:30PM

MARMEN STRING QUARTET*

Special Event

Sunday, February 22 | 3PM

**JOYCE DIDONATO Mezzo-soprano
TIME FOR THREE**

All in the Family

Saturday, March 14 | 1PM & 3PM

**LITTLE LISTENERS Ages 3-6
“Time for Music”**

At the Princeton Garden Theatre

Wednesday, March 18 | 7PM | Movie Screening

“PORCELAIN WAR”

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, March 19 | 7:30PM

**TABEA ZIMMERMANN Viola
JAVIER PERIANES Piano***

Richardson Chamber Players / Special Event

Thursday, March 26 | 7:30PM

**PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA Violin
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
CHAPEL CHOIR
RICHARDSON CHAMBER PLAYERS
“Dies Irae,” a staged reflection on the
end of the world**

Concert Classics Series

Wednesday, April 8 | 7:30PM

ÉBÈNE STRING QUARTET

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, April 23 | 7:30PM

**AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
RICHARD TOGNETTI Director**

Music & Healing

Wednesday, April 29 | 7:30PM

**LISA BATIASHVILI Violinist
“Sounding Defiance: Georgia & Ukraine”**

Concert Classics Series

Thursday, April 30 | 7:30PM

**LISA BATIASHVILI Violin
GIORGI GIGASHVILI Piano***

CHECK OUT THE FULL

25/26

LINEUP HERE:



*Princeton University Concerts Debut

Tickets: 609.258.9220 | puc.princeton.edu