

JUPITER STRING QUARTET Tuesday, October 3, 2023, at 7:30pm Foellinger Great Hall

## PROGRAM JUPITER STRING QUARTET

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

Upheaval	
Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–1994)	String Quartet No. 3
Carlos Simon (b. 1986)	An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave
Nathan Shields (b. 1983)	Medusa
Intermission	
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)	String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2

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#### ELIZABETH MACONCHY

(1907-1994)

String Quartet No. 3

Composed: 1938 Approximate duration: 12 minutes

Irish composer Dame Elizabeth Violet Maconchy is highly regarded in both England and Ireland. Born in England, she grew up in both countries. At the age of sixteen, she moved to London to study at the Royal College of Music with Charles Wood and Ralph Vaughan Williams. After completing her studies at RCM, she moved on to Prague, where she worked with Czech composer Karel Jírak and immersed herself in the music of distinguished Hungarian modernist Béla Bártok, who has been cited as arguably her greatest influence. Her many compositions include not only the string quartets that were essential to her output, but also symphonies, choral works, songs, and opera librettos.

Maconchy's String Quartet No. 3 is one of thirteen and was composed in 1938, a date that in itself signals the emotional intensity of the piece. Played in one movement, the music begins with a slow tension, building drama as the strings speak to and over each other and the pacing becomes quicker and more passionate. The extended plucking by the strings creates a dynamic current of power. In its inventiveness and directness, the composition is undeniably modern.

If the Jupiter's performance is your first hearing of this work, you may wonder why you have

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

never heard it before. We are grateful to the Jupiter Quartet for bringing it to us.

—Lucy Murray ©2023

#### **CARLOS SIMON**

(b. 1986)

Elegy: A Cry from the Grave

Composed: 2015 Approximate duration: 5 minutes

This piece is an artistic reflection dedicated to those who have been murdered wrongfully by an oppressive power; namely Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and Michael Brown. The stimulus for composing piece came as a result of prosecuting attorney Robert McCulloch announcing that a selected jury had decided not to indict police officer, Daren Wilson after fatally shooting an unarmed teenager, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

The evocative nature of the piece draws on strong lyricism and a lush harmonic charter. A melodic idea is played in all the voices of the ensemble at some point of the piece either whole or fragmented. The recurring ominous motif represents the cry of those struck down unjustly in this country. While the predominant essence of the piece is sorrowful and contemplative, there are moments of extreme hope represented by bright consonant harmonies.

-Carlos Simon

#### **NATHAN SHIELDS**

(b. 1983)

#### Medusa

This piece will be introduced from the stage.

#### LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)

String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2

Composed: 1805 Approximate duration: 38 minutes

#### Allegro

Molto adagio (Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento) Allegretto-Maggiore (Thème Russe) Finale Presto

The three "Razumovsky" quartets of Op. 59, so named after their commissioner and dedicatee, Count Andrey Razumovsky, were written between July and September of 1806 and represent Beethoven's Middle Period as well as his daring exploration into an uncharted territory of emotional expression. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, conflict was inherent in the public reception of the entire set and stretched from animosity to bewilderment. A telling moment occurred when violinist Felix Radicati commented to Beethoven concerning the Op. 59 quartets, "Surely you do not consider this music," and Beethoven replied, "Not for you, but for a later age."

While we might conclude that the animosity has receded, surely we cannot hear any of the Op. 59 quartets without some sense of wonderment over the differences among them. It is this total individualism that drives the opus and explains its transitional position between the elegance of the Op. 18 quartets and the elusive greatness of the Late quartets.

"Let your deafness no longer be a secret even in art," Beethoven scrawled on a page of sketches for the Op. 59 quartets. So it is that he unleashed his truthfulness upon us who, even in this century, remain startled.

From the shock of its opening chords to its ending race, the E Minor Quartet is an exercise in contrast and complexity. Its difficulty and length probably account for its being less often performed. The educated amateurs such as Prince Rasumovsky who played many of Beethoven's quartets were given pause by this one. Even music critics were confounded. "The concept is profound and the construction excellent, but they are not easily comprehended," said one critic for the *Allegemeine musikalische Zeitung*, referring to the Op. 59 quartets. Surely the challenges of the E Minor Quartet must have inspired that statement.

Pathos invades the opening movement *Allegro* with its intensity juxtaposed to its lyricism. One might also see the movement as a constant pull between the horizontal and the vertical with its winding melodies interrupted by silences and strident chords. Darkness and light struggle against each other. Imprinted on the whole movement is the use of musical mottos, most obvious in the descending seven-note scale that pervades the movement. Also noticeable is a repeated two-note phrase with a simple half-step chromatic change in harmony. Simple but disturbing. One is reminded here that Minimalism did not begin in the second half of the 20th century.

Beethoven's elaborate tempo marking, *Molto* adagio (Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento), tells the story of the second movement. "This piece is to be played with great feeling," he clearly marked on the score. The "feeling" of which he spoke goes well beyond poignancy. With its dignified theme, it is closer to pathos and even tragedy. Those two effects are intensified by a simple cradle song that seems to spring out of nowhere. The rocking continues with throbbing repetition until a winding scale shifts us into a dark minor mode.

