

# **Juilliard String Quartet**

**The College of Wooster**

Gault Recital Hall  
525 E. University Street  
Wooster, Ohio 44691

Sunday, October 10, 2004  
3:00 P.M.

the second movement, with its gentle chorales and flowing melodic lines, though the movement is not without a few dramatic surprises as well. The third movement (marked *Allegretto* instead of the more typical *Scherzo*) is propelled by recurring syncopated figures. In the Trio of this movement, Beethoven includes (likely to the delight of Razumovsky) a patriotic Russian melody, which is subjected to much development. The *Presto* finale is a spirited rondo, punctuated by rapid-fire imitation between parts and further suggestions of F major (as in the opening movement). Beethoven concludes the quartet with a delightful flourish, demanding the performers to charge *Piu presto* to the closing measures.

***Written by Brian Biddle***

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**Joel Smirnoff, Violin**  
**Ronald Copes, Violin**  
**Samuel Rhodes, Viola**  
**Joel Krosnick, Cello**

It seems particularly fitting that the 20th anniversary season of the Wooster Chamber Music Series begins with a performance by the famed Juilliard String Quartet. All members of the Juilliard are American-born and trained, and the Quartet has long been considered the quintessential American chamber ensemble. The Juilliard is renowned for performances characterized by a clarity of structure, beauty of sound, purity of line and an extraordinary unanimity of purpose. It is admired, not only for its outstanding performances, but also for its compelling influence on aspiring string players worldwide. It has played a seminal role in the development of some of today's most highly respected chamber groups, including the Alexander, American, Concord, Emerson, La Salle, New World, Mendelssohn, Tokyo, Brentano, Lark, St. Lawrence, and Colorado string quartets.

The Juilliard Quartet has been Quartet in Residence at the Juilliard School since its founding in 1946, and all of its members teach on the faculty there. Considered the "First Family" of chamber music in the United States, the Juilliard is beginning its 42nd season as Quartet in Residence at the Library of Congress, and enjoys a devoted following in Washington. At the Library of Congress, the Quartet performs on a set of priceless Stradivari instruments, donated to the Library in 1936 by Mrs. Gertrude Clarke Whittall.

The Juilliard has distinguished itself with a repertoire of over 500 works, including both traditional classics and contemporary works, spanning a diversity of composers from Beethoven and Schubert to Bartok and Arnold Schoenberg. An avid proponent of contemporary American music, the Quartet has premiered more than 60 compositions by American composers, and has actively promoted the visionary string quartets of Elliot Carter.

Associated with Sony Classical since 1949, the Quartet is one of the most widely recorded contemporary string quartets, with more than 100 releases to its name. It has received Grammy Awards for its recordings of the complete Beethoven quartets, the complete Schoenberg quartets, and the Debussy and Ravel string quartets. The Juilliard was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the National Academy for Recording Arts and Sciences in 1986, for its recording of the complete Bartok quartets, and in 1993 was awarded the Deutsche Schallplattenkritik Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the recording industry. In 1994, the Times of London named the Juilliard's recording of quartets by Ravel, Debussy, and Dutilleul as one of the 100 best classical CDs ever recorded.

The Juilliard Quartet performs regularly throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. A few of the numerous locations it has played are the Ravinia and Tanglewood Festivals, Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Wigmore Hall in London, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and even Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" show on public radio. Wooster is fortunate indeed to be included on the Juilliard Quartet's illustrious list of venues.

*Written by Sarah Buck*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)**

**QUARTET IN D MAJOR, OP. 76 NO. 5** – Haydn's Op. 76 collection of six quartets is his final completed set. They were finished in 1797, shortly after the composer's famously successful visits to London in the 1790s. Though interested mainly in large-scale work at this time (especially the symphony and the oratorio), Haydn remained productive in the field of the string quartet, a genre in which he is often credited as the first great master.

A theme and variations marked *Allegretto* opens the Op. 76 no. 5 quartet. The stately theme is treated to a number of alterations, including a minor variation that introduces a new theme and a suggestion of the remote key of B-flat major. The slow movement (*Largo: Cantabile e mesto*) presents several very attractive hymn-like melodies. Though marked *mesto* (sad), Haydn seems to use the term to suggest a genteel, reserved character rather than an overtly depressed mood. Following is a dance-like Minuet (marked *Allegro*) which is contracted by a Trio featuring an uneasy bass ostinato. The *Presto* finale features one of Haydn's notorious musical jokes: The movement begins with a strong cadence that is repeated several times, as if the movement ended before it began. The humor continues; as a sonata-form movement, it was expected in this historical period for the opening section (the exposition) to conclude with a satisfying cadence, then repeat. The satisfying cadence has already been given in this specimen (at the beginning), so Haydn gleefully spoils the cadence where it is supposed to happen, and instead charges into a developmental section. The spirited theme carries the finale along until we experience what Haydn had been withholding, the closing gesture where it really belongs, at the end.

