

MARY ANNE  
*Reynolds*

CHAMBER CONCERT SERIES 2016 - 2017 SEASON

## THE DOVER QUARTET

Saturday, September 17, 2016  
8 p.m.

Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall  
W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
922 Park Avenue | Richmond, VA

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# The Dover Quartet

Joel Link, violin

Bryan Lee, violin

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola

Camden Shaw, cello

**LUDWIG VAN  
BEETHOVEN**  
(1770–1827)

**Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, N°. 1** (1801)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato
- III. Scherzo: Allegro molto
- IV. Allegro

**BENJAMIN  
BRITTEN**  
(1913–1976)

**Quartet N°. 2 in C Major, Op. 36** (1945)

- I. Allegro calmo, senza rigore
- II. Vivace
- III. Chacony: sostenuto

## *INTERMISSION*

**DMITRI  
SHOSTAKOVICH**  
(1841–1904)

**String Quartet N°. 2 in A, Op. 68** (1944)

- I. Overture: Moderato con moto
- II. Recitative and Romance: Adagio
- III. Valse: Allegro
- IV. Theme with Variations: Adagio

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## **Notes on the Program**

*by Susanna Klein*

What power can four instruments hold? Composers have been answering this question in their own unique way for more than 250 years. Over time, the string quartet has been elevated to one of the most revered musical genres in all of Western Art Music. Like the self-portrait in art, the string quartet is a genre through which composers often weave their most intimate thoughts together with their most refined musical skills. Quartets are a litmus test of sorts for composers, and all composers try their hand at least once in their lifetime. The combination of instruments is distilled down to a minimum of full harmony: one instrument covers the soprano, alto, tenor and bass vocal parts of a choir. The masters of writing for string quartet – those with the most prolific and magical output, are the following composers: Haydn, who is considered the father and inventor of string quartet, as well as Mozart, Beethoven, Bartók and Shostakovich. I would like to put the quartets on tonight's program in some historical context...

### **Beethoven String Quartet in F Major**

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, a young Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) was writing music while both his musical idols, Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, were still alive. Beethoven was struck especially by the musical genius of Mozart's string quartets. Through his papers, we know that he hand-copied several of Mozart's quartets, line by line, in order to study them. Although inconceivable to us now (in the age of Google and YouTube), this tradition of patient study allowed a composer to understand another master's craft. Musicologists believe Beethoven intended to take composition lessons with Mozart, but it never came to fruition. He did, however, take some lessons with Joseph Haydn and it is during this time period in the 1790s that Beethoven developed his chamber music writing. He composed piano trios, string trios, a septet, cello sonatas and violin sonatas. In short, he wrote for everything but the kitchen sink...and notably, no string quartets. It was not until after Mozart's death and the gradual winding down of Haydn's illustrious career that Beethoven, now close to 30 years old, began to work in earnest on his first set of six string quartets, which comprise Op. 18.

The year 1801 proved to be a milestone for Ludwig van Beethoven. In 1801, he published his first symphony and his first quartet, Op. 18, No. 1, which you will hear tonight. Waiting to the ripe age of 31 to publish quartets was as much about pride as it was about economic prudence. Since Beethoven published his own music – which meant he paid for copies in advance and sold them himself – competing with Mozart and Haydn directly would have been a risky business. He printed 250 copies of the six quartets that comprise Op. 18, and he sold 241. His quartet writing was almost instantly discussed. The F major quartet is labeled as No. 1 and appears first in the published set, but it was in fact not the first quartet that he wrote. Beethoven actually wrote the more progressive No. 3 before any of the others, but when Beethoven set about to publish his six quartets, he thought very carefully about the order. Of the six quartets in Op. 18, this F Major Quartet is the one most in classical style of Mozart and Haydn, as if to announce to the world, “I can do this, too.” It begins with a unison statement of all four voices – an announcement to the world that his quartets have finally arrived. The work, in comparison to the later Beethoven style, is light and transparent. The six-note opening motive, stated in unison, is repeated in the work well over 100 times. Texturally it is often homophonic, meaning it has very clear layering of melody supported by accompaniment as opposed to competing melodies. The motives are usually featured in the first violin, and occasionally the cello, while the inner two instruments play a supporting role. Even within his earliest published string quartets, we hear the individual voice and genius of Beethoven glimmering through. In the coda of the last movement, where the quartet is whipped up to a frenzy, we get a foretaste of the Beethoven’s journey with the 15 quartets he would still write in his lifetime. There are small outbursts of drama throughout the work, all hinting at a later style, but Op. 18, No. 1 was an important milestone in Beethoven’s life precisely because he could step into a lineage of classical quartet masters. By the time Beethoven wrote his last string quartet some 25 years later, he had revolutionized quartet writing and set the bar unbelievably high for all those to follow him.

