



Schubertiade V

AUGUST 6

Thursday, August 6, 8:00 p.m., Stent Family Hall,
Menlo School

Schubertiades feature an intermission reception hosted in
partnership with Ridge Vineyards.

SPECIAL THANKS

Music@Menlo dedicates this performance to Betsy
Morgenthaler and also to U.S. Trust with gratitude for their
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Moritz von Schwind (1804–1871).
Study for *An Evening at
Baron von Spaun's*, 1868.
Art Resource, NY

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

String Quartet in F Major, op. 135 (1826)

Allegretto

Vivace

Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo

Der schwer gefasste Entschluss: Grave, ma non troppo tratto – Allegro

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

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Auflösung, D. 807 (Mayrhofer) (March 1824)

Gruppe aus dem Tartarus, op. 24, no. 1, D. 583 (Schiller) (September 1817)

Sara Couden, *contralto*; Gloria Chien, *piano*

Fantasy in f minor for Piano, Four Hands, op. posth. 103, D. 940 (1828)

Gilbert Kalish, Wu Han, *piano*

INTERMISSION

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Schwestergruss, D. 762 (Bruchmann) (November 1822)

Sara Couden, *contralto*; Gilbert Kalish, *piano*

Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960 (September 1828)

Molto moderato

Andante sostenuto

Scherzo: Allegro vivace con delicatezza

Allegro, ma non troppo

Gilbert Kalish, *piano*

Program Notes: Schubertiade V

Notes on the Program by Dr. Richard E. Rodda

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

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

String Quartet in F Major, op. 135

Composed: 1826

Other works from this period: Piano Sonata no. 32 in c minor, op. 111 (1821–1822); *Birthday Cantata for Prince Lobkowitz: Es lebe unser theurer Fürst*, WoO 106 (1823); Symphony no. 9 in d minor, op. 125 (1822–1824); String Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 127 (1824–1825); String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 130 (1825–1826); String Quartet in a minor, op. 132 (1825); String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 133, *Grosse Fuge* (1825–1826); *Écossaise* in E-flat Major for Piano, WoO 86 (1825); Arrangement of *Grosse Fuge*, op. 133, for Piano, Four Hands, op. 134 (1826)

Approximate duration: 22 minutes

The Opus 135 Quartet, composed mostly during August and September of 1826, stands in its sunny demeanor and compact scale as a kind of optimistic pendant to the visionary profundities of the other late quartets. The qualities of relaxation and good cheer are exhibited by the opening **movement**, a self-conscious evocation of the gracious and genteel chamber works with which Haydn and Mozart dominated Viennese musical society when Beethoven first arrived in the city from Bonn three decades before. The half-dozen distinct **motives** composing the main **theme** are discussed in a warm, conversational manner by the participants before the music passes on to its formal second subject, initiated by a rocket **phrase** shot into the highest reaches of the violin's range from the launching pad of a scurrying **arpeggiated** accompaniment in **triple** rhythms. The **exposition** is not repeated. The tiny **development** section is allowed enough time only to engage the triplet accompaniment and a single idea from the first theme before the colloquium returns to the expressive and formal security of the **recapitulation**.

If the first movement borrows its demeanor from the late eighteenth century, the scintillating **Vivace**, the quartet's **schерzo**, is decidedly a product of Beethoven's final creative period. The **syncopations**, cross accents, and harmonic abruptness of the outer sections of this three-part movement (**A–B–A**) are drawn from the expressive and technical realm of the quartets immediately preceding this one, while the central **trio** posits a melody that tries to fly completely beyond the limits of the violin and a whirring accompaniment figure whose dogged repetitions nearly transform it into some kind of demonic **ostinato**.

The **Lento**, music of sublime introspection and rapturous stillness, rarely rises above a stage whisper. Over the opening theme, which serves as the subject for a series of free **variations**, Beethoven wrote, "*Süsser Ruhegesang, Friedengesang*"—"Sweet restful song [or lullaby], song of peace." It is not impossible that this phrase had autobiographical import for the composer, then fifty-six years old and seriously ill. Just as the quartet was nearing completion, he wrote to his old friend Franz Wegeler, "I still hope to give several more great works to the world and then, like a tired child, to end my earthly existence among friendly souls."

