

2021 Preview Notes • Week Four • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, August 7 at 8:00 pm



Canticle III: Still falls the Rain, Op. 55 (1954)

Benjamin Britten

Born: November 22, 1913 • Died: December 4, 1976

Duration: approx. 11 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2017

Part three of Britten's *Canticles* is set to Edith Sitwell's poem, *Still falls the Rain*; subtitled *The Raids, 1940. Night and Dawn*. Though explicitly referencing the wartime tragedies of 1940, the poem returns repeatedly to descriptions of Christ's death on the cross, raising questions about the nature and necessity of suffering and sacrifice. Britten's composition follows the poem's irregularities in rhyme and meter, avoiding a melodic setting in favor of a free recitative for tenor and piano that alternates, verse by verse, with a duet for horn and piano. Only in the final stanza are the tenor and horn heard together, following each other in rhythm but holding shimmering dissonances between them. The concluding stanza is the only one in which the opening words—*Still falls the Rain*—are not heard. Instead, the final lines evoke the voice of God in a direct account of the Passion.

Participants: Daniel McGrew, tenor; Wei-Ping Chou, horn; Lydia Brown, piano



Theme and Variations, Op. 80 (1916)

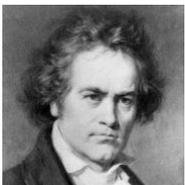
Amy Beach

Born: September 5, 1867 • Died: December 27, 1944

Duration: approx. 20 minutes • Marlboro Premiere

Born in Henniker, New Hampshire in 1867, Amy Beach was the first major American born and trained composer. Beach's output during the early 20th century contains over 300 works and focuses mainly on songs and chamber music. The *Theme and Variations* for flute and strings was written in 1916 on a commission from the San Francisco Chamber Music Society. The first theme is drawn from one of her many songs, in this instance a work titled *Indian Lullaby*. We hear this melody played, at first, only by the string quartet. After the statement of the theme, the flute enters with an extended solo. Each of the five variations alternate characters and moods. It is a rich, ambitious work and a definitive example of American Romanticism.

Participants: Marina Piccinini, *flute*; Kobi Malkin & Carmit Zori, *violin*; Jordan Bak, *viola*; Julia Yang, *cello*



Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1, "Ghost" (1808)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770 • Died: March 26, 1827

Duration: approx. 25 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2017

Beethoven's piano trios have been a beloved subject of study at Marlboro. The overall structure of this trio follows an arch shape. The two outside movements are lucid and direct in style; the high point of the trio is the middle movement, the foreboding *Largo*, from which the piece takes its name '*Ghost*'. The opening piano figure of the ghost movement is associated with Beethoven's sketches for the witches' scene from an opera based on *Macbeth* that he was planning at the time. In a rare departure, Beethoven gives the piano some passages mostly for coloristic effects, rather than for melodic or accompaniment purposes. At the premiere, with Beethoven himself at the piano, Louis Spohr lamented that "Beethoven's almost continual melancholy was no longer a mystery to me."

Participants: Filippo Gorini, *piano*; Carmit Zori, *violin*; Yi Qun Xu, *cello*

2021 Preview Notes • Week Four • Persons Auditorium

Sunday, August 8 at 2:30pm



Nacht, Op. 3b (1918)

Adolf Busch

Born: August 8, 1891 • Died: June 9, 1952

Duration: approx. 5 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2013

Violinist and composer Adolf Busch, who had a thriving career in Germany, was one of the few non-Jewish musicians who spoke out against Hitler. He moved to Switzerland in 1927 and refused engagements in both Germany and Italy in protest against anti-Semitism and fascism. It was his dream to create a summer musical community where artists could come together to exchange ideas, explore music together, and share meals and life experiences as a large musical family. His legacy was cemented in 1951 when he cofounded the Marlboro Music School and Festival. A handful of Busch's works have been recorded but are rarely heard in performance today.

Participants: Jennifer Johnson Cano, *mezzo-soprano*; Edvard Pogossian, *cello*; Lydia Brown, *piano*



Bagatelles, Op. 14/d (1981)

György Kurtág

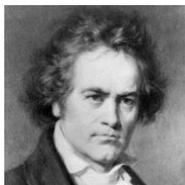
Born: February 19, 1926

In residence 1997

Duration: approx. 12 minutes • Last Marlboro Performance: 2016

Like Bartók and Ligeti, Kurtág was born in a small town in what is now Romania. He and his family moved to Budapest in 1946 where he studied with Pál Kadosa, Leó Weiner, and Sándor Veress. Though brief, the six vignettes of Op. 14/d capture a world of references. Dedicated to British flutist Michelle Lee, these pieces are transcriptions of earlier pieces from the solo piano cycle, *Játékok* (*Games*, 1973-76), and *Herdecker Eurythmie* for speaking voice, lyre, flute, and violin (1978). *Játékok* is an adventurous compendium of piano miniatures—some only a few notes long, others in more extended forms. According to musicologist Stephen Walsh, in this work Kurtág decided to embrace his experimental jottings, both as an inspiration for young pianists and as a source of ideas for future works. Thus they form a sort of diary of his musical thoughts, while at the same time complementing the pedagogical piano collections of Bartók and Veress. Kurtág has worked with many Marlboro participants including Kim Kashkashian, Charles Neidich, and Marina Piccinini.

Participants: Marina Piccinini, *flute*; William Langlie-Miletech, *double bass*; Filippo Gorini, *piano*



String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132 (1825)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770 • Died: March 26, 1827

Duration: approx. 30 minutes • Last Marlboro performance: 2015

While working on his Op. 132, Beethoven fell gravely ill with liver disease, bowel inflammation, and other painful abdominal conditions. The episode left him severely compromised and weak, but he was able to finish the quartet during the summer of 1825. Above the third movement Beethoven writes, "*Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Divinity by a Convalescent, in the Lydian mode*". A hymn expressing his gratitude for the return of good health in the Lydian mode, an ancient ecclesiastical scale, gives the listener a spiritual reprieve.

Participants: Stephanie Zyzak & Claire Bourg, *violin*; Tanner Menees, *viola*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*