

Program subject to change

SCHUBERT

Quartettsatz in C minor, D 703

THOMAS

Sun Threads*, movement 2: *Inovcations

MARENZIO

Three Madrigals (ed. Mase)

Scendi dal Paradiso
Qual Mormorio Soave
Gia Tona al Rallegrar

MOZART

Wind Serenade No. 12 in C minor, K.388/384a

Allegro
Andante
Menuetto in canone
Allegro

Quartettsatz in C minor, D 703

Franz Schubert

(b. Vienna, 1797 / d. Vienna, 1828)

First performed: March 1, 1867 (posthumously) in Vienna

Franz Schubert died, only 31 years old, leaving many works incomplete. The famous “*Unfinished*” *Symphony* is actually only one of several symphonies he did not complete, and the *Quartettsatz* (“Quartet Movement”) is among several chamber works to suffer the same fate. Speculation on why these works awaited completion range from “he put it aside and never got ‘round to it again,” to “what he started was so amazing he couldn’t think of a way to follow up.”

There is little question that Schubert intended to write another string quartet after *No. 11 in E Major* (which he did finish) in 1816. He completed this movement, started another movement, and got about 40 bars into it, and that’s all we have. And we are lucky to have event this; the manuscript was among several Schubert papers that were scattered after his death – but the *Quartettsatz* ended up in the collection of Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), who edited the work and had it published following its premiere, which took place almost 40 years after Schubert’s death.

The movement is a first movement, in Sonata form. Its trembling opening yields to a definitively stated opening theme in the first violin, a beautiful lyrical melody interrupted by a return to the agitated opening mood. These two ideas continue to succeed each other; the Schubertian

tendency to pit yearning and harsh reality side by side. The Recapitulation reverses the entry of the main themes, allowing for a stridently definitive final cadence.

***Sun Threads*, movement 2: Invocations**

Augusta Read Thomas

(b. Glen Cove, New York, 1964)

“Invocations” is the second movement from the string quartet, *Sun Threads*. As a whole, the work was premiered by the Avalon String Quartet on April 30, 2003.

Program note by the composer. For more on Augusta Read Thomas, visit augustareadthomas.com

Music is my entire life! I Cherish things deeply felt. I believe my music must be passionate, involving risk and adventure, such that a given musical moment might seem like a surprise right when you hear it but, only a millisecond later, seems inevitable. I think of my music as nuanced lyricism under pressure. I strive to attain quality of thought when it comes to inventing musical ideas, and writing for the string quartet is quite terrifying in this regard since the genre has a massive and wonderful repertoire. It is very hard to find quality new and personal sounds when composing for the string quartet.

My primary artistic concern is to communicate in an honest and passionate voice, which can speak to people from all walks of life. I believe being faithful to my deepest inner promptings and creative urges offers me the best opportunity to communicate with any willing listener, irrespective of prior musical knowledge, professional training, or background.

To all music, every listener brings his or her own unique perspective. In this regard, what is of greatest concern to me in *Sun Threads* is that I lead my listener to new aesthetic engagements with the world and themselves and that with each new piece, I continue on a life's journey of self-discovery.

Music of all kinds constantly amazes, surprises, propels, and seduces me into a wonderful and powerful journey. I am happiest when I am listening to music and in the process of composing music. I care deeply that music is not anonymous and generic or easily assimilated and just as easily dismissed. I would say that *Sun Threads* has passionate, urgent, seductive, and compelling qualities of sometimes complex, but always logical thought, allied to sensuous and engaging sonic profiles.

My favourite moment in any piece of music is the moment of maximum risk and striving. Whether the venture is tiny or large, loud or soft, fragile or strong, passionate, erratic, ordinary, or eccentric! Maybe another way to say this is the moment of exquisite humanity and raw soul. All art that I cherish has an element of love and recklessness and desperation. I like music that is alive and jumps off the page and out of the instrument as if something big is at stake.

One of my main artistic credos has for a long time been to do with examining small musical objects (a chord, a motive, a rhythm, a colour, etc.) and exploring them from every possible perspective. The different perspectives reveal new musical elements, which I then transform and which in turn become the musical development. Thus my works, and *Sun Threads* in particular, take on a kind of organic, circular, self-referential quality, while at the same time, they clearly progress forward.

