



**JUPITER STRING QUARTET**

Tuesday, April 23, 2019, at 7:30pm

Foellinger Great Hall

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# PROGRAM

## JUPITER STRING QUARTET

Nelson Lee, violin  
Meg Freivogel, violin  
Liz Freivogel, viola  
Daniel McDonough, cello

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)

*String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 13*  
Adagio; Allegro vivace  
Adagio non lento  
Intermezzo: Allegretto con moto  
Presto

Kati Agócs  
(b. 1975)

*Imprimatur* (String Quartet No. 2)  
Recitative  
Ostinato  
Enraptured Troping  
Meditation—Crystal Chains  
Wild Dance  
Quodlibet  
Coda

*20-minute intermission*

Antonín Dvořák  
(1841-1904)

*String Quartet No. 13 in G Major, Op. 106*  
Allegro moderato  
Adagio ma non troppo  
Molto vivace  
Finale: Andante sostenuto; Allegro con fuoco

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*The Jupiter String Quartet, the quartet-in-residence at the University of Illinois School of Music, is represented by Jensen Artists, [www.jensenartists.com](http://www.jensenartists.com).*



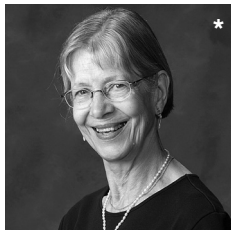
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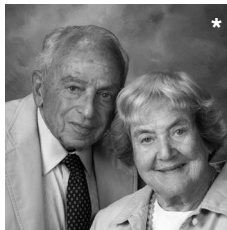
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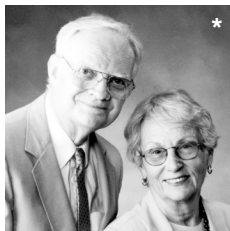
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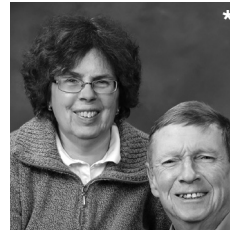


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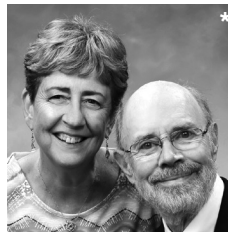
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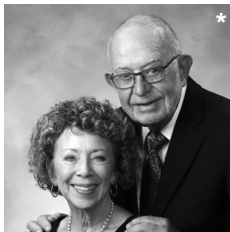
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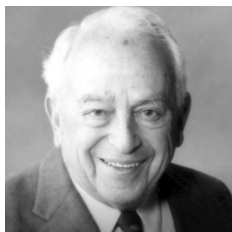
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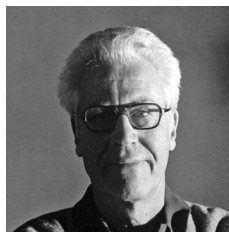
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# PROGRAM NOTES

This performance by the Jupiter String Quartet celebrates the ensemble's 15th anniversary. What better way to honor the Jupiter than by hearing its members play string quartets by Felix Mendelssohn and Antonín Dvořák. A special addition to this is the quartet's programming of Kati Agócs' *Imprimatur*, a thrilling piece commissioned jointly by the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Harvard Musical Association, and the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois in celebration of the Jupiter String Quartet's 15 years of playing together.

## FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, Germany  
Died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig, Germany  
*String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 13*

In chamber music, Mendelssohn found some of his most inventive composing, the A Minor Quartet being a superb example of that. Written in 1827 but published later, the work reveals Mendelssohn's close study of the late Beethoven quartets. The motto Mendelssohn employed for the Quartet, *Ist Es Wahr?* ("Is it true?"), is not so much a suggestion of Beethoven's motto, *Muss es sien?* ("Must it be?") from his Op. 135, but rather a device that accomplishes the cyclical form which Mendelssohn so admired in Beethoven. Mendelssohn's three-note motto links all four movements of the A Minor Quartet and lends to it a wonderful cohesiveness that we identify with the earlier master.

The programmatic content of the motto is quite different, however, from Beethoven's more anguished thought. Mendelssohn's idea came from "Is it true that you are always waiting for me in the arbored walk?"—a line by Johann Gustav Droysen from a poem that Mendelssohn had already set to music. It is the sense of this more romantic notion that pervades the Quartet. Beyond poetry, or in addition to it, Mendelssohn himself had fallen in love in the spring of 1827. So it is that the A Minor Quartet, relying heavily on compositional techniques of late Beethoven, links Classical form to Romantic expression.

