

2022 Preview Notes • Week Four • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, August 6 at 8pm



String Sextet, H. 107 (1906-1912)
Frank Bridge
 Born February 26, 1879
 (Brighton, England)
 Died January 10, 1941
 (Eastbourn, England)
 Duration: approx. 28 minutes
 Marlboro Premiere

In 1912 Frank Bridge was looking to expand his musical horizons, exploring a richer harmonic palette that was deeply influenced by the then dominant impressionists, such as Franck and Fauré. The String Sextet in E-flat Major (composed between 1906 and 1912) and the Piano Quintet H. 49 (written between 1904-1905 and revised in 1912) represent the peak of this musical quest. The Sextet was first performed in 1913 in what is now Wigmore Hall, London by Bridge himself (on first viola) joined by two colleagues from the Royal College of Music: Ernest Tomlinson (viola) and Felix Salmond (cello). The Sextet is, among all of Bridge's romantic chamber works, the richest in texture and dynamics. The first of three movements, marked *Allegro moderato*, begins with a soaring melody that establishes the broad scale and emotionally tumultuous character of the first movement. The second subject of the movement, however, presents itself as tender and soft, featuring simple phrases given sequential treatment that concludes with a radiant climax. The second movement, *Andante con moto*, is in C-sharp Minor and combines the characteristics of both a traditional second, slow movement as well as a typical third movement, the *Scherzo*. The movement is structured in a ternary form, beginning with the *Andante* material, moving then to the fast dance-like *Allegro giusto*, before returning to the calm, melodic material with which the movement began. This second movement can be described as the emotional heart of the movement: beautifully shaped counter-melodies combine to create a painful lament. The fast tempo of the movement's middle section does not, however, provide a reprieve from the pain expressed at its beginning, instead expressing that emotion through the agitation of running sixteenth notes and quick, writhing scalar passages articulated first in the violins before being passed around the ensemble. The Sextet's finale, labeled *Allegro ben moderato* (well-moderated allegro), is the most compact and thematically dense of the three movements. The opening theme takes its shape from the falling fourths of the scherzo theme,

thus subtly connecting the two movements to each other. It is this, almost a "genetic" link between the movements, that creates the nearly cyclical quality that the Sextet possesses, as Bridge recalls motivic material, and their associated emotive worlds, from each movement. Tonight's performance of the String Sextet marks the work's Marlboro premiere, as it has never before appeared on a festival program since Marlboro's founding in 1951.

Participants: Cherry Choi Tung Yeung & Isabelle Durrenberger, *violins*; Hayang Park & Hsin-Yun Huang, *violas*; Julia Yang & Peter Myers, *cellos*



Concertino (1925)
Erwin Schulhoff
 Born June 8, 1894 (Prague)
 Died August 18, 1942
 (Wülzburg, Germany)
 Duration: approx. 15 minutes
 Last Marlboro performance: 2019

Erwin Schulhoff was born in Prague to a supportive and musical family, who encouraged the young Schulhoff in his early compositional interests. At only seven Schulhoff received a commendation from Antonín Dvořák that allowed him to study piano, and at the age of ten, Schulhoff entered the Prague Conservatory. He would go on to study piano and composition with important teachers in Vienna, Leipzig, and Cologne, even studying with Max Reger for three years from 1907-1910. After surviving the First World War, having been required to fight as part of the Austrian army, Schulhoff moved to Berlin and then to Dresden, where he became acquainted with Dada artists such as George Grosz. An avant-gardist at heart, Schulhoff was fascinated by the Dada aesthetic, and later as well by the Second Viennese School and by jazz, for both of which he advocated strongly as a concert organizer and pianist when he returned to Prague in 1924. He even played with and composed for the jazz orchestra of the Prague Theater, writing under the penname Petr Hanus. Compositionally, Schulhoff was not only influenced strongly by these disparate styles, but as well by impressionism, expressionism and neo-classicism, and one can particularly hear the influence of impressionism (including the affinity for pentatonicism often found amongst the French impressionists) and neo-classicism in his *Concertino* for flute/piccolo, viola, and double bass. Tragically, in part due to Schulhoff's truly modern sensibility and virtuosic experimentation with style, as

