

Gather (2021) Disc 1.

- 1 **Gather for Cello and Piano** (2021, world premiere)
3:11
PATRICK CASTILLO (born 1979)

DAVID FINCKEL, *cello*; WU HAN, *piano*

- 2–5 **Piano Trio in G major, op. 1, no. 2 1** (1794–1795)
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)
- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Adagio – Allegro vivace</i> | 12:21 |
| <i>Largo con espressione</i> | 9:26 |
| <i>Scherzo: Allegro</i> | 3:51 |
| <i>Finale: Presto</i> | 7:41 |

WU HAN, *piano*; KRISTIN LEE, *violin*; DAVID FINCKEL, *cello*

- 6–10 **Quintet in A major for Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass, op. posth. 114, D. 667, “Die Forelle” (“The Trout”)** (1819)
FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

<i>Allegro vivace</i>	13:09
<i>Andante</i>	6:34
<i>Scherzo: Presto</i>	4:07
<i>Andantino (Tema con variazioni)</i>	7:28
<i>Finale: Allegro giusto</i>	6:21

WU HAN, *piano*; ARNAUD SUSSMANN, *violin*;
MATTHEW LIPMAN, *viola*; DAVID FINCKEL, *cello*;
SCOTT PINGEL, *bass*

The 2021 edition of Music@Menlo *LIVE*, titled *Gather*, celebrates the joy of coming together around a shared love of live music, after an immensely challenging year for the arts when concert halls largely fell silent. Each disc explores pinnacles of the chamber music art form, including both masterworks and tantalizing discoveries. This collection of recordings also celebrates the opening of the Spieker Center for the Arts, Music@Menlo’s new home.

Combining timeless classics of the past with a voice from today, Disc 1 opens with the world premiere performance of Patrick Castillo’s *Gather* for Cello and Piano, written to commemorate the opening of the Spieker Center for the Arts. The serene yet captivating Piano Trio, op. 1, no. 2 by Ludwig van Beethoven follows, and the disc concludes with Franz Schubert’s beloved “Trout” Quintet, penned in a matter of days to be enjoyed at a chamber music soirée.

Liner notes by Patrick Castillo © 2021

PATRICK CASTILLO (Born 1979) **Gather for Cello and Piano (2020)**

Composer’s Note

I was profoundly honored to be asked by David Finckel and Wu Han in early 2020 to create a new work to celebrate the opening of the Spieker Center for the Arts, planned for that October. For the occasion, I composed *Gather*, a paean to our sacred ritual of coming together around a shared love of music. This ritual has borne the Music@Menlo community, which has been for me an immense source of intellectual and spiritual nourishment for nearly two decades. Little did any of us know at the time how starved we would be for that ritual by the time of *Gather*’s first hearing. As we emerge from this dreadful silent year and gather once again as a community, I am doubly honored for these to be the first notes heard in Music@Menlo’s new home.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) **Piano Trio in G major, op. 1, no. 2 (1794–1795)**

Unfairly underrecognized within Ludwig van Beethoven’s oeuvre, and even among just the Opus 1 Trios, is the second of the set, the Trio in G major. It is the least frequently performed of the three, and consequently the least known, despite its sheer excellence. One could perhaps make a similar case for the G major Trio relative to its two siblings as Beethoven would make twenty years later for his Eighth Symphony when told that it failed to meet the same acclaim as the Seventh—to which the temperamental composer retorted, “That’s because it’s so much better!”

To be sure, that is as rash a judgment on the Seventh Symphony as it would be on the ingenious Trios in E-flat major and C minor, but at the very least, the G major Trio is the most difficult to figure out. If the E-flat Trio is the most firmly situated in the realm of Haydnesque and Mozartian Classicism and the C minor Trio the most brazenly forward-looking, then the Trio in G major captures, like a time-lapse video of night turning into day, the metamorphosis of Beethoven’s creative impulses toward the “new path” his music would soon pursue.

The G major Trio begins with a luxurious *Adagio* introduction: a hazy reverie, which is nevertheless of structural importance, as the violin’s opening melodic figure foreshadows the movement’s first theme. Even once the music enters into its main *Allegro vivace* section, this buoyant theme doesn’t appear in full until several measures in—it needs that long of a runway before taking flight. Beethoven’s restless approach to thematic development is already evident in the movement’s exposition; the proper development section itself traverses a remarkably wide spectrum of expressive characters. This

is a movement marked by its great breadth of musical materials. Though it has the trappings of the sonata form innovated by Haydn, it leaves us with the impression that that form was insufficient to contain Beethoven's imagination. The movement concludes with a rich coda, continuing on past an emphatic cadence that would have made for a wholly satisfying conclusion, like the bonus of extra innings after nine frames of riveting baseball.

The trio's centerpiece, however, is the second movement, poetically marked *Largo con espressione*—"unexcelled," according to musicologist Lewis Lockwood, "by the slow movement of any piano trio written up to this time, and for sheer lyrical beauty it outdoes those of [Beethoven's] early piano sonatas." The three instruments (four voices, given the independence of the pianist's left and right hands) synergistically share phrases, weaving a rich polyphonic texture that looks ahead to the most deeply felt chamber scores of the coming century. In one of music history's most poignant coincidences, the composer's close friend and colleague Ignaz Schuppanzigh was performing this movement in Vienna at the moment that, elsewhere in the city, Beethoven took his last breath.

