



**CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD WINNER:  
ROLSTON STRING QUARTET**

Sunday, December 2, 2018, at 3pm  
Foellinger Great Hall

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# PROGRAM

## CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD WINNER: ROLSTON STRING QUARTET

Luri Lee, violin  
Emily Kruspe, violin  
Hezekiah Leung, viola  
Jonathan Lo, cello

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

*String Quartet No. 18 in A Major, K. 464*  
Allegro  
Menuetto and Trio  
Andante  
Allegro

György Ligeti  
(1923-2006)

*String Quartet No. 1, "Métamorphoses nocturnes"*  
Allegro grazioso  
Presto—Prestissimo  
Andante tranquillo  
Tempo di Valse, moderato, con eleganza, un poco capriccioso  
Allegro, un poco gioviale  
Subito, allegro con moto  
Prestissimo

*20-minute intermission*

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

*String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130*  
Adagio ma non troppo—Allegro  
Presto  
Andante con moto, ma non troppo  
Alla danza tedesca. Allegro assai  
Cavatina. Adagio molto espressivo  
Finale: Allegro

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*Audience and rising young performers share the stage of the Foellinger Great Hall in these events, fostering a close mutual connection. The stage ticket price includes light refreshments; balcony seating, which does not include refreshments, is available at a reduced price. The 2018-19 series includes Cleveland Quartet Award Winner: Rolston String Quartet (December 2); Concert Artists Guild and M-Prize Winner: Argus Quartet (January 27); Young Concert Artists Winner: Hanzhi Wang, accordion (February 10); and the Krannert Center Debut Artist (April 14). For more information about these events, please visit [KrannertCenter.com/calendar](http://KrannertCenter.com/calendar).*

*Rolston String Quartet appears by arrangement with:*

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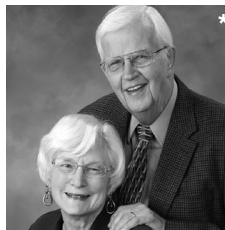
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# PROGRAM NOTES

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria  
Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria  
*String Quartet No. 18 in A Major, K. 464*

This jewel, one of the six quartets (“my six children”) that Mozart dedicated to his good friend and mentor Joseph Haydn in 1785, is as powerful a demonstration of his genius and craftsmanship as there could be. Such sunny, lovely music, which seems to spin out effortlessly, is in fact an intricately woven tapestry, a supreme work of art whose complexity is so hidden that most of it we don’t even notice.

The seeds planted in the first violin’s opening few measures contain all the rich potential for what happens later. Their ideas occur uncountable times in uncountable ways throughout all four movements, forming the quartet into a single, unified whole.

Let’s try to describe that opening theme by means of some visual images. Imagine a countess at the top of a grand staircase, bedecked in finery, silver hair reaching for the ceiling, hoop skirt and glittering shoes, having been announced to the gathering. After the fanfare of her introduction on the top step, a buoyant upbeat E, Mozart gives her an elegant turn figure, gracefully circling around the E (E, D-sharp, F-sharp, E), then another around D, the next step down (D, C-sharp, E, D). She stumbles slightly as the music suddenly does a quick slide down to A in eighth notes, but regains her balance and her composure. Refined quarter notes walk back up from the A to D, and there she stops and looks around to see if anyone has noticed her slight misstep. In a second, answering four-measure phrase she starts down again, repeating the turn figures and this time swirling around D and

C-sharp. In order to make her onlookers believe that she had meant the stumble to have been choreographed, she performs an exact copy of it, but this time a step lower, “tripping” down to G-sharp and climbing back to C-sharp.

