

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2014 AT 8:00PM  
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Musical Preview by the Princeton Pianists Ensemble, 7pm  
Post-concert talk back with members of the Danish String Quartet  
moderated by Professor Scott Burnham

## DANISH STRING QUARTET

Frederik Øland, violin  
Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, violin  
Asbjørn Nørgaard, viola  
Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin, cello

### Carl NIELSEN

String Quartet No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 14  
Allegro con brio  
Andante sostenuto  
Allegretto pastorale — Presto — Allegretto  
pastorale  
Finale: Allegro coraggioso

A Journey Through Scandinavian Folk Music,  
selections to be announced from the stage

— INTERMISSION —

### Felix MENDELSSOHN

String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 13  
Adagio — Allegro vivace  
Adagio non lento  
Intermezzo: Allegretto con moto  
Presto

*The Danish String Quartet is represented by Kirshbaum Demler & Associates, Inc.*



## ABOUT THE DANISH STRING QUARTET

Since making its debut in 2002 at the Copenhagen Festival, the Danish String Quartet has demonstrated a passion for Scandinavian composers, who they frequently incorporate into adventurous contemporary programs, while also proving skilled and profound performers of the classical masters. Last season, *The New York Times* selected their concert as a highlight of the year: "One of the most powerful renditions of Beethoven's Opus 132 String Quartet that I've heard live or on a recording." This scope of talent has secured them a three-year appointment in the coveted Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's CMS Two Program beginning in the 2013-14 season and they have also been named as a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist for 2013-15.

Repertoire featured in the Danish String Quartet's 2013-14 season engagements includes works by Hans Abrahamsen, Beethoven, Debussy, Osvaldo Golijov, Peter Lieberson, Ligeti, Mendelssohn, Carl Nielsen and Shostakovich. The quartet began its season in the United States in November with a performance at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. followed by a new music performance in the Lincoln Center's Kaplan Penthouse. The quartet also made its Boston debut as part of the Boston Celebrity Series. They return this month to play concerts, in addition to Princeton, at Alice Tully Hall in New York City, presented by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Berkeley CA, Dallas TX, Detroit MI, and San Diego CA, among others. The Danish String Quartet made its West coast debut this past summer at Music@Menlo described by *San Francisco Classical Voice* as "a concert of one ravishing performance after another, culminating in the Beethoven, weaving magic over the full house, which gave a genuine standing ovation to the quartet, not one of those half-hearted crouching applauses. No, this was very real, really loud, and more than well-deserved."

“Scandinavian folk music lies very close to our hearts. The music is beautiful, melancholic, magical and powerful. The string quartet as a folk band is a fairly uncommon thing, but the possibilities are endless.”

—*The Danish String Quartet*

Since winning the Danish Radio P2 Chamber Music Competition in 2004, the quartet has been in great demand throughout Denmark and in October 2013 they presented the seventh annual DSQ-Musifest, a three-day festival held in Copenhagen that brings together musical friends the quartet has met on its travels. Outside of its homeland the quartet will perform in the UK, Spain, Germany, Northern Ireland, Australia, Norway and Poland during the 2013-14 season. In 2009 the Danish String Quartet won First Prize in the 11th London International String Quartet Competition, as well as four additional prizes from the same jury. This competition is now called the

Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, and the Danish String Quartet has performed at the famed hall on several occasions. It will return to Wigmore Hall in April 2014 to perform a program of Beethoven and Haydn.

In 2006, the Danish String Quartet was Danish Radio's Artist-in-Residence, giving them the opportunity to record all of Carl Nielsen's string quartets in the Danish Radio Concert Hall, subsequently released to critical acclaim on the Dacapo label in 2007 and 2008. In 2012 the Danish String Quartet released an equally-acclaimed recording of Haydn and Brahms quartets on the German AVI-music label. Said Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times*: "What makes the performance special is the maturity and calm of the playing, even during virtuosic passages that whisk by. This is music making of wonderful ease and naturalness..." It recently recorded works by Brahms and Fuchs with award-winning clarinetist Sebastian Manz at the Bayerische Rundfunk in Munich to be released by AVI-music in early 2014. The quartet's love of Scandinavian music has been captured in a recording of folk music that it will release on its own label this Spring. Selections from tonight's performance will be part of that disk.

