

## QUATUOR DANEL



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Artist Partner Program presents

## **QUATUOR DANEL**

Marc Danel, violin

Gilles Millet, violin

Vlad Bogdanas, viola

Yovan Markovitch, cello

Thursday, February 25, 2016 . 8PM  
Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

## PROGRAM

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ALEXANDER BORODIN

Quartet No. 2 in D Major

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegro

Nocturne: Andante

Finale: Andante — Vivace

MIECZYŚLAW WEINBERG

Quartet No. 3, Op. 14

Presto

Andante sostenuto

Allegretto

*played without pause*

INTERMISSION

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Quartet No. 5 in B-flat Major, Op. 92

Allegro non troppo

Andante

Moderato — Allegro — Andante

*played without pause*

This performance will last approximately

**1 hour and 40 minutes with one 15-minute intermission.**

This performance of Quatuor Danel is generously underwritten by **Richard and Sarah Bourne**.

Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

## ABOUT QUATUOR DANEL

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Founded in 1991, the **Quatuor Danel** has been at the forefront of the European music scene, with major concert performances worldwide and a number of groundbreaking recordings that have won many important international awards. The Quartet will make its American debut during the 2015–2016 season, featuring concerts in New York and Washington as well as at series across the country.

The ensemble is famous for their bold, concentrated interpretations of the string quartet cycles of Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Shostakovich and Weinberg. Their lively and fresh vision on traditional quartet repertoire has won them lavish praise from both the public and the press. Russian composers have a vital place in the Quatuor Danel's repertoire: they have championed the string quartets of Shostakovich, and their recently reissued recording of the complete cycle (*Fuga Libera*, 2005) is considered one of the benchmark interpretations of these quartets.

In addition, over the past three years the Quatuor Danel has recorded the almost-unknown quartet oeuvre of Mieczysław Weinberg, the neglected contemporary of Shostakovich, for the CD label CPO. The Quartet will continue to offer this breathtakingly beautiful repertoire in coming seasons. In addition, they have collaborated with major contemporary composers such as Wolfgang Rihm, Helmut Lachenmann, Sofia Gubaidulina, Pascal Dusapin and the stars of the younger generation including Jörg Widmann and Bruno Mantovani.

In addition to their advocacy for Russian music, the Quatuor Danel has a particular passion for teaching young musicians in general and string quartets in particular. Teaching, outreach and masterclasses are a fundamental part of their activities. The Quartet has been artist-in-residence at the University of Manchester since 2005, working closely with the students and also with musicologists Barry Cooper and David Fanning.

The Quartet's upcoming concerts will take them to the major halls in Brussels, Amsterdam, Moscow, Paris, London, Madrid, Vienna, Berlin, Beijing, Tokyo and New York; they are equally comfortable when playing in lesser-known, intimate venues. The Quatuor Danel is a regular guest at the major European festivals, and in the summer of 2016 made their North American debut at the Ottawa ChamberFest. Upcoming recording projects of the Quatuor Danel consist of the three Tchaikovsky quartets, the Quartet and Piano Quintet by Franck and a longer-term project combining all the string quartets of Haydn with late Beethoven.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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Quartet No. 2 in D Major  
ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833–1887)  
Composed in 1881.  
Premiered on January 26, 1882  
in St. Petersburg.

In June 1881, Borodin was in Weimar trading compliments with Franz Liszt. Despite the gratification of that activity, Borodin was eager to return to Russia, where he was to meet his wife for a summer holiday in Zhitovo at the country estate of his friend, the composer Nikolai Lodyzhensky. The stay was to be a welcome, two-month respite for Borodin from the strenuous duties of his career as one of the country's leading researchers and teachers of chemistry and medicine. In addition to spending time with his wife, Catherine ("Catherine the Great," he sometimes chided her), he could also compose uninterruptedly, a luxury he rarely enjoyed. Given leisure and a halcyon summer setting at Zhitovo, he completed his Second String Quartet during July and August 1881, virtually his only important work finished in a single session. The new piece was premiered by the Galkin–Degtyerev–Rezvetsov–Kuznetsov Quartet at a concert of the St. Petersburg branch of the Imperial Russian Music Society on January 26, 1882.

