



# FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

*in Cooperation with Pacific's Conservatory of Music present*

## Parker Quartet

DANIEL CHONG, violin

KEN HAMAQ, violin

JESSICA BODNER, viola

KEE-HYUN KIM, cello

2:30 PM, Sunday, September 16, 2018  
Faye Spanos Concert Hall  
University of the Pacific

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WOLFGANG A. MOZART **QUARTET NO. 16 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, K. 428** (c.1783)

(1756–1791) Allegro ma non troppo  
Andante con moto  
Menuetto and Trio: Allegro  
Allegro vivace

LEOŠ JANÁČEK **QUARTET NO. 1, "KREUTZER SONATA"** (c. 1923)

(1854–1928) Adagio–Con moto  
Con moto  
Con moto–Vivo–Andante–Adagio  
Con moto–(Adagio)–Più mosso

— INTERMISSION —

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN **QUARTET IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 74, "HARP"** (c.1809)

(1770–1827) Poco Adagio—Allegro  
Adagio ma non troppo  
Presto—Più presto quasi prestissimo—Tempo I  
Allegretto con variazioni

MKI Artists, One Lawson Lane, Suite 320, Burlington, VT 05401  
Please contact Kate Barnes at (802) 658-2592 [kate@mkiartists.com](mailto:kate@mkiartists.com)

[parkerquartet.com/](http://parkerquartet.com/)

*Season Sponsor: C. A. Webster Foundation*

### ARTIST PROFILE



Inspiring performances, luminous sound, and exceptional musicianship are the hallmarks of the Grammy Award-winning Parker Quartet. Renowned for its dynamic interpretations and polished, expansive colors, the group has rapidly distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation. In demand worldwide, the Quartet has appeared at the world's most important venues since its founding in 2002.

The Parker Quartet will begin its fourth year in-residence as Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University and continues its signature busy schedule with performances and residencies scheduled around the United States, including for the Schubert Club, Skidmore College, St. John's College, University of South Carolina, Kansas City's Friends of Chamber Music, and an appearance on the Jukebox series at the Kennedy Center.

Recent highlights include the "Schubert Effect" project in collaboration with pianist Shai Wosner at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, the premiere of a new string quartet by American composer Augusta Read Thomas as part of the Quartet's four-concert series at Harvard University, and appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, the Slee Series in Buffalo, and New York's Lincoln Center Great Performers series. The Quartet is a strong supporter of violist Kim Kashkashian's project *Music for Food*, participating in concerts in the United States for the benefit of various food banks and shelters.

Founded and currently based in Boston, the Quartet's honors include winning the Concert Artists Guild Competition, the Grand Prix and Mozart Prize at France's Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, and Chamber Music America's prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award. also in residence at USC School of Music, the Quartet's numerous residencies have included serving as Artists-in-Residence at the University of St. Thomas, Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Minnesota, Quartet-in-Residence with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and as the first-ever Artists-in-Residence with Minnesota Public Radio.

The Parker Quartet's members hold graduate degrees in performance and chamber music from the New England Conservatory of Music and were part of the New England Conservatory's prestigious Professional String Quartet Training Program from 2006–2008.

## Mozart: *Quartet in E-flat Major*

The early 1780s were a time of unambiguous success for Mozart. His popular opera *Idomeneo* made him resentful of his subordinate status in the service of the Archbishop Colloredo, forcing a break and allowing a move from Salzburg to Vienna in 1781 (souring relations with his father). Mozart was also busy in the Weber household, reassigning his affections from her unobtainable sister Aloysia to Constanza and marrying her in August 1782 (further worsening paternal relations). Eventually, in the summer of 1783, Mozart and his wife made a three-month conciliatory visit from Vienna to his father in Salzburg. Despite these emotional upheavals, the musical freedom accompanying the move to Vienna enabled Mozart's composing to flourish: his opera *Die Entführung* and the "Haffner" *Symphony* rocketed him to fame.

