



*The Clarice presents*  
**Brentano Quartet**  
with Thalea Quartet

Thursday, April 13, 2023 • 8PM  
GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL  
AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

**VAS**  
VISITING ARTIST SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND

***Presented by The Clarice***

## **Brentano Quartet**

Mark Steinberg, *violin*

Serena Canin, *violin*

Misha Amory, *viola*

Nina Lee, *cello*

String Quartet in C Major, Op. 33, No.3, "Bird" ..... Franz Josef Haydn  
(1732-1809)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegretto

Adagio ma non troppo

Finale: Rondo - Presto

*Ever Yours*—Octet for Strings ..... Osvaldo Golijov  
(b. 1960)

*Sowing Fifths*

*Starbound*

*You reap what you sow*

*Papa*

*with the Thalea Quartet*

Christopher Whitley, *violin*

Kumiko Sakamoto, *violin*

Lauren Spaulding, *viola*

Alex Cox, *cello*

### **INTERMISSION**

String Quartet in A-flat Major, Op. 105 ..... Antonín Dvořák  
(1841-1904)

Adagio, ma non troppo-Allegro appassionato

Molto vivace

Lento e molto cantabile

Allegro non tanto

*The creation of Ever Yours was supported by The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center,  
University of Maryland, College  
Park, MD.*

*This performance is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council and The Morris &  
Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.*



THE MORRIS & GWENDOLYN  
CAFRTZ FOUNDATION

## Oswaldo Golijov: *Ever Yours* (2022)

"When the Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale invited me to write an octet, I went back to re-read the letters from Vincent Van Gogh to his brother Theo. I was struck and inspired once again by the intensity of his being in the world, and his attention to all different kinds of blues (in just one paragraph about a walk he took along the seashore, he talks about 'the deep blue sky flecked with blues deeper than the fundamental blue of intense cobalt,' and goes on to talk of the 'blue whiteness of the Milky Way,' and finds in the sparkling stars 'opals, emeralds, lapis lazuli, rubies, sapphires...') I was struck even deeper by Vincent's ending every letter to his beloved brother with an "ever yours."

"This piece is dedicated to Geoff Nuttall, with whom I felt a sense of brotherhood. I think he lived in that state of *everyourness*, with the *yourness* being his love for Haydn and his attention to, and delight in every one of the extraordinary turns that Haydn's quartets gift us; and Geoff's love for, and attention to California's native vegetation, and to each of his thousands of records, and, especially, to the extraordinary friends and musicians who played together with him in the St Lawrence String Quartet.

"Vitality, Love and Attention. Somebody said that true love is attention. "Love-is-Attention" is what connects Haydn and Van Gogh. That concentrated attention that unveils newer and newer dimensions in what we all see and hear, but, many times, fail to notice until *they* notice and invite us to notice too.

"Vitality, Love, Attention. In short, those are the qualities that I hope pervade this new work.

"The octet is in four movements. Each of them focuses on some striking figure of the corresponding movements in Haydn's Quartet Op. 76, Number 2 and takes those figures to places different than the ones Haydn took them.

"The first movement, *Sowing Fifths* is, like Haydn's, based on a pair of fifths (a fifth, in music, is the distance or interval between, for instance, A and E). I think that what Haydn did was to explore the possibilities latent in that pair of fifths and let music unfold according to its own laws. In my own way, I tried to do the same.

"The second movement is all built on the first four measures of Haydn's second movement. It takes that innocent tune for a trip to the stars. Hence its name: *Starbound*.

"The third movement, *You reap what you sow*, is the first Minuet I ever wrote in my life and, I hope, not the last. How much fun I had writing that peacocky dance!

"The last movement, *Papa*, is a different kind of dance, accentuating the Hungarian Roma influence in the fourth movement of Haydn's quartet. *Papa*, because that is how Haydn was affectionately called, and also because Geoff was such a great papa to his boys.

"Back to Vincent's walk on the seashore. He writes to Theo: 'It was not happy, but neither was it sad. It was beautiful.' I hope that whatever beauty and emotion that arise from this octet, is also the consequence of compositional patterns and colors. Most of all, I hope that *everyourness* will continue to ripple out with new musical friendships in the future."

– Oswaldo Golijov

**Antonín Dvořák: String Quartet in A-flat Major, Op. 105**

In the years between 1892 and 1895, Antonin Dvořák was across the ocean, forsaking his native Bohemia to become the director of New York's National Conservatory, and rather grandly to undertake the task of helping America articulate its own musical identity. It is uncertain if he helped accomplish the latter goal, but during his time in the United States he was acclaimed and feted as a pre-eminent European composer and an Old World cultural ambassador. Besides his activities in New York, he was to spend time in the rural Czech community of Spillville, Iowa, and to be captivated by the rich traditions of African-American spirituals and Indigenous music. Few European figures of Dvořák's cultural stature had ventured to explore America in such depth, at a time when London, Paris and Vienna remained so much the center of artistic life. It is telling that, whereas Brahms quailed at the thought of journeying to England to accept an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University, Dvořák was enterprising enough to cross the ocean and remain abroad for three years.