well as his participation in the nascent communist movement in Germany, after the Nazis took power in early 1933, Schulhoff's music was labeled as "degenerate" and soon thereafter a total ban on the performance of his music in Germany was put into effect. Schulhoff eventually moved back to Prague, where he attempted to cobble together a living working in radio. As his engagement with the communist party increased, Schulhoff and his family became citizens of the Soviet Union in May, 1941. Less than a month later, Schulhoff was interned and moved to a concentration camp for "citizens of foreign states" in Wülzburg (in Bavaria), where he died, in August 1942, from tuberculosis.

The *Concertino* was composed in 1925 during a period of Schulhoff's life when he was experimenting with the variety of styles circulating in Europe. One can observe Schulhoff's adventurousness even in the instrumentation of the four-movement work, a decidedly non-standard combination of instruments still today. The *Concertino* opens with a dulcet *Andante con moto*, in a neo-classical style. A spirited *Allegro furioso* movement follows, which opens with the chasmic registral space of four-and-a-half octaves. For the *Andante* third movement, the double bass is instructed to tune the instrument's E-string down to a C, lending a darker timbre to the movement. The *Concertino* concludes with a spritely final *Rondino*, marked *Allegro gaio* (cheerful, gay) and the movement's raucous tone is emphasized by the returned presence of the flute. This is the sixth performance of Schulhoff's *Concertino* at Marlboro since its first appearance on a program in 1998.

Participants: Joshua Smith, *flute/piccolo*; Yuchen Lu, *viola*; Nina Bernat, *double bass*



Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115 (1891)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833

(Hamburg, Germany)

Died April 3, 1897 (Vienna, Austria)

Duration: approx. 38 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2011

When Brahms composed his Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, only a handful of works for the same instrumentation had been composed, perhaps the most well-known being Mozart's (1789) and Carl Maria von Weber's (1815). Brahms wrote the work for the renowned clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, to whom Brahms was introduced by the likewise eminent German conductor Hans von Bülow, also a friend and supporter of Brahms' work. Reportedly, Brahms had retired from composing before hearing Mühlfeld perform in March of 1891 but was so enamored of his playing that he composed the Quintet during his

summer holiday that year. It was also during that summer that Brahms wrote his Clarinet Trio Op. 114, and later composed his two Clarinet Sonatas, Op. 120, all of which were written for the clarinetist. The Clarinet Quintet was first given a private, then a public premiere by Mühlfeld and the Joachim Quartet (with Joseph Joachim playing first violin) in late 1891: first in Meiningen (a city in central Germany) and, two weeks later, in a public concert in Berlin. The Quintet was immensely popular and was subsequently given performances both by the original ensemble and others across Europe.

Brahms composed the Quintet with a traditional four-movement structure: an *Allegro* first movement opens the work, though in a departure from classical sonata form, Brahms sets this first movement in 6/8 time. The *Allegro* opens with a string introduction, the violins playing in thirds in a D Major sonority that, when the cello enters with its syncopating rhythm in the third measure, is transformed to B Minor, setting the tone for the clarinet's sweeping entrance two bars later. The *Adagio* that follows the emotionally turbulent first movement shifts to B Major for a placid opening; all strings are muted and, with their triplet figures, provide a gently rocking accompaniment to the clarinet's long, *dolce* melodic lines. A pastoral-like *Andantino* in D Major follows, marked *simplice*, though the calm of the movement transforms soon into an unsettled *Presto non assai, ma con sentimento* (*Presto*, though not very fast, but with feeling) that features virtuosic arpeggios in the clarinet. The Quintet closes with a return to the home key of B Minor in the fourth movement, marked *Con moto* (with movement). The movement is composed in a theme and variation form, thus gesturing towards his predecessor, Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, which likewise concludes with a movement in theme and variation form. Brahms uses the variations to not only gaze backwards historically to Mozart but also to return the listener to moments earlier in the work, such as in the fourth variation, in B Major, which references the Quintet's second movement. A coda that reprises and develops the work's opening material closes the work, though in contrast to the first movement's quiet fading away, the final movement ends with a loud B Minor chord that is articulated in all five instruments, a sudden, final outburst of emotion before the work concludes.

