Artist Partner Program presents:

**MECCORE QUARTET**

Friday, February 6, 2015. 8pm

Wojciech Koprowski, violin
Jarosław Nadrzycki, violin
Michał Bryła, viola
Karol Marianowski, cello

Program

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

Quartet in D major, K. 575
- Allegretto
- Andante
Menuetto: Allegretto
- Allegretto

— INTERMISSION —

**CLAUDE DEBUSSY**

Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10
- Animé et très décidé
- Assez vif et bien rythmé
- Andantino, doucement expressif
- Très modéré — Très mouvemente et avec passion

**BRETT DEAN**

_Eclipse_
- Slow and spacious, secretive
- Unlikely Flight
- Epilogue

*Played without pause*

*Program will be approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes including one 15-minute intermission.*

Funded in part by a generous gift from **John W. Layman**.
Praised for its breathtaking performances, flawless technique and visionary interpretations, the Meccore Quartet won second prize – and three additional special prizes – at the London International String Quartet Competition at Wigmore Hall in April 2012. The Quartet also has received top prizes at the Paolo Borciani Competition (2011), the International Chamber Music Competition in Weiden (2010) and the Max Reger International Chamber Music Competition (2009). The Quartet was formed by four of Europe’s most celebrated young string players in 2007 and now performs extensively throughout the continent. The Quartet’s debut tour in North America took place in November 2013.

Since 2009 the Meccore has worked closely with the Artemis Quartet at the Berlin University of the Arts. As postgraduates at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, the Quartet worked closely with Alfred Brendel on the interpretation of Beethoven’s music. Brendel raved that “the Meccore String Quartet has impressed me as an outstanding young ensemble.”

The Meccore Quartet directs “Q’arto Mondi,” an international chamber music festival featuring top quartets from around the world that takes place annually in Poland. After having been featured many times on European radio and television, the Quartet’s Schubert recording was recently named one of the best accomplishments on the Polish cultural scene. The Quartet was also nominated for the prestigious Paszporty Polityki award.

The Quartet receives financial support from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, as well as from Young Poland.

About the Program

Quartet in D Major, K. 575
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Composed in 1789

Given the steady deterioration in Mozart’s health, finances and prospects in Vienna at the beginning of 1789, it is not surprising that he eagerly accepted the invitation of a fellow Mason and former student, Prince Karl Lichnowsky, to assess the career possibilities in Berlin. Lichnowsky, an officer in the Prussian army, regularly visited the court at Berlin, and suggested that he could arrange an audience with King Frederick William II, nephew and successor of the immensely cultured Frederick the Great and an avid music lover and a cellist of more than modest accomplishment. Mozart left Vienna with Lichnowsky on April 8. After stops in Prague, Dresden and Leipzig, Prince and composer arrived in Berlin on April 25.

In Berlin, Mozart met with the King’s director of chamber music, the French cellist virtuoso Jean Pierre Duport, and renewed his acquaintance with the oboist Friedrich Ramm, who had won the composer’s friendship in Mannheim a dozen years earlier by performing the Oboe Concerto (K. 314) five times in ten days. Duport and Ramm were apparently not able to arrange a meeting with Frederick William for Mozart immediately, so he went back to Leipzig for a few days to give a concert of his own music at the Gewandhaus. Back in Berlin on May 19, Mozart attended a performance of The Abduction from the Seraglio in his honor at the Imperial Theater, and heard a concert by his student, the 11-year-old Johann Nepomuk Hummel, whose ambitious father was then shepherding his prodigious child through an extensive concert tour of Europe. On May 26, Mozart was finally granted an audience with the King, which went well enough for Frederick William to commission from the Viennese visitor a set of six string quartets for himself and a half-dozen piano sonatinas for his eldest daughter, Fredericka. As downpayment, Mozart was presented with 100 Friedrichs d’or in a fine gold box.
Mozart arrived home in Vienna on June 4, 1789, and immediately set to work on the commission for the Prussian court. Sometime in July (the manuscripts were not dated precisely), he completed the Quartet in D Major (K. 575) and one of the piano sonatas (K. 576) — and then stopped. His health was poor that summer, his finances worse and his worry about Constanze, pregnant for the fifth time in seven years, acute, and most of what energy he could muster was channeled into preparing the revival of Figaro ordered by Emperor Joseph II for the end of August. The commission for Così fan tutte followed that production, and Mozart could not return to the Berlin commission until May 1790, when the B-flat Major Quartet (K. 589) was completed. The Third “Prussian” Quartet (K. 590 in F major), Mozart’s last work in the genre, was finished in June. Unable to fulfill the balance of the commission and desperate for cash, Mozart sold the three quartets to Artaria for a pittance later that year. Artaria waited, in vain, for the three quartets that would complete the set, and did not announce their publication until December 28, 1791, three weeks after Mozart had died. Frederick William probably never saw or heard these works that his patronage had inspired.