Nevertheless, even Dvořák—an artist who identified deeply with his native land—became homesick. He was to return home in the summer of 1895, at first just for a visit, but ultimately for good, submitting his resignation to New York a few weeks later. He had been extremely productive while in the States, composing his famous Cello Concerto and his even more famous "New World" Symphony. Two of his best-known chamber works also date from this time—the "American" Quartet and the Viola Quintet, which is also nicknamed "American." In his final days before setting sail for home, he began work on his A-flat String Quartet, opus 105, but did not finish it until December, when he had been home for several months.

Listeners disagree on the flavor of the A-flat Quartet, composed on both sides of the Atlantic: some claim to hear persistent American strains in it, some hear an affirmation of the composer's Slavic roots, some just hear an expat yearning for home. Whatever its essence, this piece is one of Dvořák's chamber masterpieces, a showcase for all the traits that make him beloved: rich harmonizations, imaginative, layered textures, irresistible rhythmic verve. Couched in such a rich, darkly stained key, it nevertheless overflows with joy, a uniquely Dvořákian combination.

The first movement opens in minor-key shadows, starting deep down in the cello and traveling up the instruments; it recalls the opening of Beethoven's famous opus 132 quartet at first, lost and searching, chromatically fraught. But Dvořák is not one to follow Beethoven too far into his philosophical labyrinths: where the earlier composer erupts into cascades of questions, the later one chooses to blossom miraculously into sunlight and celebration, an Allegro brimming with positive energy. The progress of this main section seems effortless, a carriage ride in a new stretch of countryside on a perfect afternoon. At times motoric, at times sweetly touching, at times even mock-ferocious, every time the music turns a corner it seems to encounter more good news, a new delightful scenario.

Following this comes a Scherzo, a dance with a darker, Furiant-like energy. This is spiky, whirling music; it flirts with demonic tendencies but always retains a suave balance, filled with grace and charm. The contrasting Trio section in the middle is an extraordinary episode, a kind of lovers' tryst: slightly removed from the dance scene but retaining its rhythmic sway, this is loving, wistful music, starting as duet between violin and cello but gradually becoming transformed into an ecstatic exchange between the two violins, amazing music from a master of string writing.

The slow third movement is hushed and choral; a simple and tender stanza is heard, then repeated as a variation; then a second stanza, the answer to the first, is stated and repeated in its own variation. Composed at Christmas in 1895, it is easy to imagine the glowing candlelight, the intimacy and peace of a scene at home or in church among loved ones. By contrast, the middle section of the movement is foreboding, hunted, restless; starting with feverish chromatic motion and constant changes of key, it eventually whips itself up to a crisis point. The thunder and lightning dissipate, and we find ourselves magically back in the clarity and simplicity of the opening material, this time adorned with second-violin birdsong, a kind of laughing disbelief at the bad dreams that came before.

The Finale is at first mock-menacing: the cellist as a bad guy, his face muffled in a black cape. Not fooled for a minute, the first violin takes his material and transforms it into folksy celebration, a festive, friendly round dance. Filled with good cheer, ebullient but not urgent, the music irresistibly beckons us to cut a rug in the finest Bohemian tradition. Lyrical episodes intervene, a choral melody in simple rhythms, and later on a more undulating, lovely tune in triplets. Ultimately the movement spirals upward into a triumphant coda, wherein we hear these themes transformed, presented in a newly energized, blazing light, rocketing unstoppably to a final cadence.

– Note by Misha Amory



### BRENTANO STRING QUARTET

Since its inception in 1992, the Brentano String Quartet has appeared throughout the world to popular and critical acclaim. “Passionate, uninhibited and spellbinding,” raves the London Independent; The New York Times extols its “luxuriously warm sound [and] yearning lyricism.”

Within a few years of its formation, the Quartet garnered the first Cleveland Quartet Award and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and was also honored in the U.K. with the Royal Philharmonic Award for Most Outstanding Debut. Since then, the Quartet has concertized widely, performing in the world’s most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall in New York, the Library of Congress in Washington, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, Suntory Hall in Tokyo and the Sydney Opera House. In addition to performing the entire two-century range of the standard quartet repertoire, the Brentano Quartet maintains a strong interest in contemporary music and has commissioned many new works. Their latest project, a monodrama for quartet and voice called *Dido Reimagined*, was composed by Pulitzer-winning composer Melinda Wagner and librettist Stephanie Fleischmann and premiered in Spring 2022 with soprano Dawn Upshaw. Other recent commissions include the composers Matthew Aucoin, Lei Liang, Vijay Iyer, James Macmillan and a cello quintet by Steven Mackey (with cellist Wilhelmina Smith).

