



**JUPITER STRING QUARTET WITH MICHAEL BROWN, PIANO**

Thursday, November 30, 2017, at 7:30pm

Foellinger Great Hall

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# PROGRAM

## JUPITER STRING QUARTET WITH MICHAEL BROWN, PIANO

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

*String Quartet No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1*  
Introduzione: Andante espressivo; Allegro  
Scherzo: Presto; Intermezzo  
Adagio  
Presto

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

*Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47*  
Sostenuto assai; Allegro ma non troppo; Più agitato  
Scherzo: Molto vivace; Trio I; Trio II  
Andante cantabile  
Finale: Vivace

*20-minute intermission*

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

*Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44*  
Allegro brillante  
In modo d'una marcia; Un poco largamente; Agitato  
Scherzo: Molto vivace; Trio I; Trio II  
Allegro ma non troppo

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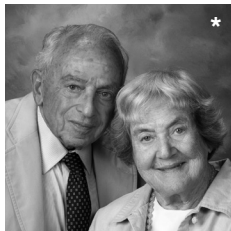
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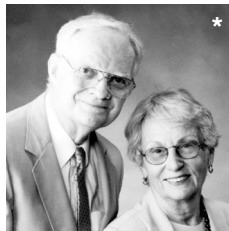
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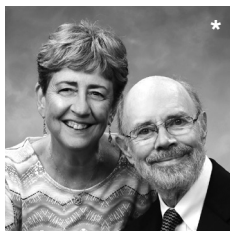
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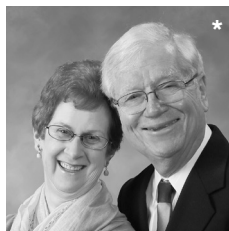
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## PROGRAM NOTES

In their all-Schumann program, the Jupiter String Quartet and Michael Brown artfully include major works from Schumann's chamber music composed between 1841 and 1843. This period, following his marriage to Clara Wieck in September of 1841, was marked by the extremes of happiness and pain that beset Schumann all his life. He was aware of being in Clara's shadow but suffered much from any separation from her as she pursued her active piano performance career. When she returned from a month-long trip to Copenhagen in April 1841, he set to work on his three string quartets, the first of which we hear tonight, followed in the fall by the Piano Quintet and the Piano Quartet also included in the Jupiter and Michael Brown's remarkable program.

Central to Schumann's music is the reflection of his so-called "split personality," that is, the free and happy Florestan side and the restrained and pensive Eusebius side, so named after the imaginary characters that Schumann created to express his life. How much this reflects his own mental illness resulting in his attempted suicide in 1854 by a leap into the icy Rhine and his death two years later in a mental institution, we shall leave to the psychiatrists. What we need to study is the glorious result of his compositional efforts despite, not because of, his sufferings. We might note, however, that Schumann was subject to the well-known conflict of two artists in a marriage, this time somewhat in reverse of Gustav and Alma Mahler or Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. For a portrayal of the marriage as well as Schumann's own troubles, one might turn to the 1947 film *Song of Love*.

### ROBERT SCHUMANN

Born June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Germany

Died July 29, 1856, in Endenich, Bonn, Germany

#### *String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1*

Schumann's three string quartets reveal both his reverence for Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—and certainly Mendelssohn—and his basic contention with traditional Classical form. He admired it but wanted to reach beyond it. Without arrogance, Schumann undertook that challenge in his string quartets. Schumann's string quartets were dedicated to his close friend and colleague Felix Mendelssohn and premiered on September 13, 1842, as a present for his wife Clara on her 23rd birthday.

Clara Schumann cautioned her husband, in his string quartets, to compose in a manner that could be more easily understood. Understanding hardly seems the issue in the A Minor String Quartet, a great achievement of Romantic expression, yet it adds to the complete appreciation of this wonderful work that is both a denial and honoring of Classical form. In it, Schumann breaks free of the restraints of Classicism in his emotionalism but still employs honored forms in a most individual way. His studies of Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn as well as the contrapuntal techniques of Bach are not lost in the A Minor Quartet.