It was at this point that he began a set of six quartets, each very different in personality, to reveal the breadth of his talent and as an homage to Haydn. These quartets were directly inspired by the Op. 33 string quartets recently finished by Haydn, and were legendarily and munificently praised by Haydn, who in turn then returned to the format himself. Of the six, K.428 is a gem and is one of the most genial and most Haydn-like in its joy and unanticipated shifts of harmony. Mozart worked on this quartet over the course of two months in summer 1783, and the autograph score is full of amendments and deletions. He clearly wanted things to be better than just so, and he seems to have composed with less than his customary fluency. Perhaps he had this piece in mind when he described the group as "the fruit of a long and laborious effort" — he churned each of the others out in as little as a single day.

The first movement of K.428 opens with an octave leap that then descends dramatically to the tritone, the devil's interval. Although 20<sup>th</sup> century composers tend to apply this with eager unrestraint, in the more conservative 18<sup>th</sup> century the audience's attention would have been seized immediately. The majority of the melody is given to the first violin, a technique he may have chosen to honor Haydn. Playfulness suffuses the themes, with little phrases tossed imitatively among the instruments and a cackling motif holding the material together. Skies darken somewhat in the brief development section but good cheer returns, which subtly varies the material rather than merely repeating it.

Many keys have been associated with a particular feeling or emotion. For example, E-flat major is deemed by many to be heroic. Mozart sets the second movement in A-flat major, considered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to be the Romantic key. But a moment of harmonic ambiguity produces a loss of focus in the melody after its first statement, allowing a minimal variation on the theme before the first section is repeated. While most of the instruments play a decent sequence of chords, listen for one member, often the cello, to wind a dignified melody through the harmonic foundation yielding a dark, dissonant coloration. Listen also for a bar in the viola and first violin near the start of the second half of the movement that sounds like a misprint in the score: it is not, and Mozart must have delighted in playing that dissonance for Haydn.

Humor is a major element of the music of Haydn and Mozart. The third movement begins with a couple of what has been described as either a "mild sneeze or donkey's bray." This is followed by a parody of a pastoral scene. Can you visualize the Viennese, out for a day in the country, arm in arm, smugly sharing the latest society gossip? Listen for hunting horn calls and folk songs in the distance. A minor key section briefly portrays inclement weather, but a return to major key assures us that all is well.

The finale begins with a few little impulses of pleasantness, innocuously enfolded but quickly shattered by a rowdy explosion of rhythmic activity. The teasing continues in successive passages, as the outburst turns even more unpredictable. Listen as Mozart gets us chuckling and then transfixes us with tenderness that comes from nowhere. At the end, when the tease returns, it is bejeweled with a supple kind of trill, but the exuberance continues to the end, before clobbering us with four final, triumphal chords.

## Janáček: *Kreutzer Sonata Quartet*

Leoš Janáček was the polar opposite of Mozart: Mozart achieved his greatest work (in fact, lived his entire life) before reaching thirty-six, Janáček created his most well-known and highly regarded compositions in his late sixties and seventies. Rather than thriving like Mozart in European cultural centers (Vienna, Berlin, Leipzig or London), Janáček spent most of his life in Brno in a region that would become Czechoslovakia after World War I.

Janáček is best known for several operas that reflect his fascination with folk music, speech patterns and his conviction that music is

sourced directly from the elements of ordinary existence. Among his celebrated works are a mass, a few orchestral pieces, and a handful of chamber works including two string quartets. Uncommon for chamber music, but typical of Janáček's conception of natural musical realism, both quartets are regarded as program music with intricate narrative connections. The *String Quartet No. 1* has been called a "wordless opera" because of the way that the unfolding music portrays the powerful discourse, passions, and chaos of the characters.

Opera and lieder composers have historically taken creativeness from literature (Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, and *Death in Venice*; Richard Strauss's *Don Juan*; Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*) while instrumental music often makes allusion to natural phenomena (Debussy's *La Mer*) or tells a story (Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*). But there are not many instrumental works based on great literature: Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Tchaikovsky's overture to *Romeo and Juliet*, and...both of Janáček's string quartets.

