

Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:30PM

Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

BRENTANO STRING QUARTET

Mark Steinberg, *Violin*

Serena Canin, *Violin*

Misha Amory, *Viola*

Nina Lee, *Cello*

with

JOYCE DIDONATO, *Mezzo-soprano*

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER (1643-1704)

Suite for Strings in D Minor, H. 545

Prélude 1

Prélude 2

Sarabande

Gigue angloise

Gigue francoise

Passecaille

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10

Animé et très décidé

Assez vif et bien rythmé

Andantino doucement espressif

Très modéré

—INTERMISSION—

JAKE HEGGIE (b. 1961)

Camille Claudel: Into the Fire, texts by Gene Scheer (2011)

Prelude: Awakening

Rodin

La Valse

Shakuntala

La petite châtelaine

The Gossips

L'age mûr

Epilogue: Jessie Lipscomb visits Camille Claudel,

Montdevergues Asylum, 1929

The Brentano String Quartet appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists.

ABOUT THE BRENTANO QUARTET

Since its inception in 1992, the Brentano String Quartet has appeared throughout the world to popular and critical acclaim. For 14 years, the Brentano Quartet was Princeton's first and only Quartet-in-Residence. In July 2014 we bid them a bittersweet goodbye as they succeeded the Tokyo String Quartet as Artists-in-Residence at Yale University. The quartet also currently serves as the collaborative ensemble for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In recent seasons, the Quartet has traveled widely, appearing all over the United States and Canada, in Europe, Japan and Australia.



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN STENZEL

It has performed in the world's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City; the Library of Congress in Washington, DC; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; the Konzerthaus in Vienna; Suntory Hall in Tokyo; and the Sydney Opera House. The Quartet has participated in summer festivals such as Aspen, the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, the Edinburgh Festival, the Kuhmo Festival in Finland, the Taos School of Music and the Caramoor Festival.

In 2012, the Brentano String Quartet provided the central music (Beethoven Opus 131) for the critically-acclaimed independent film *A Late Quartet*. The feature

film, directed by Yaron Zilberman and starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Catherine Keener, Christopher Walken and Mark Ivanir, was screened in major cities throughout North America, including Toronto, New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

In addition to performing the entire two-century range of the standard quartet repertoire, the Brentano Quartet has a strong interest in both very old and very new music. It has performed many musical works pre-dating the string quartet as a medium, among them Madrigals of Gesualdo, Fantasias of Purcell, and secular vocal works of Josquin. Also, the quartet has worked closely with some of the most important composers of our time, among them Bruce Adolphe, Elliott Carter, Chou Wen-chung, György Kurtág, Steven Mackey, and Charles Wuorinen. The Quartet has commissioned works from Wuorinen, Adolphe, Mackey, David Horne and Gabriela Frank.

Among the Quartet's latest collaborations with contemporary composers is a work by Princeton's own Steven Mackey, *One Red Rose*, which was commissioned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, and premiered in Richardson Auditorium last season. Other new commissions include a piano quintet by Vijay Iyer, a work by Eric Moe (with Christine Brandes, soprano), and a new viola quintet by Felipe Lara (performed with violist Hsin-Yun Huang).

The Quartet has been privileged to collaborate with such artists as soprano Jessye Norman, pianist Richard Goode, and pianist Mitsuko Uchida. The Quartet enjoys an especially close relationship with Ms. Uchida, appearing with her on stages in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

In 2013, the second of three recordings featuring the late Beethoven Quartets was released on Aeon Records. Previous recordings include a disc of Mozart (also on Aeon), and the Opus 71 quartets of Haydn. In the area of newer music, the Quartet has released a disc of the music of Steven Mackey on Albany Records, and has also recorded the music of Bruce Adolphe, Chou Wen-chung and Charles Wuorinen.

Within a few years of its formation, the Quartet garnered the first Cleveland Quartet Award and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 1998, cellist Nina Lee joined the Quartet, succeeding founding member Michael Kannen. 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. We are pleased to welcome the Brentano Quartet back to Princeton.