In fact, it is complex counterpoint that rules the opening of the first movement. The contrapuntal sense is interrupted by sudden chords creating a war, as it were, between the horizontal and the vertical. This pulling back and forth explains

at least some of the plaintive qualities of the movement. Also notable here is Schumann's use of a musical motif, in this case, a six-note phrase that fixes itself in our brains and finds a way to our hearts.

Surely the second movement Scherzo is a bow to Mendelssohn in its lively staccato statement. Yet true to form, Schumann inserts a lyrical trio section marked as an Intermezzo, and we sense his ever-present contrasting personalities, Florestan and Eusebius.

The plaintiveness of the first movement returns and is elaborated upon in the third movement Adagio. Here rapture and ecstasy rule in this incredible achievement of Romantic expression. A beautiful song is given to the violin and then to the cello followed by a more agitated section urged on by the viola. All ends quietly as we are left in amazement at Schumann's genius.

The last movement Presto breaks out like a peasant dance but is in truth a most sophisticated example of complex compositional style, although it seems to defy all rules in its excitement. Again, there is a war between horizontal and vertical with a contrapuntal opening interrupted by sharp chords. A three-note motto persists in many variations. Then, unexpectedly, everything slows. We are held in suspense for an endless moment when the cello offers a bagpipe drone under a quiet melody. A stately chorale finds its way in but gives way to the fast opening theme for a most exciting finish.

### *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47*

The Piano Quartet was completed in October of 1842 and concluded Schumann's year-long creative burst of chamber music that also included his Piano Quintet and his three Op. 41 string quartets. It was written for Count Matvei, an obviously accomplished amateur cellist, but given its premiere by professional musicians in Leipzig on December 8, 1844. The pianist was Clara Schumann.

The brief but riveting *Sostenuto assai* that opens Schumann's Piano Quartet quickly gives way to the powerful and expressive *Allegro ma non troppo* that dominates the first movement with its recurring themes and pulsing rhythm maintained by the piano. We have a momentary return to the *Sostenuto* before the themes are restated and developed in a livelier *Allegro* section which, after a sustained moment, leads to the thrilling *Più agitato* that concludes the movement.

The staccatos of the second movement Scherzo are interrupted twice by two more sustained Trio sections before the movement wisps into thin air. Then we are taken into the heaven of the *Andante cantabile* with its moving lyricism for each instrument in turn. The opening cello song is unforgettable, but the violin, viola, and piano all have their special moments.

The wonderful Finale seems to combine the power of the first movement with the lyricism of the third movement and the liveliness of the Scherzo. The masterful writing of the Piano Quartet is some of Schumann's best.

## *Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44*

The direct route Schumann's music takes to our hearts is no better demonstrated than in his Piano Quintet composed in September of 1842 in just five days. It was dedicated to Clara Schumann who was pianist in the first reading of the work at the Schumann home. For a private performance the following December, no less than Felix Mendelssohn filled in for an ailing Clara.

The work seems amazingly free from the effects of the mental illness that plagued Schumann. The first movement bears his familiar imprint with its bold, heroic opening followed by a lovely song. The cello and viola hold sway in the second theme while the piano takes center stage with virtuosic runs in the development section. All join forces for the thrilling recapitulation.

The second movement is, as the tempo marking indicates, in the manner of a march. In this case, we have a kind of universal funeral march not intended as a tribute to an individual but one for humanity itself and its frailties. A lyrical section intervenes and lifts the mood before a return to the solemn march. A forceful and faster section follows which, in turn, becomes lyrical before it, too, returns to the spirit of the opening march. A simple, unadorned moment concludes

this movement that seems to be almost a war between the happy and the sad—a true reflection of Schumann's own personal battle between his opposing personalities.

The third movement Scherzo is a thorough exploration of scale patterns underscored by interesting and irregular rhythmic patterns. Two contrasting Trio sections interrupt the scales, the second one a brilliant revision suggested by Mendelssohn when he played the piano part.