The cryptic legend heading the finale—"Der schwer gefasste Entschluss. *Muss es sein? Es muss sein!*" ("The difficult resolution. Must it be? It must be!")—apparently arose from the playful **canon** that Beethoven wrote for a friend in April, but six months later, when the motives derived from its syllables gave rise to the principal theme of this movement, it may have taken on a more philosophical implication for the composer—the quintessential question of the acceptance

of his own mortality. (The manuscript is inscribed in French in the composer's hand, "*Dernier [last] quatuor de Beethoven.*") The slow introduction, the only tragic passage in the entire work, is hewn from the falling shape of the motive *Muss es sein?* but the main body of the **sonata-form** movement forges its joyous resolve from the rising reply: *Es muss sein!* Once, to join the development to the recapitulation, the tragic music returns, but its melancholic emotions are soon dispelled by the quartet's jubilant close.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(Born January 31, 1797, Vienna; died November 19, 1828, Vienna)

Auflösung, D. 807 (Mayrhofer)

Composed: March 1824

Other works from this period: March 1824: "Grand Duo" Sonata for Piano, Four Hands, D. 812; String Quartet in d minor, D. 810, "Death and the Maiden"; String Quartet in a minor, D. 804, "Rosamunde"; Octet for Winds and Strings, D. 803

1824: Introduction and Variations on *Trockne Blumen* for Flute and Piano, D. 802; Sonata in a minor for Arpeggione and Piano, D. 821; *Salve Regina* in C Major, D. 811; Four *Ländler* for Piano, Four Hands, D. 814

Gruppe aus dem Tartarus, op. 24, no. 1, D. 583 (Schiller)

Composed: September 1817

Other works from this period: September 1817: String Trio in B-flat Major, D. 581; Polonaise in B-flat Major for Violin and String Orchestra, D. 580

1817: Piano Sonata no. 5 in A-flat Major, D. 557; no. 6 in e minor, D. 566; and no. 7 in D-flat Major, D. 567; Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, D. 574, "Duo"; Eight *Écossaises* for Piano, D. 529; Sonata in a minor for Piano, op. posth. 164, D. 537; *An die Musik*, op. 88, no. 4, D. 547

Approximate duration: 6 minutes

Johann Baptist Mayrhofer was born in Steyr in 1787, went to school in Linz, and moved to Vienna in 1810 to study law. He met Schubert four years later, and the two became close friends despite their contrasting characters—Mayrhofer was moody and melancholic; Schubert was ebullient and outgoing. Schubert was influenced both by Mayrhofer's thoughtfulness and by his knowledge of the classics, and he set some three dozen of his poems during the next four years. They grew close enough personally that the composer moved into the poet's quarters late in 1818 until Schubert moved out in 1820. Their friendship continued, however, and Schubert set nine more of Mayrhofer's verses, including his sweeping and almost visionary version of "Auflösung" ("Dissolution") from March 1824 (D. 807), in which the poet seeks to escape the bonds of earth to envelop himself in the "celestial song of sweet ethereal choirs." Mayrhofer was deeply moved by Schubert's early death in 1828, and he largely gave up writing thereafter. He first tried to commit suicide in 1831 and finally succeeded five years later.

There is no more disturbing and violent page anywhere in Schubert's creative output than *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* (*Group from Tartarus*), D. 583, his 1817 setting of Friedrich von Schiller's chilling vision of a most fearsome hell. The frightening imagery of Schiller's poem is heightened by references to ancient mythology: Tartarus was the sunless abyss below Hades, the underworld inhabited by departed souls, where Zeus imprisoned the Titans after defeating them; Cocytus was a tributary of the Acheron, the river over which Charon ferried the souls of the dead; Saturn was the god of agriculture, believed to have

*Bolded terms are defined in the glossary, which begins on page 94.

ruled Earth during a period of happiness and plenty, and “shattering his sickle asunder” portends the death of hope itself. The celebrated German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau said that he never placed *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* at the end of a recital because “the listener will be left stunned and terrified.”