The quartet's opening movement follows conventional sonata form, with its smooth, even-treading main theme given immediately by the cello; the more animated complementary melody is initiated by the violin above a pizzicato accompaniment. The second and third movements, a Scherzo and a Nocturne, will be forever linked as the songs "Stranger in Paradise" and "This Is My Beloved" with the 1953 Broadway musical *Kismet*, whose score was the result of unashamed raids upon Borodin's music by Robert Wright and George Forrest. Though the artistic merits of such a practice are debatable, the popularity that Borodin's melodies gained in their theatrical transmogrifications is vivid testimony to his lyric genius. The closing movement juxtaposes two

thematic strains in contrasting tempos as the bases for another sonata form, a technique that critic Andrew Porter suggested might have been indebted to Beethoven's Op. 135 Quartet, whose finale grew from the musical rendering of the exchange, "*Muss es sein? Es muss sein!*" ("*Must it be? It must be!*").

Quartet No. 3, Op. 14  
MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG (Moisei Vainberg)  
(1919–1996)  
Composed in 1944.  
Premiered on October 12, 2007 at the  
University of Manchester, England  
by the Quatuor Danel.

Mieczysław Weinberg occupied one of the most unlikely career niches of any 20th-century musician: a Polish-born Jewish refugee who became one of the Soviet Union's most distinguished composers. Weinberg, born in Warsaw on December 8, 1919 (he is also known as Moisei Vainberg), came from a musical family and studied piano and composition at the local conservatory. Soon after his graduation in 1939, he fled before the Nazi invasion of Poland to Minsk, where he became a student of Vassily Zolotarev. Weinberg lived in Tashkent from 1941 to 1943 and then settled in Moscow, where he befriended Shostakovich and other leading Soviet musicians and quickly rose to prominence. He managed to escape the 1948 purges that withered the spirits and careers of many eminent Soviet musicians by adhering to a conservative idiom deemed appropriate by the authorities, but he was jailed in 1953 on a trumped-up charge of "Jewish bourgeois nationalism." (Not only had Weinberg been shadowed by the secret police ever since his father-in-law, Solomon Mikhoels, the celebrated Jewish actor and artistic director of the Moscow State Jewish Theater, was executed on Stalin's order in January 1948, but his wife's uncle, a physician at the Kremlin, had recently been

labeled an “enemy of the people.”) Shostakovich came to his defense and he was released after 11 weeks in prison. Weinberg lived quietly thereafter in Moscow and composed prolifically until his death in 1996, creating a large catalog of works that contains six operas, four operettas, three ballets, 25 symphonies (many with programmatic associations, including one “In Memory of Dmitri Shostakovich”), numerous concerted compositions, 17 string quartets, much chamber music, songs, choral works, piano pieces, and incidental and film music. “In his music,” wrote Russian-born musicologist and lexicographer Nicholas Slonimsky, “he followed the precepts of ‘social realism’ in its ethnic aspects; according to the subject of the composition, he made use of Jewish, Polish, Moldavian or Armenian folk melos, in tasteful harmonic arrangements devoid of abrasive dissonances.”

Weinberg composed his String Quartet No. 3 in 1944, during his early years in Moscow, and it shares much of its style and substance with the music of Shostakovich. Markings on the manuscript indicate that he intended to publish the work, but the war and then his own personal difficulties overrode that plan and the score was not issued until 2003. The work was given its belated premiere by the Quatuor Danel in October 2007. In his liner notes for the recordings of the complete Weinberg Quartets by the Quatuor Danel on the CPO label, University of Manchester (England) musicologist David Fanning, who is completing the first full-length monograph in English on Weinberg, wrote of the Quartet No. 3, “Quite distinct from the relaxed quality of the Second Quartet, the Third returns to the wiry intensity of the First Quartet, but this time with a greatly clarified harmonic language and more confident, even assertive use of the instruments.” The opening movement traces a traditional sonata form that is realized with a decidedly modern drive and toughness. It takes as its main subject a broad cello melody with an urgent accompaniment that courses through the entire ensemble. Emotional and formal contrast is provided by two lyrical strains, the first a leaping

violin theme set against hammered chords, the second a gliding scalar motive played above a soft, eerie, sustained background. All the motives figure in the development section, where they are worked out with considerable vehemence before being fully recapitulated in altered versions to round out the movement.