Things brighten considerably in the third movement Allegretto maggiore (Thème russe) with its quote from a Russian folk song, "Sláva Bogu ne nebe, Sláva" (Glory to God in Heaven, Glory), that Beethoven explored in creative counterpoint. Mussorgsky would use this theme later in the coronation scene of his opera Boris Godunov and Rimsky-Korsakov in his opera The Tsar's Bride. Despite its brighter skies, this third movement is not without its clouds of nervous agitation and gloom.

The *Finale* marked Presto would be almost gay were it not for its harmonic ambiguity and a certain frenetic quality that underlies its cheerfulness. At face value, however, it is an energetic romp beset with treacherously difficult dotted rhythms and high-speed tempos intimidating to all but the best players. One proceeds in this Quartet with the sense that anything could happen.

—Lucy Murray ©2023

## PROFILES

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 20th year together, this tight-knit ensemble is firmly established as an important voice in the world of chamber music. *The New Yorker* claims, "The Jupiter String Quartet, an ensemble of eloquent intensity, has matured into one of the mainstays of the American chambermusic scene."

The guartet has performed 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 International Music Festival, Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, Rockport Music Festival, Caramoor International Music Festival, Music at Menlo, the Banff Centre, the Seoul Spring Festival, and many others. In addition to their performing career, they have been artistsin-residence at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign since 2012, where they maintain private studios and direct the chamber music program.

Their chamber music honors and awards include the grand prizes in the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition; the Young Concert Artists International auditions in New York City; the Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America; an Avery Fisher Career Grant; and a grant from the Fromm Foundation. From 2007– 2010, they were in residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Two.

The Jupiter String Quartet feels a particular connection to the core string quartet repertoire; they have presented the complete Bartok and Beethoven string quartets on numerous occasions. Also strongly committed to new music, they have commissioned string quartets from Nathan Shields, Stephen Andrew Taylor, Michi Wiancko, 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's latest album is a collaboration with the Jasper String Quartet (Marquis Classics, 2021), produced by Grammy winner Judith Sherman. This collaborative album features the world premiere recording of Dan Visconti's *Eternal Breath*, Felix Mendelssohn's *Octet in E-flat, Op. 20*, and Osvaldo Golijov's Last Round. The Arts Fuse acclaimed, "This joint album from the Jupiter String Quartet and Jasper String Quartet is striking for its backstory but really memorable for its smart program and fine execution." The quartet's discography also includes numerous recordings on labels including Azica Records and Deutsche Grammophon.

Highlights of the Jupiter Quartet's 2022-23 season include performances presented by Cleveland Chamber Music Society, Chamber Music Monterey Bay, Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival, Northwestern University's Winter Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music in Napa Valley, BIG Arts with the Jasper Quartet, and many others, as well as a residency at Middlebury College with the Jasper Quartet. Jupiter will also perform residency concerts at the Krannert Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

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.

For more information, visit www.jupiterquartet.com.

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As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgement and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.



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## WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE AT THE CENTER

We work to create the best possible setting for the experiences you seek and find here.

#### NECESSARIES

Restrooms are located in the foyers of Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, and Colwell Playhouse; the east entrances on the Lobby level; and in each elevator lobby on Level 1 and Level 3. Lobby restrooms and one restroom in each elevator lobby are fully accessible and contain baby-changing stations.

Ushers will be happy to provide you cough drops courtesy of St. Joseph Apothecary, or disposable foam earplugs if the place starts rockin'.

If you or a companion needs medical assistance, contact an usher or other staff member.

Please take a moment before the performance to note the theatre exits nearest to you. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the theatre, please remain calm, follow the instructions of the house staff, and exit in an orderly fashion to the appropriate safe meeting location, which will be announced to you.

#### PHONES AND DEVICES

The use of cell phones, cameras, and recording devices during performances is prohibited unless otherwise announced from the stage.

#### LATE ARRIVALS

As a courtesy to performers and audience members, latecomers will be seated only at times selected in advance by the artist. Should you find that you've arrived late to a performance, our Patron Services staff will keep you informed about the earliest seating opportunity.

#### LOST ITEMS

If you are in need of Lost and Found, please visit the Patron Services counter. We will do our best to reunite object and owner!

#### TICKET RETURNS

If you find you can't attend a performance, please contact the Ticket Office in advance, preferably by 6pm the day before the performance (kran-tix@illinois.edu). We never charge a handling fee on ticket transactions.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is committed to making experiences accessible for all patrons, and we are delighted to provide a number of services to assist you. Krannert Center is equipped with an assisted listening system, wheelchair-accessible and no-step/few-step seating, and large-print programs, Braille programs, and American Sign Language interpreters are available with three weeks' advance notice.

For assistance regarding your visit, please email: Para ayuda en relación con su visita, favor de enviar un email a:

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欢迎! 如若您对您的造访需要帮助, 请发送电子邮件至:

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STUDEN

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U of I students, come on in. In whatever clothes, whatever state of mind, from whatever world of experience, you are welcome here. We don't have a dress code, we don't have an opinion code, and we want the Center to be your kind of place. Because of the vital support of Krannert Center donors and the Krannert Center U of I student fee, U of I students never pay more than \$10 for a ticket, and dozens of events each year are completely free.

Your presence helps to make Krannert Center a place like nowhere else—and what you can experience here makes your education like nobody else's. If you are inspired by what you find here, invite others to join you.

When you come to Krannert Center, we promise that you'll leave different: refreshed, reaffirmed, renewed!

