



MIDDLEBURY
PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

P R E S E N T S

Heath Quartet

SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024

2:00 PM ET

ROBISON HALL, MAHANEY ARTS CENTER



Heath Quartet

Sara Wolstenholme and Juliette Roos, Violins

Gary Pomeroy, Viola

Christopher Murray, Cello

Chorale Prelude “O Mensch, bewein’ dein’ Sünde groß,” BWV 622 **Johann Sebastian Bach**
(1685–1750)

String Quartet No. 44 in B-flat Major, Hob.III:44; Op.50 No.1, **Joseph Haydn**
“Prussian Quartet No.1”
(1732–1809)
Allegro
Adagio non lento
Minuet – Trio
Finale. Vivace

∞ *Intermission* ∞

String Quartet **Henriëtte Bosmans**
Allegro molto moderato
(1895–1952)
Lento
Allegro molto

String Quartet No. 3 in D Major, Op. 34 **Erich Wolfgang Korngold**
Allegro moderato
(1897–1957)
Scherzo. Allegro molto
Sostenuto. Like a Folk Tune
Finale. Allegro con fuoco



*This free event is made possible by the Sunderman Family Concert Endowment Fund,
in memory of Dr. F. William Sunderman Jr. and Dr. Carolyn Reynolds Sunderman.
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Program Notes

BACH Chorale Prelude “O Mensch, bewein’ dein’ Sünde groß,” BWV 622 [c. 1708–1717]

Notes courtesy of the LA Philharmonic

Bach, one of the titans of Western music, relied on the favor of princes, kings, and town councils for employment throughout his life. He saw himself as a tradesman who happened to be a musician instead of a cobbler, a carpenter, or a baker. Bach produced a vast body of masterpieces inspired by his kaleidoscopic musical knowledge and his deeply felt Lutheran faith. Near the end of his life, he devoted himself increasingly to solving abstract musical problems.

One of 46 Lutheran hymn tunes Bach set in his *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book), meant as a teaching tool for young church organists, the Chorale Prelude sets a Passion hymn that translates as “O man, bewail thy sins so great,” with a melody by Matthias Greiter and words by Sebald Heyden. Bach would return to that melody in versions of both his *St. Matthew Passion* and *St. John Passion*. In this chorale prelude, Bach reflects the somber, guilt-ridden tone of the text, letting the melody slowly unfold; he still adorns the theme with plenty of his characteristic ornamentation.

HAYDN String Quartet No. 44 in B-flat Major, Hob.III:44; Op.50 No.1 [1787]

Notes courtesy of the LA Philharmonic

Few composers come close to Haydn in terms of both the quantity and the quality of their production and of its historical importance. In a lifetime that ran from the high Baroque of Bach and Handel, across the whole Classical era and the short life of Mozart, up to the dawn of Romanticism and Beethoven’s first six symphonies, Haydn not only lived through a period of enormous cultural change, but he also helped impel it. Writing prolifically in all genres, he virtually created the string quartet and did much to establish the symphony.

The six “Prussian” Quartets of Opus 50 were composed in 1787 and dedicated to Frederick William II, King of Prussia, a fine amateur cellist to whom Mozart and Beethoven also dedicated works. Motivic structure, variety, and a bow to the cello mark the set and are indicated in the Op. 50, No. 1 Quartet. The repeated cello note offers a darkness to the opening Allegro movement. With the entrance of the other instruments, things turn brighter yet a certain lyrical poignancy remains as the cello grounds the work while the violins and viola sing. Haydn thoroughly explores the theme with elegance and a touch of joy and sorrow. His creative use of the repeated note is nothing short of amazing. The second movement Adagio non lento, the longest of the four, continues with the elegance of a courtly dance but shot through with subtle shifts to the minor that are always compelling to the listener. One has a sense that Haydn chooses to mask his own seriousness. He returns to a vibrant major key development before a gracious and quiet conclusion. The third movement Minuetto goes well beyond the notion of dancing, yet the spirit of the dance remains in the movement’s unquestionable charm. The staccato

descending notes of the trio section surely thrilled the court for whom it was performed. The Finale, marked Vivace, is a challenging race in the spirit of fun but still musically complex and elegant. The movement also contains musical surprises such as the unexpected pauses that we associate with Haydn. He brings things to a breathless conclusion.

BOSMANS String Quartet [1927]

Notes courtesy of the National String Quartet Foundation and Donemus Publishers

Henriëtte Bosmans was a Dutch pianist and composer. Her father was the principal cellist of the Concertgebouw Orchestra and her mother taught piano at the Amsterdam Conservatory. She started composing as a teenager while studying harmony and counterpoint with Jan Willem Kersbergen.