## **Britten String Quartet N°. 2 in C Major**

Let's fast-forward about 150 years to 1945, when the English composer Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) wrote his second of four string quartets. What had transpired in the world of quartet writing in those 150 years? For one thing, through the romantic period and into the 20th century, the string quartet expanded its tonal range. All the voices in the quartet had become virtuoso participants. The second violin and viola parts, in particular, were no longer relegated to the back seat. The newly improved string bow design by François Xavier Tourte (1747–1835) had made string sounds more powerful in volume and expression. Textures had become thicker and complex in counterpoint, meaning that several melodies were often layered one on top of the other. The string quartet had been stretched to its limit of tonality by Béla Bartók and Arnold Schoenberg. All of these changes can be heard in Britten's astounding work. This was the state of affairs in the quartet world when the 38-year-old Britten was commissioned to write a piece for the 200th anniversary of the death of his favorite, Henry Purcell. The state of the world was an entirely different matter. Europe had just been devastated – inconceivably – by yet another World War. Britten, a pacifist, had earned notoriety by being an conscientious objector. In 1945, at the end of the war, Britten met the American violinist Yehudi Menuhin at a party. When he heard that Menuhin was going on a recital tour for concentration camp survivors, Britten convinced him to let him be his accompanist. The ten-day tour, which included a concert in Bergen-Belsen, where scores of displaced persons listened, left an indelible impression on him. He bore witness to both horrific destruction and a remarkable spirit for survival in the face of unspeakable brutality. It was this trip that inspired his dramatic second quartet. Although Britten is thought of as a tonal composer during this period, his harmony branches into chromaticism and dissonance. The quartet is a piece of great fantasy and emotion, a journey through many textures and moods. The last movement, labeled chacony, is a revival of Henry Purcell's most famous variations form. It ends with an epic repetition of 21 C major chords.

## Shostakovich Quartet N°. 2 in A

When you listen to Shostakovich's second string quartet, consider the fact that it was written around the same time (1944) as Britten's second quartet. Both pieces are born out of death and destruction, a time before cultural globalism and the internet – and a different compositional style and *Weltanschauung* are apparent. When discussing Dmitri Shostakovich's works, there is always a subtext in musicological circles: his turbulent relationship with the Soviet regime and his reaction to the atrocities of Stalinism. At first, Shostakovich was revered by the state, but by 1936 his relationship with the authorities had become strained at best. Like Beethoven whom he greatly admired, he began writing quartets when he was musically mature, and also like Beethoven, found the string quartet a perfect vehicle for his most complex emotions. He wrote a total of 15 quartets during his lifetime, considered by most musicians a quartet cycle of astounding genius. Many of his quartets contain encryptions of letters and numbers with covert messages. String quartets are less concrete than song cycles and operas, which meant that getting past censorship for "unsuitable subject matter" was much easier. Jewish themes are woven into the piece and can be interpreted as a reaction to Stalin's anti-Semitic campaigns of the 40s and the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis. But even before this time period, the composer had secretly begun incorporating Jewish folk music into his own compositions, for he admired its "ability to build a jolly melody on sad intonations." In contrast to the first quartet, which was rather optimistic, the second quartet gives voice to what will become the quintessential Shostakovich style: a dark romanticism in which dissonance and sorrow prevail. Shostakovich has a unique voice that takes us through a brutal emotional landscape – hopeful for an instant, but more often distant, afraid, and unsettled. The scherzo features his customary grotesque waltz, to which surely no one is dancing. In the Recitative and Romance, as in many of his slow movements, one can sense a terrible loneliness and the composer's voice turns exquisitely tender.