Violinists Frederik Øland and Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen and violist Asbjørn Nørgaard met as children at a music summer camp where they played both football and music together, eventually making the transition into a serious string quartet in their teens and studying at Copenhagen's Royal Academy of Music. In 2008 the three Danes were joined by Norwegian cellist Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin. The Danish String Quartet was primarily taught and mentored by Professor Tim Frederiksen and has participated in master classes with the Tokyo and Emerson String Quartets, cellist Paul Katz, violinists Levon Chilingirian and Gábor Takács-Nagy. More information can be found on the quartet at [danishquartet.com](http://danishquartet.com). This concert represents the Danish String Quartet's Princeton debut.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

### *Quartet No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 14*

CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931)

*Composed in 1897-1898*

*Premiered on May 1, 1899 in Copenhagen by violinists Anton Svendsen and Ludvig Holm, violist Frederik Marke and cellist Ejler Jensen*

After graduating in 1886 from the Copenhagen Conservatory, where he majored in violin and also studied composition, theory, piano and music history, Carl Nielsen supported himself as a freelance violinist in Copenhagen by performing in chamber concerts and with the orchestra at Tivoli Gardens. He turned seriously to composition after finishing school — two of his pieces for string orchestra were given at Tivoli in 1887 and a string quartet was played by a local chamber music society the following year. His first real

success came with the premiere of the *Little Suite for Strings* by the Tivoli Orchestra on September 8, 1888; the score was published the following year as his Op. 1.

In September 1889,

Nielsen joined the second violin section of The Royal Danish Orchestra, a post he held for the next sixteen years while continuing to foster his reputation as a leading figure in Danish music. He received a leave of absence during the 1890-1891 season to study Wagnerian music drama in Germany under a government grant, and made a swing

“These Danish players have excelled in performances of works by Brahms, Mozart and Bartok in New York in recent years. But they play Nielsen’s quartets as if they owned them.”

— *The New York Times*

through Paris in the spring to immerse himself in the artistic riches of that city. Paris worked its charms on him, and so did a young Danish sculptress, Anne Marie Broderson, who was studying there that year — they were married just a month after they first met, and honeymooned in Italy to indulge their shared interest in art. When they returned to Copenhagen in the summer of 1891, Nielsen was inspired to compose his First Symphony, which he dedicated to Anne Marie. His position in Danish music grew steadily during the following years.

Nielsen spent the summer of 1897 helping his in-laws run their farm in Thygesminde in southern Jutland while Anne Marie stayed in Copenhagen to work on a commission for an equestrian statue for the city's new town hall. When he could spare time from the hay and the heifers, he began planning *Saul and David*, his first opera, and

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undertook his String Quartet in E-flat Major. The opening movement of the Quartet was sketched that summer and completed in Copenhagen in December, but Nielsen could not then return to the work until the next year, when it was largely completed at Thygesminde. (The farm was sold the following year, ending Nielsen's brief career in agriculture.) The Quartet was performed privately in Copenhagen on May 1, 1899 at the recently established *Vor Forening* ("Our Society") and first given in public on October 4, 1899 at the Odd Fellows Hall on the inaugural concert of an ensemble founded by Georg Høeberg, Louis Witzansky, Anton Bloch and Ernest Høeberg. Nielsen's Quartet received only faint praise on that occasion, but it went on to have many performances during the composer's lifetime and ultimately won the following praise in a review in *Politiken* of a concert on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday: "The E-flat Quartet is indisputably masterful, Nielsen's greatest triumph in this music genre, powerful and manly, profoundly poetic, gracefully pastoral, courageously ambitious."