### **Béla Bartók (1881-1945)**

**QUARTET NO. 3** – Bartók's third quartet, composed in 1827, is by far his shortest quartet, lasting only slightly longer than fifteen minutes. It is, however, by no means a slight piece. The quartet exhibits extraordinary focus of conceit; a great deal of thematic material and contrasting textures and moods are condensed, and they become more intense in the process. In this regard the quartet is indebted to the contributions of the Second Viennese School (Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg), who valued intensity and efficiency above lengthy development and repetition. The entire compositional output of Anton Webern, for example, fits easily on three compact discs.

For this work, Bartók forgoes the expected four-movement sonata cycle. Instead, the quartet is divided into two sections of differing thematic material (marked *Moderato* and *Allegro*). Following these two sections are a recapitulation of the material from the *Moderato* and a Coda which incorporates elements of the *Allegro*. All four discrete sections are performed continuously without pause. As expected with much of Bartók's work, the thematic material is derived largely from Hungarian folk songs. In the first part, themes are subjected to a technique wherein the structure of each theme is preserved, but stretched and expanded internally, providing contrast and development while keeping the musical essence of the theme intact. A rapid pizzicato line in the cello marks the beginning of the *Allegro* second section, a fiery dance featuring many coloristic string effects for which Bartók is known, including snap pizzicato and playing with the wood side of the bow. Again the cello leads us to a new section, the recapitulation of the *Moderato* that is perhaps more subdued than its original statement. A flurry of rapidly ascending and descending melodic lines played *sul ponticello* (close to the bridge) usher in the closing Coda. Striking *glissandi* in viola and cello propel the brief reprise to an intense conclusion.

### **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

**QUARTET IN E MINOR, OP. 59 NO. 2** – The three quartets designated Opus 59 were composed at the request of Count Razumovsky, the Russian ambassador to Vienna who was well-known as a chamber music enthusiast. All three quartets were written in 1806 and were premiered the following year by the Count's personal quartet (led by Ignaz Schuppanzigh) at his home. Though initially criticized for being long and extraordinarily difficult (to both perform and comprehend), the three Razumovsky quartets have endured to become admired and indispensable components of chamber music repertory.

Those familiar with the quartets of Beethoven cannot help but notice dramatic differences of style between the Razumovsky works and the composer's previous contribution to the string quartet repertory, the six quartets of Op. 18. Indeed, much stylistic evolution has taken place; the reserved Classicism found in the earlier works has by the time of Op. 59 begun to give way to more experimental and evocative musical gestures. The pivotal *Eroica* Symphony (premiered two years earlier) is often recognized as a harbinger of this important stylistic transition. The listener may notice from the stark two-chord introduction to the second Razumovsky quartet that this is a work very much cut from the same cloth as the monumental symphony that precedes it. The ensuing *Allegro* follows the standard conventions of sonata form, but evokes a strong dramatic tension through the use of nervously energetic rhythms and the strong presence of the Neapolitan (F major) sonority.

Carl Czerny, a student of Beethoven, once remarked that the composer conceived the second movement while gazing at the stars and contemplating the music of the spheres. After marking the movement's tempo (*Molto Adagio*) Beethoven explicitly instructs performers *Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento* (Play this piece with much feeling). One can easily picture a starry sky to the musical landscape set forth in

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### Program

Quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5

Franz Joseph HAYDN  
(1732-1809)

Allegretto-Allegro  
Largo ma non troppo: cantabile e mesto  
Menuet: Allegro ma non troppo  
Finale: Presto

Quartet No. 3

Béla BARTÓK  
(1881-1945)

Prima parte: Moderato-  
Seconda parte: Allegro-  
Ricapitulazione della prima parte: Moderato-  
Coda: Allegro Molto

### INTERMISSION

Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN  
(1770-1827)

Allegro  
Molto adagio  
Allegretto  
Finale: Presto

Presented with support of



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### UNDERWRITER

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Mr. and Mrs. Stanley C. Gault  
Jay Klemme and Anne Wilson  
Lois and Raymond McCall  
Stephen M. Rhodes  
Vi S. Robertson  
Ken and Jill Shafer  
Tim and Jenny Smucker  
Yvonne and Ted Williams

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