

An Evening with Parker Quartet

Daniel Chong, *violin*

Ying Xue, *violin*

Jessica Bodner, *viola*

Kee-Hyun Kim, *cello*

With special guests

Jung-Ja Kim, *piano* and Charles Clements, *double bass*

Mozart String Quartet No. 22 in B-flat major, K.589

Allegro

Larghetto

Menuetto: Moderato

Allegro assai

Prokofiev String Quartet No.2 in F major, Op. 92

Allegro sostenuto

Adagio

Allegro

Intermission

Schubert Piano Quintet in A major, D. 667 "Trout"

Allegro vivace

Andante

Scherzo: Presto

Andantino – Allegretto

Allegro giusto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

String Quartet No. 22 in B-flat major, K.589 (1790)

[Mozart](#)'s greatest contribution to the string quartet repertoire dates from 1782 and 1785, the period during which he composed the six quartets dedicated to his friend [Joseph Haydn](#). Only four quartets follow them, the lone K. 499 in D major, composed in 1786 and known as the "Hoffmeister" quartet, and the three quartets known as the "Prussian" quartets. They owe their name and genesis to what has generally assumed to have been a commission for six quartets from King Frederick William II of Prussia. The king, a keen amateur cellist, had received [Mozart](#) at Potsdam during the visit of the latter in the spring of 1789.

After [Mozart](#) returned to Vienna he quickly completed the first of the quartets, K. 575 in D, but thereafter made no further attempt to add to Frederick William's quartets for another year. [Mozart](#)'s dilatory attitude to proceeding with the set may be in part accounted for by the commission he and his librettist [Lorenzo da Ponte](#) received for *Così fan tutte*, which probably arrived late in the summer of 1789. However, it also casts doubts on the so-called "commission" from the Prussian king, particularly since he referred in a letter to "dedicating" the quartets to the king, a very different matter to a commission, for which he would have received an agreed sum. There is in fact no evidence that Frederick William ever set eyes on the three quartets which were completed, and they were eventually published posthumously by Artaria in January 1792, just weeks after the composer's death.

The B flat Quartet, the second to be completed, was entered in [Mozart](#)'s own thematic catalog in May 1790. [Mozart](#) had obviously returned to the quartets after the first performances of *Così* in January 1790, since the third, K. 590 in B flat followed a month later. With the notable exception of the great String Quintet in D, K. 593, the two quartets represent the only major works composed by [Mozart](#) during the whole of 1790, a year in which increasing financial worries resulted in the bleakest compositional year of his adult life. In the three completed quartets, [Mozart](#) concentrated on giving the cello-playing king a dominant role, often pushing the second violin and viola into the background to enable the cello to present thematic material or engage in dialogue with the first violin. The second quartet is in the customary four movements, an opening Allegro, followed by a relatively brief Larghetto, a Minuet of almost symphonic proportions and a finale marked Allegro assai. While the quartet (like its companions) fails to attain the elevated status of the six "Haydn" quartets, it is nevertheless a work of enigmatic beauty typical of [Mozart](#)'s late works.

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Sergei Prokofiev (1881-1953)

String Quartet No.2 in F major ("Kabardinian"), Op. 92 (1941)

The parenthetical subtitle here, "Kabardinian," refers to the origin of the themes in this quartet. [Prokofiev](#) rarely used folk or other unoriginal thematic material in his works. This F major Quartet was an exception. In 1941 the composer, along with [Myaskovsky](#) and other artists, was sent away from Moscow -- towards which Hitler's troops advanced -- to the safer haven of Nalchik, capital city of the Kabarda-Balkar Republic, situated in the Northern Caucasus. There he was exposed to, and ultimately fascinated by, the folk music of that region.

While experienced listeners will hear the folk-flavor in the themes of this quartet (especially in the second movement), they will at once recognize the music as pure [Prokofiev](#). The tenor of the work is light, from the rhythmic gusto of the first movement to the chipper prance of the finale. The opening panel, marked *Allegro sostenuto*, features two colorful themes, both lively and rhythmic, the second of the pair more genial and catchy. While the development section works up considerable tension and conflict, the music in general remains light and playful.

The second movement *Adagio* begins with an exotic melody which has a Middle-Eastern air about its quivering accompaniment. A playful theme that skips about to an array of rhythmic effects forms the delightful middle section. The opening theme is reprised and the music ends quietly. The finale, marked *Allegro*, presents a catchy rhythmic theme and an alternate exotic melody, whose accompaniment features colorful prickly jabs. The middle section is largely comprised of a sustained emotional outburst whose cries are the only sounds in the work that even vaguely hint at war or suffering. The main material returns in reverse order and the work ends happily.

