

# CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH 8, 2024, AT 7:30 ▶ 4,413TH CONCERT

**Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage**

*Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center*

## **QUARTETTO DI CREMONA**

**CRISTIANO GUALCO**, violin

**PAOLO ANDREOLI**, violin

**SIMONE GRAMAGLIA**, viola

**GIOVANNI SCAGLIONE**, cello

## **Winter Festival: Quartet Panorama**

**DMITRI  
SHOSTAKOVICH**

(1906–1975)

**Quartet No. 8 in C minor for Strings, Op. 110 (1960)**

▶ Largo

▶ Allegro molto

▶ Allegretto

▶ Largo

▶ Largo

GUALCO, ANDREOLI, GRAMAGLIA, SCAGLIONE

**OSVALDO GOLIJOV**

(b. 1960)

***Tenebrae* for String Quartet (2002)**

GUALCO, ANDREOLI, GRAMAGLIA, SCAGLIONE

## **INTERMISSION**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT**

(1797–1828)

**Quartet in D minor for Strings, D. 810, “Death  
and the Maiden” (1824)**

▶ Allegro

▶ Andante con moto

▶ Scherzo: Allegro molto

▶ Presto

GUALCO, ANDREOLI, GRAMAGLIA, SCAGLIONE

The **Jerome L. Greene Foundation** is the 2023–2024 CMS Season Sponsor.

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# ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM


Dear Listener,

Few who were in Alice Tully Hall for the Quartetto di Cremona's CMS debut on February 1, 2022, will ever forget the occasion. This extraordinary ensemble, which we have known since their founding in the year 2000, gave us a program of such variety and daring that we simply could not resist. And they proved themselves: any who doubted the wisdom of closing their debut program with Arnold Schoenberg's 45-minute (unbroken) First Quartet was utterly convinced of their decision after they delivered a performance that combined searing intensity, technical wizardry, and infectious commitment.

This time, the Quartetto di Cremona brings us a program of similar adventurousness. They begin with a work by a composer who invented his own language, which became the defining sound of Soviet Russia: Dmitri Shostakovich. Of his fifteen quartets, the Eighth, which we hear tonight, is among the most riveting and visceral. Following the Shostakovich is a quartet by Argentine native Osvaldo Golijov, who burst onto the chamber music scene in the 1990s with two extraordinary string quartets: *Yiddishbbuk* (1992), and *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind* (1994). Tonight's work, *Tenebrae*, dates from 2002, and in it you will hear that Golijov, amazingly, created an entirely new language for string quartet, unlike any heard elsewhere.

After intermission, the intensity does not lessen; we encounter Schubert's innocent maiden being seduced by the frightening figure of death in what is certainly one of the most dramatic and evocative chamber works of all time.

Enjoy the program,



David Finckel

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Wu Han



# NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Kathryn Bacasmot

## Quartet No. 8 in C minor for Strings, Op. 110

### DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

- ▶ Born September 25 (O.S. September 12), 1906, in Saint Petersburg
- ▶ Died August 9, 1975, in Moscow

### *Composed in 1960*

Because of all his maneuvers to survive under the scrutinizing and oppressive Soviet regime, it is hard to know the “real” Shostakovich. So we peer into his music, hunting for clues. One tantalizing piece to examine is the String Quartet No. 8, which seems to assume an overt persona through which the composer is communicating. It was written in just a few days during his stay near Dresden, then part of East Germany, to work on a Soviet film score about the Allied bombing of the city during World War II. Ostensibly, he dedicated the work to “Victims of Fascism and War.” However, he later suggested in a letter to a friend that it was really an autobiographical work: “When I die it’s hardly likely that someone will write a quartet dedicated to my memory. So I decided to write one myself.”

This autobiographical element appears in the work in two main ways: through a four-note motif frequently heard in different iterations, and through numerous quotes from his own previously composed pieces. The four-note motif, announced at the very beginning, spells out an abbreviated German transliteration of the composer’s name, using the pitches D, E-flat, C, and B to represent DSCH. The somber first movement

- ▶ First CMS performance on March 16, 1980, by violinists Ani Kavafian and James Buswell, violist Walter Trampler, and cellist Leslie Parnas
- ▶ Duration: 20 minutes

meditates on the DSCH motif and introduces the first quote, from his First Symphony. Later, a quote from his Fifth Symphony—sometimes seen as an offering to appease the Party after his first significant censorship—sings in the first violin. The music soon dovetails into the contrasting frenzy of the second movement, where the DSCH theme builds and erupts into a quote from his Second Piano Trio, a work dedicated to the polymath Ivan Sollertinsky, who is credited with profoundly influencing Shostakovich’s style, in part by introducing him to the works of Gustav Mahler.