ABOUT JOYCE DIDONATO

Winner of the 2012 Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Solo, Kansas-born Joyce DiDonato entrances audiences and critics alike across the globe, and has been proclaimed “perhaps the most potent female singer of her generation” by *The New Yorker*. With a voice “nothing less than 24-carat gold” according to *The Times* (London), DiDonato has soared to the top of the industry as both a performer and a fierce arts advocate, gaining international prominence in operas by Rossini, Handel and Mozart, as well as through her wide-ranging, acclaimed discography. Her signature parts include the bel canto roles of Rossini, leading the *Financial Times* to declare her Elena *La Donna del Lago*, “simply the best singing I’ve heard in years.”

Much in demand on the concert and recital circuit, DiDonato holds residencies this season at both the Carnegie Hall, New York City and the Barbican Centre, London. Recently she completed an acclaimed recital tour of South America, and has appeared in concert and recital in Berlin, Vienna, Milan, Toulouse, Mexico City and Aspen, in addition to appearing as guest singer at the BBC’s Last Night of the Proms at the Royal Albert



Hall, London. Last season, she made her Princeton University Concerts recital debut to a sold-out and enthusiastic crowd. We are pleased to welcome her back.

In opera she appeared last season as Cendrillon at the Liceu Barcelona, Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Lyric Opera Chicago, Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at the Metropolitan Opera, and the title role of Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at the Royal Opera House. Highlights this season include *Romeo I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in her native Kansas City, Elena in *La Donna del Lago* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Maria Stuarda* in Barcelona, the title role of Alcina with the English Concert, and Marguerite in *La damnation de Faust* with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle.

An exclusive recording artist with Erato/Warner Classics, DiDonato's most recent recording, *Stella di Napoli*, is a sumptuous bel canto banquet including little-known gems alongside music by Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti. Her Grammy-Award-winning recording *Diva Divo* comprises arias by male and female characters, celebrating the rich dramatic world of the mezzo-soprano. The following recording *Drama Queens* was exceptionally well received, both on disc and on several international tours. A retrospective of her first ten years of recordings entitled *ReJoyce!* was released last year.

Other honors include the Gramophone Artist of the Year and Recital of the Year awards, a German Echo Klassik Award as Female Singer of the Year, and an induction into the Gramophone Hall of Fame.

“The staggering, joyful artistry of Joyce DiDonato reminds us that in any generation there are a few giants. Joyce is not only a great, brave and inspiring artist – one of the finest singers of our time – but she is also a transformative presence in the arts. Those who know her repertoire are in awe of her gifts, and those who know nothing of it are instantly engaged. Joyce sings and the world is suddenly brighter. She compels us to listen actively, to hear things anew.”

–Composer Jake Heggie

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER (1643-1704)
Suite for Strings in D Minor, H. 545

The inner life of the emotions burns with the same fire from age to age. We connect easily still with Shakespeare because essentially we are as people have always been. Reborn with each generation, the emotional intensity we feel inside begins as amorphous sensation and searches for a container, for a form in which to present itself to the world.

It is often said today that we live in a world replete with assumed intimacies, a world in which individualism is celebrated and emotional reactions are shared with nary a thought for propriety or convention. This was not always so; expression of emotion is dependent on societal norms, the ever changing conventions of each epoch. In the France of Louis XIV the social graces were seen as essential checks on the potentially animalistic excesses of raw emotion. Reason was extolled, enabling us to live together and to reach beyond the primitive energies of pure instinct. Perhaps there is something

