Artist Partner Program Presents:

**FAURÉ QUARTETT**

Sunday, February 15, 2015 . 3PM
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Dirk Mommertz, piano  
Erika Goldsetzer, violin  
Sascha Frömbling, viola  
Konstantin Heidrich, cello

Program

**GUSTAV MAHLER**  
Movement for Piano Quartet in A Minor  
Nicht zu schnell

**GABRIEL FAURÉ**  
Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 15  
Allegro molto moderato  
Scherzo: Allegro vivo  
Adagio  
Allegro molto

— INTERMISSION —

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**  
Piano Quartet in G minor, Op. 25  
Allegro  
Intermezzo: Allegro, ma non troppo —  
Trio: Animato — Tempo del Intermezzo  
Andante con moto  
Rondo alla Zingarese: Presto

This performance is dedicated in loving memory of our brother, John B. (Jack) Bourne, a music lover who treasured The Clarice. —Richard and Sarah Bourne

Masterclass funded in part by James & Brenda Cooley, Carolyn and Carl Fichtel, and Dorothy White and her daughters, Pam White and Alice Mobaidin.

This performance will last approximately one hour and 45 minutes with a 15-minute intermission.  
Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.
The requirements have changed. Whoever is playing chamber music today can’t be limited to the rules from decades ago. The expectations regarding the diversity of repertoire have changed, which creates room for ensembles like the Fauré Quartett, which has established itself as one of the world’s leading piano quartets within just a few years. Dirk Mommertz (piano), Erika Geldsetzer (violin), Sascha Frömbling (viola) and Konstantin Heidrich (cello) use the opportunities arising from these developments. They discover new sound fields in chamber music and perform compositions outside the mainstream repertoire.

They are visionary in their approach and highly regarded for their experiments and discoveries, be it performances with the NDR Big Band; collaborations with artists like Rufus Wainwright or Sven Helbig; appearances in clubs like the Berghain, Cocoon Club or Le Poisson Rouge in New York; or TV shows in KIKA or “Rhapsody in School,” getting children excited about chamber music. When they released their album Popsongs in 2009, there was a great deal of buzz in the press and audience. The following year, the ensemble was awarded the ECHO Klassik Award in the Classic Beyond Borders category, their second award after their recording of Brahms’ piano quartets (Chamber Music Recording of the Year, 2008). Other prizes include the German Music Competition, the ensemble prize from Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, international competition and recording awards, Music Prize Duisburg and Brahms prize Schleswig Holstein.

The musicians of the Fauré Quartett are pioneers in many ways. After they met during their studies in 1995 in Karlsruhe for the 150th anniversary of Gabriel Fauré, they quickly realized that this combination offered new insights into undiscovered repertoire. In 2006, they signed a contract with Deutsche Grammophon, promoting them to the Champions League of the classical music business. They made highly regarded benchmark-recordings with works by Mozart, Brahms, Mendelssohn and pop songs from Peter Gabriel and Steely Dan.

Worldwide tours have raised their profile abroad and international masterclasses are part of their work with students. The members teach at the universities of Berlin and Essen. Moreover, they are Artistic Directors of “Festspielfrühling Rügen” as well as “Quartet in Residence” at the University of Music Karlsruhe. During their tours, the musicians appear in the world’s most important chamber music venues, including Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Berlin Philharmonie, Teatro Colón Buenos Aires and Wigmore Hall London. All these mosaics form a unique profile for this defining chamber music ensemble.

The Fauré Quartett is represented in the USA and Canada by Marianne Schmocker Artists International, New York

