**August 8**

Saturday, August 8, 5:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Robert Schumann coined the phrase “heavenly length” when describing Schubert’s C Major Symphony, “The Great.” The same could be said of our festival’s final Concert Program, which serves as a musical eulogy for Schubert, who died on November 19, 1828. We begin by recognizing Schubert’s devotion to two other composers: Haydn, to whose grave, thirty-five miles away, the terminally ill Schubert walked to pay his respects in early October, and Beethoven, whose forward-looking Opus 131 String Quartet was performed at Schubert’s request at his deathbed, making it the last music Schubert heard. Following a brief interval, a quartet of Schubert’s most famous and beloved songs, all composed in his final months, powerfully summarizes his incomparable contribution to the art form. And after taking another deep breath, we close Music@Menlo 2015 with a work that many regard as the most transcendent in all of music: Schubert’s Cello Quintet.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Music@Menlo dedicates this performance to Ann S. Bowers with gratitude for her generous support.

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**JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)**

String Quartet in d minor, op. 103, Hob. III: 83 (unfinished) (1803)

- Andante grazioso
- Minuetto, ma non troppo presto

Dover Quartet: Joel Link, Bryan Lee, violins; Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola; Camden Shaw, cello

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)**

String Quartet in c-sharp minor, op. 131 (1825–1826)

- Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo –
- Allegro molto vivace –
- Allegro moderato –
- Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile –
- Presto –
- Adagio quasi un poco andante –
- Allegro

Dover Quartet: Joel Link, Bryan Lee, violins; Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola; Camden Shaw, cello

**INTERMISSION**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)**

- Auf dem Strom for Voice, Horn, and Piano, op. posth. 119, D. 943 (Rellstab) (March 1828)
  - Nikolay Borchev, baritone; Kevin Rivard, horn; Wu Han, piano

- Der Hirt auf dem Felsen for Soprano, Clarinet, and Piano, op. posth. 129, D. 965 (Müller, von Chézy) (October 1828)
  - Joëlle Harvey, soprano; José González Granero, clarinet; Wu Han, piano

- Der Doppelgänger from Schwanengesang, D. 957/13 (Heine) (1828)
  - Nikolay Borchev, baritone; Wu Han, piano

- Die Taubenpost from Schwanengesang, D. 965a (Seidl) (October 1828)

**BRIEF INTERMISSION**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT**

Quintet in C Major for Two Violins, Viola, and Two Cellos, op. posth. 163, D. 956 (1828)

- Allegro ma non troppo
- Adagio
- Scherzo: Presto – Trio: Andante sostenuto
- Allegretto

Arnaud Sussmann, Benjamin Beilman, violins; Paul Neuhauer, viola; Keith Robinson, Laurence Lesser, cellos

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North face of the Matterhorn, Zermatt, Switzerland
Program Notes: Ascent to the Summit, 1828

Notes on the Program by Patrick Castillo

JOSEPH HAYDN
(Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Lower Austria; died May 31, 1809, Vienna)

String Quartet in d minor, op. 103, Hob. III: 83 (unfinished)
Composed: 1803
Published: 1806

Other works from this period: Die Jahreszeiten (The Seasons), Hob. XXI: 3 (1799–1801); Te Deum in C Major, Hob. XXIIIc: 2, For Empress Maria Theresa (1800); String Quartet in F Major, op. 77, no. 2, Hob. III: 82 (“Lobkowicz” Quartet no. 2) (1799); Mass in B-flat Major for Soloists, Chorus, Organ, and Orchestra, Hob. XXII: 14, Harmoniemesse (1802); Mass in B-flat Major for Soloists, Chorus, Organ, and Orchestra, Hob. XXII: 13, Schöpfungsmesse (1801)

Approximate duration: 12 minutes

Haydn set to work on his String Quartet in d minor, op. 103, in 1803. The work remains unfinished; we have only the second and third of its projected four movements. Haydn was in poor health when he accepted the commission from Moritz von Fries, a Viennese arts patron, to compose a new quartet. He began with the inner movements—traditionally, the slow movement and the minuet—presumably because these were easier to tackle. Haydn probably figured he would get to the more challenging outer movements when he was back at full strength. But upon realizing that his health would not improve, Haydn had the two completed movements published on their own in 1806, with an announcement that these would serve as his farewell. He continued to decline over the next three years and died in 1809.

