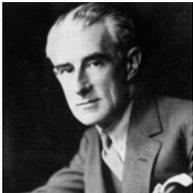


2018 Preview Notes • Week Five • Persons Auditorium

Friday, August 10 at 8:00pm



Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914-1917)

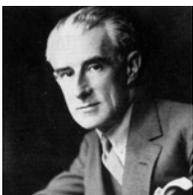
Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, 1897 • Died December 28, 1937

Duration: approx. 30 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

Le Tombeau de Couperin comprises six movements, each of which corresponds to a movement in a traditional Baroque suite. Not only does the piece memorialize the form in which François Couperin, the work's eponymous inspiration, excelled, but each movement is dedicated to the memory of a friend of Ravel's who perished in World War I. Though *Le Tombeau* was originally composed as a solo suite for keyboard, four movements of the piece were orchestrated by Ravel in 1919. By augmenting the range of timbres, the orchestration allows for the dance rhythms to be brought out even further; early critics of the work questioned its tone, noting that the dances are often buoyant and whimsical instead of overtly elegiac. In response, Ravel stated "The dead are sad enough, in their eternal silence," and the orchestrated version of the piece remains a piece of enduring popularity over 80 years after Ravel's own death.

Participants: Marlboro Music Festival Orchestra, Leon Fleisher, *conductor*



La Valse

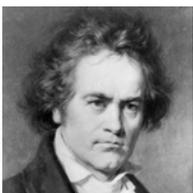
Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, 1897 • Died December 28, 1937

Duration: approx. 11 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

Whereas *Le Tombeau de Couperin* originated as a work for keyboard that later became widely known in its orchestrated form, *La Valse* was first conceived as a fully orchestrated work intended for the ballet stage. However, it was a two-piano reduction that Ravel himself performed alongside Marcelle Meyer in order to present the composition to Sergei Diaghilev, the founder of the Ballets Russes. Diaghilev pronounced the work a masterpiece... but not a ballet. The friendship between the composer and impresario subsequently crumbled, and it is believed that Diaghilev even challenged Ravel to a duel years later. The piece was begun as an homage to the Viennese Waltz, and the dark undertones to the piece are sometimes interpreted as a critique of the decadent and ultimately bellicose tendencies of the former Austro-Hungarian capital. Ravel, though, resisted a materialistic reading of the composition and pronounced that "one should only see in it what the music expresses: an ascending progression of sonority."

Participants: János Palójtay, *piano*; Ieva Jokubaviciute, *piano*



Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97, "Archduke" (1811)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770 • Died March 26, 1827

Duration: approx. 45 minutes • Last Marlboro Performance: 2017

Though the Archduke is now off-played and familiar, it was lauded for its novelty upon first performance with Beethoven himself at the piano. Ignaz Moscheles exclaimed "In the case of how many compositions is the word 'new' misapplied! But never in Beethoven's, and least of all in this, which again is full originality." Not only is the Archduke a chamber piece of notable length, and though it is the last piano trio that Beethoven penned, it was one of the first in the genre to achieve a balance of substantial writing for all three instruments.

Participants: Juho Pohjonen, *piano*; David McCarroll, *violin*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*

MARLBORO MUSIC

2018 Preview Notes • Week Five • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, August 11 at 8:00pm



Alphorn (1878)
Richard Strauss
Born June 11, 1864
Died September 8, 1949
5 minutes, Last Performed: 2009



Le Soir (c. 1840-42)
Charles Gounod
Born June 17, 1818
Died October 18, 1893
5 minutes, Marlboro Premiere

Though it is often (and rightly) discussed that the overwhelming majority of pieces rehearsed at Marlboro are never performed, it is the same joy in the activity of rehearsal that makes it possible for a more casual reading group to develop into an ensemble that proposes to present its work in concert. This is the case with this performance. *Alphorn*, a searching but straightforward complaint of heartbreak, was written when the composer was still in his teens. *Le Soir* is a setting of a poem by Alphonse de Lamartine, a favorite of Franz Liszt and an early pioneer of French Romantic poetry. Whereas the Strauss lyrics begin with a series of questions about the source of the horn's sound, concluding finally that it emanates from within the lovelorn breast of the narrator, the poetry of *Le Soir* begins with definite descriptions of the night's beauty but becomes swept up in questions when light from the planet Venus illuminates the landscape of the poem.

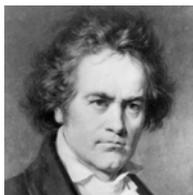
Participants: Kara Dugan, *mezzo-soprano*; Radovan Vlatković, *horn*; Lydia Brown, *piano*



String Quartet No. 3, Op. 94 (1975)
Benjamin Britten
Born November 22, 1913 • Died December 4, 1976
Duration: approx. 30 minutes • Last Marlboro Performance: 2011

Written just one year before his death, Britten's third string quartet represents the composer's return to quartet writing after a period of three decades. Britten was recovering from a heart operation in 1973 during which he complained of discomfort while reaching the upper staves of an orchestral manuscript. Musicologist Hans Keller ribbed him, suggesting that this was the perfect time for Britten to write a string quartet. The piece itself includes five movements, and it is sometimes seen as more of a suite because of this. Britten showcases many moods in succession, beginning with a meditation on how to pair two voices, moving onto an ostinato in the second movement that contrasts bustling material with an obsessively repeated musical gesture. The musical texture thins in the third movement, marked *Solo (Very calm)*, and the following *Burlesque* jostles the piece back into motion. The final movement harkens back to Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice*; it is titled *La Serenissima* and opens with a lapping motion reminiscent of the waters. Britten referred to the end of his final quartet as "a question;" just as his quartet defies the structure of a quartet as such, the conclusion defies absolute conclusiveness.