In the last movement, Schumann returns to the heroic vigor and song-like quality of the first movement but adds to that an astounding three-voiced fugue. It is especially interesting, in this movement, to note Schumann's honoring of Classical form despite his attempt to free music from those confines in the name of Romanticism.

Having no real precedent, the work was a pioneer for the great quintets of Brahms, Franck, and Dvořák.

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# PROFILES

The **JUPITER STRING QUARTET** stands at the forefront of the younger generation of classical chamber music ensembles. Formed in 2002, they concertize across the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and South America performing in the world's finest halls, including New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center; the Kennedy Center, Corcoran Gallery, and Library of Congress in Washington, DC; Boston's Jordan Hall; London's Wigmore Hall; Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes; the Esterházy Palace in Austria; and Seoul's National Arts Center and Sejong Chamber Hall. Recent concerts include performances in New York City; Washington, DC; Boston; Chicago; Tucson; Aspen; Buffalo; Cincinnati; Dallas; and Denver; to name just a few. They have been enthusiastically welcomed at major music festivals in North America, including Aspen, Bowdoin, Caramoor, Rockport, Yellow Barn, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Madeline Island, Skaneateles, Honest Brook, the Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, Banff, and Lanaudière Festival, and abroad at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in Ireland and the Seoul Spring Festival, among many others.

The Jupiter String Quartet feels a particular connection to the core string quartet repertoire. They have presented the complete Beethoven string quartets at the Aspen Music Festival, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Lanaudière Festival in Quebec. They performed the complete Bartók string quartets at the University of Illinois. They have a strong, ongoing commitment to new music, demonstrated through a series of commissioned works, including string quartets from Syd Hodkinson, Hannah Lash, Dan Visconti, Mark Adamo (*Aristotle* with baritone Thomas Hampson),

and a forthcoming quartet by Kati Agócs to be premiered in summer 2018. The quartet can be heard on 10 recordings on various labels including Azica Records, Marquis Classics, and Deutsche Grammophon. *Rootsongs* features Dvořák's "American" *String Quartet* with Stephen Andrew Taylor's arrangements of four African-American spirituals, sung by Ollie Watts Davis, and Dan Visconti's *Ramshackle Songs*, a work inspired by the music of Tin Pan Alley and commissioned by the ensemble. Their most recent CD, *Revelations*, is chamber music by Su Lian Tan released in 2017.

The Jupiters have received several musical distinctions: an Avery Fisher Career Grant (2008), Grand Prize in the Banff International String Quartet Competition (2004), Grand Prize in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition (2004), membership in Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society Two (2007-2010), and Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award (2007), which "honors and promotes a rising young string quartet whose artistry demonstrates that it is in the process of establishing a major career." They also won the 2005 Young Concert Artists International auditions.

The Jupiter String Quartet is a particularly intimate group, consisting of violinists Nelson Lee and Meg Freivogel, violist Liz Freivogel—Meg's sister—and cellist Daniel McDonough—Meg's husband. Meg and Liz grew up playing string quartets with their two brothers. They grew to love chamber music during coachings with Oliver Edel, a cellist and teacher in the Washington, DC area. Nelson also comes from a musical family—both of his parents are pianists, his father also conducts, and his twin sisters Alicia and Andrea play clarinet and cello. Although Daniel originally



wanted to be a violinist, he ended up on the cello because the organizers of his first strings program declared that he had “better hands for the cello.” He remains skeptical of this comment (he was, after all, only five), and suspects they may just have needed more cellists, but is happy that he ended up where he did. Daniel, Nelson, and Meg met at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and when they were searching for a violist Meg suggested her sister Liz, who was at nearby Oberlin College. The four finished their schooling together at the New England Conservatory of Music in the Professional String Quartet Training Program. The quartet chose Jupiter as its namesake; it was the most prominent planet in the night sky at the time of its formation. Its astrological symbol resembles the number four and numerous musical references emphasize connotations of happiness and strength associated with the Roman god. The quartet owes much of its musical philosophy to the influences of the original Cleveland Quartet and the current Takács Quartet, in which all four members form a dynamic and democratic union. The Jupiters spent their formative years under the instruction of these eminent chamber musicians, and continue to adhere to many of their central principles today.