Though the Opus 103 Quartet is properly listed in d minor, its intended key, its Andante grazioso movement—the quartet’s projected second movement—is in the amiable key of B-flat major. The movement begins with a simple, tuneful melody. But this music’s seeming simplicity belies its refined craftsmanship. Haydn, after all, was the composer responsible for transforming the string quartet from a first violin plus supporting cast to a sophisticated conversation between four distinct voices. And the independence of each instrument here results in a richly satisfying ensemble texture.

The movement’s middle section enters, without warning, into the rarefied key of G-flat major. This music is simultaneously charming and strange: it begins with a four-bar phrase, derived from the opening theme—but rather than complete the melody, Haydn proceeds to a series of decorative triplet figurations. After mischievously steering this material through various keys, Haydn returns to the material of the opening.

The stern d minor minuet movement forecasts the Sturm und Drang sensibility of the Romantic composers more than it reflects the genteel manner of the traditional minuet.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(Born Bonn, baptized December 17, 1770; died March 26, 1827, Vienna)

String Quartet in c-sharp minor, op. 131
Composed: 1825–1826
Published: 1827, Mainz
Dedication: Baron Joseph von Stutterheim

Other works from this period: Piano Sonata no. 32 in c minor, op. 111 (1821–1822); Birthday Cantata for Prince Lobkowicz: Es lebe unser theurer Fürst, WoO 106 (1823); Symphony no. 9 in d minor, op. 125 (1822–1824); String Quartet in B-flat Major op. 130 (1825–1826); String Quartet in a minor, op. 132 (1825); String Quartet in F Major, op. 135 (1826); String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 133, Grosse Fuge (1825–1826); String Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 127 (1824–1825); Écossaise in E-flat Major for Piano, WoO 86 (1825)

Approximate duration: 35 minutes

The impetus for Beethoven’s late quartets was a commission from the Russian prince and amateur cellist Nikolay Galitzin, who asked Beethoven for “one, two, or three quartets, for which labor I will be glad to pay you what you think proper.” Even after fulfilling Galitzin’s commission for one, two, or three quartets, Beethoven had conceived so many musical ideas that he needed to continue. The resulting works are the String Quartet in c-sharp minor, op. 131, and the String Quartet in F Major, op. 135.

Karl Holz, the second violinist of the Schuppanzigh Quartet, who later worked as Beethoven’s secretary, relates the following:

During the time when he was composing the three quartets commissioned by Prince Galitzin, Opus 127, Opus 130, [and] Opus 132, such a wealth of new quartet ideas streamed forth from Beethoven’s inexhaustible imagination that he felt almost involuntarily compelled to write the c-sharp minor and F major quartets [opp. 131 and 135]. “My dear friend, I have just had another new idea,” he used to say, in a joking manner and with shining eyes, when we would go out for a walk; and he wrote down some notes in a little pocket sketchbook. “But that belongs to the quartet after the next one, since the next one already has too many movements...” When he had finished the B-flat Major Quartet [op. 130], I said that I thought it the best of the three. To which he replied, “Each in its own way! Art demands of us that we don’t stand still...You will find here a new kind of voice-leading, and, as to imagination, it will, God willing, be less lacking than ever before!” Later he said that he thought the c-sharp minor Quartet [opp. 131] his greatest.

Opus 131 holds a special place in the hearts of many. It is unique among Beethoven’s quartets in its structure—its seven movements are to be played without stopping—as well as in its powerful emotive content. Of this profound work, Wagner would remark, “‘Tis as if the master, grown conscious of his art, were settling himself to work on his magic.”

Few works in the repertoire so completely fascinate, challenge, and inspire both listeners and performers as does Beethoven’s Opus 131. Its challenges to the performers begin with its rare key signature: c-sharp minor—a key that precludes the players from relying on their instruments’ open strings. It is as though, by suppressing the instruments’ natural resonance, Beethoven has encoded the notion of human struggle into the work’s DNA.