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Gallic in this idea. French writer Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt writes in one of his short stories “Marie Maurestier was theatrical and never let herself go; she always preserved her self-awareness. Some people viewed this as proof of her falseness; others saw it as an expression of dignity.” Today we might think of “theatrical” and “never letting herself go” as antithetical. But in 17th century France the dance forms gave appropriate and graceful outer shape to the inner life, sensuality cloaked in geometry.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier was one of the most renowned composers in 17th century France, albeit always less favored than his compatriot Lully who was employed in the court of Louis XIV. Charpentier studied in Rome, where he was steeped in the very singing Italian style, and wrote music for the theatrical troupe of Molière for 20 years. It is during this period, in 1680 - 81, that he wrote the “Concert for four viols.” This is a suite of dances intended for performance by a consort of viols, the ancestor of the modern string quartet. There is a contrapuntal prélude followed by a suite of dances. (The second prélude takes the form of an allemande, the traditional opening dance of a suite at that time.) We can easily imagine ourselves into the noble ballroom, dancing always beautifully but also with undertones of seduction, assertion of individual personality, or even aggression. There are very particular conventions of performances associated with the French Baroque, such as notes inégales, in which moderately quick notes swing, as in jazz. There is also the possibility of improvised florid ornamentation, an opportunity for a splash of individuality, a vivid scarf or tie worn along with a conventional uniform. So in fact the music becomes something both theatrical and dignified, a volatile balance which both enlivens and ennobles the proceedings.

—Note by Mark Steinberg, ©2015

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10

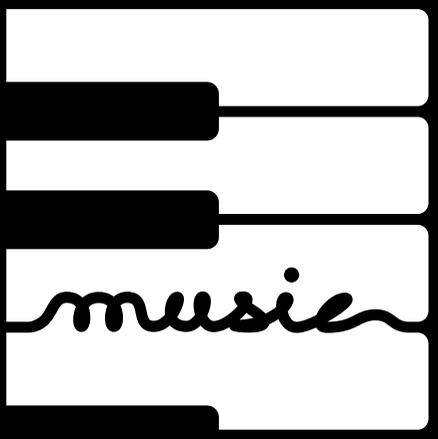
Claude Debussy was no academic. Fed up with the rigors of conservatory training, he longed to compose in a style that was distinctly French, as opposed to the more Germanic intellectual and aesthetic ideals of his teachers. He was very much involved with the artistic currents of his time in his native country, especially symbolism in poetry and in the visual arts. Attention was being shifted from concrete meanings and associations with reality toward meanings of a different sort. Symbolist art was to be understood as metaphorical and suggestive, pointing toward truths inaccessible through direct description. Thus a poet such as Mallarmé or Verlaine could shift attention toward sounds of words and mystical images — a new, more purely sensual poetry. The painter Odilon Redon, who had enormous appreciation for Debussy, might depict a giant eyeball aloft in the manner of a hot air balloon (or a cactus-man, or a crying spider) and in doing so shift the viewer's understanding toward the exotic world of fantasy and the quirks of free association. Symbols, no longer referencing or tethering us to reality, were set free to engage our senses in new, foreign ways. Historically the Symbolist Movement was a precursor to surrealism, and entering the dream world of later Surrealist painters is not entirely divorced from the feeling of listening to Debussy's music. Even within received forms there is often a sense of following the dictates of free-association rather than consciously constructed architecture.

Ironically, exoticism and what we now call “world music” furnished a large part of Debussy's vocabulary in his quest to create something distinctly French. A Javanese gamelan (a sort of colorful percussion orchestra) performance at the Paris Exposition in 1889 left a strong impression on the composer, as did the music he came to know on a trip to Russia. Debussy's creed was that French music should above all else exist to give pleasure, and the flavors of foreign lands were exploited for their sensual novelty, in the manner of the best fusion cuisine.

Debussy's String Quartet in G Minor, written in 1893, has become one of

the most beloved in the repertoire partly because of the stunning sensual beauty and variety of textures Debussy manages to create with these four homogeneous string instruments. The sounds he creates flutter and undulate; his harmonic language is often iridescent. Turner was one of Debussy's favorite painters, and the sense of motion and activity one sees in Turner's skies and seas has aural analogues in so many moments of this piece.