Thank you so much for coming to tonight's concert. We look forward to seeing you again in October to welcome the Parker String Quartet!

All the best,

**Susanna Klein**

Rennolds Board Member

Area Coordinator of Strings, Assistant Professor of Violin

VCU Department of Music

### **Susanna's Picks**

If you would like to explore tonight's composers further, check out the recommendations below. Selections for each composer include a book, a website, a piece to listen to, and a live concert in Richmond this season that features his work.

#### **Beethoven**

Safford: Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph

lvbeethoven.com

Quartet Op. 132

Richmond Symphony, Symphony No. 8 - February 4, 2017

#### **Britten**

Kildea: Benjamin Britten: A life in the Twentieth Century

brittenpears.org

Solo Cello Suites

Washington Chorus, War Requiem - November 3, 2016

#### **Shostakovich**

Wilson: Shostakovich, A Life Remembered

shostakovichquartets.com

Piano Trio Op. 10

Rennolds Series, Montrose Trio - February 18, 2017



## **About the Quartet**

The Dover Quartet catapulted to international stardom following a stunning sweep of the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, becoming one of the most in-demand ensembles in the world. The New Yorker recently dubbed them “the young American string quartet of the moment,” and The Strad raved that the Quartet is “already pulling away from their peers with their exceptional interpretive maturity, tonal refinement and taut ensemble.” In 2013-14, the Quartet was the first ever Quartet-in-Residence for the venerated Curtis Institute of Music, and is now faculty Quartet-in-Residence at Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music.

In addition to winning the Grand Prize and all three Special Prizes at the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, the Dover Quartet has continued to receive accolades: in 2015 it was announced that the group had been awarded the highly prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award, and shortly thereafter, Lincoln Center awarded the quartet the annual Hunt Family Award, as part of the organization’s Emerging Artist Awards. In its early years, the quartet also won grand prize at the Fischhoff Competition, and special prizes at the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition.

The Dover Quartet participates regularly in some of the continent’s most reputable summer festivals, including Chamber Music Northwest, Artosphere, Bravo Vail, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and are active proponents of new music: this season included a premier of Pulitzer-Prize winning Caroline Shaw’s new quartet at Dumbarton Oaks, and next season will include the premieres of multiple commissions, including works from Richard Danielpour and Michael Djupstrom.

The Dover Quartet was formed in 2008 at the Curtis Institute of Music, and continued their studies as Graduate Quartet-in-Residence at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music from 2011-13. Because of the exceptional faculty at both of these institutions, the group draws from the musical lineage of the Cleveland, Vermeer, Concord, and Guarneri Quartets. The Quartet has been mentored extensively by Shmuel Ashkenasi, James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, Joseph Silverstein, Arnold Steinhardt, Michael Tree, and Peter Wiley, and is dedicated to sharing their music with underserved communities and is an active member of Music for Food, an initiative to help musicians fight hunger in their home communities.

### **Joel Link, violin**

From a young age, violinist Joel Link has met much success both as a soloist and chamber musician. As a top prize winner of numerous competitions including the Johansen International Competition in Washington D.C. and the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition in England, Link's playing has received accolades for being both highly refined and captivatingly passionate. The Atlanta Journal Constitution wrote of a concert, "After Joel played, the audience rose, one at a time, seemingly pulled out of their seats by the richness of his sound and the authority of his musical ideas." As a result of his prize at the Menuhin Competition, Link was featured in The Strad magazine and has also appeared on numerous radio shows, including NPR's "From the Top."

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, he studied with renowned violinists Joseph Silverstein and Pamela Frank, and served as the Curtis Symphony Orchestra's concertmaster for the 2009-2010 season. Joel's love of chamber music has taken him to highly regarded music festivals across the globe, including the Ravinia and Marlboro music festivals, as well as Music from Angelfire. As a member of the Dover String Quartet, (formerly the Old City String Quartet) Joel has received the Grand Prize as well as the Gold Medal from the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition, and concertizes with the ensemble to great critical acclaim.