The quartet begins with a slow, sinewy fugue. In addition to its enigmatic melody, this subject is characterized by its recurring sforzandi—sudden accents that puncture the line. As the ensemble texture develops, the piercing effect of this gesture becomes more pronounced, evoking a stabbing pain that dissipates and leaves a feeling of melancholy in its wake. Near the end of the movement, these pains recur with increasing frequency, becoming nearly too much to bear. The fugue finally comes to a mysterious stillness; the full ensemble sustains a quiet c-sharp.

Shifting up a barely perceptible half step, the music turns bright for the second movement, marked Allegro molto vivace. After the
movement comes to an understated conclusion, two loud chords forcefully announce the arrival of something new. The third movement serves as a recitative, prefacing the substantial Andante at the center of the quartet: a set of variations on an eloquent theme, introduced by the violins. The seven variations that follow share the same key but proceed at different tempi and traverse a wide range of characters.

Without pause, the cello brashly interrupts, launching the quartet’s wild fifth movement Presto. After what seems like a triumphant conclusion, three strident G-sharps extend the proceedings, and the rambunctious Presto dissolves into the desperate sadness of the sixth movement, marked Adagio quasi un poco andante. This pithy movement, as searingly expressive as it is compact, prepares the way for the quartet’s tempestuous finale.

A sudden burst of anger points the quartet towards its final movement’s sustained rage. The attentive listener might detect the dark motif on which the first movement is built in transformed in this turbulent finale. The return of this material in the quartet’s final chapter contributes to the unified quality of the work’s wide-ranging musical ideas. The journey has come full circle. Along the way, Beethoven has, with remarkable insight and empathy, given voice to seemingly the entire spectrum of human experience.

Aside from Wagner, countless others throughout history have held a deep reverence for this iconic work. Another anecdote from violinist Karl Holz reports that when Schubert first heard the Opus 131 Quartet, “He fell into such a state of excitement and enthusiasm that we were all frightened for him.” In November 1828, shortly before his death, Schubert made his last musical request: to hear Beethoven’s Opus 131, which was played for him five days before he died. In Holz’s words: “The king of song had sent the king of song a friendly bidding to the crossing.”

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**FRANZ SCHUBERT**

*Born January 31, 1797, Vienna; died November 19, 1828, Vienna*

**Auf dem Strom for Voice, Horn, and Piano, op. posth. 119, D. 943 (Rellstab)**

**Der Hirt auf dem Felsen for Soprano, Clarinet, and Piano, op. posth. 129, D. 965 (Müller, von Chézy)**

**Der Doppelgänger from Schwanengesang, D. 957/13 (Heine)**

**Die Taubenpost from Schwanengesang, D. 965a (Seidl)**

**Composed:** Auf dem Strom: March 1828; Der Hirt auf dem Felsen: October 1828; Der Doppelgänger: 1828; Die Taubenpost: October 1828

**Published:** Auf dem Strom: 1829 as Opus 119; Der Hirt auf dem Felsen (The Shepherd on the Rock): 1830 as Opus 129; Der Doppelgänger, D. 957/13, and Die Taubenpost, D. 965a, from Schwanengesang: 1829

**Approximate duration:** 28 minutes

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**Auf dem Strom**

Schubert composed Auf dem Strom (On the River) for a concert presented on March 26, 1828: this was the only public concert during Schubert’s lifetime devoted entirely to his music, and it took place on the first anniversary of Beethoven’s death. Auf dem Strom sets a poem by Ludwig Rellstab which Beethoven had intended to set before he died. Schubert’s setting and the inclusion of Auf dem Strom on his March 26 concert, then, represented an homage to the composer whom he most revered.

Rellstab’s text—fittingly, in more ways than one—describes a journey to a faraway place, as a metaphor for death and passage into the next world. Schubert’s setting is for voice, piano, and horn, with the piano and horn providing a dignified prelude to each of the song’s five stanzas. At the start of the second verse, Schubert salutes Beethoven by setting the words “And so the waves bear me forward / with unsympathetic speed” to the funeral-march theme from Beethoven’s Eroica Symphony. At Beethoven’s funeral, Schubert served as one of the pallbearers, and his friend, the poet Franz Grillparzer, delivered the eulogy. In his remarks, Grillparzer asked, “Who shall stand beside him?” Schubert knew that it was he who should assume Beethoven’s mantle, and his allusion to the Eroica in one of his own songs, on the first anniversary of Beethoven’s death, might be heard as a veiled proclamation. But, alas, Schubert himself had just eight months left.