That turn figure is the most obvious surface feature of the theme, but there are other, equally important ideas that Mozart introduces. First, the overall E to D outline of the first four measures is answered by the D to C-sharp of the second phrase. This stepwise pairing happens many times throughout the quartet, as does the four-note stepwise figure of the “pratfall and recovery” (A, B, C-sharp, D). The four-note stepwise idea is also playfully embedded inside the two turn figures in a cross-rhythm that plants the seed for many such syncopations in this and the other movements. If we imagine the F-sharp of that first turn figure as the downbeat, we discover that there are now two, four-note figures in a row—F-sharp, E, D, C-sharp and E, D, C-sharp, B—that lead directly into that recovery (A, B, C-sharp, D). Ingenious!

The up/down, pratfall-recovery concept also acts as a metaphor for the complexity of the counterpoint in Mozart’s writing. Far from simply melody and accompaniment where viola and cello don’t have much to say, this is a tightly integrated weave in which all four instruments are constantly involved—singing, conversing, dancing, parrying—all of it good-natured fun.

We know that Haydn and Mozart played chamber music together from time to time. (Would that there could have been YouTube in those days!) If *String Quartet No. 18 in A Major, K. 464* had been on the menu for one of those sessions, we can be certain that there would have been smiles, winks, and chuckles between them.

## GYÖRGY LIGETI

Born May 28, 1923, in Târnăveni, Romania

Died June 12, 2006, in Vienna, Austria

*String Quartet No. 1, "Métamorphoses nocturnes"*

It's easy to understand why a colleague of György Ligeti would have given his *String Quartet No. 1* (1954) the nickname of "Bartók's 7th." Just as Brahms had the colossus of Beethoven peering over his shoulder as he wrestled with his first symphony, Bartók's iconic creations served both as Ligeti's inspiration and impediment. These two Romanians (their birthplaces less than 200 miles apart) both lived through turbulent times. Ligeti's parents were sent by the Nazis to Auschwitz and he to a forced labor camp. Their music reflects that turbulence, and Ligeti's performance instructions of *mesto* and *dolente* underscore the sense of deep and lasting pain. The quartet, like Bartók's third, is designed to be played as a single movement of about 20 minutes' duration, though divided into numerous segments by means of fermatas, rests, and shifts in texture, mood, and tempo.

Although Ligeti was somewhat dismissive of his early works prior to the Hungarian Revolution in 1956—he described them as "the prehistoric Ligeti"—they contain the essential ingredients of what was to come. One feature of his writing is similar to Bartók's; the music is almost unswervingly nontonal. Occasionally, some deliberate tonal reference will sneak in. (Witness the *valse* segment, which briefly tries its hand at a taste of F-sharp minor.) He uses pedal points, *ostinatos*, and double-stop fifths in the cello to

suggest tonal centers. But the essence of his harmonic language stems from the intersection of dissonant melodic cells, just as Bartók loves to do—memorable clusters, untethered to a home base and, most importantly, tightly intersecting with those of its neighbors. This is *petit point*, not *needlepoint*; the players are tied together so intricately that they are as one.

That degree of cohesion, that sense of all four players operating as a highly-supercharged unit, stems also from the way in which Ligeti is able to portray the music as a living, breathing creature, proceeding organically and often almost imperceptibly from one scenario into the next (hence, the subtitle "*Métamorphoses nocturnes*"). To carry it off, he demands from his performers a huge level of involvement, expertise, sensitivity, preparation, and control from the intense and complex rhythms to the frightening *prestissimos*; this is not music for the faint of heart!

The other, more surface element that might cause a listener to compare this work with the Bartók quartets (especially again No. 3, written 18 years earlier in 1936) is the highlighting of special effects. The *glissandi*, the harmonics, the bow effects, the trills—all are developed and sustained, so that rather than functioning only as occasional ornaments or for emphasis, they become important actors in the drama. A performance of the quartet is an immensely satisfying experience, an intense, wild ride that leaves its listeners breathless and exhausted, and its participants exhilarated. It will prove unforgettable.