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About the Program

**Movement for Piano Quartet in A Minor**

**Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)**

*Composed in 1876*

Premiered on July 10, 1876 at the Vienna Conservatory

In 1875, when Mahler matriculated there, the Vienna Conservatory was one of the leading music schools in Europe, rivaled only by those of Paris and Leipzig. Just five years before, the institution had moved into its new headquarters, a magnificent building erected by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde just off the Ringstrasse, which contained studios, offices, libraries and concert halls. Its main auditorium, the Grosser Vereinsaal, became the home of the Vienna Philharmonic and is still regarded as one of the finest music rooms in the world. The Conservatory’s director was Josef...
Hellmesberger Sr., one-time concertmaster of the Court Opera Orchestra, leader of the quartet that was among the first to program the great chamber works of Beethoven, Schumann and Schubert, and friend of Johannes Brahms. Mahler’s principal professor of harmony was Robert Fuchs, who had begun what became a 40-year tenure at the Conservatory just one year before; his composition teacher was Franz Krenn, a prolific writer of sacred music who was known for the thoroughness and stiff pedanticism of his instruction. Though not formally enrolled in Anton Bruckner’s classes, Mahler also sat in on some of his counterpoint lectures.

Mahler proved to be an excellent student, attentive to his studies and even inspired when it came to composition. He is known to have written at least one movement of a symphony, several songs and a goodly number of chamber pieces, including the opening movement of a Piano Quartet in A minor in June 1876. (He began a scherzo for the proposed work shortly thereafter but left it incomplete.) The Quartet won an important school prize and it was performed with considerable success on July 10 at the Conservatory and again on a recital in his parents’ Bohemian town of Iglau in September. “This composition shows an impressive wealth of ideas and a great skill in execution which reveal him as a composer of genius,” wrote the critic for the Mährischer Grenzbote. Mahler told his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner, whose reminiscences are one of the most important sources of personal information about the composer, that the Piano Quartet excited a good deal of interest at the Conservatory, and that it was performed at least once at the home of Dr. Theodor Billroth, a close friend of Brahms. The score was then sent to Moscow for a competition and “it got lost,” according to the composer, but his widow, Alma, discovered a copy among his papers in the 1960s. The Quartet was given over radio station WBAI in New York in 1962 and played publicly two years later at an International Society for Contemporary Music concert in New York’s Philharmonic Hall. The score was published in 1976 by Sikorski of Hamburg in an edition by Peter Ruzicka.

The A minor Piano Quartet shows both Mahler’s assimilation of the influences of Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms and his ability to create music of distinctive profile and strong emotion from his earliest years. The 12-minute movement (Nicht zu schnell — Not too quickly) is disposed in proper sonata form, with a melancholy main subject, marked by a melodic leap followed by a sigh, and a contrasting subsidiary motive of more animated character. Perhaps the most surprising feature of the movement is its development section, the portion of the traditional form with the fewest structural guidelines and therefore the most leeway for the composer’s imagination, which shows remarkable technical ingenuity and emotional passion for the work of a 16-year-old. The recapitulation of the earlier themes balances the structure, and the movement closes with a brief violin cadenza and a dying coda.

**Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 15**

*Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)*

*Composed 1876-1879; revised in 1883*  
*Premiered on February 14, 1880 in Paris*

In 1872, Gabriel Fauré was introduced to the Viardot family by his teacher and mentor, Camille Saint-Saëns. The Viardots were among Europe’s most prominent 19th-century musical families: Pauline, head of the clan, was one of the day’s leading mezzo-sopranos (her sister, Maria Malibran, was an equally celebrated singer); her daughter Louise enjoyed a successful career as a singer, teacher and composer in Russia and Germany; her son, Paul, was a noted violinist and conductor. Fauré, then organist at St.-Sulpice and composer of a growing number of finely crafted songs and choral works, became friendly with the Viardots, and he conceived a special fondness for Pauline’s younger daughter, Marianne. Love blossomed sufficiently during the following years that their engagement was announced in July 1877 — only to be abruptly broken off in October.
Fauré was deeply wounded by the affair, and he never revealed the exact cause of the falling out, except to say in later years that “perhaps it was not a bad thing for me. The Viardot family might have deflected me from my proper path.” The path the Viardots would have preferred for the budding composer would have led, of course, through the opera house, but Fauré’s genius lay not in the large public forms of opera and symphony but in the intimate genres of song and chamber music. By the time that his first important chamber work, the Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, was received with enthusiasm at its premiere in Paris on January 27, 1877, he was already well advanced on his next instrumental composition — the Piano Quartet in C minor. This gestating work confirmed the creative direction Fauré chose to follow, so the collapse of his engagement to Marianne may have been occasioned as much by fundamental and apparently irreconcilable differences in artistic philosophy as by any breach of romantic sentiment.