**Der Hirt auf dem Felsen**

Schubert completed Der Hirt auf dem Felsen (The Shepherd on the Rock) in October 1828, one month before he died. It would be the second-to-last of his more than six hundred lieder.

Schubert composed the song for a prominent soprano named Anna Mildor-Hauthmann, who requested a concert showpiece—and, indeed, the song exhibits grander aspirations than the typical Schubert lied. At some twelve minutes in length, it is a good deal longer than almost any other of Schubert’s songs. It is moreover scored for voice, piano, and clarinet, placing it in the more public realm of chamber music. But despite its greater breadth, The Shepherd on the Rock still contains the expressive immediacy that characterizes all of Schubert’s lieder.

The song comprises seven verses: the first four and the last use poetry by Wilhelm Müller; the words for the fifth and sixth come from another poet, thought to be Helmina von Chézy.

Hauptmann asked Schubert for a song that would allow her to show off a wide expressive range, and Schubert obliged: The Shepherd on the Rock charts an emotional journey from Romantic yearning to lonely misery and, finally, to hopeful optimism.

Following the piano’s mysterious introductory measures, the clarinet begins the song with a long-breathed, pastoral melody. Schubert traces the clarinet’s expansive range from its bright upper register to the round warmth of its low end.

The song’s first two stanzas set the scene:

When, from the highest rock up here, I look deep down into the valley, And sing.

Far from the valley dark and deep Echoes rush through, upward and back to me, The chasm.

The vocal melody comes from the clarinet’s opening tune; as the shepherd describes singing from the highest rock, Schubert cleverly portrays the echo of her voice over the valley with the clarinet. The music turns more impassioned, as the shepherd sings:

The farther that my voice resounds, So much the brighter it echoes From underneath.

My sweetheart dwells so far from me, I hotly long to be with her Over there.

The song’s middle section—where the text turns from Müller to von Chézy—becomes dark:

I am consumed in misery, Happiness is far from me, Hope has on earth eluded me, I am so lonesome here.

But the gloominess gives way to an understated resolution. So longingly did sound the song,
Schubert affects the change in atmosphere through subtle, but utterly magical, shifts in harmony. The song’s final stanza finds the shepherd renewed by the anticipation of spring.

The springtime will come,
The springtime, my happiness,
Now must I make ready
To wander forth.

Der Doppelgänger
Schubert’s mammoth output of more than six hundred songs includes two of the finest song cycles in the repertoire: his famous Winterreise (Winter Journey) and Die schöne Müllerin (The Fair Maid of the Mill). Between August and October of 1828, Schubert set to work on what was projected to be two new cycles: one on poems by Ludwig Rellstab and the other on poems by Heinrich Heine. He didn’t complete either cycle, but after his death, his brother collected the thirteen songs Schubert did complete—to which his publisher Haslinger added Die Taubenpost—and the fourteen songs were published in 1829 as Schwanengesang (Swan Song). This evening’s program offers the last two songs of this posthumous cycle.

Der Doppelgänger (The Wraith) sets words by the great German Romantic poet Heinrich Heine. The poem conjures the feelings of solitude and existential angst that resonated with Schubert, especially during his final years.

The night is calm, the avenues are quiet,
My sweet one lived in this house;
She has already left the city long ago,
The house certainly still stands, in the same place.

A man is standing there, too, staring up into space,
And powerfully wringing his hands in torment.
It horrifies me, when I see his countenance,
The moon shows me my own form.

You my fearful double, you pale partner!
Why do you ape the pain of my love,
That has tortured me here in this spot
So many a night, in times long ago?

Schubert’s setting is unspiringly bleak. Against a series of impassive chords in the piano, the singer keens a forlorn melody.

Die Taubenpost
The starkness of Der Doppelgänger is assuaged in the final song of Schwanengesang, Die Taubenpost (The Pigeon Post). The text, by Johann Gabriel Seidl, is a cheerful ode to a carrier pigeon.