### **Bryan Lee, violin**

Bryan Lee has performed as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Delaware, Lansdowne, and Temple University Symphony Orchestras, among others. Bryan was awarded the Bronze Medal at the 2005 Stulberg International String Competition and won second prize at the 2004 Kingsville International Young Performers Competition. He was featured on America's National Public Radio station on the show "From the Top", and has attended Ravinia's Steans Institute for Young Artists, La Jolla Summerfest, Music from Angel Fire, Encore School for Strings, Sarasota Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, and the Perlman Music Program.

Serving as Associate Concertmaster of both Symphony in C and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, and as a substitute for the Philadelphia Orchestra, Bryan has performed under the batons of such renowned

conductors as Michael Tilson Thomas, Rossen Milanov, Otto-Werner Mueller, Alan Gilbert, Christoph Eschenbach, and Sir Simon Rattle, and has collaborated in chamber music with Peter Wiley, Ida Kavafian, Roberto Diaz, Anne-Marie McDermott, Carter Brey and the Tokyo String Quartet. Bryan is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied with Pamela Frank and Victor Danchenko. His previous studies were with Choong-Jin Chang and Soovin Kim.

### **Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola**

Praised by Strad Magazine as having “lyricism that stood out...a silky tone and beautiful, supple lines,” violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt has already established herself as one of the most sought-after violists of her generation. In addition to appearances as soloist with the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Jacksonville Symphony, and the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra, she has performed in recitals and chamber music concerts throughout the United States, Latin America, and Europe, including an acclaimed 2011 debut recital at London’s Wigmore Hall, which was described in Strad as being “fleet and energetic...powerful and focused.”

Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt is the founding violist of the Dover Quartet, First Prize winner and sweeper of every special award at the Banff International String Quartet Competition 2013 and winner of the Gold Medal and Grand Prize in the 2010 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. Her numerous awards also include First Prize of the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and top prizes at the Tokyo International Viola Competition and the Sphinx Competition. Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt’s summer festival appearances include Marlboro, Bowdoin, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Sarasota, Strings, Bravo! Vail Valley, and La Jolla Summerfest, as well as Italy’s Emilia Romagna Festival. Among the conductors with whom she has worked are Seiji Ozawa, Christoph Eschenbach, Alan Gilbert, Charles Dutoit and Otto-Werner Mueller.

A violin student of Sergiu Schwartz and Melissa Pierson-Barrett for several years, she began studying viola with Michael Klotz at the Bowdoin International Music Festival in 2005. Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Roberto Diaz, Michael Tree, Misha Amory, and Joseph de Pasquale. She then received her Master’s Degree in String Quartet with the Dover

Quartet at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, as a student of James Dunham. Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt performs on a 2004 copy of the Primrose Amati, originally made for Roberto Diaz by Gabrielle Kundert.

### **Camden Shaw, cello**

Cellist Camden Shaw has captivated audiences across the United States and Europe as an artist of unique and sincere vision. His playing has been described as "Wonderfully rich" (Kansas City Star), "dynamic and brave" (Stereo Times), and possesses a fluidity and flair that is truly unique. As cellist of the prizewinning Dover Quartet, he has appeared all over the world to great acclaim, being called a "phenomenal instrumentalist, who [seems] to have no technical difficulties." (Rheinpfalz Ludwigshafen.)

Shaw has also collaborated in chamber music with such renowned artists as Daniel Hope, Leon Fleischer, and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and maintains an active career as a soloist: highlights from recent years include a performance of the Beethoven Triple concerto with the highly-acclaimed Artosphere Festival Orchestra, where Shaw also holds the principal chair, and the release of his solo album by the audiophile label Unipheye Music. The Album met with much critical praise, and a review in the STRAD magazine said of Shaw's Kodaly sonata: "There is a raw earthiness to Shaw's playing, an interplay of passion and plaintive lyricism, and a courageous contempt for [its] horrific demands that is utterly gripping."

Shaw graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in 2010, where he studied with Peter Wiley. Other major teachers include Norman Fischer, David Finckel, and Steven Isserlis. Shaw performs on an instrument made in 2010 by Sam Zygmuntowicz of Brooklyn, NY.

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