



Chamber  
Music Society  
of Lincoln Center

# ROSE STUDIO CONCERT

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 30, 2017 AT 6:30

**Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio**

**ROBERTO DÍAZ**, viola

**CALIDORE STRING QUARTET**

**JEFFREY MYERS**, violin

**RYAN MEEHAN**, violin

**JEREMY BERRY**, viola

**ESTELLE CHOI**, cello

**2017-2018  
SEASON**

**The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10023

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[www.ChamberMusicSociety.org](http://www.ChamberMusicSociety.org)

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**FELIX  
MENDELSSOHN**  
(1809-1847)

**Quartet in F minor for Strings, Op. 80 (1847)**

- ▶ Allegro vivace assai
  - ▶ Allegro assai
  - ▶ Adagio
  - ▶ Finale: Allegro molto
- MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, CHOI

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**  
(1833-1897)

**Quintet in G major for Two Violins, Two  
Violas, and Cello, Op. 111 (1890)**

- ▶ Allegro non troppo ma con brio
  - ▶ Adagio
  - ▶ Un poco allegretto
  - ▶ Vivace ma non troppo presto
- MYERS, MEEHAN, BERRY, DÍAZ, CHOI

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Photographing, sound recording, or videotaping this event is prohibited.

# NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

## Quartet in F minor for Strings, Op. 80

### FELIX MENDELSSOHN

- Born February 3, 1809 in Hamburg.
- Died November 4, 1847 in Leipzig.

#### ***Composed in 1847.***

- First CMS performance on March 15, 2006.
- Duration: 25 minutes

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On April 13, 1847, during his ninth visit to London, Mendelssohn suffered an attack of dizziness while standing on a bridge across the Thames. He had to cling to the railing to avoid fainting, but quickly recovered and carried on with the exhausting schedule of concerts, receptions, and dinners that had been arranged for him. He met three times with Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, entertaining them with hours of conversation and piano playing, directed four performances of *Elijah*, conducted several other programs of his music, appeared as soloist in Beethoven's G major Concerto at a Philharmonic Society concert, lunched at the Prussian Embassy, and toured art galleries. He made at least one formal public appearance every day of the week before he departed on May 8th. "Another week like this, and I'm a dead man," he confided to his old friend Karl Klingemann, secretary of the Hanover Legation in London. He arrived home to his wife, Cécile, and his family in Leipzig nearly exhausted.

Two days later, Mendelssohn learned that his beloved sister

Fanny had died suddenly in Berlin from a stroke on May 14th at the age of 41. He collapsed upon receiving the stunning news, and he was too ill even to attend the funeral. He canceled his upcoming performances and largely withdrew into his own thoughts. Cécile took him first to the spa at Baden-Baden and then to Interlaken in Switzerland, but those beneficent locales did little to heal his mind or body. Many commissions awaited his attention but the only work he was able to complete that summer was the String Quartet in F minor, into which he poured his grief over Fanny's death. He seemed to be recovering somewhat by the beginning of October, when he went to Berlin to discuss business matters with his brother, Paul. The sight of Fanny's rooms, left exactly as they had been on the day she was stricken, was, however, more than Mendelssohn could bear. He collapsed again and reverted to his state of the previous months. He made it back to Leipzig but suffered three strokes between October 7th and November 3rd. On November 4th, four months shy of his 39th birthday, Mendelssohn died. The F minor Quartet was his last important work.

The quartet's opening movement is unsettled, almost tempestuous in mood, given for much of its length to churning rhythmic activity, probing harmonic progressions, and shocking dynamic contrasts. The second theme is quieter and

more lyrical, but its character is one of enervation rather than calm. The development section concerns itself exclusively with the passionate main theme. The return of the subsidiary subject in the recapitulation provides only a brief respite in the movement's headlong rush toward its final measures. The second movement is not one of those scherzos of elfin grace that had vivified Mendelssohn's compositions since his teenage years, but is rather sardonic and macabre, music that presages some of Mahler's bitter scherzos of a half-century later. The barren trio that stands at the movement's center is supported

by a quasi-ostinato line sounded in hollow octaves by the viola and cello. The *Adagio*, the expressive heart of Mendelssohn's touching memorial to his sister, herself a composer and pianist of excellent talent, is based on a little song melody that he had sent to her in a letter in June 1830, soon after he had celebrated his 21st birthday; she was then 25. The *Finale* is at times almost athematic, consisting wholly of bare figurations and skeletal arpeggios such as can be found nowhere else in Mendelssohn's creative output. The sense of grief remains unassuaged through the work's anxious closing measures. ♦

## Quintet in G major for Two Violins, Two Violas, and Cello, Op. 111

### JOHANNES BRAHMS

- ▶ Born May 7, 1833 in Hamburg.
- ▶ Died April 3, 1897 in Vienna.