Schubert’s musical setting captures the spirit of Seidl’s text with exquisite precision and ends Schwanengesang on an uplifting note. It betrays a love of life made all the more poignant by Die Taubenpost’s place as the last song Schubert composed.

FRANZ SCHUBERT
Quintet in C Major for Two Violins, Viola, and Two Cellos, op. posth. 163, D. 956
Composed: 1828
Published: 1853, as Opus 163
First performance: November 7, 1850, Musikverein Hall, Vienna
Other works from this period: All composed in 1828: Piano Sonata in c minor, D. 958; Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959; Piano Sonata in B-flat major, D. 960; Fugue in e minor for Organ, Four Hands, D. 952; Psalm 92 for Baritone and Chorus, D. 953; Mass no. 6 in E-flat Major, D. 950; Drei Klavierstücke, D. 946; Schwanengesang, D. 957
Approximate duration: 55 minutes

Schubert’s String Quintet in C Major is widely regarded as one of the most perfectly conceived works in the entire chamber music literature. It exhibits all of Schubert’s chief compositional strengths: flawless melodies supported by expressive harmonic schemes, a prototypically Romantic poignancy, and a Beethovenian sense of dramatic narrative. Formally speaking, the work combines its ensemble of two violins, viola, and two cellos with perfect instrumental clarity and fluidity.

Schubert composed the Cello Quintet from August to September of 1828, just weeks before his death on November 19. He offered it for publication a month after its completion, but the work was refused. It did not receive its premiere until 1850 and was published three years later.

The Cello Quintet’s opening Allegro ma non troppo features an effortless stream of characteristically Schubertian melodies. Oscillating between major and minor tonalities, the primordial introductory measures are simultaneously expectant and serene.

The cellos combine in their rich tenor register to sing the lyrical second theme, one of the quintet’s most memorable passages.

While Schubert’s supreme craftsmanship is clearly evident in this work, the quintet’s true artistic genius lies in those elements that cannot be quantified. As with Beethoven’s late quartets, a unique musical universe comes into being in Schubert’s Cello Quintet, something that cannot be achieved simply through polished compositional technique. Witness the perfect cohesion and logic of musical ideas in the coda that closes the first movement.

Schubert biographer Brian Newbould writes that in the Cello Quintet’s slow movement, “divine peace confronts and dispels human angst.” The Adagio begins with a soft and timeless slow-moving lullaby, sung in shimmering chords by the three middle strings. Hushed pizzicati in the second cello provide the lullaby’s rhythmic grounding, while the first violin extemporizes above. The contrasting B section is fiery and impassioned. Its relentless rhythmic energy, pitting hard syncopations against turbulent triplet figures, evokes an almost sinister backdrop to the first violin’s desperate cry. This tumultuous ride slows to a reflective halt, leading back to an ornamented variation of the tranquil A section.

Like the second movement, the third movement presents and reconciles two opposing philosophies. Instead of the serenity and turbulence of the slow movement, here, Schubert brings together extroverted bliss and private meditation. The scherzo begins with a vigorous dance resembling the rustic Viennese ländler. The two cellos’ deep sonority contributes to the dance’s festive, rollicking atmosphere. Schubert offsets the scherzo’s buoyant ländler with a solemn central trio section. Here, the second cello adds increased gravity to the ensemble’s timbre. After this moment of reflection, the countryside festivities cheerfully resume.
Commentator Melvin Berger calls the quintet’s final movement “a stirring paean to the indomitability of the human spirit.” Indeed, following the emotionally exhausting second movement and the polarity between the scherzo and trio of the third, the finale’s Hungarian dance theme throws all questioning to the wind and embraces life without reservation. The lilt of the second musical idea departs from the hot-blooded Hungarian dance in favor of a distinctly Viennese flavor. After extending this heartwarming theme, Schubert presents yet another musical idea: a thoughtful duet between the two cellos, accompanied by sighing legato figures in the upper strings. This mercurial music escalates into a seamless return to the opening Hungarian dance. After reprising each of the movement’s themes, Schubert ups the ante with a faster repeat of the dance theme. As if to reinforce the point, the tempo quickens even further, barreling towards the finish line at breakneck speed.