The creation of the Piano Quartet No. 1, begun in the summer of 1876 but not completed until 1879, wrapped around this affair of the heart; the finale was thoroughly revised four years later. The Quartet, dedicated to the acclaimed Belgian violinist Hubert Léonard, a friend of the composer and an early champion of the Violin Sonata, has been Fauré’s most popular chamber creation since its premiere in Paris on February 14, 1880. For a maiden work for chamber ensemble, the Quartet is a remarkable achievement in instrumental color, formal clarity, harmonic sophistication and melodic richness. The composition opens with a modally inflected melody in dotted rhythms for unison strings that provides much of the movement’s thematic material. Wide-ranging piano arpeggios lead to the complementary subject, a descending stair-step theme of brighter countenance that is passed from viola to violin to cello. The development section is a masterful working out of the main subject that climaxes with a brief but stormy passage of rising scales to provide the gateway to the recapitulation of the principal themes. A gentle coda closes the movement. The Scherzo is music of ethereal delicacy whose gossamer rhythms are buoyed by subtle shifts of meter. The central trio is spun from a lyrical string theme in chordal texture balanced upon airy piano arpeggios. The Adagio, the emotional core of the Quartet, may reflect Fauré’s personal grief during the time of the work’s composition. It follows a broad three-part form (A–B–A) based on two motives derived from an ascending scale: the first (A) is halting and fragmentary; the other (B) is flowing and expansive. The sonata-form finale begins with a theme that recalls both the Adagio in its rising scalar contour and the first movement in its dotted rhythms. The lyrical second theme, introduced by the viola, provides contrast. The development, grown almost entirely from the second theme, reaches an impassioned climax before subsiding for the recapitulation. The C minor Piano Quartet, one of the masterworks of the French chamber repertory, ends with a brilliant coda.

**Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 25**  
**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**  
*Composed in 1857-1861*  
*Premiered on November 16, 1862 in Vienna by the composer as pianist and members of the Hellmesberger Quartet*

The high-minded direction of Johannes Brahms’ musical career was evident from his teenage years — as a lad, he studied the masterpieces of the Austro-German tradition with Eduard Marxsen, the most illustrious piano teacher in his native Hamburg, and played Bach and Beethoven on his earliest recitals; his first published compositions were not showy virtuoso trifles but three ambitious piano sonatas inspired by Classical models; he was irresistibly drawn to Joseph Joachim and the Schumanns and other of the most exalted musicians of his day. When Schumann hailed him as the savior of German music, the rightful heir to the mantle of Beethoven, in a widely read article in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik in 1853, Brahms...
was only too eager to accept both the renown and the responsibility inherent in such a lofty appraisal. He tried sketching a symphony as early as 1855 (not completing it, however, until two decades later), but his principal means of fulfilling Schumann’s prophecy during the early phase of his creative life were focused first on the genres of piano works and songs, and then on chamber music.

Finished compositions did not come easily for Brahms, however, and he made numerous attempts to satisfy himself with a chamber piece before he allowed the publication of his Piano Trio, Op. 8 in 1854. (He destroyed at least three earlier efforts in that form.) The following year, he turned to writing quartets for piano, violin, viola and cello, a genre whose only precedents were the two by Mozart and a single specimen by Schumann. Work on the quartets did not go smoothly, however, and he laid one (in C minor, eventually Op. 60) aside for almost two decades, and tinkered with the other two for the next half-dozen years in Hamburg and at his part-time post as music director for the court Lippe-Detmold, midway between Frankfurt and Hamburg.