A sudden halt shifts the work into the third movement, an off-kilter waltz. The quote featured in this movement is from the Cello Concerto, a work that was premiered by his dear friend Mstislav Rostropovich. It was also the piece performed during his tours of the United States and the United Kingdom during Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization project of cultural exchanges, which finally allowed the composer to meet and share ideas with his international colleagues. The movement quietly trails off as the first violin is left alone to usher in the attached fourth movement that arrives with distinctive three-note knocking motifs. Emerging from the solo violin is a passing reference to

the *Dies Irae* melody, from the requiem mass for the dead, followed by a quote from the Russian song "Exhausted by the hardships of prison." The subtext becomes more poignant when we hear the cello singing above the ensemble with a melody from his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, which had enjoyed initial success until Stalin heard a performance,

after which he was publicly shamed in an article published in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*. Its arrival casts a new meaning on the repeated knocks, as Shostakovich became afraid of a midnight knock on his door from the police after the incident. The brief final movement begins in the same mood as the opening, quietly bringing the piece to a close. ♦

## *Tenebrae* for String Quartet

### OSVALDO GOLIJOV

► Born December 5, 1960, in La Plata, Argentina

► This is the first CMS performance of this piece.

► Duration: 12 minutes

### *Composed in 2002*

When reflecting on planet earth, most astronauts or astronomers share their astonishment at the contrast between our terrestrial experience of hubristic magnitude and the celestial perspective of fragile smallness. As Carl Sagan described it, everything humanity has ever known has played out "on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam." Occasionally, the rest of us also glimpse this bittersweet dichotomy, wondering at the clash between kindness and hatred, beauty and tragedy, war and peace. This happened for Osvaldo Golijov in September 2000, as he read about incidents of ongoing violence in the news and took his son to a planetarium in New York, where they observed the famous image of the earth as a blue dot against the unknowably vast darkness of space. It inspired him to write a piece that would "sound as an orbiting spaceship that never touches the

ground," revolving to present different perspectives to the listener. Golijov elaborated that "if one chooses to listen to it 'from afar,' the music would probably offer a 'beautiful' surface but, from a metaphorically closer distance, one could hear that, beneath the surface, the music is full of pain."

The title comes from the three *Tenebrae* (Latin for "darkness") services, on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday of Holy Week in the Christian faith. Each night begins in light and ends in shadow as fifteen ceremonial candles are extinguished one by one following the reading of each psalm. Eventually all candles in the church are put out and the congregation is engulfed in utter darkness, save for the light of one candle representing hope. The structural framework of Golijov's music centers on snippets taken from *Troisième Leçon de Tenebrae*

by the French Baroque composer François Couperin, which Golijov loops throughout. During the two movements, a sense of tension sustains

the haunting music in mid-air, caught between darkness and light, and their metaphorical doubles of despair and hope, in prolonged meditation. ♦

## Quartet in D minor for Strings, D. 810, "Death and the Maiden"

### FRANZ SCHUBERT

- ▶ Born January 31, 1797, in Vienna
- ▶ Died November 19, 1828, in Vienna

#### *Composed in 1824*

As Schubert entered his twenties, he was already a seasoned composer of five symphonies, four masses, several string quartets, and 300 songs, including two that would become among his most famous, "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (1814) and "Erlkönig" (1815). It has been calculated that at one point he was writing an average of 65 measures of music per day. During this time of intense artistic activity, however, Schubert approached a crossroads regarding his future: should he follow in the footsteps of his family and become a teacher, or should he follow an artistic path? Initially taking the practical route, he enrolled in a teacher's college, but it left him deeply unsatisfied. As he wrestled with his choices, he continued producing psychologically and emotionally charged works, including "Der Tod und das Mädchen," or "Death and the Maiden," from 1817. The song lasts barely two minutes, with its brevity underscoring the astonishing directness of the content. In just two stanzas, Schubert delivers a dramatic

- ▶ First CMS performance on April 3, 1970, by the Amadeus String Quartet (violinists Norbert Brainin and Siegmund Nissel, violist Peter Schidlöf, and cellist Martin Lovett)
- ▶ Duration: 40 minutes

scene in which a girl frantically resists death with her cries, "Pass by! . . . I am still young; leave me, dear one and do not touch me." Death answers coolly as a dispassionate funeral march accompanies, "Give me your hand . . . I am not cruel; you shall sleep softly in my arms."

