# FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

**The Ying Quartet**
Timothy Ying, violin
Janet Ying, violin
Phillip Ying, viola
David Ying, cello

Sunday, October 24, 1993, 3:00 p.m.
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

## Program

Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5 — **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827)
- Allegro
- Menuetto
- Andante cantabile
- Allegro

Quartet No. 2 (1987) — **Christopher Rouse** (1949- )
- Adagio; doloroso
- Agitato
- Largo; lamentoso

*-Intermission-*

Quartet in C minor, Op. 51, No. 1 — **Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)
- Allegro
- Romanze: Poco adagio
- Allegretto molto moderato e comodo–Un poco piu animato
- Allegro

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This program is in honor of
**Ilse Perl Stone**

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The YING QUARTET is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.
115 College Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401.

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## The Ying Quartet

The Ying Quartet—violinists Timothy Ying and Janet Ying, violist Phillip Ying, and cellist David Ying—was formed in 1988 at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and a year later won the 1989 International Cleveland Quartet Competition. In May 1991, the quartet made its New York City debut at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

The Ying Quartet enjoys a particularly exciting and diverse musical life, maintaining an active international touring schedule that has included U.S. appearances in New York, Boston, Chicago, Washington, St. Louis, San Francisco and Los Angeles; and concerts in Germany, England, Sweden, Estonia and Taiwan. The Yings have spent summers in residence at the Tanglewood, Norfolk and Aspen Music Festivals.

In addition to their busy performance career, the Yings are participants in the unique National Endowment for the Arts Rural Residency Initiative. In this program, the quartet receives grants from the National Endowment, the Cedar Arts Forum and the Jesup Community School to be resident ensemble in the small town of Jesup (pop. 2000) in northeast Iowa. As members of the community, the Yings share their music with everyone they encounter, ranging from students to senior citizens and from farmers to local business owners. After one of their recent performances, which now consistently draw more than 500 people, local music critic Harvey Hess commented in the *Waterloo Courier* that "the Yings possess the enviable gift of making their every performance sound extraordinary." Informal performances have taken place in livingrooms, in one-room Amish school houses, in hospitals, at civic gatherings, at social clubs and at business meetings. The quartet is committed to exploring the use of music as a catalyst to spur creative achievement in all aspects of community life.

## Program Notes

### String Quartet in A Major, Op. 18, No. 5

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**
(1770-1827)

The first movement of Beethoven's A major quartet is more direct and simpler than those found in the earlier quartets in Op. 18. The opening group of themes is made up of a number of individual phrases of varied character that go directly to the minor-key unison of the second subject without a bridge. The development, instead of focusing on the most important melodic material, is based on subsidiary and transitional motifs. The recapitulation almost literally repeats the exposition, except for the necessary adjustments in key. And the short coda is merely a fragmented A scale, with the first violin out of synchronization with the others.

As with Mozart, Beethoven places the Menuetto next, instead of the more usual slow movement. The gently rocking, almost waltzlike theme sets the mood for this sweet, sedate movement. The use of third beat accents in the more thickly textured trio gives the impression of a poorly played accordion. The Menuetto is repeated after the trio.

Over the theme and variations third movement, Beethoven wrote the word "pastoral," a clue to his conception of the music's character. The rather plain melody consists of a descending and ascending scale, with only minor deviations. But the five variations leave behind the eighteenth-century variation concept, which tends to keep the theme's harmonic outline while varying the details of figuration, rhythm, and tonality. In his variations, Beethoven reveals different aspects of the theme's expressive concept. Particularly striking is the contrast between the fourth and fifth variations; the fourth is hushed and almost mystical, while the fifth is rude, robust, and full-voiced. In the lengthy coda Beethoven introduces the theme in its original form, pitting it against a double-time scale figure that essentially moves in contrary motion. At the very end the tempo slows, leading to a subdued conclusion.

The nervous, agitated first theme of the final movement is in sharp contrast to the organlike sonority of the second theme, which sounds much slower but is actually in the same tempo. The quick four-note motto that opens the movement pervades the following development section, and after a full stop, the recapitulation brings back the previously heard material. The coda, with the four-note phrase still dominant, summarizes the movement.