In the first movement, the motto is put forward in the slow introduction before the typically Mendelssohnian filigree of the Allegro. The interesting development section shows Mendelssohn at his most inventive with a fine use of dissonance and counterpoint before he moves to the free-form recapitulation. The second movement Adagio is emotional, yet still compositionally interesting with its *fugato* for the viola. The Intermezzo of the third movement is a return to the ingenuous Mendelssohn of simpler works. The dramatic opening of the final Presto reflects the fourth movement of Beethoven's Op. 132 and then emerges into a movement rich with motifs before it closes with a restatement of the opening song-cycle theme.

Because its first movement is in A major, the work is often listed in that key, although A minor is clearly predominant throughout.

## **KATI AGÓCS**

Born January 20, 1975, in Windsor, Ontario,  
Canada

*Imprimatur* (String Quartet No. 2)

Recently named a Guggenheim Fellow, Kati Agócs is also a winner of the prestigious lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her many other awards include a Charles Ives Fellowship and fellowships from the Massachusetts Arts Council, New York Foundation for the Arts, and American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers; the Leonard Bernstein Fellowship at Tanglewood; a Fulbright Fellowship to the Liszt Academy in Budapest; and residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, and the Virginia Center. She has served as composer-in-residence with the Bowdoin International Chamber Music Festival, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. Born in Canada of Hungarian and American parents, she holds doctoral and master's degrees from the Juilliard School where she studied with Milton Babbitt. Her music has been performed worldwide and was described by *The Boston Globe* as "music of fluidity and austere beauty" with "a visceral intensity of expression." Indeed, those qualities are instantly recognizable in her *Imprimatur* of 2018 that we hear on this program.

A 15-minute work in seven continuous movements or sections, *Imprimatur* opens with a definitive statement and a balance of instruments that persists throughout. During its growing intensity, all four players have compelling solo moments demanding the widest ranges of their instruments. A fugue-like quality adds to the complexity of the piece. The harmonies are

modern, yet a lyricism remains that fulfills *The Boston Globe's* description of Agócs's music. The mixture of old and new can even be noted in the tempo markings with the first and last two (Recitative, Ostinato, Quodlibet, and Coda) being traditional terms while the third, fourth, and fifth (Enraptured Troping, Meditation—Crystal, and Wild Dance) are words of Agócs's choosing. The title *Imprimatur* from the Latin meaning "an imprinted mark of devotion" seems also implied in the music's gravity and excellence.

The world premiere of *Imprimatur* was given in 2018 by the Jupiter String Quartet at the Aspen Music Festival. *Imprimatur* was commissioned jointly by the Aspen Music Festival and School, Robert Spano, music director; the Harvard Musical Association; and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

## **ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

Born September 8, 1841, in Nelahozeves, Czechia  
Died May 1, 1904, in Prague, Czechia  
*String Quartet No. 13 in G Major, Op. 106*

Dvořák's return home from America in the spring of 1895 surely accounts for the good spirits of the G Major Quartet, which he began in November of that year and completed in December. What accounts for its compositional excellence is another matter. Without question, it is one of the gems of his impressive canon of 14 string quartets. It was premiered by the Bohemian String Quartet in Prague on October 9, 1896.



The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, opens almost playfully but quickly turns powerful in the statement of a theme that is often repeated throughout the Quartet, yet always in a fresh way. If good spirits prevail in this movement, so do brilliance, energy, and ease of composition. A balance of instruments is reflected everywhere and charmingly in the repetition of a descending motto by each instrument, one at a time. Rhythmic complexity partners with tuneful passages in a style singular to Dvořák. He brings the movement to a rousing conclusion after a final bow to the dominating theme.

The contrasting *Adagio ma non troppo* of the second movement is one of Dvořák's most profoundly moving statements. The cello weaves a low accompaniment while the upper strings sing plaintively and punctuate with gentle pizzicatos. A sweet song as only Dvořák can sing evolves into another powerful statement. Repeated notes introduce a section that is contrapuntal in nature but disguised behind Dvořák's gift of song. The balance of instruments is notable with each given important moments. After a dramatic cadenza moment for the first violin, Dvořák brings the movement to a quiet conclusion, suggesting a certain resignation of spirit.