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December, 1770, in Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

*String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130*

With his last five string quartets (Opuses 127, 130, 131, 132, and 135, written in a flurry in 1825 and 1826), Beethoven allowed his imagination free rein, creating towering and wonderful works that strain the limits both of his listeners' focus and his performers' abilities. They are now regarded as monuments of the literature, but for whatever reasons, despite initial successes among discerning audiences, they proved unapproachable. Op. 130, for example, was given only one public performance in Vienna between Beethoven's death in 1827 and 1850.

Today, almost two centuries later, we scratch our heads; what is it about Op. 130 that could have seemed so confusing, so strange? True, it has six movements instead of the usual four, and the extra movements are unusual—the fourth movement, *Alla danza tedesca*, and the fifth, a second slow movement entitled *Cavatina*—not to mention the original last movement, a gigantic fugue, which his friends and publisher convinced him to replace with a more accessible finale.

But perhaps the most perplexing aspect of the quartet is its sudden twists and turns, its stops and starts, its unexpected moves. Beethoven feasts on these surprises. He starts with a slow, intimate, lyrical adagio in B-flat major, emphasizing chromatic steps. Suddenly there is a shocking shift to a joyous allegro, now all diatonic, with nary an accidental. He repeats that adagio/allegro pairing, but this time in F major, the dominant key. So far, those severe contrasts in tempo and language are what we most notice, because otherwise we're where we should be tonally; this, after all, is a movement in sonata form. If we started in B-flat major, we know that F major is our goal, and that's where we are.

But now Beethoven reveals his outrageous plan, just as he's cadencing in F major. He has everyone tiptoe in unison from F upward chromatically step-by-step to C, where we would logically expect the climb to stop, because C is "so" to F's "do." Here comes the shock: he doesn't stop on the C! Instead, he keeps going past the C to D-flat. Is this D-flat now to be our new "do?" Or is it our new "so," in which case we're in G-flat major? Soon Beethoven confirms that yes, that's where we've arrived. Still, not a terrible problem, even though it's far from where we should be, as long as we get to F major by the end of the exposition. But, he doesn't even try to get there, and ends the exposition in G-flat. Now that would have been confusing for a listener in 1825!

That decision wreaks havoc in the development section and unleashes many consequences for the entire work. This is exactly Beethoven's *modus operandi*, to introduce a novel idea then run with it, and allow it to dominate the conversation. G-flat major's entrance spawns the second movement in B-flat minor, and then the third in D-flat major. The *Alla danza tedesca* in G major seems to be a deliberate brightening after so much of the dark side of the tonal palette, but then the following E-flat major *Cavatina* droops to its own flat side, C-flat major, with a performance instruction of *beklemmt*, or "heavy of heart." Between those two movements is a chasm of feelings, linked in part by the common tone G, which is the heart and soul of the *Cavatina*.

Typical of the late quartets, Op. 130 is by turns intimate, introspective, mournful, soulful, frenetic, ecstatic, exuberant, droll, playful, pleading, raging, and heaven-storming—much like the man himself, perhaps.

—John Kruspe



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# ROLSTON STRING QUARTET

The 2018 recipient of and the first international ensemble chosen for the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America, Canada's **ROLSTON STRING QUARTET** continues to garner critical acclaim and recognition for their musical excellence. In 2016, a monumental year for the quartet in which they were named among CBC Radio's "30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30," they captured First Prize at the 12th Banff International String Quartet Competition (BISQC), were named a winner of Astral Artists' National Auditions, and won the Grand Prize at the 31st Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition. They were also prizewinners at the 2016 Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition and the 2016 (inaugural) M-Prize Competition.