The piece has as well a dramatic arc reminiscent of an epic journey in that one "motto theme," proclaimed boldly at the opening of the piece, appears throughout in different guises and in a variety of settings. This theme is transformed rather than developed in the traditional sense. Because of this a listener may feel he is following a protagonist through travels in unexpected lands, in the manner of Homer's *Odyssey* or, to get back to France, Voltaire's *Candide*.



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As any hero feels on his home turf, the initial statement of the theme is forthright and self-assured, but it quickly slips away into uncharted territory. Already after its first encounter with alien material the theme is more uncertain, modulating through various key areas looking for a way to understand new surroundings. Often one recognizes the theme in flight, or at sea, in transition from one experience to the next; other times it is self-assured again, as if settled in a new territory, albeit temporarily. The first movement ends with a furiously brilliant version of the motto theme in double notes, fully mobilized, in contrast to its more stable, if full of potential, version at the opening.

The scherzo movement features many new versions of this theme: one playful and jaunty which becomes an ostinato background, a more seductive, drawn-out version, plus a bravura, declamatory version on the lowest string of the first violin. This last, somewhat unexpected, version is perhaps a tip of the hat to Eugène Ysaÿe, the great Belgian violinist whose eponymous quartet premiered the work. Besides partaking, with its pizzicati and repeated ostinato patterns, of the flavor of the Javanese gamelan, this movement also has a somewhat Iberian character, with rhythms and guitar-strums suggestive of flamenco.

The thoroughly enchanting slow movement is the only one in the work not truly having a version of the motto theme. Here, instead, there is an encounter with the new, the other. In the same key (very distant from the opening key of the work) and meter as the corresponding, and likewise profoundly eloquent, movement of Beethoven's last quartet, Op. 135, this movement also starts out with exploratory bars leading into a broad, poetic theme. This, plus the addition of mutes, gives a distant, introspective quality to the movement. The only reference to the motto theme is in the build-up to the climax in the contrasting middle section, where the quick three note turn of the theme helps to propel the motion forward, perhaps another possible, yet somehow impossible, transformation of the hero as seen only in a dream. When the opening theme returns it is with a foreign note left over in the cello, suggesting that that which has been imagined and yearned for is not to be had in the end. The movement closes with an endlessly touching, ethereal

sense of floating free from any reality-based problems, content and absorbed in a glowing vision.

The most uncertain part of the piece is the start of the last movement, for, while basking in the glow of a peaceful vision is pleasurable and liberating, eventually there is the moment of awakening. Here we have the return of the motto theme, chords that slip languidly, even groggily, and a section that builds up steam with the main theme gathering momentum to lead into the main section of the movement proper. There is a sense of preparing for a homecoming, the recounting of adventures, and there are two major climaxes both featuring the motto theme in full splendor. When the pace quickens twice as the piece nears its conclusion there is a sense of great excitement and triumph. The hero has returned home, and this home is now bright with the possibilities of lessons won through experience – now G Major rather than G Minor as it was at the start.

–Note by Mark Steinberg, ©2015

JAKE HEGGIE (b. 1961)

Camille Claudel: Into the Fire (2011), texts by Gene Scheer

The French sculptor Camille Claudel (1864-1943) was an artistic genius at a time when a woman was rarely taken seriously on her own. Art critic Octave Mirbeau described her as “a rebellion against nature: a *woman* of genius!” Claudel knew how gifted she was – and one of her great frustrations was that she was primarily known in connection with a man: Rodin, the mighty sculptor who had been her mentor, teacher and lover. Their stormy and ill-fated romance, warring egos, clashing genius, her bold life choices, his broken promises, and the mental illness that resulted in her isolation and confinement – all of this is part of her tragic story. But only part.

For there are her sculptures: sublime, beautiful, inspired, aching, they dance and sing to us through time. Only a relatively few survive, for she destroyed

much of her work before her family sent her away to an asylum; and there, she never sculpted again.