The *Molto vivace*, briefest of the four movements, is again both playful and rhythmically complex at the same time. While there is a suggestion of a folk dance, the movement still bows to song. Such technical observations, however, should not outweigh an appreciation for the movement's natural musicality.

A modestly slow introduction precedes the fire of the Finale where all four instruments seem to reach for the heights and depths of musical expression. A four-note motto unifies this movement that combines something from each of the earlier movements but stated in an ever-fresh way typical of Dvořák. He pulls us back and forth between the *Andante sostenuto* and the *Allegro con fuoco* moods before a joyfully brilliant conclusion.

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# PROFILE

The **JUPITER STRING QUARTET** is a particularly intimate group, consisting of violinists Nelson Lee and Meg Freivogel, violist Liz Freivogel (Meg's older sister), and cellist Daniel McDonough (Meg's husband, Liz's brother-in-law). Now enjoying their 16th year together, this tight-knit ensemble is firmly established as an important voice in the world of chamber music. In addition to their performing career, they are artists-in-residence at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where they maintain private studios and direct the chamber music program.

The quartet has performed across the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Americas in some of the world's finest halls, including New York City's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London's Wigmore Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, Washington, DC's Kennedy Center and Library of Congress, Austria's Esterhazy Palace, and Seoul's Sejong Chamber Hall. Their major music festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival and School, Bowdoin Music Festival, Lanaudiere Festival, West Cork (Ireland) Chamber Music Festival, Caramoor International Music Festival, Music at Menlo, Maverick Concerts, Madeline Island Music Festival, Rockport Music Festival, the Banff Centre, Yellow Barn Festival, Skaneateles Festival, Encore Chamber Music Festival, and the Seoul Spring Festival, among others.

Their chamber music honors and awards include the grand prizes in the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition in 2004. In 2005, they won the Young Concert Artists International auditions in New York City, which quickly led to a busy touring schedule. They received the

Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America in 2007, followed by an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2008. From 2007 to 2010, they were in residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Two, and in 2009 they received a grant from the Fromm Foundation to commission a new quartet from Dan Visconti for a CMSLC performance at Alice Tully Hall. In 2012, they were appointed as artists-in-residence and faculty at the University of Illinois, where they continue to perform regularly in the beautiful Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

The Jupiter String Quartet feels a particular connection to the core string quartet repertoire; they have presented the complete Bartók string quartets at the University of Illinois and the complete cycle of Beethoven string quartets at the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Lanaudiere Festival in Quebec. Also strongly committed to new music, they have commissioned string quartets from Syd Hodkinson, Hannah Lash, Dan Visconti, and Kati Agócs; a quintet with baritone voice by Mark Adamo; and a piano quintet by Pierre Jalbert.

The quartet can be heard in numerous recordings on labels including Azica Records, Marquis Classics, and Deutsche Grammophon. Their next release is a recording of contemporary works with piano alongside Australian pianist Bernadette Harvey, to be released on Marquis Records in 2019.

The Jupiters place a strong emphasis on developing relationships with future classical music audiences through educational performances in schools and other community centers. They believe that, because of the intensity of its interplay and communication, chamber music is one of the most effective ways of spreading an enthusiasm for classical music to new audiences.

Early exposure to chamber music brought these four musicians together. Meg and Liz grew up playing string quartets with their two brothers, and they grew to love chamber music during weekly coachings with cellist Oliver Edel, who taught generations of students in the Washington, DC, area. Nelson's parents are pianists (his father also conducts) and his twin sisters, Alicia and Andrea, are both musicians. Although Daniel originally wanted to be a violinist, he chose the cello because the organizers of his first string program declared that he had "better hands for the cello," and he is happy that he ended up where he did.

The quartet chose its name because Jupiter was the most prominent planet in the night sky at the time of its formation and the astrological symbol for Jupiter resembles the number four. They are also proud to list among their accomplishments in recent years the addition of seven quartet children: Pablo, Lillian, Clara, Dominic, Felix, Oliver, and Joelle. You may spot some of these miniature Jupiters in the audience or tagging along to rehearsals, along with their grandparent babysitters. For more information on the quartet, visit [www.jupiterstringquartet.com](http://www.jupiterstringquartet.com).