Following the Banff competition win, the Rolston String Quartet immediately embarked upon the BISQC Winner's Tour, taking them to Germany, Italy, Austria, Canada, and the United States. *Musical Toronto* states, "They performed with a maturity and cohesion rivaling the best string quartets in the world." In the 2017-2018 season, the quartet tipped its 100-concert milestone with performances throughout Canada, the United States, Germany, Brussels, Italy, and Israel. Highlights included appearances in the Smithsonian, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Toronto's Koerner Hall, and the Esterházy Palace in Eisenstadt, Austria. Highlights of the 2018-2019 season include debut performances at Carnegie Hall; Washington, DC's Freer Gallery; London's Wigmore Hall; Chamber Music Houston; two major Canadian tours under the auspices of the Prairie Debut and Debut Atlantic touring networks, and three European tours, with concerts in Leipzig, Berlin, Luzerne, Heidelberg, Barcelona, Graz, and others.

The Rolston String Quartet began their two-year fellowship as the Yale School of Music's quartet-in-residence in the fall of 2017. They have also served as the graduate quartet-in-residence at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, and have participated in residencies and fellowships at the Académie Musicale de Villecroze, Aspen Music Festival, Banff Centre, McGill International String Quartet Academy, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Robert Mann String Quartet Institute, St. Lawrence String Quartet Seminar, and the Yehudi Menuhin Chamber Music Festival.

Notable collaborations include performances with such renowned artists as Andrés Díaz, Gilbert Kalish, Mark Morris, Arthur Rowe, Robert McDonald, Donald Palma, Jon Kimura Parker, and Miguel da Silva. Additionally, they have worked with songwriter Kishi Bashi and composers John Luther Adams and Brian Current. Primary mentors include the Brentano Quartet, James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith. They have received additional guidance from the St. Lawrence String Quartet, Barry Shiffman, Miguel da Silva, and Alastair Tait.

The Rolston String Quartet—violinist Luri Lee, violist Hezekiah Leung, cellist Jonathan Lo, and new member as of the spring of 2018, violinist Emily Kruspe—was formed in the summer of 2013 at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity's Chamber Music Residency. They take their name from Canadian violinist Thomas Rolston, founder and long-time director of the Music and Sound Programs at the Banff Centre.

Luri Lee plays a Carlo Tononi violin, generously on loan from Shauna Rolston Shaw. The Rolston String Quartet is endorsed by Jargar Strings of Denmark.

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# CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD

The creation of a lasting legacy for young musicians was envisioned by the Cleveland Quartet in 1995 as a culmination of its remarkable 26-year history. The quartet joined forces in 1995 with Chamber Music America (CMA) and eight prominent chamber music presenters to found the Cleveland Quartet Award and to raise funds for the establishment of the Cleveland Quartet Endowment Fund. The biennial award is not a competition. Nominations are submitted confidentially to CMA by a national roster of chamber musicians, presenters, and educators, and the award honors and promotes a rising young string quartet whose artistry demonstrates that it is in the process of establishing a major career. The winning string quartet's presentations and performances are funded by income from the Cleveland Quartet Award Endowment Fund, which is managed by CMA. The Rolston String Quartet is the eleventh ensemble to receive this prestigious award. Previous winners include the Brentano (1997), Borromeo (1999), Miami (2001), Pacifica (2003), Miro (2005), Jupiter (2007), Parker (2009), Jasper (2012), Ariel (2014), and Dover (2016) quartets.

Cleveland Quartet Award winners perform on the following presenters' series: Buffalo Chamber Music Society (Buffalo, New York); Carnegie Hall (New York, New York); Chamber Music Society of Detroit (Detroit, Michigan); Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (Washington, DC); Friends of Chamber Music (Kansas City, Missouri); Market Square Concerts (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania); Krannert Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Urbana, Illinois); and University of Texas at Austin (Austin, Texas).

Chamber Music America, the national network of ensemble music professionals, was founded in 1977 to develop, support, and strengthen the chamber music community. With a membership of nearly 6,000—including musicians, ensembles, presenters, artist managers, educators, music businesses, and advocates of ensemble music—CMA welcomes members representing a wide range of musical styles and traditions. In addition to its funding programs, CMA provides its members with consulting services, access to instrument and other insurances, conferences, seminars, publications, and a member-centered website, [www.chamber-music.org](http://www.chamber-music.org).