The Quartet No. 1 was a commissioned work, subtitled 'Kreutzer Sonata' because it was inspired by Leo Tolstoy's tragic novella of the same name, which in turn had been based on the earlier Beethoven *Violin Sonata No.9*, dedicated to Rodolphe Kreutzer, a renowned violinist of the time.<sup>1</sup>

The work was written in the last one or two weeks (accounts differ) of October 1923, at a time of great creative intensity when Janáček was 69 and having a musically fruitful but one-sidedly ardent and obsessed (730 letters, most unanswered) relationship with a married woman 38 years his junior and confused by the attention.<sup>2</sup>

The piece recounts the disquieting, shadowy story of a man who murders his wife, a gifted amateur pianist, whom he suspects of having an affair with a dashing violinist, to whom he, ironically, had introduced her. The wife and supposed lover play Beethoven's sonata together and at a key moment in the story, seemingly carried away by the music's passion, they are confronted by the husband who comes home unexpectedly from a business trip well after midnight. He threatens the violinist with a knife and, when the man flees, he turns on his wife, inflicting a mortal wound.

<sup>1</sup> Kreutzer ignored Beethoven's dedication and never performed the original sonata, declaring it 'outrageously unintelligible' and apparently unplayable.

<sup>2</sup> Unrequited, she still proved to be the ultimate muse, serving as the impetus for both string quartets, the *Glagolitic Mass*, the *Sinfonietta*, and the inspiration for the lead female roles in his operas *Katya Kabanová*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *The Makropulos Affair*.

Form in music refers to musical structure or architecture. Although Janáček structures his work in four movements, you will not hear traditional forms such as sonata or rondo that Mozart or Beethoven used. Instead, the work seems to be in a state of turbulent flux, one of continuous development of various rhythmic and melodic scraps of sound. It describes an emotional drama comprising moments of clash as well as passionate eruptions, a fanatical work charging towards catharsis and to final climax, propelling the listener violently through an enormous scope of emotions.

According to Tolstoy, music is one of the main forces for encouraging adultery in our society (who knew?!). While Tolstoy attributes to music “the most immoral effect”,<sup>3</sup> Janáček in his Quartet exploits music to the precisely contrasting conclusion: it is the voice of the conscience of humanity.

He neither tracks the strict order of Tolstoy’s novella nor exactly patterns his characters after those of Tolstoy. Instead, he uses the primal substance of the novella, with its potent passionate subject matter, to inform his own musical material, contrasting snips of one against snippets of the other. Sprinkled throughout the piece are twisted quotes from Beethoven’s work and there is frequent use of mutes, tremolo, *sul ponticello* (played close to the bridge) and *pizzicato*. The music is often less melody than a compelling, emotionally charged talking; Janáček’s attention to speech patterns is evident in this music.

The opening contains two elements: a slow anguished, pleading, rising and falling motif (the heroine) on the violin and viola, followed immediately by a faster, more assertive theme on the cello, which represents the overbearing husband. These two elements dominate the first movement, taking on a variety of forms like a motto in various guises throughout the quartet. The scherzo-like second movement includes the rhythm of a polka and introduces the elegant violinist. It starts with an accelerated version of the earlier descending motif and soon moves into a chillingly hostile world of tremolo played *sul ponticello* followed by faster relentless triplets. The *Con moto* opening of the third movement parrots the second subject of Beethoven’s opening presto; its timorousness is interrupted by more of Janáček’s scary *sul ponticello*. The final movement starts calmly using the work’s opening rising motif, but the energy grows unremittingly with fast accompanying figures that develop into a furious rush to the exhausted finish.

## Beethoven: *Quartet in E-flat Major*

Beethoven’s musical productivity, like his life, can be expediently divided into three parts — cleverly named Early, Middle and Late. It is opportune for listeners that this is so because it gives us something to hang on to and talk about, a way of cataloging the uncatalogable. The Northern Hemisphere marks the autumnal equinox this year at exactly 6:54 P.M. PDT on Saturday, September 22, 2018, but you will not notice that the leaves instantly change color and the average temperature drops 20°F in the moment that we go from the period of summer to fall. Neither does a composer’s work instantly change when evolving from one period to the subsequent.