#### **Composed in 1890.**

- ▶ Premiered on November 11, 1890 in Vienna by the Rosé Quartet (Arnold Rosé and August Siebert, violins; Sigismund Bachrich, viola; Reinhold Hummer, cello), and violist Franz Jelinek.
- ▶ First CMS performance on January 8, 1971.
- ▶ Duration: 29 minutes

For many years, Brahms followed the sensible Viennese custom of taking to the countryside when the summer heat made life in the city unpleasant. In 1880 he first visited the resort of Bad Ischl in the lovely Salzkammergut region east of Salzburg, an area of mountains and lakes widely famed for its enchanting scenery (and in more recent years the site of the filming of *The Sound*

*of Music*). There he composed the *Academic Festival* and *Tragic Overtures* and the Piano Trio, Op. 87, cantankerously telling his friends that he was encouraged to such productivity because the miserable weather confined him constantly to his villa. Two years later, however, he again chanced Ischl, again found the weather poor, and again composed; the String Quintet, Op. 88 dates from the summer of 1882. Brahms then stayed away from Bad Ischl until 1889, but thereafter it became his annual country retreat until his last summer seven years later. It was at Ischl during the summer of 1890 that Brahms composed what his biographer Walter Niemann called "the most passionate, the freshest, and the most deeply inspired by nature" of all his works—the String Quintet in G major, Op. 111.



## **“WITH THIS LETTER YOU CAN BID FAREWELL TO MY MUSIC—BECAUSE IT IS CERTAINLY TIME TO LEAVE OFF.”**

Brahms was 57 years old in 1890. By that time he had acquired the great hedgerow of beard that is so familiar from the photographs of him in later life, a pronounced corpulence, and a feeling that he had “worked enough; now let the young people take over.” When he submitted the score of the new quintet to his publisher, Fritz Simrock, in December 1890, a month after it had been premiered in Vienna by the Rosé Quartet, he attached a note to the manuscript: “With this letter you can bid farewell to my music—because it is certainly time to leave off.” His dear friend and faithful correspondent Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, reminding him that his health was excellent and that he was at the peak of his popularity, wrote to him, “He who can invent all this [i.e., the G major Quintet] must be in a happy frame of mind! It is the work of a man of 30.” Still, Brahms was not to be swayed and he announced his retirement as a composer. When he heard the celebrated clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld at Meiningen the following spring, however, his resolve was broken, and he again took up his pen to produce the resplendent valedictories of his last years: the Trio (Op. 114), Quintet (Op. 115), and Sonatas (Op. 120) for Clarinet; the

*Fantasies and Intermezzi* for Piano (Op. 116-119); the *Four Serious Songs* (Op. 121); and the *Chorale Preludes* for Organ (Op. 122).

The quintet’s opening *Allegro* is one of Brahms’ typically masterful sonata forms, broad in scale and gesture yet enormously subtle and integrated in detail. The cello is entrusted with announcing the main theme through a dense but glowing curtain of accompanimental rustlings from the upper strings. The complementary melody, almost Schubertian in its warm lyricism, is presented in duet by the violas. The development incorporates much of the thematic material from the exposition, but keeps returning, almost like a refrain, to the rustling figurations of the movement’s opening. The earlier themes are recapitulated in heightened settings to round out the movement. When Max Kalbeck, the composer’s friend and eventual biographer, said that this music reminded him of the Prater, Vienna’s amusement park, Brahms replied, “You’ve guessed it! And the delightful girls there.” The *Adagio* is a set of three free variations based on a touching theme whose most characteristic gesture is the ornamental turn in its opening phrase. The following *Allegretto* serves as the quintet’s scherzo, though in spirit it is indebted to the popular waltzes of his adopted Vienna that Brahms so loved. The finale combines elements of sonata and rondo, a formal procedure, perhaps borrowed from Haydn, that Brahms employed in several other of his important works. ♦