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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Piano Quintet in A major, D. 667 "Trout" (1819)

Schubert's Piano Quintet in A Major, D. 667—commonly referred to as "The Trout"—is well known to musicians and audiences alike. Its bright tonality and airy, refreshing textures make it a perennial favorite at chamber music festivals, music schools, and even New Year's Eve parties. A great part of its popularity no doubt rests in the fourth movement (also the eponymous source of the quintet's nickname), which presents variations on the popular Schubert lied "Die Forelle" ("The Trout"), D. 550.

Schubert's first biographer Heinrich Kreissle von Hellborn says that Schubert wrote the quintet in the summer of 1819 while traveling through Upper Austria with his friend and vocal muse Johann Michael Vogl. The pair's travels took them through Linz and the small town of Steyr. It was there that Schubert met up with his boyhood friend Albert Stadler and came into contact with Sylvester Paumgartner, an amateur cellist and the leading music patron of Steyr. The two suggested to Schubert that he compose a quintet for themselves and some friends that incorporated variations on his recent popular song from 1817, "Die Forelle."

Schubert was not alone in writing for this creatively arranged set of instruments (piano, violin, viola, cello, and bass). Contemporaries of his—such as Ries, Cramer, and Onslow—wrote quintets for the same set of instruments, as did several British composers who were possibly inspired by double-bass virtuoso Domenico Dragonetti's presence in London at this time. A recent theory has it that the "Trout" Quintet's original bassist was using the Viennese bass, a fretted five-string instrument tuned in a D-major chord. While there is no concrete proof that this was the instrument for which Schubert wrote, the bass part has the exact range and many idiomatic passages for the instrument. While the Viennese bass had seen the height of its popularity perhaps two decades earlier, it is not so far-fetched to think that this instrument was still being used regularly in the small rural town of Steyr. Perhaps the instrument's tuning and bright sound contributed to Schubert's choice of key.

The "Trout" Quintet is cast in five movements. The first—which uses a figure from the piano part of "Die Forelle" as a main thematic cell—is a typical sonata-allegro movement, but with special emphasis on modulations to the flattened submediant (this relationship between the tonic and flat-six is used so often by Schubert that it is sometimes referred to as the "Schubert third").

The second movement is unusual for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the form: A–A. While the form may not seem inspired, the modulations employed surely are. The movement begins in F (the "Schubert third" of A Major), then moves through F-sharp minor, G major, A-flat major, A minor, and finally back to the home key of F. The Scherzo and trio are quite representative of the time, again with some very unusual modulations.

The celebrated variation movement, pitched in D rather than the song's original key of D-flat, presents the "Forelle" theme with a variety of ornamentations, giving each instrument in the quintet a chance to sing. The Finale is similar to the form of the second movement, but with a first-half repeat, meaning in effect the material is heard three times in a row (A–A–A). The

second half—unlike that of the second movement—is an exact transposition with no change at all to the material.

While there is no manuscript copy of the "Trout" in Schubert's hand, we do have two important sources for the music: the first printed edition, published posthumously in 1829, and a set of parts in Albert Stadler's hand, who copied them for Paumgartner in Vienna. The parts give some important clues about the original performance, particularly concerning the tuning of the bass. While the printed first edition doubled the cello part in the bass right down to low C, Stadler's own parts put the lower limit in the bass part at F, exactly the range of the Viennese bass.

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About the Artists

Parker Quartet

Inspiring performances, luminous sound, and exceptional musicianship are the hallmarks of the Grammy Award-winning Parker Quartet. Renowned for its dynamic interpretations and polished, expansive colors, the group has rapidly distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation. In demand worldwide, the Quartet has appeared at the world's most important venues since its founding in 2002.

Following a 2017 summer season that had the ensemble crossing North America for appearances at music festivals including the Bowdoin International Music Festival in Maine, the Strings Music Festival in Colorado, and the Garth Newell Music Center in Virginia, the Parker Quartet will begin its fourth year in-residence at Harvard University with the new prestigious title of Preceptor. The Quartet's 2017-18 season continues its signature busy schedule with performances and residencies scheduled around the United States, including for the Schubert Club, Skidmore College, St. John's College, University of South Carolina, Kansas City's Friends of Chamber Music, and an appearance on the Jukebox series at the Kennedy Center.

Highlights of the 2016-17 season included a January 2017 European tour featuring performances with violist Kim Kashkashian and two concerts in Washington, DC: at the National Gallery of Art and with jazz pianist Billy Childs at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Other performances also included Annapolis Concerts at St. John's College, the Mary Anne Rennolds Chamber Concert Series at VCU, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society.

Recent highlights include the project "Schubert Effect" in collaboration with pianist Shai Wosner at the 92nd Street Y, the premiere of a new string quartet by American composer Augusta Read Thomas as part of the Quartet's four-concert series at Harvard University, and appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, the Slee Series in Buffalo, and New York's Lincoln

Center Great Performers series. The Quartet also continues to be a strong supporter of violist Kim Kashkashian's project Music for Food by participating in concerts throughout the United States for the benefit of various food banks and shelters.

