

#### JUPITER STRING QUARTET WITH KIRSTEN DOCTER, VIOLA

Friday, November 10, 2023, at 7:30pm Foellinger Great Hall

#### **PROGRAM** JUPITER STRING QUARTET WITH KIRSTEN DOCTER, VIOLA

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

#### **Folk Encounters**

Su Lian Tan (b. 1964)	Life in Wayang I. Gods Descend II. Ballade III. The Chattering Strings
Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961)	Excerpts from String Quartet No. 1, "At the Octoroon Balls" 3. Creole Contradanzas 4. Many Gone 5. Hellbound Highball
20-minute intermission	
Antonín Dvořák (1770–1827)	Viola Quintet in E-flat Major ("American"), Op. 97, B. 180 Allegro non tanto Allegro vivo Larghetto Finale: Allegro giusto

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#### **SU LIAN TAN**

(b. 1964)

#### Life in Wayang

I. Gods Descend II. Ballade III. The Chattering Strings

#### Composed: 2002

Wayang is a type of traditional puppet theater found across the Malay world, most notably in Indonesia and Malaysia. In the type best known internationally, wayang kulit, painted leather shadow puppets depict stories adapted from the Hindu epics and are accompanied by the layered, cyclical intonations and punctuating gong tones of bronze gamelan orchestras. Held outdoors, often in conjunction with religious events, wayang performances represent a central place of gathering within communities as children and adults alike can witness both the story world on the screen and the "behindthe-scenes" working of the puppeteer and musicians. Life in Wayang's tripartite structure mirrors that of traditional wayang narratives transports the listener into the aural, mental, and communal states of wayang performance.

*Life in Wayang* was commissioned by the Takacs String Quartet. They premiered it in April 2003 at Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont.

I. This first movement struggles with our concepts of god and pious love. Beckoned towards the world of light and shadows by the solo violin, the listener is suddenly plunged by the entry of all four instrumental voices into a world where quickly-shifting tremolo and pizzicato evoke the flickering light and darkness

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

of the wayang world, and the sharp shifts of the puppets as they enact sacred-secular dramas. Lush, sweeping dissonances interspersed with solo interjections suggest interplay of dramatic characters and the emotions of the audience. The emergence of an even, oscillating ostinato in the middle voices provides a gamelan-like core melody over which cello and violin voices twist and turn. With a sudden break to silence, a final pianissimo commentary carries the listener to the next movement.

II. As humans are prone to loving each other, so the music of the second movement charts this journey of rapture and heartbreak, easy and difficult, through twists and turns. Instrumental voices harmonizing in a Western Romantic idiom evoke ballads both familiar and forgotten, bringing the scale of the shadow play from celestial to human. Sudden interjections from the individual voices interrupt these sweet tonalities, returning the listener to the rhythmic and harmonic world of the first movement. Like chiming bells, new strident instrumental attacks mark metered triads that announce a final coda in which both tonalities are reconciled, then fade away.

III. The third movement brings us back to the present as we resume our place in the audience of wayang performed in a celebration of community. The playful initial melody unfolds accompanied by pizzicato, which then fragments and intensifies into polyvocal conversation. As the narrative reaches its climax, the quartet's frantic rhythm slows. Suddenly, the wayang performance is over. With a final quiet commentary, the audience disperses.

—Dr. Elizabeth Clendenning ©2016

#### WYNTON MARSALIS

(b. 1961)

Excerpts from String Quartet No. 1, "At the Octoroon Balls"

- 3. Creole Contradanzas
- 4. Many Gone
- 5. Hellbound Highball

#### Composed: 1995

Wynton Marsalis is an American icon in both jazz and classical music. His numerous recordings in both fields have been awarded many Grammys, and he was the first jazz composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his work, Blood on the Fields. He is Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center and Music Director of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Wynton Marsalis is also famous for his humanitarian efforts such as organizing the Higher Ground Relief concert at Lincoln Center which raised over three million dollars in support of musicians and cultural institutions impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

At the Octoroon Balls was commissioned by Lincoln Center and given its premiere by the Orion String Quartet in 1995 in conjunction with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. It has since been recorded by the Harlem Quartet. We are fortunate to hear this performance by the Jupiter String Quartet.

Wynton Marsalis's String Quartet No. 1, subtitled "At the Octoroon Balls," is an unforgettable meeting of his jazz and classical music talents. We hear the third, fourth, and fifth movements of work, but all other movements of this amazing and full-blown piece bear the interesting titles that reflect Marsalis's grand inspiration brought on by the balls of New Orleans held by Creole men. The additional titles are: Come Long Fiddler Mating Calls and Delta Rhythms Creole Cadenzas Many Gone Hellbound Highball Blue Lights on the Bayou Rampart Street Row House

It is forever remarkable that Marsalis could seek inspirations for his String Quartet No. 1 from works of a such a different nature and make them all work for string quartet.

