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**CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD WINNER:
VERONA QUARTET**

Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

PROGRAM

CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD WINNER:

VERONA QUARTET

Jonathan Ong, violin

Dorothy Ro, violin

Abigail Rojansky, viola

Jonathan Dormand, cello

What is left for us to write?

Composed during a time when he suffered from near-complete hearing loss, Beethoven's revelatory Op. 131 is arguably the zenith of his late string quartets, unprecedented in its originality and scope. Upon hearing it, Schubert famously exclaimed, "After this, what is left for us to write?" This enduring question continues to be answered by the composers of today; notable amongst them is Gabriela Lena Frank who—born with moderate to profound hearing loss—employs a similar compositional approach to Beethoven, retreating into her inner world of silence for musical inspiration. This introspective style of composing has produced works of both spiritual and intellectual profundity—hallmarks of Beethoven's late compositional style.

Verona Quartet appears by arrangement with:

Dinin Arts Management & Consulting, LLC

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Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Quartettsatz in C Minor, D. 703

Gabriela Lena Frank
(b. 1972)

Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout

Toyos
Tarqueda
Himno de Zampoñas
Chasqui
Canto de Velorio
Coquetos

20-minute intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
Allegro molto vivace
Allegro moderato—Adagio
Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile—Andante moderato
e lusinghiero—Adagio—Allegretto—Adagio ma non troppo
e semplice—Allegretto
Presto
Adagio quasi un poco andante
Allegro
(Played without pause)

PROGRAM NOTES

In this program, the Verona Quartet daringly leaps from music of the late 18th and early 19th centuries to that of the 21st century. Enjoy that stretch of time which confirms the ongoing power of music and its never-ending effect on our lives.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Born January 31, 1797, in Himmelpfortgrund, Vienna, Austria

Died November 19, 1828, in Vienna, Austria
Quartettsatz in C Minor, D. 703

Composed: 1820

Approximate duration: 13 minutes

To explain Schubert is to explain a miracle, and we should attempt it only with the reminder that he said of himself: "It sometimes seems to me as if I did not belong to this world at all." Indeed, he belonged to it so briefly that the size and impact of his output are astonishing. Within his short lifespan of 31 years, he composed no less than nine symphonies, 20 string quartets, two piano trios, a variety of other significant chamber works such as the famous "Trout" Quintet and Cello Quintet, numerous operas, 21 piano sonatas as well as other solo piano works including the *Wanderer Fantasy*, two glorious sets of impromptus, and the remarkable *Fantasy in F Minor* for four hands. Looming over all this is his vast catalogue of over 600 songs.

Scholarship suggests that Schubert intended to add another three movements to the *Quartettsatz*, making it his twelfth string quartet, yet there is a perfection about the single first movement *Allegro assai* that also suggests he knew when to stop. One way or the other, the *Quartettsatz* is a fully developed work with many themes and contrasting moods. The shimmering tremolos of the opening statement immediately indicate the work's intensity, which grows with every reiteration of them. The contrasting lyricism only emphasizes that intensity.

Although the title *Quartettsatz* implies a single movement, the work is actually one complete movement with 41 measures of a second unfinished one that ends in mid-phrase, a reminder of the concluding *Contrapunctus* of Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*. Even that inconclusiveness adds to the drama of the piece. The *Quartettsatz* has contributed to what is sometimes an exaggerated perception of Schubert as a composer who left works unfinished, the most famous example being his Symphony No. 8, known as the "Unfinished" Symphony. Scholarship concerning whether or not the symphony was actually incomplete is still inconclusive.

After Schubert's death, Brahms procured the manuscript for the *Quartettsatz*, and the work received its premiere in Vienna on March 1, 1867. Brahms' edit of the score was published in 1870, a notable 42 years after Schubert's death.