The popularity of Brahms' Clarinet Quintet can be observed in its frequent presence on Marlboro programs; it was first performed here in 1955, and tonight's performance marks its twenty-first appearance on a Marlboro program since.

Participants: Yoonah Kim, *clarinet*; Isabelle Durrenberger & Brian Hong, *violins*; En-Chi Cheng, *viola*; Christoph Richter, *cello*

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Sunday, August 7 at 2:30pm



Wind Octet in E-flat Major,
Op. 103 (1792, rev. 1793)
Ludwig van Beethoven
Born December 17, 1770
(Bonn, Germany)
Died March 26, 1827
(Vienna, Austria)
Duration: approx. 23 minutes
Last Marlboro performance: 2018

Music composed solely for wind instruments does not feature conspicuously in Beethoven's catalogue of mature works, but as a young composer in Bonn, Beethoven wrote a variety of pieces for different instrumental combinations, including for wind octet. Though Beethoven abandoned the majority of the juvenile works that he composed in Bonn before he moved to the bustling musical capital of Vienna in 1792, there are a few to which the composer returned, amongst them the Wind Octet in E-flat Major. Composed only months before Beethoven moved to Vienna, the piece was reworked the following year, though Beethoven never published it; eventually, it was published posthumously, in 1837. The musical material of the Octet did, however, reach the public, for Beethoven transformed the Octet into his String Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 4, which he completed in 1795, during a time in which he was studying with Joseph Haydn, a master of string chamber music and the so-called Father of the String Quartet. But the story of the Octet's fragmented identity does not end there: the finale of the Octet also existed as a standalone work for wind octet, the Rondino in E-flat Major, WoO 25, which was eventually published in Vienna, posthumously, in 1829. Considered light entertainment and intended as Tafelmusik (table or background music), the Octet is light without being simple. Written for a fairly typical Harmonie ensemble—two oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns—the Octet is composed of four movements in a typical sonata form. The work opens with a sonata *Allegro* form, followed by a slower *Andante*; next comes a *Minuet* (though the dance has more the feel of a rambunctious *Scherzo*), and the work is concluded by a *Presto Finale*. The first movement is based on a recurring rhythmic pattern, presented by the oboe and passed around the entire ensemble. The second movement, the *Andante*, begins with the oboe presenting the main theme, followed by the bassoon. After a long central section, the full octet reprises the final passage of the movement's opening

theme once again, before shifting to the lighter and playful mood of the *Minuet*. This dance movement is one of the earliest examples of Beethoven's predilection for replacing the minuet with a more untamed *Scherzo*. The main theme, propulsive and fast, can be heard as an early predecessor to the famous *Scherzo* of the Ninth Symphony. Finally, the Octet ends with a spirited *Presto*. This afternoon's performance marks the twenty-fifth time that Beethoven's Wind Octet has been performed at Marlboro since its first appearance here in 1953.

Participants: Frank Rosenwein & Russell Hoffman, *oboes*; Sang Yoon Kim & Víctor Díaz Guerra, *clarinets*; Marlène Ngalissamy & Jake Thonis, *bassoon*; Richard King & Ryan Williamson, *horns*



Canticle III: Still falls the Rain, Op. 55
(1954)
Benjamin Britten
Born November 22, 1913
(Lowestoft, England)
Died December 4, 1976 (Aldeburgh)
Duration: approx. 12 minutes
Last Marlboro performance: 2021