The deeply moving Andante may well have been Weinberg’s musical response to the horrors of the war that had engulfed the country for the preceding three years — the Siege of Leningrad had finally been lifted in January 1944, just before the Third Quartet was written, and its toll of perhaps two million dead was just then coming to be realized. The movement follows a simple three-part form (A–B–A). Its outer sections are based on a keening, wide-ranging violin theme with a skeletal accompaniment; the center is more hopeful though it too eventually succumbs to the grim, trudging music of the opening.

The finale is dominated by the long, animated theme presented at the outset by the first violin and taken up in turn by viola and cello before being discussed and reiterated by all the participants. The energy flags as the music progresses, however, as the quartet comes to a mysterious, dying close.

**Quartet No. 5 in B-flat Major, Op. 92**  
**DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)**

**Composed in 1951–1952.**

**Premiered in November 1953 in Moscow**  
**by the Beethoven Quartet.**

In 1948, Shostakovich, Prokofiev and many other important Soviet composers were condemned for threatening the stability of the nation with their “formalistic” music. Through Andrei Zhdanov, head of the Soviet Composers’ Union and the official mouthpiece for the government, it was made known that any experimental or modern or abstract or difficult music was no longer acceptable for consumption by the country’s masses. Only simplistic music glorifying the State, the land and the people would be performed:

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM (cont'd)

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symphonies, operas, chamber music — any forms involving too much mental stimulation — were out; movie music, folk song settings and patriotic cantatas were in.

Shostakovich saw the iron figure of Joseph Stalin behind the purge of 1948, as he was convinced it had been for an earlier one in 1936. After the 1936 debacle, Shostakovich responded with the Fifth Symphony, and kept composing through the years of World War II, even becoming an international figure representing the courage of the Soviet people with the lightning success of his Seventh Symphony (“Leningrad”) in 1941. The 1948 censure was, however, almost more than Shostakovich could bear. He determined that he would go along with the Party prerogative for pap, and would withhold all of his substantial works until the time when they would be given a fair hearing — when Stalin was dead. About the only music that Shostakovich made public between 1948 and 1953 was that for films, most of which dealt with episodes in Soviet history (*The Fall of Berlin*, *The Memorable Year 1919*), and some patriotic vocal works (*The Sun Shines Over Our Motherland* and *Song of the Forests*, which won the 1949 Stalin Prize). The only significant works he released during that half-decade were the 24 Preludes and Fugues for Piano. The other compositions of the time — the First Violin Concerto, the *Songs on Jewish Folk Poetry*, the Fourth and Fifth String Quartets — were all withheld until later years.

With the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953 (ironically, Prokofiev died on the same day), Shostakovich and all of the Soviet Union felt an oppressive burden lift. The thaw came gradually, but there did return to the country’s artistic life a more amenable attitude toward art, one that allowed significant works to again be produced and performed. Shostakovich, whose genius had been shackled by Stalin’s repressive artistic policies, set to work on the great Tenth Symphony, and composed steadily thereafter

until his death two decades later. The creations of his later years are sharply divided into two seemingly antithetical streams, though each reveals a fundamental aspect of Shostakovich as man and artist. One series of works, including the Symphonies No. 11 (“The Year 1905,” extolling Lenin) and No. 12 (“1917”), cantatas, film music, patriotic marches and choruses, and instrumental scores in a popular vein (the Piano Concerto No. 2, for example), is for public consumption and the fulfillment of his duties as “People’s Artist of the U.S.S.R.,” a title conferred upon him in 1954. Paralleling these noisy, jingoistic entries is a large repertory of pieces that are both profound and personal: the magnificent and disturbing last symphonies (No. 13, “Babi Yar,” based on Yevtushenko’s searing poem about the German army’s massacre of 70,000 Jews near Kiev in September 1941; No. 14, settings of 11 texts dealing with death; and No. 15, one of the most stark and moving orchestral documents of the modern age), the First Violin Concerto, the songs on verses of Alexander Blok and Michelangelo Buonarroti, and, perhaps most significant of all, the last ten of his 15 string quartets. As had Beethoven, Shostakovich used the medium of the string quartet as the bearer of his most intimate and deep-seated feelings, a virtual window into his soul. The wealth of thought and the clarity of expression in these quartets is nothing short of staggering, and as an oeuvre they are matched in the 20th century only by those of Béla Bartók.