The Parker Quartet has distinguished itself with acclaimed recordings for Nimbus, Zig-Zag Territoires, Innova Records, and Naxos. The Quartet's most recent recording featuring Mendelssohn's Quartets Op. 44, No. 1 and 3 was widely lauded by the international press. The Quartet's debut commercial recording of Bartók's String Quartets Nos. 2 and 5 for Zig-Zag Territoires (July 2007) won praise from Gramophone: "The Parkers' Bartók spins the illusion of spontaneous improvisation... they have absorbed the language; they have the confidence to play freely with the music and the instinct to bring it off." Their Naxos recording of György Ligeti's complete works for string quartet won the 2011 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance (the last string quartet to win this category). In 2015, Innova Records released the world premiere recording of American composer Jeremy Gill's "Capriccio" written for the Quartet through a Chamber Music America commissioning grant. In April 2016 Augusta Read Thomas's world premiere recording of *Helix Spirals* for string quartet on "Of Being is a Bird" was released on Nimbus Records.

Recent collaborations include those with acclaimed artists like violist Kim Kashkashian, violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, pianists Anne-Marie McDermott and Shai Wosner, Kikuei Ikeda of the Tokyo String Quartet, clarinetist and composer Jörg Widmann, and clarinetist Charles Neidich.

Founded and currently based in Boston, the Parker Quartet's numerous honors include winning the Concert Artists Guild Competition, the Grand Prix and Mozart Prize at France's Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, and Chamber Music America's prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award. Now Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University's Department of Music, and also in residence at USC School of Music, the Quartet's numerous residencies have included serving as Artists-in-Residence at the University of St. Thomas (2012–2014), Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Minnesota (2011–2012), Quartet-in-Residence with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (2008-2010), and as the first-ever Artists-in-Residence with Minnesota Public Radio (2009-2010).

The Parker Quartet's members hold graduate degrees in performance and chamber music from the New England Conservatory of Music and were part of the New England Conservatory's prestigious Professional String Quartet Training Program from 2006–2008. Some of their most influential mentors include the original members of the Cleveland Quartet, Kim Kashkashian, György Kurtág, and Rainer Schmidt.

Jung-Ja Kim, *piano*

Kim has won critical acclaim in the United States, Europe, and Asia for her pianistic brilliance and insight. The *New York Times* called her debut "[b]rilliant playing, a vibrant, compelling performance," and the *Boston Globe* has consistently praised her over the years, describing her playing as "arresting," "a virtuosity of imagination," and "musical advocacy of a high order." Recent engagements include a recital at New York's Alice Tully Hall (2014) and

Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto No. 2* at the Seoul Arts Center with the Korean Chamber Orchestra (2016).

Kim made her New York debut at Carnegie Hall's recital hall as a winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions (1964) and was a winner of the Kosciuszko Chopin Competition (1964). She was selected by Leonard Bernstein to appear with the New York Philharmonic as part of the nationally televised Young People's Concerts. As a recipient of a Martha Baird Rockefeller grant (1968), she toured in France, Switzerland, England, Holland, Norway, and Germany. In the United States, she has appeared at American venues including Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Phillips Gallery, Jordan Hall, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and Merkin Hall. Orchestral engagements have included the Baltimore Symphony, St. Louis Chamber Orchestra, Boston Civic Symphony, the Seoul Philharmonic, and the Czech National Symphony. *American Record Guide* said Kim's recording of the complete Rachmaninoff Preludes had "a potent emotional current coursing through the music." Her other CDs include solo piano works by Ravel, Mozart, and Chopin.

Kim holds undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas from the Juilliard School, where she was a recipient of the Olga Samaroff and Frank Damrosch scholarships.

Charles Clements, *double bass*

Charles Clements grew up in Westborough, Massachusetts and began playing music at an early age. A 10-year journey through piano, viola, trumpet and electric bass led Charles to the double bass in high school which he began to study privately with Rhode Island Philharmonic bassist Nancy Kidd and play in jazz ensembles and youth orchestras in the Boston area. He attended the New England Conservatory of Music earning his Bachelor's Degree studying with Boston Symphony bassist Todd Seeber. Charles went on to receive his Master's Degree at Manhattan School of Music in New York, studying with New York Philharmonic bassist and jazz talent David Grossman.

Charles was a New World Symphony fellow from 2011-2014 and now is a regular substitute in the Boston Symphony. He has performed with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, and Boston's 'A Far Cry Chamber Orchestra'. Previously, Charles was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center for two summers earning the Maurice Schwartz prize for musical achievement in 2010. Other festivals Charles played at include the Britten-Pears program in England, the Schleswig-Holsten Music Festival in Germany, the Aspen Music Festival, the National Orchestral Institute, and the Domaine Forget Institute in Canada.

Charles now resides in Boston where he plays with a variety of different classical music ensembles and collaborates on a wide range of projects ranging from American Roots to Baroque.