

October 12, 2017 at 8:00pm | Pre-concert Talk by Professor Wendy Heller at 7:00pm
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

QUATUOR MOSAÏQUES

Erich Höbarth, *Violin*
Andrea Bischof, *Violin*
Anita Mitterer, *Viola*
Christophe Coin, *Cello*

**WOLFGANG
AMADEUS
MOZART**
(1756-1791)

String Quartet No. 17 in B-flat Major, K. 458 “The Hunt”
Allegro vivace assai
Menuetto et trio: Moderato
Adagio
Allegro assai

MOZART

String Quartet No. 15 in D Minor, K. 421
Allegro moderato
Andante
Menuetto et trio: Allegretto
Allegretto ma non troppo

INTERMISSION

**FRANZ
JOSEPH
HAYDN**
(1732-1809)

String Quartet in C Major, Op. 20, No. 2, Hob. III:32
Moderato
Capriccio: Adagio – Cantabile
Minuet: Allegretto – Trio
Fuga a 4 soggetti: Allegro

Please join us downstairs in the Richardson Lounge following the concert for a reception to celebrate the start of the season.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

By Zoe Kemmerling, © 2017

Quartet in B-flat Major, K. 458 “The Hunt”

Quartet in D Minor, K. 421

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Mozart’s long-lasting celebrity is based in part on his incomparable subtlety and wit, qualities that are particularly valuable in chamber music. He is so much a part of our musical consciousness that it’s hard to imagine him at the vanguard of an evolving style, admired for putting notes together in a way previously unimagined. As a young man in the bustling cultural center of Vienna, Mozart’s talent and charm drew acclaim not only from wealthy and fashionable patrons but from one of the only men of his same stature: Haydn. The two composers’ mutual admiration is well documented in their correspondence, exemplified by Haydn’s testimonial to Leopold Mozart: “Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name.”

The impetus for this resounding declaration was allegedly a performance of the very set of six quartets from which

K. 458 and K. 421 are taken, a collection known as the “Haydn” quartets after the recipient of their dedication. They were published together as Mozart’s Opus 10 by the Viennese company Artaria in 1785. Dedication to a friend or colleague was rare, as this honor was usually reserved for an aristocratic patron in recognition of a commission or to shore up a remunerative relationship. Thus the act itself, even more so than the flowery language that appears on the manuscript—beginning “To my dear friend Haydn” and whimsically referring to the works as their creator’s children—was a testament to Mozart’s admiration for Haydn, whose Opus 33 quartets had recently set a new standard for the genre. The brilliant youngster just beginning his journey and the respected master had formed a genuine friendship, strengthened by regular chamber music reading sessions. One documented quartet party included Haydn on first violin and Mozart on viola (his habitual

part at musical gatherings), along with their contemporaries Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf and Johann Baptist Vanhal; Haydn and Mozart also performed on violas together in Mozart's string quintets. An awareness of the camaraderie of string quartet playing is one of the elements that set Haydn's and Mozart's quartets apart from their predecessors. Each voice is indispensable not only to the harmony but to the progression of the work as a whole, and communication is key.

K. 458, which appeared as Opus 10, No. 3, gained the nickname "The Hunt" not from the composer or publisher but from popular opinion—a common occurrence. The sub-genre of "La chasse," with its galloping compound-meter rhythms and open intervals meant to evoke horn-accompanied hunting parties, was in fashion. (Horns of the day mostly played tonic and dominant pitches, and could only execute chromaticism with difficulty, and not on horseback.) The first movement of "The Hunt" fits the bill, with rollicking themes and volleying motives suggesting riders calling to each other across a wood. The simple, energetic melody is tidily harmonized, and playful trills circle the ensemble in constant motion. The development begins with a

drone-infused pastoral interlude before the chase once again gets underway, through minor-tinged harmonic thickets and into a triumphant, sunny forte.

A stately Minuet with pensive harmonic turns in the B section is next, followed by a lighthearted Trio that pairs the first violin and cello in lyrical counterpoint while the inner voices tick a clockwork beat. The Adagio is a sweet and nostalgic aria, the lower three voices supporting the first violin with rich cadences, flowing accompanimental figures, countermelodies, and even remnants of the imitative, circular "chase" patterns of the first movement transposed to a stately tempo. The finale appears in a fast-moving sonata form rather than the typical rondo form. Mozart extrapolates the contrasting elements of the first theme, with its smooth two-note opening and spry staccato eighth notes, into the overarching plot of the movement; slurred motives and slick flourishes alternate with angular, spiky passages and insistent repeated notes.