The Quartet opens with an expansive, exuberant main theme that arches through the violin's highest register above a contrapuntal fabric whose richly woven texture runs through much of the work. A complementary motive of more subdued character is worked into a transition leading to the subsidiary theme, a flowing, pastoral melody first sung by the cello that recurs in a heroic transformation after some discussion. A restatement of the main theme (unusually, in the tonic key) begins the development section, which is based largely on that idea and the exposition's complementary motive. A full recapitulation of the earlier themes and a triumphant coda round out the movement.

The Andante sostenuto, the Quartet's expressive heart, is based on a hymnal theme with modal inflections presented by the violin following a pensive introduction. The mood grows more intense as the music unfolds before quieting for a recall of the hymnal melody. The central

episode is an extended passage of precise counterpoint of rising intensity, after which the movement concludes with a beatific reprise of the hymnal theme by the cello wound about with delicate tracery in the first violin.

The third movement is a formal surprise — the outer sections (*Allegretto pastorale*) are mild-mannered and playful, perhaps Nielsen's analog to the intermezzos Brahms was fond of using instead of a traditional muscular scherzo, but the trio is a stormy, driving Presto that contrasts sharply with the halcyon surrounding music. The mild-mannered theme returns, oblivious to what has just happened.

The sonata-form finale takes as its thematic materials a high-spirited march tune (*Allegro coraggioso* ["courageously"]) and a lyrical subject of small melodic leaps. The development begins with an extraordinary passage that transforms the opening march tune into a pizzicato fugue before turning to more conventional treatment of both exposition themes. A full recapitulation and a supercharged imitative coda based on the march theme bring the Quartet to a rousing close.

## ***A Journey Through Scandinavian Folk Music,*** *selections to be announced from the stage*

### ***The Danish String Quartet comments:***

Scandinavian folk music lies very close to our hearts. The music is beautiful, melancholy, magic and powerful. It has quite a lot of similarities with folk music from other parts of Northern Europe, as tunes have crossed the Northern Sea from Scandinavia to Britain, The Netherlands, Poland and elsewhere. The string quartet as a folk band is a fairly uncommon thing, but the possibilities are endless. Bass lines, harmonic patterns and melodies ... even percussive elements, these four instruments can do it all. We did all the arrangements ourselves and hope you will enjoy this little glimpse of traditional melodies from the



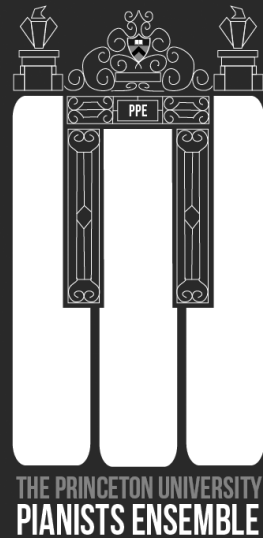
Danish shore, the Norwegian mountains and the Swedish forests.

***Quartet in A Minor, Op. 13,  
"Ist Es Wahr?"***

FELIX MENDELSSOHN  
(1809-1847)

*Composed in 1827*

Mendelssohn possessed a boundless curiosity and enthusiasm about all music, old and new. By age eighteen, he was intimately familiar with the Classical forms and idioms of Mozart and Haydn, and he erected upon them the creative precocities of his youth (including the magical Octet of 1825, perhaps the greatest piece of music ever composed by one so young), but he was also one of the leading Bach scholars of the time. His composition teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, director of the Berlin Singakademie, had guided him fruitfully through *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (whose contrapuntal intricacies he delighted in mimicking in his teenage works), and his musically knowledgeable maternal grandmother, who had