The five works to which Britten gave the title 'canticle' are all settings of texts of a religious or spiritual nature, and each is scored for a different combination of voices and instruments. Britten completed his third canticle in November 1954, soon after the first performance of his chamber opera, *The Turn of the Screw*, a setting of Henry James' 1898 novella of the same name. This canticle's instrumentation is reminiscent, in pared-down fashion, of Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, Op. 31, a song cycle composed approximately a decade prior, in 1943. The third canticle sets a poem by the British poet and critic Edith Sitwell (1887-1964), subtitled *The Raids, 1940. Night and Dawn*. In this haunting Good Friday poem, composed the same year as the events upon which it meditates, the casualties of war are represented through an allegory invoking the Passion of Christ. Like in the *Serenade*, the horn part was written for Dennis Brain (1921-1957) who gave the first performance with Britten at the piano and Peter Pears singing the tenor part in January 1955 at a concert given in memory of the young pianist Noel Mewton-Wood who had tragically taken his own life the previous year. Structurally, the work is one of Britten's most lucid, being a sequence of free recitatives for voice and piano based on the recurring refrain "Still falls the rain," interspersed with dramatic interludes for horn and piano which are in turn a set of variations on the

work's opening theme. Voice and horn unite only at the very end to represent 'the voice of One', resolving the work's previous tensions. In 1956, Britten incorporated the Canticle into a larger setting of Sitwell's poetry entitled *The Heart of the Matter*, for which Britten expanded the work to include a narrator and composed extra music to surround and complement the *Canticle III*. Britten's third *Canticle* has been a favorite at Marlboro since its first performance at the festival in 1965 by the tenor Jon Humphrey, with Stephen Seiffert on horn and Luis Battle at the piano. This afternoon's performance marks the eleventh time that the work has appeared on a Marlboro program. While Britten's canticles—compact and powerful works of vocal chamber music—have made frequent appearances on Marlboro programs, *Canticle III* has been heard with increasing frequency since the early 2000's. With its visceral meditation on war, violence, and pain, one can imagine why Britten and Sitwell's work continues to resonate today.

Participants: Patrick Bessenbacher, *tenor*;
Ryan Williamson, *horn*; Lydia Brown, *piano*

century devotional music for organ. The quartet closes with a virtuosic final movement, that in both style and even motivic material, is reminiscent of Mendelssohn's epic and beloved String Octet Op. 20, likewise in E-flat Major, composed over fifteen years prior. While irrepressible in its ebullience, and thus striking in its resemblance to the Octet, one can hear in this Quartet the compositional maturity that Mendelssohn had gained in the intervening years, and this is true, generally, of the quartet as a whole.

The appearance of Mendelssohn's String Quartet in E-flat Major on the program this afternoon is a Marlboro rarity; this is only the second time that the work has been performed at the festival, the first performance having occurred in 1996, with an ensemble featuring Jennifer Gilbert and Soovin Kim on violin, Ellen DePasquale on viola, and David Soyer on cello.

Participants: Maria Ioudenitch & Ji Won Song, *violins*;
Hayang Park, *viola*; Christoph Richter, *cello*



String Quartet in E-flat Major,
Op. 44, No. 3 (1838)
Felix Mendelssohn
Born February 3, 1809
(Hamburg, Germany)
Died November 4, 1847
(Leipzig, Germany)
Duration: approx. 30 minutes
Last Marlboro performance: 1996

Mendelssohn composed his fifth string quartet, Op. 44, No. 3, between 1837 and 1838, completing the work on February 6 of that year. The third of the three quartets that make up his Op. 44, the works belong to Mendelssohn's middle period and were dedicated to the Crown Prince of Sweden.

The E-flat Major Quartet opens with an *Allegro vivace*; the substantial first movement is one of the longest movements Mendelssohn composed in all of his chamber music output, and yet its composition is compact, in Mendelssohn's creative motivic development and masterful contrapuntal writing. The bright, joyful nature of the movement is followed by a dance: a *Scherzo*, marked *Assai leggiero vivace* (very light and lively). Composed in C Minor, one can hear in this dance echoes of Mendelssohn's impish evocation of the fairies of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in his Scherzo incidental music for the play. In the Quartet's third movement, marked *Adagio non troppo* (slowly, but not too much so) one can hear echoes of early nineteenth-