When we listen to music, ‘period’ in music history becomes very flexible. The stages run together and the gap between Mozart and Beethoven may not seem significant: 26 years between the opening Mozart and the Beethoven that closes today’s program may seem like the blink of an eye compared to the metamorphosis between Mozart’s quartet and the quartet that Janáček wrote 140 years later.

Despite the clever divisions of Beethoven’s periods, artists, programmers, and audiences never seem to know where to put Beethoven’s two “singular” quartets — the “Harp” that we hear today and the “Serioso” that we will hear in the final concert of this season. They’re stylistically not quite Middle Period and not yet Late Period. What they actually are is a case in point of how Beethoven did not wake up one morning with a whole new artistic method.

The Dialectic is where an idea generates its opposite which then combine to form a synthesis which in turn becomes a new idea generating its own opposite and so on. Both Mozart and Haydn were interested in fashioning something new out of a combination of the current and the old. Beethoven, in his own way, was doing the same thing. The Op.74 “Harp” quartet signals a tipping point in Beethoven’s evolution as a composer in that we hear him simultaneously honoring the stylistic and formulaic traditions of the past while also beginning to experiment with innovative compositional techniques.

The first movement shows Beethoven in a state of peaceful control. The sonata form movement has the customary two themes for development; between them you will hear the superb *pizzicato* shift that gives this quartet its sobriquet: two of the players play *pizzicato arpeggios* while the other two play *arco*. This was a novelty at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Beethoven reprises the *pizzicato* impact later

when he joins both themes together. Superb chordal passages precede the coda where the solo violin scampers about as the other players continue “harping.”

Beethoven is even more off-the-cuff in the second movement. A beautiful cantabile melody in the major mode alternates with minor-key episodes. Listen for the opening melody to return twice, each time more lavishly embellished than before. It is unexpectedly full of tense peacefulness, charming the audience while holding fierce powers in reserve. The many protracted hymn-like sections are disturbed by the agitated, rising line in the cello when the theme is carried by the violins, or by the upper instruments’ fretful figures when the cello assumes the melody. The movement, like hope, simply fades away at the end.

With the fiercely dramatic Presto, we are reanimated and swept into the “Beethoven sound.” Four-note patterns pound away, echoing the Fifth Symphony (dit-dit-dit-dah). Its middle section is even faster, reaching quasi prestissimo speed. As in many of Beethoven’s scherzos, this Trio appears twice and the scherzo itself three times, producing an S-T-S-T-S scheme. There is a nearly flippant use of counterpoint throughout the movement.

Without pause, an enigmatic transition leads to the demure finale, where, after what he has just unleashed and contrary to the fugue you might expect, Beethoven surprisingly returns with a set of six variations on a theme that suggests a love song. The Allegretto con Variazioni is pensive, bouncy, everything effortless and simple. In the course of the variations, some remote keys are touched upon, and the melody is encircled by brilliant figurations and exposed to a sequence of creative transformations. The movement culminates in an exuberant, but quite brief, coda in a faster swirling tempo that masterfully regains the anticipated arrival at the (heroic) tonic key, exiting with three soft chords.

The “Harp” was the first Beethoven quartet to be published by itself, with an opus number that did not contain multiple works like Opp. 18 and 59. This remained the norm for all of his later quartets, each of which is distinct and received a deservedly individual opus number.

— notes ©Michael Spencer

<sup>3</sup> Tolstoy’s jealous husband was particularly wary of its power: “...how can that first presto be played in a drawing room among ladies wearing low-necked dresses? ... [it leads to] an awakening of energy and feeling unsuited both to the time and the place.”

# 63<sup>RD</sup> SEASON

## 2018-2019

*Presented in Cooperation with  
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### Parker Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, September 16, 2018  
Faye Spanos Concert Hall  
*RECEPTION FOLLOWS*

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2:30 PM Sunday, October 7, 2018  
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*RECEPTION FOLLOWS*

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- Please turn off cellular telephones and disengage audible signals on digital devices during concert.
- Concert programs are subject to change without notice.
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- Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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