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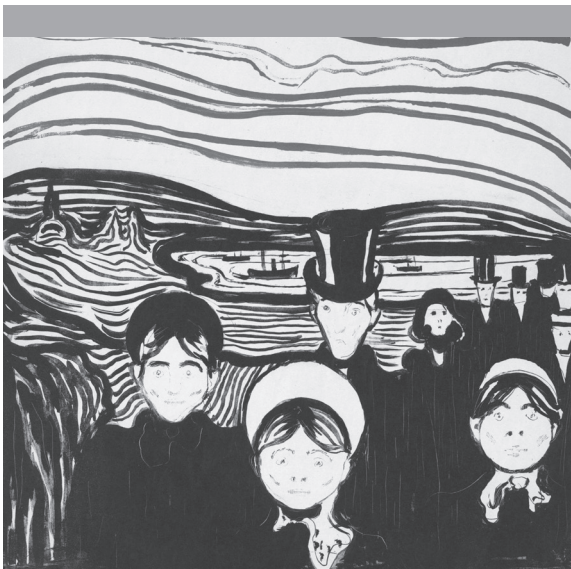
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# Edvard Munch

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known Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel when she grew up in Berlin, obtained for him a copy of the rare, unpublished score of the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1823 or 1824. Before the end of 1827, Mendelssohn had enlisted the town's best vocalists to rehearse the *Passion* and determined to perform it in public — the renewal of interest in J.S. Bach's music, and, indeed, the entire Baroque revival, date from that concert, on March 11, 1829 at the Singakademie. Complementing Mendelssohn's antiquarian strain was his interest in the most daring, avant-garde music of the day — the last works of Beethoven. In the years before his death, in March 1827, Beethoven explored uncharted continents of style and expression in his sonatas, quartets, *Missa Solemnis* and Ninth Symphony, and Mendelssohn eagerly studied those amazing and challenging creations.

The String Quartet in A Minor that Mendelssohn completed on October 26, 1827 was the product of this entire congeries of influences — Mozart, Bach,

Beethoven, plus, of course, his own genius — which were further enflamed by a *petite affaire de le coeur*. The previous spring, shortly before matriculating at Berlin University, Mendelssohn had indulged in a short holiday at Sakrow, the Magnus family estate near Potsdam, and there he fell in love, at least a little. The circumstances, even the maiden's name, are unknown, but he was sufficiently moved by the experience to set to music a poem of his friend Johann Gustav Droyson that began, "Is it true [*Ist es wahr?*] that you are always waiting for me in the arboreal walk?" The piece, published two years later under the title *Frage* ("Question") as the first number of his Op. 9 set of songs, was woven as thematic material into the new A-Minor Quartet. The score was published in 1829 as Mendelssohn's Op. 13.

The Quartet opens with a slow introduction whose A Major tonality serves as an emotional foil for the tempestuous main body of the movement. Two arching phrases — the second soaring high in the first



## Want to hear more of the Danish String Quartet?

Their performance at The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center of Beethoven and Mendelssohn will be streamed live on the internet.



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2014 AT 7:30PM.

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violin's compass — preface the quotation of the searching motto phrase from *Ist Es Wahr?*, recognizable by its long–short–long rhythm. The music's tempo and energy are quickened by scurrying filigree before the viola initiates the principal theme, based on the motto rhythm. The cello posits a lyrical melody as the complementary subject. The scurrying phrases return to mark the onset of the development section, which is remarkable for the intensity of its counterpoint and its nearly febrile mood. The recapitulation serves both to return and enhance the earlier themes before the movement closes with an explosive coda that stops without resolving the music's strong tensions. The deeply felt Adagio offers another paraphrase of the motto theme at beginning and end as the frame for the somber, densely packed fugal episode that occupies the middle of the movement. The third movement, titled Intermezzo, uses a charmingly folkish tune, daintily scored, in its outer sections to surround an ethereal passage of musical feather-stitching at the center. Both ideas are deftly combined in the coda. A dramatic cadenza-recitative for the violin over tremolo harmonies, reminiscent of the fourth movement of Beethoven's A minor Quartet, Op. 132, launches the finale. A clutch of highly charged motives is presented and worked out with great intensity as the music unfolds. The work closes not with a wail of tragedy or with a sunburst of redemption, but with a recall of the Quartet's most introspective moments — first the theme of the Adagio, and then the introduction from the opening movement, bringing with it a final reflection upon the music and thought of *Ist Es Wahr?*.

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