—Lucy Murray ©2023

#### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

(1841–1904)

String Quintet in E-Flat Major, Op. 97

Allegro non tanto Allegro vivo Larghetto Finale: Allegro giusto

Composed: 1893

Son of a poor but musical butcher and innkeeper, Dvořák escaped that destiny and went instead to Prague where he began composing immediately after completing his studies at the Organ School. He was a violist in the orchestra of the National Theatre in Prague and little known as a composer until he was befriended by Brahms, who recognized his rare genius and championed him throughout his life. Dvořák traveled to England in 1844 where he was immediately acclaimed and then to America in 1892 where he studied American musical styles and won more approval as director of the National Conservatory in New York City from 1892 to 1895. From this period came the Opus 97 Quintet composed in the summer of 1893 in Spillville, Iowa. He returned to his native Bohemia in 1895 where he became

professor of composition and later director at the Prague Conservatorium until his death in 1904. He was given a national funeral and buried with other national heroes in the Vyŝehrad cemetery.

No greater compliment has been paid Dvořák than by Brahms himself when he said, "I should be glad if something occurred to me as a main idea that occurs to Dvořák only by the way." Brahms does not stand alone in his admiration of Dvořák. Janáček says of him: You know that feeling when somebody takes the word out of your mouth before you have time to form it? That was always my experience in Dvořák's company. In him his person and his work were interchangeable. And then his melodies were as if he had taken them from my heart. Such a bond nothing on earth can sever. In an 1877 letter, Hans von Bülow called Dvořák "next to Brahms, the most God-gifted composer of the present day."

Surely the Opus 97 Quintet expresses the man and his genius, a man, says scholar Ottokar Sourek, "apparently locked within himself, moving only in the sphere of divine beauty, now plunged in gloomy meditation, his vision lost in eternity, now smiling brightly, bubbling over with happiness and breaking forth in outbursts of the frankest joy..." Here we have all of Dvořák: the magnificent exploration of instruments, the changing moods, great tenderness, and incredible lyricism. The work is a culmination of Dvořák 's greatest strengths: Romantic spirit and Classical form infused with the Czech folk traditions that lend his music its singular qualities.

Despite what we perceive as its national flavor, a word should be said about Dvořák's transcendence of that idiom in his music. For all his championing of the Czech folk spirit, Dvořák was not a slave to it. As the eloquent Sourek puts it, "He had no intention of employing the national tunes as they stood; he sought rather by means of his own ideas to embody their pure and delicate fragrance, their deep, though naive emotions, and also some of their typical melodic and harmonic features." As Michael Beckerman suggests in his fascinating essay, "The Master's Little Joke: Antonin Dvořák and the Mask of Nation," from Dvořák and His World, "...the question of national music remains a powerful and inscrutable one to this day." It is this inscrutableness that is part of Dvořák's genius, perhaps best explained by Thomas Kahlcke in his essay "A Simple Bohemian Musican?" when he says, "It is (a) fundamental solidarity with the people – whether the Indians or his native Bohemians – that lends Dvořák's music its particularly humanitarian character."

That said, the Opus 97 Quintet is rich in its American folk music references, specifically that of the Iroqouis Indians who Dvořák encountered in the Czech settlement of Spillville, Iowa. This is evidenced in the drumming rhythms of first movement that follow the opening Bohemian melody and again in the second movement Scherzo when the second viola takes up the beat. The third movement Larghetto contains a reference to Dvořák's treatment of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," which he had composed earlier in New York. The fourth movement Finale again makes use of American Indian references coupled with distinctly Bohemian themes. Over all these references, however, Dvořák imposes sonata form.

The Opus 97 Quintet followed closely on the heels of the famous "American" Quartet of 1893. Both works, along with the "New World" Symphony, came from Dvořák's stay in the United States from 1892 to 1895. It was premiered, along with the "American" Quartet, in Boston on January 1, 1894 by the Kneisel Quartet.

—Lucy Murray ©2023

## PROFILES

**Kirsten Docter** is associate professor of viola and chamber music at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. First prize wins at the Primrose International and American String Teachers Association Viola Competitions launched her on a career that includes a 23-year tenure with the Cavani Quartet, concerts on major series and festivals, and numerous appointments as a master class clinician and teacher.

Docter's festival appearances include performances at the Aspen Music Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Society, and Kneisel Hall. Her work can be heard on the Azica, Albany, and New World labels.

Docter formerly served on the chamber music and viola faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the University of Michigan. She has been a jury member of the Primrose International Viola, Fischoff National Chamber Music, and Sphinx competitions. In the summer she serves on the viola faculty of the Perlman Music Program and Bowdoin International Music Festival.

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 quartet 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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The University of Illinois System carries out its mission in its namesake state, which includes the traditional territory of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

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 acknowledgment and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward.

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

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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.

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