The Brentano Quartet has worked closely with other important composers of our time, among them Elliot Carter, Charles Wuorinen, Chou Wen-chung, Bruce Adolphe and György Kurtág. They have also been privileged to collaborate with such artists as soprano Jessye Norman, mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and pianists Richard Goode, Jonathan Biss and Mitsuko Uchida. The Quartet has recorded works by Mozart and Schubert for Azica Records, and all of Beethoven’s late Quartets for the Aeon label. In 2012, they provided the central music (Beethoven Op. 131) for the critically-acclaimed independent film “A Late Quartet.”

Since 2014, the Brentano Quartet has served as Artists-in-Residence at the Yale School of Music. They were formerly the Ensemble-in-Residence at Princeton University, and were twice invited to be the collaborative ensemble for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

The Quartet is named for Antonie Brentano, whom many scholars consider to be Beethoven’s “Immortal Beloved,” the intended recipient of his famous love confession.

Photo by Jurgen Frank





**THE THALEA STRING QUARTET** brings their signature vibrancy and emotional commitment to dynamic performances that reflect the past, present and the future of the string quartet repertoire while celebrating diverse musical traditions from around the world. Fueled by the belief that chamber music is a powerful force for building community and human connection, the Thalea String Quartet has performed across North America, Europe and China, and has appeared at The Kennedy Center, Massey Hall and Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall. They have shared the stage with luminaries of the chamber music world, including members of the Emerson, Borromeo and St. Lawrence String quartets and they have performed alongside celebrated artists including Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw, violist Lawrence Power, acclaimed Canadian band BADBADNOTGOOD and visionary hip-hop artist Jay Electronica.

Committed to shaping and contributing to the future of the string quartet repertoire, the Thalea String Quartet has premiered dozens of new works and have collaborated on new commissions with composers including Paola Prestini, Anthony R. Green, Akshaya Avril Tucker and Tanner Porter.

Winners of the 2021 Ann Divine Educator Award from the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the members of the Thalea String Quartet have been celebrated for their innovative approach to education and community engagement.

The Thalea String Quartet is the Doctoral Fellowship String Quartet at the University of Maryland. The quartet has also held fellowship positions at the University of Texas at Austin and the San Francisco Conservatory. They were top prize winners at the 2018 Fischhoff Competition and 2018 Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition.

Christopher Whitley (violin) is originally from Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Kumiko Sakamoto (violin) is from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada; Lauren Spaulding (viola) is from San Antonio, Texas; and Alex Cox (cello) is from West Palm Beach, Florida.

# COMING UP

## **COLLEGE PARK JAZZ FEST WITH THE HALL CP**

SUN, APR 16 • 12PM

Join The Clarice and The Hall CP at the inaugural College Park Jazz Fest! The event features the best jazz music around, great food & drinks and local vendors! The Jazz Fest begins at 12PM with an open jam. Performances by Crush Funk Brass Band, Julieta Eugenio Trio (winner of the 2022 DCJazzPrix) and The JoGo Project will follow! Join The Clarice and The Hall CP at the inaugural College Park Jazz Fest! The event features the best jazz music around, great food & drinks and local vendors! The Jazz Fest begins at 12PM with an open jam. Performances by Crush Funk Brass Band, Julieta Eugenio Trio (winner of the 2022 DCJazzPrix) and The JoGo Project will follow!

## **JAZZ JAM AT THE HALL CP**

WED, APR 26 • 7:30PM

Welcome the warm weather with this new monthly jazz jam session led by D.C.-based saxophonist Elijah Balbed! The house band will play a set starting at 7:30PM. Bring your instrument—after enjoying their set, you'll have a chance to call a tune!

## **RUBBERBAND: *EVER SO SLIGHTLY***

THU, MAY 4 • 8PM

In *Ever So Slightly*, 10 dancer-athletes explore the behavioral mechanisms we develop against the flow of irritants that bombard us in daily life.

## **TESLA QUARTET**

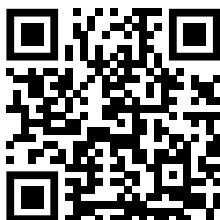
SUN, MAY 7 • 3PM

Praised for their “superb capacity to find the inner heart of everything they play, regardless of era, style, or technical demand” (The International Review of Music), the Tesla Quartet brings refinement and prowess to both new and established repertoire.

## **NATIONAL ORCHESTRAL INSTITUTE + FESTIVAL**

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