



# FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

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## Pro Arte Quartet

DAVID PERRY, violin  
SUZANNE BEIA, violin  
SALLY CHISOLM, viola  
PARRY KARP, cello

2:30 pm, Sunday, March 2, 2025  
Faye Spanos Concert Hall  
University of the Pacific

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### STRING QUARTET NO. 2 (2012)

Andantino, ma tranquillo  
Molto tranquillo, non vibrato  
Tempo di marcia  
Coda

DENYS LYTVYENKO

(b. 1985)

### STRING QUARTET (1919)

Modéré  
Intermède  
Finale : Vif

GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE

(1892–1983)

### STRING QUARTET IN E $\flat$ MAJOR, H.277 (1834)

Adagio ma non troppo  
Allegretto  
Romanza  
Allegro molto vivace

FANNY HENSEL (NÉE MENDELSSOHN)

(1805–1847)

— INTERMISSION —

### STRING QUARTET IN D MINOR, D.810, *DER TOD UND DAS MÄDCHEN* (1824)

Allegro  
Andante con moto  
Scherzo: Allegro molto—Trio  
Presto

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797–1828)

Pro Arte Quartet appears by arrangement with Sarah Schaffer  
ARS Nova, LLC., P.O. Box 620254, Middleton, WI 53562. ■ 608.836.763 ■ slschaffer13@gmail.com

*Season Sponsor: C. A. Webster Foundation*



### Artist Profile

The Pro Arte Quartet is one of the world's most distinguished string quartets. Founded by Alphonse Onnou in Brussels in 1912, it became the Court Quartet to Queen Elizabeth of Belgium. The quartet began the first of many international tours in 1919. After the First World War it became famous for the performance of modern music and for its extensive recordings of Haydn. Later the quartet premiered new works by Bartók, Milhaud and Honegger.

The Pro Arte Quartet made its American debut in 1926 in New York and returned for 30 tours to the United States, often under the auspices of the chamber music patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. It performed at the inauguration of the Hall of Music at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. In 1932 it was named the "Quatuor de la Cour de Belgique" (Quartet of the Court of Belgium). Its first visit to Madison, Wisconsin was in 1938. Two years later, the musicians were stranded in Madison by the outbreak of World War II and accepted residency at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

While touring in Wisconsin in 1941 they were offered permanent residency. In the late 1950s, the Pro Arte Quartet became members of the University's School of Music faculty in addition to being artists-in-residence.

The Pro Arte Quartet reached its centennial anniversary in 2012, the first string quartet to do so. To honor this occasion, the quartet embarked on a commissioning project to include up to eight new works, presented throughout the 2011-2012 season.

### Lytvynenko: *String Quartet No. 2*

Born in Lviv, Denys Lytvynenko is a cellist, composer, and concertmaster of the cellos of the Lviv National Philharmonic and a member of the Phoenix quartet. He inherited an interest in music from his mother, a pianist, and he took formal piano lessons at the age of 4! His passion for the piano, theater, and singing was overcome by the desire to master the cello. In 2003, as a cellist, Denys graduated from the Solomiya Krushelnytska Lviv Specialized Secondary Music Boarding School. He continued his studies at the Mykola Lysenko Lviv State Music Academy, and he became a laureate of international and all-Ukrainian competitions.

His music is deep, lively, and written in a truly skilled manner. The composer has an acute sense of modernity, which is revealed in new musical ideas, bringing a unique interpretation in the terms of current Ukrainian events.

In the first movement, we sense his despair and hopelessness. In the second movement, whose lyricism and poignant harmonies contradict its dodecaphonic compositional style, our protagonist offers a prayer for respite from the situation in which he finds himself. However, his prayers are answered in the third movement only by grotesque laughter and cruel mockery. The fourth movement (Coda) begins with notes of optimism and hope of finally rising above a demoralizing existence, soaring high above world struggles. But regrettably, he is brought back down to Earth in the end, his dreams of transcendence prove to have been a mere illusion.

In the words of the composer, *String Quartet No. 2* tells a story without a happy ending. It recounts the voyage of somebody who finds himself imprisoned in a life in which he no longer finds joy or comfort.

### Tailleferre: *String Quartet*

Germaine Tailleferre was born in Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, a suburb of Paris. As a girl, she studied piano with her mother and began composing on her own. Tailleferre had to overcome the objections of her parents and change her name (from Taillefesse!) before she enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire for preliminary studies in 1904. Later, as a degree student, she won first prizes in harmony, solfège, counterpoint and accompaniment.

At the Paris Conservatory, her fellow students included Durey, Poulenc, Milhaud, Auric, and Honegger. She composed her only *String Quartet* over a creative two-year period between 1917-19. When the work was premiered in 1919, she was invited as the lone female member to join *Nouveaux Jeunes* (The New Young People) later known as *Les Six*. Her *String Quartet* is a free-form sonatina set into three short movements.

The delicate opening is paired with the pulsating rhythms and the ingenious dissonances dispersed throughout to create an excitedly colorful timbre across the ensemble. Two themes watch over this movement, but they are never developed or explored. Tailleferre uses all four instruments to create different lines of interest from the lead melody line to the counter-cello in the central section. There is an intimate feel about this movement that epitomizes chamber music at its best.