GABRIELA LENA FRANK

Born September 26, 1972, in Berkeley, California
Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout

Composed: 2001

Approximate duration: 24 minutes

With an American father of Lithuanian Jewish heritage and a mother of Peruvian and Chinese descent, Frank often draws from her multicultural background in her music. That said, she received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Rice University and a Doctorate in Music from the University of Michigan in 2001. She has received commissions from many distinguished ensembles

such as the Kronos Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony, and Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble of which she is a member. Her many awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Latin Grammy Award. In 2020, she received the 25th Annual Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities for her work "weaving Latin American influences into classical constructs and breaking gender, disability, and cultural barriers in classical music composition."

Her *Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout* is a highly unique, thrilling, and profound work that expresses both South American and Asian flavors. Frank has commented that the work draws inspiration from the idea that "cultures can coexist without the subjugation of one by the other." Many unusual demands are made on all four instruments as they soar to their highest moments and descend to their lowest. It was originally composed for string quartet and later arranged for string orchestra.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December 1770, in Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131

Date of Composition: 1825

Approximate Duration: 39 minutes

By the time Beethoven began Op. 131 in 1825, his compositions had become deeply personal. No better example of this exists than Op. 131, the third of his five late string quartets.

The arguable seven movements of Op. 131 form an organic whole, not simply because they are played without interruption but because of their rhythmic, harmonic, and conceptual integration. While some of this unity depends on the performers, Beethoven seems to prepare the listener for a next movement by predicting it in the previous one. In another sense, however, we are never prepared for what happens in Op. 131.

The somber introductory statement, called by Richard Wagner "the most melancholy sentiment in music," takes the form of a fugue, but we soon sail forth into the happier waters of the Allegro molto vivace. Two soft chords at the end of the second movement beckon the two loud ones that bring the brief Allegro moderato, which in turn serves as an introduction to the lengthy Andante. This movement, the centerpiece of the Quartet, takes the shape of a theme with six variations. There is a suggestion of a clean break, but the last two notes of the Andante really serve as steppingstones into the playful but treacherously difficult Presto. In the final statement of this scherzo-like movement, Beethoven calls for the melody to be played *sul ponticello* (close to the bridge), which produces a strange, glassy sound almost suggesting the frustrations of his own hearing loss. So it is with the dramatic gesture leading to the sixth movement Adagio. The viola introduces the meditative melody of the brief Adagio. Then, with two angry statements, we are thrust into the final Allegro on which Wagner lavishly commented: "This is the fury of the world's dance—fierce pleasure, agony, ecstasy of love, joy, anger, passion, and suffering; lightning flashes and thunder rolls; and above the tumult the indomitable fiddler whirls us on to the abyss. Amid the clamor he smiles, for to him it is nothing but a mocking fantasy; at the end, the darkness beckons him away, and his task is done."

In 1822, Beethoven wrote to his publisher: "I sit pondering and pondering. I have long known what I want to do, but I cannot get it down on paper. I feel I am on the threshold of great things." There followed soon after this the *Missa Solemnis*, the Ninth Symphony, and his crowning achievement, the late quartets. Among those five astounding works—plus the *Grosse Fuge*—Beethoven confided to his friend Karl Holz that Op. 131 was his favorite. Many agree.

VERONA QUARTET

Acclaimed for its “bold interpretive strength, robust characterization and commanding resonance” (*Calgary Herald*), the Verona Quartet has firmly established itself amongst the most distinguished ensembles on the chamber music scene today. The group’s singular sense of purpose most recently earned them Chamber Music America’s coveted 2020 Cleveland Quartet Award and a reputation as an “outstanding ensemble . . . cohesive yet full of temperament” (*The New York Times*). The Quartet serves on the faculty of the Oberlin College and Conservatory as the Quartet-in-Residence in addition to holding residences at the Lunenburg Academy of Music Performance, Indiana University Summer String Academy, and North Carolina’s Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle.

The Verona Quartet has appeared across four continents, enchanting audiences at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center (New York City), Kennedy Center, Library of Congress (Washington, DC), Jordan Hall (Boston), Wigmore Hall (United Kingdom), and Melbourne Recital Hall (Australia), and has performed at festivals including La Jolla Summerfest, Chamber Music Northwest, Caramoor, Alpenglow, and Bravo! Vail, and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The quartet curates the UpClose Chamber Music Series under the auspices of the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, bringing the visceral energy of classical music to diverse audiences in venues ranging from concert halls to craft breweries, and unlocking the secrets of the music through the “intimate way they communicate with each other and the audience” (*The Arts Fuse*, Boston).