In the spring of 1927, Bosmans began lessons with Willem Pijper, at that time one of the most sought-after composition teachers in the Netherlands. Shortly thereafter, she started working on a string quartet, which she dedicated to Pijper and noted his birthday, September 8, 1927, as the day of completion. The first movement “Allegro molto moderato” opens with a unison lyrical melody, played by the viola, which subsequently comes to fruition in all instruments. At “più vivo” another element is introduced; poignant and vibrant, also starting in unison but soon again replaced by the lyrical melody, which from this point on, however, always appears in combination with repetitive eighth notes. At a later stage, the poignant element reappears but again withdraws in favor of the lyricism, which continues to develop and, finally with strong accents, gradually comes to a halt. At the end, the tranquility of the opening returns. The second movement “Lento,” introduced by the first violin, is built on a theme with similarities to the lyrical melody of the first movement. The music is soothing: in addition to mild melodies in mellow sounds there are sustained tones in the cello part, at times creating a pastoral character. “Allegro molto,” the final movement, has a rousing rhythmic motif which is present from beginning to end. It forms the basis for a powerful melodic theme consisting of whole note intervals and is hence easily recognizable. Halfway through, approaching an almost sultry slow waltz, the rhythm is slightly tempered. Thereafter, the turbulent opening returns towards a grand climax.

The first performance was on January 28, 1928 in the Recital Hall of the Concertgebouw by the Amsterdam String Quartet, the members of which were all part of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. Press reactions were mostly favorable but didn't fail to acknowledge the ‘influence of Debussy and Ravel’. The manuscript of this String Quartet is located in the Nederlands Muziek Instituut in The Hague.

KORNGOLD String Quartet No. 3 in D Major, Op. 34 [1945]

Notes courtesy of the LA Philharmonic and Bard Festival

A true prodigy, Erich Wolfgang Korngold was 13 when his pantomime *Der Schneemann* (orchestrated by Zemlinsky) premiered at the Vienna Court Opera. After achieving great European success with the

operas *Die tote Stadt* (1920) and *Das Wunder der Heliane* (1927), Korngold traveled to Hollywood to work with director Max Reinhardt on the film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1934). He pioneered the symphonic film score, collecting Academy Awards for *Anthony Adverse* (1936) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938). After World War II, he applied his richly detailed orchestral writing and flair for urgently romantic melodies to concert music, composing a symphony and solo concertos for violin and cello.

Like George Frederic Handel, Gustav Mahler, and Charles Ives before him, Korngold resourcefully and imaginatively used self-borrowing and thus linked his music for film with music for the concert stage in many of his American works, with Korngold himself saying, “Never have I differentiated between my music for the films and that for the operas and concert pieces. Just as I do for the operatic stage, I try to give the motion pictures dramatically melodious music, sonic development, and variation of the themes.” Having focused on dramatic music throughout his career, Korngold’s chamber music output is smaller and includes three string quartets.

The Third String Quartet, the only one he wrote in America, is dedicated to conductor and fellow exile Bruno Walter. The fast first movement contrasts a restlessly downward winding theme with a tranquil second one. A Scherzo in C minor follows in which outer dance macabre-like sections frame a trio with a wistful theme from Korngold’s score from *Between Two Worlds* (1944). In the folk tune inspired, slow E-flat minor movement, a lyrical theme from *The Sea Wolf* comes to the fore. A lively finale has a second theme referring to the score for *Devotion* (1946). The work premiered in Los Angeles in 1949.



Biography

Heath Quartet

Sara Wolstenholme, Violin

Juliette Roos, Violin

Gary Pomeroy, Viola

Christopher Murray, Cello

The Telegraph calls the “delicate perfection” of their sound “a marvel,” with “an exquisite tenderness,” and *The Washington Post* praises their “winsome blend of impetuosity and discipline.”

The dynamic and charismatic Heath Quartet is one of the most exciting British chamber ensembles of the moment, steadily building a reputation for their upbeat and integrated sound. Their recording of Sir Michael Tippett’s string quartets (Wigmore Live) received widespread acclaim and won the 2016 Gramophone Chamber Disk of the Year. A subsequent, critically acclaimed release on Harmonia Mundi of Tchaikovsky’s Quartets Nos. 1 and 3 was selected as Disk of the Week by both *The Sunday Times* and BBC Radio 3. The Quartet’s complete Bartók cycle (recorded live at the Wigmore Hall) was released by Harmonia Mundi (June 2017).



The Heath Quartet became the first ensemble in 15 years to win the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society’s Young Artists Award (2013). Formed in 2002 at the Royal Northern College of Music, they were selected for representation by YCAT, awarded a Borletti-Buitoni Special Ensemble Scholarship, and in 2012 won the Ensemble Prize at the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern where they are now regular invitees.

Champions of contemporary music, the Quartet has worked with numerous leading composers including Hans Abrahamsen, Louis Andriessen, Brett Dean, Anthony Gilbert, Sofia Gubaidulina, Steven Mackey, and John Musto.

With a deep commitment to education, the Heath Quartet members are Professors of Chamber Music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, individually holding instrumental teaching posts on the faculty. Education and outreach work are very important parts of the Quartet’s life.

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colbertartists.com

heathquartet.com

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