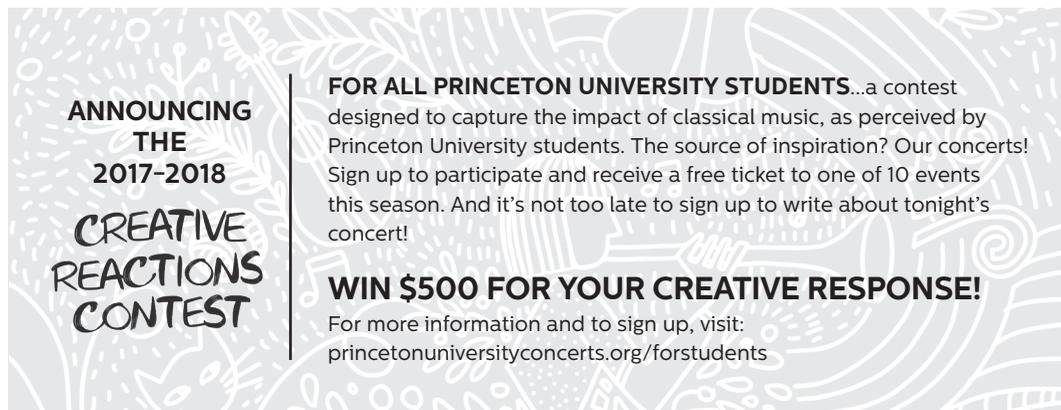
K. 421, appearing as No. 2 in the Opus 10 set, isn't the most famous of the "Haydns" but contains an equally arresting blend of characters. The Allegro moderato first movement opens, appropriately for a work

in D minor, with concentrated pathos. The first violin's melody, with an unsettled offbeat accompaniment, sweeps from low, growling trills to high, rippling scales. Mozart, ever adept at shifting between light and dark, soon weaves buoyancy and grace into the constantly evolving textural blend. The interplay of the four voices is especially crucial in the imitation and layering of the development, where he exactly dissects the preceding thematic ingredients.

The Andante progresses with unhurried grace, the four voices waltzing together through a gentle 6/8 meter. Short phrases and frequent pauses give the music a simultaneously dance-like and improvisatory quality. The three-note accompaniment from the quartet's opening here transforms from a troubled offbeat figure to steady,

gently rocking motion. The Menuetto, with its ubiquitous, martial dotted motive, is rather stern, though the first violin coyly reverses the rhythm into a delicate high-register chirp for the trio.

The finale of the D-minor quartet is also unusual in its form: the 6/8 meter of the slow movement returns for a theme and variations. Here the melody flows freely over rhythmic punctuation, allowing the first violin to wind through extended chromatics in the first variation. The contrapuntal web becomes denser and cleverer—intricate figures combine, familiar motives sneak in and out of the accompaniment, and rapid hocketing creates a constant murmur of activity. Brisk triplets bring the movement to a bittersweet close: noble and tinged with melancholy.



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Quartet in C Major, Op. 20, No. 2, Hob. III: 32

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

Mozart wrote in his Opus 10 dedication of introducing his “children” to Haydn, but it is the latter who is most commonly credited with well-formed, individual, and multitudinous offspring. Known as “the father of the string quartet,” Haydn composed 68 of these works, which are unfailingly unique, concise, graceful, complex, and perpetually inventive. With the ability to craft a façade of classicism even tidier than Mozart’s, Haydn was skilled at simultaneously celebrating and undermining traditional forms, his style based on mastering rules of composition and then breaking them—cheekily and thoughtfully. Celebrated for his playfulness, Haydn’s compositional ethos demonstrates what every humorist knows: wit is an unimpeachable, and therefore powerful, weapon of the revolutionary.

Haydn wrote the set of six quartets Opus 20 in 1772, a decade into his tenure at the Esterházy court under the music-loving Prince Nikolaus. Though his role as Kapellmeister encompassed an ever-evolving panoply of duties, from conducting the orchestra to mounting

opera productions, Haydn found time to compose Opus 20 and two previous sets of quartets in quick succession. Since the Esterházy did not hold regular string quartet performances, these works seem to be entirely self-motivated: possibly written for the Viennese audiences from whom Haydn was largely isolated out at the Eszterháza estate, possibly for the composer’s own growth and enjoyment.