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# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## CALIDORE STRING QUARTET

► The Calidore String Quartet's "deep reserves of virtuosity and irrepressible dramatic instinct" (*New York Times*) and "balance of intellect and expression" (*Los Angeles Times*) have won it accolades across the globe. The Calidore String Quartet—violinists Jeffrey Myers and Ryan Meehan, violist Jeremy Berry, and cellist Estelle Choi—made international headlines as the winner of the \$100,000 Grand Prize of the 2016 and inaugural M-Prize International Chamber Music Competition, the largest prize for chamber music in the world. Also in 2016, the quartet became the first North American ensemble to win the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and was named BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists, an honor that brings with it recordings, international radio broadcasts, and appearances in Britain's most prominent venues and festivals. Most recently the Calidore was honored with a 2017 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award. This season continues the Calidore's three-year residency with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's CMS Two program.

Highlights of the 2017-18 season include debuts at the Kennedy Center and in Boston, Philadelphia, Paris, Brussels, Cologne, and Barcelona, as well as returns to Wigmore Hall and the Verbier Festival. In April 2018 the Chamber Music Society will present the Calidore in its Alice Tully Hall recital debut. As protégés of the Emerson Quartet, the Calidore will perform a joint program with the Emersons at the Ravinia Festival as well as series in Portland, Ann Arbor, and Southern California. The Calidore String Quartet regularly performs in the most prestigious venues throughout North America, Europe, and Asia such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Wigmore Hall, Berlin Konzerthaus, Seoul's Kumho Arts Hall, and at many significant festivals, including Verbier, Ravinia, Mostly Mozart, Music@Menlo, Rheingau, East Neuk, and Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In addition to winning the M-Prize, the quartet has won grand prizes in virtually all the major US chamber music competitions, including the Fischhoff, Coleman, Chesapeake, and Yellow Springs competitions, and captured top prizes at the 2012 ARD Munich International String Quartet Competition and Hamburg International Chamber Music Competition.

The Calidore String Quartet has released three commercial recordings, the most recent of which features quartets by Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn recorded live in concert at the 2016 Music@Menlo festival. The ensemble's other recordings include a debut album of quartets by Mendelssohn and Haydn and an album on the French label Editions Hortus, with music commemorating the World War I centennial. Since 2016 the Calidore serves as visiting guest artists at the University of Delaware. Formed in 2010 at the Colburn School of Music, the quartet has studied with the Emerson Quartet, David Finckel, Andre Roy, Arnold Steinhardt, Günther Pichler, Gerhard Schulz, Guillaume Sutre, Gabor Takacs-Nagy, Paul Coletti, Ronald Leonard, Clive Greensmith, Martin Beaver, and the Quatuor Ebène. Using an amalgamation of "California" and "doré" (French for "golden"), the ensemble's name represents a reverence for the diversity of culture and the strong support it received from its home, Los Angeles, California, the "golden state."

## ROBERTO DÍAZ

► Violist Roberto Díaz continues a long and distinguished career as performer and educator. President and CEO of the Curtis Institute of Music since 2006, his tenure has seen the introduction of Curtis On Tour; the inception of classical guitar, string quartet, and conducting programs; the launch of Curtis Summerfest; and the debut of an online stage called Curtis Performs. Before his appointment at Curtis, he was principal violist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, where he performed the entire standard viola concerto repertoire and presented a number of Philadelphia Orchestra premieres. In demand as a soloist, he collaborates with leading conductors of our time, and has appeared with the symphony orchestras of Minnesota, Boston (at Tanglewood), Nashville, New World, Aspen, Grant Park, and Calgary, among others. He has also worked directly with important 20th and 21st-century composers, including Krzysztof Penderecki, Edison Denisov, Roberto Sierra, and Jennifer Higdon. As a chamber musician, he has toured Europe, Asia, and the Americas as a member of the Díaz Trio with violinist Andrés Cárdenes and cellist Andrés Díaz. Among Mr. Díaz's numerous recordings are the complete works for viola and piano by Henri Vieuxtemps, a Grammy-nominated disc of viola transcriptions by William Primrose, and the Brahms sonatas with Jeremy Denk. Mr. Díaz plays the ex-Primrose Amati viola.



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