After seeing the brilliant film *Camille Claudel* in 1989, I had been looking for a moment to create a theatrical work based on her story. Finally, I saw the opportunity in 2010, when Ruth Felt (president of San Francisco Performances) asked me to create a new work to celebrate the Alexander String Quartet's 30th anniversary. Knowing I am primarily an opera composer, Ruth also said we could invite a singer to participate.

I called my friend Joyce DiDonato to ask her about the project. "Yes, please," was her reply. The writer Gene Scheer, my frequent collaborator, enthusiastically signed on, as well. Instead of a full opera, a theatrical song cycle would be our foray into Claudel's story.

The cycle takes place the day she is to be taken to the asylum. As dawn breaks (*Awakening*), Camille wakes to the strange reality of what is about to happen and addresses her sculptures. The powerful, rugged bust of *Rodin* is first, followed by the lyrical *La Valse* – a sensuous dance of love and death.

Shakuntala, according to Hindu mythology, was the bride of King Dushyanta. Dreaming of her husband one day, she inadvertently offended a powerful *rishi*, or sage, whose curse was that she would be forgotten by the one she dreamed of. For many years, she and her child were banished and isolated, until the king was awakened to his error and sought her out to beg forgiveness. Claudel's sculpture depicts the difficult, emotional moment of their reunion.

La petite châtelaine is a tender, radiant portrait of innocence. In 1892, Claudel reluctantly aborted Rodin's child – likely at his behest – and ended their affair. This sculpture dates from shortly after, when Claudel began to sense a growing paranoia: a fear that Rodin was trying to steal her ideas and destroy her career.

The Gossips represents a real turning point for Claudel. While Rodin's sculptures and fame became more massive, hers became more intimate

and small. Her paranoia led her to believe that she was being followed and persecuted by “la bande à Rodin” (or “Rodin’s gang”). Here four women whisper and gossip in a corner. About whom?

L’age mûr (“Maturity” or “Destiny”) is a large bronze sculpture in the Musée d’Orsay. It depicts three figures: an older man being led away by an ancient woman while a younger woman, on her knees, tries desperately to reach out to him. This also dates from about the time of Claudel’s abortion and Rodin’s refusal to leave his long-time lover, Rose Beuret.

In 1913, on her mother and brother’s order, Claudel was taken to an asylum. To avoid further scandals, her brother, the diplomat and playwright Paul Claudel, had her confined in isolation. Her mother and sister never visited her, Paul only every few years. In 1929, her closest friend from their student days in Paris came to visit (*Epilogue*). Jessie Lipscomb and her husband were on their way to Italy and decided to seek out Camille. They found her quiet, reflective, and dear. A photograph Jessie’s husband took of them is the last evidence we have of Camille Claudel. She died in 1943.

Musically, the cycle is tonally based with a strong sense of dance throughout, especially a strong undercurrent of $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Debussy’s G Minor string quartet is a primary source of inspiration. The composer was a close friend of Claudel and kept a copy of her sculpture *La Valse* on his mantle. There are a few recurring themes, most of which are permutations of the music from Camille’s first line: “Last night, I went to sleep completely naked” - a line from an early letter she wrote to Rodin.

Camille Claudel: Into the Fire was completed in December 2011 and received its premiere at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco on February 4, 2012. It is lovingly dedicated to Joyce DiDonato. The work was commissioned by San Francisco Performances and generously underwritten by a gift from Linda and Stuart Nelson. An orchestral version receives its first performance with The Berkeley Symphony and conductor Joana Carneiro on February 26, 2015.

—Note by Jake Heggie, ©2015

TEXTS

Camille Claudel: Into the Fire

Texts by Gene Scheer

1. Rodin

Last night, I went to sleep completely naked.
I pretended you were holding me
But I woke alone again
Everything burned away
In the cruel morning light.

Was I dreaming that you loved me
Though you left me far behind?
Someone's there
Hidden in the shadows
You don't want me to see
You don't want me to find

In the clay
I search with my fingers
To uncover something true
Rodin! Rodin!
Was there ever a time
You wanted me to find you?