Opus 20 became known as the “Sun Quartets” after the image of a rising sun gracing the cover of an early edition, a symbol suggesting the works’ sparkling nature and their author’s unfettered creativity. The Sun Quartets also became associated, after their appearance, with a compositional movement called *Sturm und Drang* that emphasized the drama of authentic, unrestrained emotion. *Sturm und Drang* might seem to be the antithesis of rational stylistic development and intricate craftsmanship (and was in fact a reaction to the sometimes obsessive control of classicism), yet Haydn possessed the ability to merge these two faces of art seamlessly, as his Opus 20 demonstrates.

The first movement of Opus 20, No. 2 begins as sunnily as one could wish: a melody blossoms in the cello's high range and continues into a violin duet rich with suspensions and sweet harmonies, the viola providing a spirited, airy bass line. The first violin is equally ready to erupt in arpeggiated fireworks and recede into the hushed mystery of a surprise harmonic turn. The development intensifies and magnifies these contrasting motives, the violin and cello dueling at opposite ends of register, the suspensions and ripples of the theme drawn out in sequences. The second movement, aptly named Capriccio, begins with a strikingly dramatic unison recitative that recurs and builds throughout the movement. In between these episodes, the cello transforms the opening motive into a plaintive soliloquy. Halfway through, the clouds part for

another melodic interlude, this one an achingly beautiful, serene aria.

Unfolding like the scenes of an opera, the second movement's denouement merges seamlessly into the Minuet's calmly flowing melody, which is underscored by a gentle drone. The cello leads a contemplative trio, joined by the other instruments for brief moments of turbulence. The finale exhibits one of Haydn's favorite displays of technical mastery: a four-voice fugue in which short, staccato notes abut sinuous chromaticism, rife with inversions, suspensions, and obscured meters. It's breathtakingly exciting yet supremely organized, a triumphant ending for a work which is exacting in its artistry, conquering sublime heights and profound depths of feeling.

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ABOUT THE QUARTET

QUATUOR MOSAÏQUES



Quatuor Mosaïques is the most prominent period-instrument quartet performing today. The ensemble has garnered praise for its atypical decision to use gut-stringed instruments which, in combination with its celebrated musicianship, has cultivated their unique sound. The quartet has toured extensively, won numerous prizes, and established a substantial discography. Formed in 1987, the group is comprised of Austrians Erich Höbarth (violin), Andrea Bischof (violin), and Anita Mitterer (viola), and French cellist Christophe Coin. These four musicians met while performing with Nikolaus Harnoncourt's *Concentus Musicus Wien* in the 1980s and decided

to perform on original instruments as a classical “caper quartet.” Although the quartet performs on period instruments, it embraces the European quartet tradition, constantly allowing for the evolution of its repertoire as it strives to reveal the music’s psychological underpinnings.

For the first time in three years and in celebration of their 30th anniversary season, Quatuor Mosaïques has embarked on a North American tour this month, performing at Princeton, and the Celebrity Series of Boston, Duke Performances in Durham (NC), Da Camera: Chamber Music and Jazz in Houston, Friends of Chamber Music in

Denver (CO), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Music Toronto, and the Union College Concert Series in Schenectady, and offering works of Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, and Mendelssohn. European engagements this season include a two-concert Haydn series in London's Wigmore Hall, two recitals in Amsterdam's lauded Concertgebouw, a series of three performances of late Schubert Quartets at the Kilkenny Arts Festival in Ireland, and three performances of Haydn, Mozart, and Donizetti quartets at Scotland's Lammermuir Festival.

Quatuor Mosaïques has appeared in Europe, the United States, Australia, and Japan and regularly performs in Vienna's Konzerthaus, London's Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and Berlin's Philharmonic Hall, among others.

Quatuor Mosaïques is often featured at such prestigious European festivals as Edinburgh, Salzburg, Lucerne, Bremen,

Bath, Graz, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, and Oslo. The ensemble collaborates regularly with many international artists including pianist Sir András Schiff, clarinetist Sabine Meyer, and cellists Miklós Perényi and Raphaël Pidoux. In 2006, Quatuor Mosaïques was invited to Spain to perform for King Juan Carlos I on the monarch's personal collection of Stradivari instruments.

Quatuor Mosaïques' discography includes works of Haydn, Mozart, Arriaga, Boccherini, Jadin, Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, as well as lesser-known composers. Recordings of the Wiener Klassik repertoire (Haydn string quartets Op. 20, 33 and 77 and the quartets of Mozart dedicated to Haydn) have been awarded numerous prizes such as the Diapason d'Or, the Choc du Monde de la Musique, and a Gramophone Award. At the end of last month, a new recording of Beethoven's late string quartets was released on the Naïve label.



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