Brahms was principally based in Hamburg during those years, usually staying with his parents, but in 1860, when he was 27 years old and eager to find the quiet and privacy to work on his compositions, he rented spacious rooms (“a quite charming flat with a garden,” he said) in the suburb of Hamm from one Frau Dr. Elisabeth Rössing, a neighbor of two members of the local women’s choir he was then directing. Hamm was to be his home for the next two years, and there he worked on the Variations on a Theme of Schumann for Piano Duet (Op. 23), the Handel Variations (Op. 24) and the Piano Quartets in G minor (Op. 25) and A major (Op. 26). Brahms dedicated the A major Quartet to his hospitable landlady. The two Piano Quartets were finally finished by early autumn 1861, and given a private reading by some unknown local musicians and Clara Schumann during her visit to Hamm shortly thereafter. Brahms basked in the glow of Clara’s approval of both his new pieces and the direction of his career.

In September 1862, Brahms succumbed to a long-held desire and visited Vienna. He had already made several professional contacts in the city, perhaps most notably with Joseph Hellmesberger, Director of the Vienna Conservatory and leader of a highly regarded string quartet. Hellmesberger introduced his German visitor to Julius Epstein, professor of piano at the school, and an evening of Brahms’ music was planned for Epstein’s apartment, located, fortuitously, at Schulerstrasse 8, the very building in which Mozart had composed *The Marriage of Figaro*. Hellmesberger and his colleagues eagerly joined Brahms in reading the two new Piano Quartets, and the violinist echoed Schumann’s pronouncement when it was over: “This is indeed Beethoven’s heir.” Hellmesberger insisted that they mark Brahms’ arrival in Vienna by presenting the G minor Quartet at his recital on November 16 in the hall of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde; the program garnered sufficient success to warrant scheduling another concert two weeks later to introduce the A major Quartet. Those events solidified Brahms’ reputation in Vienna, and were instrumental in helping him decide to settle in the city for good in August 1863, the same month that Fritz Simrock published the G minor Piano Quartet.

The first movement of the G minor Piano Quartet contains an abundance of thematic material woven into a seamless continuum through Brahms’ consummate contrapuntal skill. Balanced within its closely reasoned sonata form are pathos and vigor, introspection and jubilation, storm and tranquility. The second movement (Intermezzo), cast in the traditional form of scherzo and trio, is formed from long-spun melodies in gentle, rocking rhythms. The Andante is in a broad three-part structure, with the middle section taking on a snappy martial air. The Gypsy Rondo finale is a spirited essay much in the style of Brahms’ invigorating *Hungarian Dances*. 
The following items and materials related to this performance are available in the collections of the University of Maryland Libraries. For materials held in the Paged Collections Room, please ask at the circulation desk.

**Josef Suk: Klavierquartett, Op. 1;**
*Gabriel Fauré: Klavierquartett, Op. 45 — Fauré Quartett*
**Location:** Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library — Paged Collections  
**Call Number:** MCD 17426

**Brahms Piano Quartets Op. 25 & Op. 60 — Fauré Quartett**
**Location:** Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library — Paged Collections  
**Call Number:** MCD 17427

**Wunderkind: Mendelssohn Piano Quartets — Fauré Quartett**
**Location:** Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library — Paged Collections  
**Call Number:** MCD 17428

**Mozart Piano Quartets — Fauré Quartett**
**Location:** Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library — Paged Collections  
**Call Number:** MCD 17487

**Popsongs — Fauré Quartett**
**Location:** Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library — Paged Collections  
**Call Number:** MCD 17491

These recordings feature a Fauré Quartett that is at home with the traditional piano quartet repertoire of Johannes Brahms, Felix Mendelssohn, W.A. Mozart, Josef Suk and their namesake Gabriel Fauré, but also breaks new ground with arrangements of tunes by The Beach Boys, Peter Gabriel, N.E.R.D., Ben Folds Five, Elliott Smith, A-HA, Feist, Steely Dan, Ryan Adams and System of a Down. These surprising and intriguing recordings explore the increasingly blurred lines between the concert hall and the pop music stage, and are sure to capture the attention of any chamber music fan.

For more information on these UMD Library materials and other resources relating to the performers, pieces, composers and themes of this program, please visit us at [www.lib.umd.edu/mspal/mspal-previews](http://www.lib.umd.edu/mspal/mspal-previews).