—from *Guide to Chamber Music,* by Melvin Berger ©1985

### String Quartet No. 2

**CHRISTOPHER ROUSE**
(1949- )

I completed my String Quartet No. 2 in Baltimore, Maryland on May 6, 1988. Commissioned by the Cleveland Quartet through funds provided by the Eastman School of Music, it is dedicated to the people of the Soviet Union and lasts approximately seventeen minutes.

The piece consists of three connected movements—Adagio, Agitato, and Largo—and is based upon the D-S-C-H motto (D, E-flat, C, B) which formed Dmitri Shostakovich's initials and which that composer employed so tellingly on several occasions as a significant motive in his own

scores. This motto functions both in its original and in transposed versions on various levels throughout, and on the largest scale it accounts for the tonal centers of the movements: the opening adagio is centered around a highly chromatic D minor tonality, the central agitato utilizes E-flat as a tonal center, and the final largo begins in C minor, ultimately moving to B major for its "trasfigurato" coda. Beyond this, it might be noted that the first movement is somewhat similar to a passacaglia, while the bulk of the third movement consists of a set of three variations (on material from both the first and second movements) separated by a varied *ritornello,* with the aforementioned B major coda serving as an extended resolution (until the "confused" tonality of the final measures) of the work as a whole. The central *agitato* is somewhat freer in design, intended to evoke a world of unpredictability and even disorder. Overall, the mood of my quartet may remind listeners of Shostakovich, a composer I deeply admire.

*–C. R.*

**String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 51, No. 1**

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**
(1833–1897)

To the listening public of the day, Brahms was the musical heir of Beethoven–a burden he did not bear easily. "You do not know what it is like," Brahms wrote, "hearing his [Beethoven's] footsteps constantly behind me." It is, therefore, not surprising that the two forms in which Beethoven produced such enduring masterworks, the string quartet and the symphony, were precisely those in which Brahms felt the greatest pressure to measure up to his model.

The quartet opens with an heroic ascending theme. After two sustained notes in the viola, the first violin presents a languid descending counterpart to the vigor of the previous phrase. The second theme proper, played by the two violins, enters over a rapid leaping figure in the viola. The poised concluding theme is given to the first violin, over a rhythmically complex texture. All of the thematic material is worked over in the brief development section and then recapitulated, leading to an exciting, agitated coda.

Intimate and pensive, the second movement has been described as a song without words, a favorite romantic nineteenth-century character piece. It is ternary in form: the gently expressive opening section; a wistful contrast; and the return of the opening melody, ending with a coda that includes both themes, although in reverse order.

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## FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC 1993-94 SEASON

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Sunday, September 26, 1993
3 p.m.

**Stanford String Quartet**
Sunday, January 9, 1994
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**The Ying Quartet**
Sunday, October 24, 1993
3 p.m.

**The Leonardo Trio**
Saturday, March 12, 1994
8 p.m.

**The Debussy Trio**
Sunday, May 1, 1994
3 p.m.

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Please disengage pagers and electronic watches.

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Seating is unreserved for the 1993-94 season.

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### Notes *(cont. from pg. 2)*

The third movement is removed in mood from the somewhat severe and reserved character of the rest of the quartet. The melody of connected pairs of notes is played by the first violin, while the viola strives for attention with its countermelody. Various episodes follow, until the tempo picks up for a contrasting middle section. To accompany the graceful melody, the second violin employs an effect known as *bariolage,* in which the same note is played on two different strings, producing a tonal effect not unlike a jazz trumpet player using a wah-wah mute. The movement ends with an exact repeat of the opening section.

Spiritually akin to the first movement, the finale starts with a terse, forceful motto theme derived from the opening of the first movement. An excited, passionate melody ensues but with no diminution of energy or drive. The second violin introduces the more relaxed subsidiary subject. There is barely any development before Brahms brings back all three themes to end the movement, and the quartet, with an extended coda.

–from *Guide to Chamber Music,* by Melvin Berger ©1985