As would be expected in a composition made to order for a cello-playing king, that instrumental part is given a featured prominence throughout the D Major Quartet, a technique that causes the viola and second violin to be thoroughly drawn into the music’s unfolding argument in order to achieve tonal balance and textural homogeneity. The main theme of the first movement is built from some of the stock 18th-century figures — a slow rising arpeggio, a series of scalar appoggiaturas, a little cadential flourish — that Mozart was capable of touching with magic. The complementary theme, also based on an ascending arpeggio, is entrusted to the cello. The closing subject, a buoyant running up and down the scale shared by first violin and cello, supplies much of the thematic material for the development section. The recapitulation proceeds in the conventional manner, maintaining the movement’s sunny demeanor to its closing measures. The Andante is one of those characteristically Mozartian creations that elevates simplicity to high art. It is disposed in a compact ternary form (A–B–A) in which the tiniest shadow of deep emotion passes across the music only in its central section. The Menuetto is both elegant and perky, and allows the cello an almost soloistic role in the trio. The finale is a serene rondo whose principal subject, announced by the cello, is reminiscent of the theme that opened the Quartet.

**Eclipse**

**Brett Dean (born in 1961)**

**Composed in 2003**

**Premiered on February 12, 2003 at the Cologne Philharmonie by the Auryn Quartet**

Composer, violist and conductor Brett Dean, one of Australia’s most acclaimed musicians, was born in Brisbane in 1961 and studied at the Queensland Conservatorium before moving to Germany in 1984 to become a violist in the Berlin Philharmonic. After serving in that distinguished ensemble for 16 years and beginning to compose in 1988, Dean returned to Australia in 1990 to work as a free-lance musician. He established his reputation as a composer when his clarinet concerto, Ariel’s Music, won the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers Award in 1995. Dean has since been Artistic Director of the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne (2006-2010), served residencies with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2002-2003), Cheltenham Festival (2002, 2009, 2010), Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra (2007-2008), Trondheim Chamber Music Festival (2011) and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (2011), fulfilled many significant commissions and received such notable awards as the Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize from the Australian Music Centre (2013), Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Elise L. Stoeger Prize for his contributions to chamber music (2011), Grawemeyer Award from the University...
of Louisville for his violin concerto *The Lost Art of Letter Writing* (2009), Australian National Music Award (2000, 2005) and an honorary doctorate from Griffith University in Brisbane.

Dean wrote, “Eclipse was commissioned by the Cologne Philharmonie to be premiered by the Auryn Quartet in their 2003-2004 concert season. It is in one uninterrupted movement comprising three clearly distinguishable sections: Slow and spacious, secretive; Unlikely Flight; Epilogue.

“The title refers not specifically to the astronomical significance of the word ‘eclipse,’ but carries over into other usages of the word, especially in the sense of being overshadowed or surpassed. The piece draws its inspiration from several Australian writers, notably Tom Keneally’s recent book *The Tyrant’s Novel*, David Marr and Marian Wilkinson’s political analysis *Dark Victory*, and the work of cartoonist and author Michael Leunig. It was written as a personal response to the political and social consequences of the ‘Tampa Crisis’ which unfolded in the Indian Ocean in the August of 2001 and which was the focus of both Australian and international attention for several weeks. The Tampa Crisis resulted through a showdown between the Australian federal government’s increasingly hard-line stance against boat people arriving illegally in Australian waters and the humanitarian resolve of a Norwegian sea captain, Arne Rinnan, whose actions as captain of the freighter, the Tampa, saved the lives of hundreds of refugees when their boat was in trouble in the treacherous waters between Indonesia and Australia. In the ensuing diplomatic and political tussle in which Australian authorities steadfastly refused to give ground, defied the United Nations and openly lied about the character and behavior of those on board, the boat people themselves were increasingly demonized as undesirable ‘illegals’ and ‘queue jumpers.’ In this way I felt that their very humanity and the enormity of their own personal struggles and fates were entirely eclipsed by the power games of a bigger political agenda. To further add to this sense of indignity, such compassionate sentiments, when expressed publicly, have been increasingly ridiculed in the Australian press as being those of soft, bleeding hearts and apologists of terrorism. Most of the people on board the troubled vessel, the Palapa, were fleeing from Afghanistan and Iraq. The irony of a government turning its back on the safety and claims of refugee status of people escaping these two countries’ repressive regimes in August 2001, yet within the space of two years citing the violence, human rights abuses and terrorist threat of these said regimes to justify being party to coalition invasions to instigate regime change in both countries, seems almost to be the product of a bizarre and cynical fiction.