The work's second movement, *Invocations*, was commissioned by the Santa Fe International Chamber Music Festival for the Miami Quartet with support from Chamber Music America. The work is dedicated to Santa Fe and the Miami Quartet.

Three Madrigals (ed. Mase)

Luca Marenzio

(b. Coccaglio, 1553 / d. Rome 1599)

Much of what is written about the early years of Luca Marenzio's life is speculative – we fill in blanks based on what seems most likely, and it is not until he gains employment in the well-established Italian circles of Cardinal Luigi d'Este, Alfonso II, and Ferdinando I de' Medici that details become certain. These engagements began with his talent as a singer, but he would become one of the most noted composers of madrigals in the late Renaissance. Since its invention, the madrigal lived in two worlds. Amateur singers presented them as private entertainments, receiving payment of all kinds in exchange. But madrigals were also used to supplement grander occasions and ceremonies, and these more elaborately constructed versions required professional singers.

Note by Raymond Mase, American Brass Quintet trumpeter (1973-2013):

In the closing years of the 16th century, the madrigal was considered the most progressive form of musical composition and the Italians were the leading madrigalists. Luca Marenzio, who was so admired in his lifetime that he was referred to as “the sweetest swan” and “the divine composer,” was the greatest of the Italian composers whose fame lies entirely on their madrigals, his output including more than 500 works. His madrigals were immensely popular throughout Europe and were not only published in many Italian cities, but also in Antwerp, Paris, Nuremberg, and London.

Marenzio's reputation was based largely on the success of his earlier works, published in the early 1580s, which are characterized by a youthful vigour, variety, and grace. In his most mature madrigals, Marenzio favored more serious, even morbid texts, and wrote in a style full of intense emotion and dramatic harmonies. The three madrigals in this group are taken from Marenzio's early books, published between 1581 and 1584. Typical of other Italian madrigalists, Marenzio most often used pastoral poetry as the text for his works. *Scendi dal paradiso*, written for a Roman wedding, asks Venus to come down from paradise so that a sacred knot may bind the fair souls. *Qual mormorio soave*, from one of two Marenzio collections of spiritual madrigals, reveals the annunciation in sweet whisperings. A madrigal of spring, *Gia torna a rallegrar* tells of April's return, laden with flowers to clean the air and earth. These striking madrigals inspire instrumental performance to heightened levels of sensitivity and expression, and are included

on the ABQ recording of music of the Italian Renaissance called *In Gabrieli's Day* (Summit DCD 429).

Wind Serenade No. 12 in C minor, K.388/384a

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(b. Salzburg, 1756 / d. Vienna, 1791)

First performed: 1782 in Salzburg

Mozart's made-to-order music of his Salzburg years has been listed under many names: serenade, divertimento, cassation, "Nacht musique" ("night music") and "Finalmusique." Sometimes, the same work would be referred to by more than one of these titles. Mozart's father Leopold listed the work for winds in C minor to be heard at these concerts as a "serenade," but Wolfgang referred to it as a "Nacht musique" in a letter. Such was the transitive nature of this music: written for a specific occasion, with no thought that it would ever be heard again.

Except that, in this case (as was the case with a number of other such works), Mozart must have detected something more worthwhile in this piece as, years later, he re-arranged it as a string quintet (K.405/516b).

Scored for pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns, it would appear the work was written for a Salzburg celebration in 1782. It is in four movements (not his usual layout for a serenade), and moreover, each movement is rather formally constructed. A unifying element – a diminished seventh heard early in the work – recurs in each movement. The opening movement has the serious, somewhat impending drama its home key inhabits, and several melodic ideas are suggested throughout the exposition. A second main subject is introduced by an oboe in the relative major (E-flat), but is swept away as the home key re-established. The oboe tries again, and its theme appears re-cast in C minor in the Recapitulation.

The Andante second movement, also in E-flat Major, begins rather nobly. The mood changes dramatically with the entry of a contrasting idea set to a pulsing rhythm. The unique third movement is a "minuet in canon," its triple metre pronounced over the variations presented of the theme. The contrasting trio is for the oboes and bassoons only.

Another theme and variation form is used for the final movement. It ingeniously presents a series of variations all in the home key, then a horn call announces a contrast – again in E-flat. Mozart does not give us the expected C Major "happy ending" until the very last variation of the movement, which finally enters following the return of C minor at the start of the movement's final section.

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