The Jupiter String Quartet is in its fifth year as Artists-In-Residence at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where each member maintains a private studio as well as responsibility for running the chamber music program. In addition to its formal concert and teaching schedule, the Jupiter String Quartet places a strong emphasis on developing relationships with future classical music audiences through outreach work in the schools and other educational performances. They believe that chamber music, because of the intensity of its interplay and communication, is one of the most effective ways of spreading an enthusiasm for “classical” music to new audiences.

The quartet will perform at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts once more in the current season: Thursday, April 5, 2018, with Timothy Ehlen, piano.

**MICHAEL BROWN** (piano) has been described as “one of the most refined of all pianist-composers” (*International Piano*) and “one of the leading figures in the current renaissance of performer-composers” (*The New York Times*). Equally acclaimed as a pianist and composer, his unique artistry is reflected in his creative approach to programming that often interweaves the classics with contemporary works and his own compositions.

Recipient of a 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Brown regularly makes solo appearances with orchestras such as the Seattle, North Carolina, New Haven, Albany, Flagstaff, and Richardson Symphonies. During the 2016-17 season, he was also selected by pianist Sir András Schiff to perform across the United States and Europe, including debut solo recitals in Zurich’s Tonhalle and NYC’s 92nd Street Y.

Highlights of his 2017-18 season include concerto appearances with the Maryland, New Haven, and Erie symphony orchestras, as well as solo recitals at the Gilmore Keyboard Festival, Music Center at Strathmore, and the Anneliese Brost Musikforum Ruhr in Bochum, Germany. Since joining the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s CMS Two roster in 2015, Brown also continues as a CMS artist on a United States tour and a Lincoln Center recital with his longtime duo partner, cellist Nicholas Canellakis.

For both the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons, Brown has been appointed Composer-in-Residence for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, a position that will include a symphonic commission to be premiered in 2019 as well as the opportunity to mentor the new generation of promising

young composers. Other upcoming commissions include works for Osmo Vänskä and Erin Keefe and a clarinet quartet for a consortium of gardens around the United States, to be premiered in 2018 at Wave Hill, Longwood, and Desert Botanical Gardens. He has also received commissions from the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, Bargemusic, Concert Artists Guild, Shriver Hall, Norton Building Concert Series, Pianofest in the Hamptons, and pianists Jerome Lowenthal, Roman Rabinovich, Adam Golka, David Kaplan, and Orion Weiss.

A prolific recording artist, Brown will see two new albums released in the 2017-18 season: one as a soloist with the Seattle Symphony and Ludovic Morlot in Messiaen's *Trois petites liturgies de la présence divine*, and one as a soloist with the Brandenburg State Symphony in a world premiere recording of Samuel Adler's First Piano Concerto for LINN Records. Other albums include an all-George Perle CD (Bridge), a debut solo recording (CAG) and collaborative albums with pianist Jerome Lowenthal (CAG), cellist Nicholas Canellakis (CAG), and violinist Elena Urioste (BIS).

A native New Yorker, Brown was First Prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition and recipient of the Juilliard Petschek Award, and is a Steinway Artist. He has performed at Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York City, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Wigmore Hall in London, DeSingel in Antwerp, and the Louvre in Paris, and appeared in festivals such as Marlboro, Music@Menlo, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Ravinia, Bard, Chamber Music Sedona, and Moab. He earned dual bachelor's and master's degrees in piano and composition from The Juilliard School, where he studied with pianists Jerome Lowenthal and Robert McDonald and composers Samuel Adler and Robert Beaser. Additional mentors have included Leon Fleisher and Richard Goode, as well as his early teachers, Herbert Rothgarber and Adam Kent.

In his spare time, he enjoys cooking kale, reading and obsessing over American history, memorizing obscure Woody Allen films, and he dreams of walking 50,000 steps in one day. For more information, please visit [michaelbrownmusic.com](http://michaelbrownmusic.com).