The Quartet No. 5 was composed in 1951–1952 for the 30th anniversary of the Beethoven Quartet, the ensemble that premiered all of Shostakovich’s quartets from the Second onwards, though the work’s premiere was withheld until November 1953, eight months after Stalin’s death. The first movement follows a carefully delineated sonata form, classically correct even to the repeat of its exposition. Though the quartet opens with what at first seems a curiously disjointed collection of fragments, the viola’s chromatically twisted,

dotted-rhythm motive proves to be a germinal force in the unfolding of the movement. The first theme group takes on a quasi-military demeanor, pounding up and down scales in the lower instruments while the violins sally forth with a sort of determined drudgery. The reappearance of the viola's twisted motive throws the emotional direction of the piece into doubt, and some measures of metrically uncertain transition lead to the second theme, a slick waltz melody for the second violin that acquires a pointed obbligato line in the viola when it is repeated by the cello. The violins try to coax the triple-meter waltz into their out-of-step duple divisions (the importance of this rhythmic incongruity is revealed only at the end of the movement), fail, and the viola again proposes its twisted motive as the subject for discussion. The first violin tries out the motive while the other instruments provide a soft, wobbling accompaniment, but the dialogue of the development section soon expands to include various permutations of other first theme fragments, which are whipped into a vehement climax to provide the gateway to the recapitulation. Enervated, the music quiets for the return of the second theme waltz. The cello again posits the duple divisions heard earlier, and they are ruminated upon by the other participants until the first violin discovers that they make the perfect accompanimental cushion for a long, aerial strain that seems to float above any specific meter, thus allowing the accumulated tensions of the movement to dissipate. A tiny pizzicato ghost of the viola's twisted motive hovers above the closing measures. A thin thread of sound, suspended high in the violin, bridges to the next movement.

The Andante is one of those characteristically disturbing slow movements of Shostakovich that provide an expressive foil to the highly energetic music that surrounds them without offering

much emotional solace. The movement is built (in sonatina form) from two themes: a slow-moving plaint initiated by the viola (whose opening notes recall, but do not quote, its twisted motive from the preceding movement) and continued in barren, icy octaves with the violin; and a violin melody, slightly faster in tempo, that begins timidly with a dotted rhythm and constricted intervals above a gently pulsing, off-beat monotone from the cello. The two sequences are repeated with only minor changes, and the movement comes to an unsettled close with a coda derived from the opening plaint.

The finale, which follows without pause, is framed at beginning and end by a quiet strain based on a theme of almost folkish simplicity. The music that forms the main part of the movement is closely woven in tight counterpoint and carries implications of motives heard earlier, as well as of the composer's musical "signature"—DSCH, the notes D, E-flat, C, B. (The note D represents his initial. In German transliteration, the composer's name begins "Sch": S [ess] in German notation equals E-flat, C is C and H equals B natural.) The finale, like the first movement, finishes with an ethereal, questioning coda that dies away into silence.

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## THE CLARICE AND THE COMMUNITY

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The Clarice is building the future of the arts by training, mentoring and presenting the next generation of artists and creative innovators. As artists develop their craft as performers, they must become instigators of meaningful dialogue, creative research and audience connection. These skills are developed through engagement activities both on and off campus. Engagement at The Clarice is characterized by facilitated audience interactions with artists, scholars and community leaders that are focused on process and research rather than product and performance. The Clarice supports artists in their quest for a connection with audiences through its engagement work.

### ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- Members of Quatuor Danel were part of a discussion about the music in this program before tonight's performance. The conversation was moderated by Elizabeth Massey, a PhD student in Musicology at UMD.
- This week, members of Quatuor Danel coached several chamber music ensembles made up of students in the UMD School of Music.