A string quartet for the 21st century, the Verona Quartet champions the rich breadth of the string quartet repertoire from the time-honored canon through contemporary classics. Notable

commissions and premieres include works by composers Julia Adolphe, Sebastian Currier, Corey Dundee, Texu Kim, as well as Michael Gilbertson’s Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Quartet*.

In addition to advocating contemporary music, the quartet strives for a dynamic, imaginative approach to collaboration and programming that champions cross-cultural and interdisciplinary enterprises. Such recent projects include a live-performance art installation with artist Ana Prvački, performances with dancers from Brooklyn’s Dance Heginbotham, artistic exchanges with traditional Emirati poets in the UAE, and a collaboration with GRAMMY-winning folk trio I’m With Her.

Drawing from the mentorship of the esteemed Cleveland, Juilliard, and Pacifica Quartets, the Verona Quartet’s rapid rise to international prominence was fueled by top prize wins at the Wigmore Hall, Melbourne, M-Prize, and Osaka International Chamber Music Competitions, as well as the 2015 Concert Artists Guild Competition. Their debut album, *Diffusion*—featuring the quartets of Janacek, Ravel, and Szymanowski—will be released on Azica Records in the summer of 2021. Their second album, *SHATTER*, will showcase the works of American composers Julia Adolphe, Michael Gilbertson, and Reena Esmail, in collaboration with Hindustani vocalist Saili Oak.

The ensemble’s “thoughtful, impressive” performances emanate from the spirit of storytelling; the Quartet believes that this transcends genre and, therefore, the name “Verona” pays tribute to William Shakespeare, one of the greatest storytellers of all time (*Cleveland Classical*).

The Verona Quartet are D’Addario Artists and The Violin Channel Artists

CLEVELAND QUARTET AWARD

Given biennially since 1996, the Cleveland Quartet Award honors and promotes a rising young string quartet whose artistry demonstrates that it is in the process of establishing a major career. Providing the quartet with concert appearances on chamber music series around the country, the award enriches the presenters' offerings, while helping outstanding young artists gain wide recognition.

The award is the legacy of the acclaimed Cleveland Quartet, which made its professional debut in 1969. Upon retiring in 1995, the quartet members joined forces with Chamber Music America and eight prominent chamber music presenters to create the Cleveland Quartet Award and raise funds for the Cleveland Quartet Award Endowment Fund.

The Verona Quartet is the twelfth ensemble to receive this prestigious award. Previous recipients are the Brentano Quartet (1997), the Borromeo String Quartet (1999), the Miami String Quartet (2001), the Pacifica Quartet (2003), the Miró Quartet (2005), the Jupiter String Quartet (2007), the Parker Quartet (2009), the Jasper String Quartet (2012), Ariel Quartet (2014), Dover Quartet (2016) and the Rolston String Quartet (2018).

Cleveland Quartet Award winners perform on the following presenters' series:

Buffalo Chamber Music Society (Buffalo, NY)
Carnegie Hall (New York, NY)
Chamber Music Society of Detroit (Detroit, MI)
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler
Gallery (Washington, DC)
Friends of Chamber Music (Kansas City, MO)
Market Square Concerts (Harrisburg, PA)
Krannert Center at the University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign (Urbana, IL)
University of Texas at Austin (Austin, TX)

Nominations for the Cleveland Quartet Award are submitted confidentially to Chamber Music America by a national roster of chamber musicians, presenters, and educators. The winning string quartet's presentations and performances are funded by income from the Cleveland Quartet Award Endowment Fund.

CHAMBER MUSIC AMERICA, the national network of ensemble music professionals, was founded in 1977 to develop, strengthen, and support the chamber music community. With a membership of nearly 6,000, including musicians, ensembles, presenters, artists' 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, and several publications including Chamber Music magazine and the weekly e-newsletter, Accent.