There's a secret I have traced
In your eyes, your brow, your hair.
Others think they see you
But, we both know, you're not there.

In the clay
I search with my fingers
To uncover something true
Rodin! Rodin!
Was there ever a time
You wanted me to find you?

Rodin?
Rodin?

2. La Valse

The light of day will fade
And shadows will descend
No breath can last forever
No heartbreak truly mend

Again, again...
Console my eyes with beauty
Allow me to forget
That every dance of love
Is mingled with regret

Take me
One step closer
One step back
One step spins
One step hovers
Take me!
Take me to the place for
unrepentant lovers!

Is it in the spirit?
Is it in the flesh?
Where do I abide?
Console
Oh, console my eyes with beauty
Allow me to forget
That every dance of love
Is mingled with regret...

3. Shakuntala

“Shakuntala! Shakuntala!”

He called my name in a whisper
He called my name in a cry

Before I was a mother
Before I met the king
Before he made his promise
Before I wore his ring
Before I was forgotten
Abandoned and ignored
Before I was denied
All that I adored
I did not know who I was.

“Shakuntala! Shakuntala!”

After he had learned the truth
After all his tears
Begging my forgiveness
After wasting many years
Wishing to reclaim me
Kneeling at my feet
He reaches to embrace me
Will the circle again be complete?

I lean and let him hold me
His lips familiar yet estranged
I forgive him utterly
But in doing so have I changed?

“Shakuntala! Shakuntala!”

I hear your whispers
Your cries
Oh, I want to take you back, my love,
But who I was has died!

4. La petite châtelaine

Hello, my little one,
La petite châtelaine

Do you know who I am?
Do you know who I am?

They say I leave at night
By the window of my tower
Hanging from a red umbrella
With which I set fire to the forest

Hello, my little one,
La petite châtelaine

Do you know who I am?
Or the land you come from?
Where the earth is stained...

I did as he said and returned you to clay.
Oh, how could I bleed such a blessing away?
Now I'm forever alone
With my children of stone.

La petite châtelaine

Can you hear my voice?
The voice of your mother?

(please turn the page quietly)

5. The Gossips

What is in my hands?
 What is in my head?
 So many ideas, my mind aches.
 So many ideas, the earth quakes!

People at a table listen to a prayer.
 Three men on a high cart laugh and
 go to mass.
 A woman crouches on a bench and
 cries all alone.
 What does she know?
 Does she know three people sit behind
 a screen and whisper?
 What is the secret suspended in the air?
 I know.
 I know.

The halo rusts.
 The light is dim.
 Into the fire!
 Is it him?
 Is it him?
 Is it him?

6. L'âge mûr (instrumental)

7. Epilogue: Jessie Lipscomb visits Camille Claudel, Montdevergues Asylum, 1929

Thank you for coming. I thought everyone
 had forgotten.
 Thank you for remembering me.

Four children? Beautiful...beautiful...
 Off to Italy? Beautiful...beautiful...
 You will have wonderful things to eat there.
 Here they are trying to poison me. (I see that
 they don't. I cook for myself.)
 Thank you for remembering me.

Do you remember our studio in Paris?
 Everything moving.
 Two young women, so many ideas.
 Look at me now!
 Oh, Jessie... Every dream I ever had
 was of movement.
 Touching. Breathing. Reaching. Hovering.
 Something always about to change...

A photograph? Just me and you. Yes.
 I understand. I must be very still.

Thank you for remembering me.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

We recommend two movies about Camille Claudel's life.

Camille Claudel, starring Isabelle Adjani and Gérard Depardieu
Camille Claudel: 1915, starring Juliet Binoche

PLUS...

Experience the art of belle epoch Paris for yourself! Visit the Princeton University Art Museum, located centrally on campus, and enjoy works by Auguste Rodin and others from that artistically rich time. A spectacular study for Rodin's *The Age of Bronze* is a must-see!