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Fantasy in f minor for Piano, Four Hands, op. posth. 103, D. 940

Composed: 1828

Other works from this period: 1828: String Quintet in C Major, op. posth. 163, D. 956; 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; Mass no. 6 in E-flat Major, D. 950; *Schwanengesang*, D. 957; *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*, op. posth. 129, D. 965

Approximate duration: 19 minutes

On March 26, 1828, in the hall of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, Schubert gave the only public concert entirely of his works held during his lifetime. The event, prompted and sponsored by his circle of devoted friends, was a significant artistic and financial success. The first important composition that Schubert completed after that milestone in his career was the Fantasy in f minor, the most poetic of his creations for piano duet (i.e., four hands at one keyboard).

Schubert was skilled as a violinist, violist, and solo pianist, but his favorite form of participatory chamber music was the piano duet. He wrote some sixty works for this convivial medium, though most date from his younger years, before he took up his bohemian existence in central Vienna when he was twenty. The Fantasy in f minor is his last and greatest contribution to the four-hand repertory, which, according to Maurice Brown in his study of Schubert, “has, in the highest degree, all those characteristic qualities of the composer that have endeared him to generations of music lovers.” The **fantasy** is spread across four continuous formal sections, the first and last spawned from the same thematic material so as to unify the overall structure. The opening portion, with its delicately rocking accompaniment and precisely etched melody, achieves a haunting blend of mystery and nostalgia that only Mozart could rival. Sterner motives are introduced for the sake of contrast. The following **Largo** section uses dramatic dotted-rhythm figurations at its beginning and end to frame the more tender melody that occupies its central region. A brilliant triple-meter **Allegro**, the pianistic analog of the scherzo in the contemporaneous C Major Symphony (“The Great”), forms the dancing heart of the fantasy. The themes of the opening section return in heightened, often **contrapuntal** settings to round out this masterpiece of Schubert’s fullest maturity.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Schwestergruss, D. 762 (Bruchmann)

Composed: November 1822

Other works from this period: 1822: Sixteen *Ländler* and Two *Écossaises* (*Wiener Damen-Ländler*) for Piano, D. 734 (ca. 1822); *Tantum ergo* in D Major, D. 750; Symphony no. 8 in b minor, D. 759, “Unfinished”; Fantasy in C Major, op. 15, D. 760, “Wanderer”; *Gott in der Natur* for Two Sopranos, Two Altos, and Piano, D. 757

Approximate duration: 6 minutes

Franz von Bruchmann (1798–1867), law student, philosopher, poet manqué, and, late in life, priest, was one of Schubert’s closest friends and a frequent host of Schubertiades and poetry reading evenings from 1820 to 1823. Like many other Italian, French, and German poets

of his time, Bruchmann was influenced by the writings of the sixth-century BCE Greek poet Anacreon, who wrote on a variety of subjects but was especially prized for his verses in praise of love, wine, and revelry. (*The Star-Spangled Banner* uses the melody of an eighteenth-century English drinking song titled *To Anacreon in Heaven*, whose original text suggests the contemporary lubricious view of the ancient poet: “And long may the sons of Anacreon entwine / The myrtle of Venus with Bacchus’s vine.”) On July 18, 1820, Sybilla von Bruchmann, the poet’s sister, died at the age of twenty-one, and he commemorated her passing with a poem titled “Schwestergruss” (“Sister’s Greeting”). In the following years, Schubert made a masterly setting of the verse (D. 762), evoking the funeral mood of the opening with tolling-bell chords as the gateway to the ghostly visitation of the departed, who assures her survivors of her blissful state and also leaves them with a cautionary message.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960

Composed: 1828

Approximate duration: 37 minutes

For complete background information on the Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, please read the introduction to the notes for Schubertiade II for the Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959.

The B-flat Sonata, generally regarded as Schubert’s greatest achievement in the genre, opens with a movement of breadth and majesty based on one his most ravishing melodies. The **Andante sostenuto**, consisting of such music given to only the greatest masters to compose, seems almost freed from earthly bonds, rapt out of time. “It is,” concluded Alfred Einstein, “the climax and apotheosis of Schubert’s instrumental lyricism and his simplicity of form.” The playful scherzo that follows serves as the perfect foil to the slow movement. The finale balances a certain seriousness of expression with exuberance and rhythmic energy.