Related to the first movement, the scherzo-like second is spritely in nature and opens with a refined duo in the upper strings. The cello counter-melody is very effectual, enigmatic rather than dark or gloomy. The styling of Ravel clearly has an impact on this movement, but Tailleferre's inspired imagination completely prevails.

The finale movement, starting in an unusual 6/16 time, is in saltarello (a traditional Italian dance) rhythm. The

most intricate of the three movements, Tailleferre's polytonal creations are quite a wonder. Listen for the rich textures and timbres that intertwine among the woody timbres of the instruments. A choral-like phrase occurs before the piece concludes in a united and memorable manner.

Tailleferre went on to become one of Maurice Ravel's few students. Though she experimented with modernist techniques in a few of her later compositions, she worked largely in the restrained and lucid manner of Fauré and Ravel, excelling in multiple genres: solo works for piano and harp, chamber ensembles, concerto, ballet, and film. She died in Paris.

### **Hensel: *String Quartet in E $\flat$ Major***

The older sister of her semi-infinitely-more-well-known brother Felix, Fanny Hensel was an extraordinarily gifted musician in her own right. She not only was Felix' perceptive confidant in all things musical, but she also possessed a personality deemed by their friends and family as the more passionate of the two siblings, a trait that you will hear in her String Quartet in E-flat Major, her sole work in that genre.

As a child her family encouraged her to both perform and compose. As she matured her father informed her plainly that she would do best with a career as wife and mother. Felix had ambivalent feelings, while her artist husband, Wilhelm Hensel, supported her compositional efforts.

The unusual but implicitly serious, even dark tone of the initial phrases instantly creates a mood of quiet grief. As the music progresses, sudden emphatic chords further darken the ambient mood with accentuated single pizzicatos in the cello.

The Allegretto in 6/8 time serves as a scherzo and echoes the legendary "elfin" scherzos of her brother, except her fairy-like beings expose a darker side. A vibrant central section flourishes in a very adroit and ardent counterpoint before the return to the beginning section.

A Romanza comes next, unhappy and mourning. Longest movement of the

Quartet, there are numerous ventures into distant keys reminding one of late Beethoven.

The concluding Allegro molto vivace is in sonata form. Its introductory spinning top theme alternates with secondary material of a more lyrical, though still spirited, nature. Bounteous goading from tremolo-like gestures from the lower strings impact a skittish violin whirring around an insistent vaulting theme that dithers with a wistful swaying figure. The piece ends quickly and forcefully.

### **Schubert: *Quartet in D Minor***

Franz Schubert's much-too-short life was filled with music from beginning to end. Instructed in the basics of music by both his father and his older brother Ignaz, Schubert played piano, violin, and organ, and also sang from the time he was very young. In 1808 he earned a scholarship to sing in the Imperial Court's chapel choir. He then became a schoolmaster in the same school where his father taught. He left in 1818, for full-time pursuit of music, pleading boredom.

By the 1820s, Schubert was earning some income from his compositions and was also part of a close-knit circle of artists and students who gathered regularly for "Schubertiaden."

However, starting in 1823, Schubert suffered from a number of hardships, the most difficult of which was the illness (likely syphilis) that struck the young composer at the end of 1822. Despite this, Schubert's music never stopped, and in fact developed more as he grew increasingly ill.

Schubert had not written string quartets since his teens but began writing them again in the 1820s. Perhaps, as music historian Homer Ulrich suggests, "the genre offered him a medium to marry his lyricism and dramatic intensions in a form that allowed extreme color contrasts."

Aptly, the title comes from his own song of the same name, "Der Tod und

das Mädchen" (Death and the Maiden), written seven years earlier. The D minor quartet is his fourteenth of fifteen and one of the pillars of the chamber music repertoire.

The theme runs all the way through the quartet, giving the whole piece an overall tragic bearing: each movement is in a minor key, and none deviates far from the expressive turbulence of the quartet's opening.

The first movement, an Allegro, sets the stage with typical major-minor instability and explosive outbursts.

After a somber, chorale-like beginning to the second movement, Andante con moto, a dramatic effect appears, using the "Death and the Maiden" theme.

In the third movement, a Scherzo, the quartet is split into a high and low call-and-response, while a dense dotted rhythmic figure governs. The Trio that intrudes in the movement is a breath of fresh air that wafts in and then disperses as the Scherzo's dark waltz returns.

The finale is a furious rondo that keeps the dotted rhythm from the third movement as it turns round and round in a traditional dance form called the tarantella. Schubert's luminous lyricism stands out even in the agitated movement—there are brief moments of relief within the skirmish where we hear yearning sighs and contemplative thoughts. Traditionally, the tarantella was thought to be a dance to ward off madness and death, and at this late point in the composer's life he was undoubtedly struggling with these big themes – death, spirituality, and inner strain. The finale ends with breakneck runs and two short chords.

The "Death and the Maiden" Quartet was first played in 1826 in a private home and wasn't published until 1831, three years after Schubert's death.

# 68<sup>TH</sup> SEASON

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