Several years later, in 1824, Schubert returned to this song, but now the text had gained an uncomfortable urgency in light of the composer's own health crisis. During the previous year, his body began to display signs of syphilis. The news was devastating, and Schubert knew it meant an uncertain future of indeterminant duration. In a letter to a friend he lamented, "I find myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair continually makes things worse and worse instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most brilliant hopes have perished."

*(program note continues)*

Around the time he penned this heart-wrenching letter, Schubert composed the String Quartet in D minor. A work of intense feeling, it bursts open with strident, unison chords immediately communicating a sense of urgency that pervades the first movement. The centerpiece of the work is the second movement, in which Schubert takes the funeral march melody from his song "Death and the Maiden" and transforms it into a *cri de cœur* expressed in a set of variations. The brief, stately Scherzo,

with a gorgeously lyrical contrasting section, acts as a bridge into the fiery, defiant finale. Schubert may have musically underscored his point by including allusions to another early song in the last movement: flashes of the deathly invitation ("Sweet child, come with me") from "Erlkönig" can be heard in the violins. ♦

*Kathryn Bacasmot writes about music and is a regular program annotator for CMS.*

# **CMS** Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

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### **WINTER FESTIVAL: QUARTET PANORAMA ESCHER STRING QUARTET**

Sun, Mar 10, 3:00 pm

*Complete Bartók String Quartets*

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Tue, Mar 12, 7:30 pm

*Beethoven, Rossini, Britten, Duruflé, Hummel*

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Tue, Mar 19, 7:30 pm

*Haydn, Debussy, Ravel, Michael Stephen Brown,  
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# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



NIKOLAJ LUND

## QUARTETTO DI CREMONA

► Since its formation in 2000, the Quartetto di Cremona has established a reputation as one of the most exciting chamber ensembles on the international stage. Regularly invited to perform in major music festivals and halls in Europe, North and South America, and Asia, they garner universal acclaim for their high level of interpretive artistry.

Highlights of recent and upcoming seasons are the performances at the Wigmore Hall (London), the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), the Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), the Konzerthaus in Berlin, the Brucknerhaus (Linz), and the Rudolfinum (Prague); in Geneva, Stockholm, Schwarzenberg, Kuhmo, Mumbai, Taipei, and Beijing; and for the Fundación Juan March in Madrid and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York. North American tours are regularly planned twice a year, with their Carnegie Hall debut in October 2023 as well as a re-invitation from CMS in March 2024 at Lincoln Center.

The Quartet has also collaborated with numerous artists such as Eckart Runge, Till Fellner, Pablo Barragan, Kit Armstrong, Miguel da Silva, David Orlowsky, the Emerson String Quartet, and the Pavel Haas Quartet.

On the discographic side, a new CD will soon be released with the ensemble's own version of *The Art of Fugue*, performed with seven instruments so as not to alter the original writing of Bach's score. Previous recordings include: *Italian Postcards* (2020, Avie Records); a double CD dedicated to Schubert (2019, Audite);

the complete Beethoven String Quartets (2018, Audite). All of them were received with great interest by international critics, as well as winning discographic prizes.

Frequently invited to present masterclasses in Europe, Asia, and North and South America, the members of the quartet have been Professors at the Walter Stauffer Academy in Cremona since 2011. Winners of the 2019 Franco Buitoni Award from the Borletti-Buitoni Trust for their constant contribution to the promotion of chamber music in Italy and around the world, they are ambassadors for the international project Friends of Stradivari and honorary citizens of Cremona.

Cristiano Gualco plays a Nicola Amati violin, Cremona 1640. Paolo Andreoli plays a Paolo Antonio Testore violin, Milano ca. 1758 (Kulturfonds Peter Eckes). Simone Gramaglia plays a Gioachino Torazzi viola, ca. 1680 (Kulturfonds Peter Eckes). Giovanni Scaglione plays a Dom Nicola Amati cello, Bologna 1712 (Kulturfonds Peter Eckes).

## ABOUT THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

**The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS)** was founded in 1969 under the leadership and patronage of Alice Tully and the artistic direction of Charles Wadsworth, beginning a new era for chamber music in the United States. Through its many performance, education, and digital activities, CMS brings the experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind. The performing artists constitute a multi-generational and international roster of the world's finest chamber musicians, enabling CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period. The Bowers Program, our competitive three-season residency, is dedicated to developing the chamber music leaders of the future and integrates this selection of extraordinary early-career musicians into every facet of CMS activities. CMS reaches a growing global audience through a range of free digital media, including livestreams, an online archive of more than 1,300 video recordings, and broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners around the world.



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*Updated on February 22, 2024*

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