Participants: Tessa Lark, *violin*; Yoojin Jang, *violin*; Jonathan Chu, *viola*; Christoph Richter, *cello*



String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130 with *große Fuge*, Op. 133 (1825)
Ludwig van Beethoven
Born December 16, 1770 • Died March 26, 1827
Duration: approx. 45 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2012

This 13th string quartet of Beethoven's received the nickname *Lieb*, beloved, from the composer himself. Spanning a considerable amount of performance time and six movements, this late work of Beethoven's might look back towards not only the idea of the divertimento but also Mozart's divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563, which was just heard at this year's Town Benefit concert, insofar as both works transcend the lightness of the received divertimento tradition and delve into territory that tests the boundaries of form. Indeed, Beethoven intended for the complex fugue now known separately as the *große Fuge*, Op. 133 to be the finale of the piece, but removed it at the behest of Beethoven's publisher who was baffled by the composer's ambitious intent.

Participants: Tessa Lark, *violin*; Eunice Kim, *violin*; Wenting Kang, *viola*; Peter Wiley, *cello*

2018 Preview Notes • Week Five • Persons Auditorium

Sunday, August 12 at 2:30pm



Nonet in E-flat Major, Op. 38

Louise Farrenc

Born May 31 1804 • Died September 15, 1875

Duration: approx. 25 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

From an artistic family with a reputation for sculpture, Farrenc developed her own artistic talents at a young age and studied with Ignaz Moscheles, Johan Nepomunk Hummel, and Anton Reicha. After touring, giving birth to a daughter who would also become a concert pianist, and establishing a successful music publishing company with her husband, Farrenc secured a coveted permanent position as professor of piano at the Paris Conservatory. Though the post was prestigious, Farrenc was paid less than her male colleague for nearly a decade. It was after the premiere of her Nonet in E-flat, in which Joseph Joachim performed, that Farrenc made a successful bid to be given equal compensation for her professorship.

Participants: Joshua Smith, *flute*; Frank Rosenwein, *oboe*; Ib Hausmann, *clarinet*; Brad Balliett, *bassoon*; Radovan Vlatković, *horn*; David McCarroll, *violin*; Zoë Martin-Doike, *viola*; Brannon Cho, *cello*; William Langlie-Miletich, *double bass*



String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10 (1893)

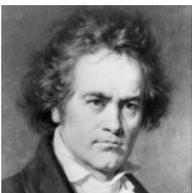
Claude Debussy

Born August 22, 1862 • March 25, 1918

Duration: approx. 25 minutes • Last Marlboro Performance: 2010

Debussy's only string quartet is also the only work of his to have been given an opus number. Despite the piece's designation as a quartet in G Minor, its free sense of form within the movements and loose grip on tonality tests the limits of both appellations and became an iconic piece at the forefront of modern French music. The piece proceeds from the intrepid first movement, to a rhythmic second movement accented throughout by instantly recognizable plucking, the sweetly expressive third movement, and the expansive finale. This particular group has rehearsed the quartet for the entire season, unfolding this many-textured piece for seven weeks in the luxury of time afforded by a Marlboro summer.

Participants: Siwoo Kim, *violin*; Nick Eanet, *violin*; Tanner Menees, *viola*; Tony Rymer, *cello*



Fantasia for Piano, Chorus, and Orchestra, "Choral Fantasy"

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770 • Died March 26, 1827

Duration: approx. 20 minutes • Last Marlboro Performance: 2016

The Choral Fantasy began with Beethoven himself improvising at the keyboard as a grand finale to a titanic concert that premiered his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and featured a concert aria, two movements from his Mass in C Major, and his Piano Concerto No. 4. The Choral Fantasy's history with Marlboro began as the season finale of 1957 with Alexander Schneider conducting, Rudolf Serkin as soloist, and a chorus made up of Blanche Moyse's chorale. Serkin's last appearance in the Choral Fantasy was in 1989, two summers before his death. "It was absolutely wrenching," remembers former administrator Harvey Olnick. "It was valiant, as if his last strength was devoted to playing that piece." For two years after his father's death, Peter Serkin performed the solo part in his father's memory. Then the tradition ended until 2003 when the Choral Fantasy returned, triumphantly concluding the summer season with Richard Goode at the piano. Mitsuko Uchida has acted as the pianist every other subsequent summer, and it is her playing along with the participation of Marlboro musicians, family members, and neighbors under the baton of Leon Fleisher who will be heard this Sunday to conclude another season of Marlboro Music.

Adapted from a blog post by Brian Potter.

Participants: Marlboro Music Festival Orchestra and Chorus; Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*; Leon Fleisher, *conductor*