“Despite its political gestation and subject matter, I don't for a moment believe that a piece of music can change the political ways of the world, and my *Eclipse* remains first and foremost a piece of chamber music and as such can hopefully be appreciated and understood on its own terms. It does however go some way towards explaining its brooding, troubled and at times aggressive features. The first section (Slow and spacious, secretive) evolves as an exploration of sound and sonorities from which a motive of oscillating fifths emerges in the lowest cello range, eventually permeating all instruments which in turn respond with a series of overtone-rich flageolet [i.e., high, thin sounds] tremolos. This builds into a pizzicato texture, at the outset vigorous and chaotic, then quickly subsiding into a period of vagueness and mystery, descending further and leading into the second section, Unlikely Flight, a nervous presto movement of constantly changing meter and jagged accents, the motor of which is still perpetuated by the oscillating fifths. The title refers to a quote from Keneally’s *Tyrant’s Novel* in which he describes with harrowing clarity the dangerous circumstances and desperate state of mind confronting someone fleeing a country such as Iraq. ‘The most piteous creature on earth,’ writes Keneally, ‘is the one contemplating unlikely flight, and without papers.’ There are startling parallels between Keneally’s fictionalization and the eyewitness accounts of the souls aboard the engineless
and doomed Palapa as it survived a violent storm at sea on the night before its ultimate rescue by the Tampa. If a solar eclipse represents a cusp of razor sharpness between light and dark, then these experiences were surely riding the cusp between life and death, between future and past, transcending any discussion based on politics of state and entering the realm of sheer existence. The drama of the middle section eventually dissipates into a more consolatory Epilogue, where much of the preceding material is reconsidered in a different and altogether more sanguine light. Though not exactly a happy end, the ambivalent openness of the work’s final chords seemed to me to be the only viable way of viewing this unfinished saga.”

Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10
Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Composed in 1893
Premiered on December 29, 1893 in Paris by the Ysaÿe Quartet

By 1893, when he turned 30, Claude Debussy had acquired a modest reputation in Paris as the composer of songs, piano pieces and miscellaneous vocal and orchestral works, as a winner of the Prix de Rome and as a bohemian musician much under the sway of the Symbolist poets Mallarmé and Régnier. His distinctive creative personality had already been demonstrated to the city’s circle of progressive music lovers by the Petite Suite, Arabesques and Suite Bergamasque (from which comes the well-known Clair de Lune), but the wider recognition of his genius began when the cantata La Damoiselle élue (“The Blessed Damzel”) was premiered at a concert of the Société Nationale on April 8, 1893. By that time, he had already begun sketching out an opera based on Maeterlinck’s newly published drama Pelléas et Mélisande, a project that would take him a decade to complete, and written much of a ballet score inspired by Mallarmé’s voluptuous poem L’Après-midi d’un faune (“The Afternoon of a Faun”). The other major endeavor of 1893 was a String Quartet, a curious undertaking, perhaps, for a composer of Debussy’s decidedly impressionistic proclivities, but one which he apparently felt necessary to show that he could handle the Classical forms that had occupied much of his long study at the Conservatoire and as a Prix de Rome recipient — it is indicative in this regard that the Quartet is the only one of his works to which he formally assigned an opus number.

The Quartet opens with a distinctive, modally inflected motive (marked by a quick, three-note ornamental cell) that serves both as the melodic germ from which the first movement grows and as the motto theme that returns in later movements to unify the work’s overall structure. The frequent recurrences of the motto throughout the opening movement, usually in transformations of sonority, harmony and mood, are separated by episodes of mildly contrasting character. The second movement is a free adaptation of the form and manner of a scherzo. The opening section posits a repetitive viola ostinato built from the motto theme around which swirl sparkling pizzicato effects for the other instruments. The center of the movement is occupied by a rhythmically augmented version of the motto theme first given by the violin above a rustling accompaniment. A modified return of the opening section rounds out the movement. The Andantino, sensual, lyrical, permeated with the sweet sensations of early spring, evokes a similar expressive and stylistic world to the one that Debussy conjured in the contemporaneous Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun. The two-part introduction to the finale comprises a slow-tempo transformation of the motto and a quicker, mock-fugal passage derived from the scherzo theme. The viola initiates the main part of the movement with a rapid motive that is tightly restricted in range. This phrase and further transformations of the motto theme occupy the remainder of the movement, which ends with a sun-bright flourish.