The *Scherzo* movement, as genial as it is brief, bridges the profundity of the slow movement to the lighthearted finale. The ebullience of the main theme—marked by fast, repeated notes—doesn't abate even for the movement's more cantabile moments and drives the trio to its conclusion with a wide grin.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Quintet in A major for Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass, op. posth. 114, D. 667, "Die Forelle" ("The Trout") (1819)

Franz Schubert composed his Piano Quintet in A major, subtitled "Die Forelle" ("The Trout") after his lied of the same name, during the summer of 1819 while vacationing in northern Austria with the baritone Johann Vogl. On a stop in the small town of Steyr, Schubert and Vogl visited with a wealthy patron and amateur cellist, Sylvester Paumgartner, who regularly hosted chamber music gatherings at his home with other amateur players. On their visit, Paumgartner requested that Schubert compose a new work for one of these affairs, specifically a quintet to complement the Quintet in D minor of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (actually an arrangement of Hummel's Opus 74 Septet for piano, winds, and strings), which was scored for the unusual combination of piano, violin, viola, cello, and double bass. It was likewise Paumgartner's request that the new quintet include a set of variations on "Die Forelle".

Testifying to Schubert's genius, the story goes that, in a rush to satisfy Paumgartner's request in time for his next

soiree, Schubert, having fully conceived the new work in his head, forewent writing out the full score and set immediately to preparing the individual string parts. The piano part he played himself, without having written down a note.

The quintet's pseudo-orchestral instrumentation—the piano's vast range, the foundation laid by the double bass—belies the intimate character of its musical content. Its affability, in turn, masks its impeccable craftsmanship. That the "Trout" Quintet has endured among the most beloved works of the chamber literature testifies to, among others of Schubert's qualities, the fierce precocity of the musical genius whose "late" works would be those completed in his thirty-first year.

Following a cheerful ascending flourish in the piano, an amiable conversation between the strings prefigures the opening *Allegro vivace's* first theme, an utterance disarmingly warm and bright. As it proceeds, the movement is marked most of all by its melodic generosity, featuring no fewer than five distinct melodic ideas, each a broadly open-armed tune. Befitting the movement's melodic abundance, Schubert's ensemble writing is equally rich: full of textural variety and giving each instrument its moment in the sun. The inclusion of the double bass is noteworthy, particularly for freeing the cello to soar, as in the second theme in E major—a long-breathed duet between violin and cello. The movement features a development section in the Classical tradition but never strays far from its bucolic temperament.

The second *Andante* movement—in F major, a key traditionally associated with pastoral settings as in Beethoven's *Pastoral*/Symphony—extends the first movement's idyllic character, slowed to a graceful serenity. The movement, comprising three themes, moreover features further textural ingenuity, as rich sonorities shift before our ears from one moment to the next. Witness the combination of viola and cello to croon the movement's second theme, a tender melody in F-sharp minor, accompanied by a steady pulse in the bass, delicate triplets in the piano, and dotted-rhythm highlights in the violin. A contented D-major melody follows at the rhythmic gait of a march but is voiced in a gentle whisper, utterly devoid of martial pomp.

The second half of the movement repeats the first, essentially verbatim, but in different keys. The return to the opening section shifts from the march's D-major cadence to the umami warmth of E-flat—a dramatic shift in atmosphere accentuated by the harmonic remoteness. The duet between viola and cello is reprised in tearful A minor, and the reappearance of the pacifist march brings the movement back to the home key.

Schubert jolts the listener out of the second movement reverie with a vigorous outburst to launch the *Scherzo*—the quintet’s shortest movement, but with an irrepressible energy packed into its miniature frame. This is music of brazen, bawdy fun, accented near the section’s end by an earthy ejaculation in the double bass.

The theme and set of six variations on “Die Forelle” that constitute the quintet’s fourth movement conjure an Arcadian paradise—so welcoming and unassuming as to perhaps obscure the sophistication of the composer’s technique. But here, too, we encounter Schubert’s thoughtful approach to instrumental writing, as in the first variation, with the bass providing the harmonic foundation, when the cello luxuriates in its rich upper register in dialogue with the violin or in the following variation, in which the viola takes over the tune, and the violin offers a shimmering countermelody.

The fourth variation offers the most drastic transformation of the theme, as the music explodes with crashing *fortissimo* chords in stormy D minor. But the clouds pass as quickly as they came, and the melody ends peacefully in F major, the pastoral key of the *Andante*. As if following torrential rains, the bittersweet fifth variation suggests the reemergence of the sun. The sixth and final variation returns to the theme in its initial form, now featuring the piano accompaniment used in the original lied.

The affable final movement begins with a single bell toll, struck *fortepiano* by piano, viola, and cello, as if to rouse the listener from the previous movement’s lullaby-like ending. The movement’s rustic central theme follows. An effortless extension of this theme arrives at a buoyant second musical idea, reminiscent of the “Die Forelle” melody.

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