

2022 Preview Notes • Week Five • Persons Auditorium

Friday, August 12 at 8 pm



Vierzehn Arten, den Regen zu beschreiben, Op. 70 (1940-41)

**Hanns Eisler**

Born July 6, 1898 (Leipzig, Germany)

Died Sept. 6, 1962 (East Berlin, GDR)

Duration: approx. 14 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

Hanns Eisler composed his *Vierzehn Arten, den Regen zu beschreiben* (Fourteen Ways to Describe the Rain) while living in exile in New York City, where he lived while teaching music at the New School for Social Research. Eisler was prosecuted by the Nazis not only for his Jewish identity but also for his political beliefs and activities as a communist. He fled Berlin, where he had settled after studying with Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna during the interwar period, traveling first to various European cities before leaving the continent for Mexico and finally, the US. Due to visa difficulties Eisler struggled to make a living in the US and did not settle permanently in the country; he took jobs as he could to scrape by, including teaching and writing for films. In 1947, both Eisler and his brother (in addition to Bertolt Brecht, with whom Eisler had collaborated before leaving for the US), were called before the "Committee for Unamerican Activities." Two years later, Eisler returned to Europe and settled in East Berlin, where he remained until his death in 1962.

Eisler's *Vierzehn Arten* was originally written for film: in early 1940 Eisler received a two-and-a-half-year fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation for experimenting with new methods of composition for film and the relationship between image and sound. For the fellowship, Eisler collaborated with the film director Joseph Losey, who provided him with a variety of materials, including the Dutch director Joris Iven's early silent documentary film, *Regen* (Rain), from 1928. Eisler began work on the piece in September 1941 and completed it two months later, just as German troops overtook Moscow, the Soviet capital. In an interview almost two decades later, Eisler remarked that the *Vierzehn Arten, den Regen zu beschreiben* came to mean for him "fourteen ways to express grief gracefully." Eisler dedicated the work to Schoenberg on the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, weaving Schoenberg's name into the music itself: at the opening of the work the tones A-e-S-C-H (A. Sch using the names for notes in German) are used prominently. The structure of the *Vierzehn Arten* is found in its name: it consists of fourteen brief movements, the longest of which lasts only 75 seconds. While the work is today more often performed as a standalone work, rather than as film music, one can easily imagine the images it was originally meant to accompany. The piece opens with

a hushed first movement that evokes the quiet before the rain begins. Soon, in the second movement, the pitter patter of the falling rain is portrayed with trills and quick eighth-notes in the violin and flute, and with a downward moving, pizzicato line in the cello.

Tonight's performance of *Vierzehn Arten, den Regen zu beschreiben* marks not only the premiere of this work at Marlboro, but also the first time that Eisler's music has been heard at the festival.

Participants: Joshua Smith, *flute*; Víctor Díaz Guerra, *clarinet*; Leonard Fu, *violin*; Jing Peng, *viola*; Chase Park, *cello*; Ieva Jokubaviciute, *piano*



String Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 97, B. 180 (1893)

**Antonín Dvořák**

Born Sept. 8, 1841 (Nelahozeves, contemporary Czech Republic)

Died May 1, 1904 (Prague)

Duration: approx. 33 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2019

Dvořák's String Quintet in E-flat Major is his third string quintet. Like all of Mozart's string quintets, the work is referred to as a so-called viola quintet, for it is scored for string quartet with an extra viola. Notably, Dvořák himself was a violist, and one can hear his expertise and passion for the instrument in his writing. The E-flat Major viola quintet was composed in 1893 while Dvořák was living in Spillville, Iowa, and was finished directly after he completed his famous *American* String Quartet (No. 12 in F Major), also in 1893. Like the *American*, the Quintet reflects similar sensibilities in balancing the new inspirations Dvořák was encountering during his American sojourn with memories of the Czech folk music of his homeland.

This evening's performance represents the twenty-first time that Dvořák's String Quintet in E-flat Major has been performed at Marlboro. The Quintet received its Marlboro premiere in 1964, with Samuel Rhodes and Endel Kalam playing the two viola parts, and its most recent appearance on a Marlboro program featured the violists Kim Kashkashian and Tanner Menees.

Participants: Hye-Jin Kim & Stephen Kim, *violins*; En-Chi Cheng & Beth Guterman Chu, *violas*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*



Into the Little Hill (2006)

**Sir George Benjamin**

Born Jan. 31, 1960 (London, England)

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

Marlboro Premiere

In 1976, at age 16, George Benjamin entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied composition with Olivier Messiaen and piano with Messiaen's wife, the renowned pianist Yvonne Loriod—becoming thus one of the legendary pedagogue's last students before Messiaen retired in 1978. Thereafter, Benjamin moved to King's College, Cambridge, where he studied with Alexander Goehr, himself also a former pupil of Messiaen. Today, Benjamin holds the position of Henry Purcell Professor of Composition at King's College London. Amongst numerous international awards, Benjamin was made a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2015 and was knighted in the 2017 Birthday Honours. Heralded as a child prodigy, in his early life Benjamin struggled under the weight and expectations of such a label. Despite having possessed a fascination with and love of opera from a very young age, Benjamin stayed away from the genre and wrote primarily for instrumental ensembles, including *At First Light* (1982), a work for a chamber orchestra of 14 players, and the viola duet *Viola, Viola* (1995). It was first in 2006, after being introduced to the playwright Martin Crimp, that Benjamin wrote his first opera: *Into the Little Hill*. It was premiered at the Opéra Bastille, with Anu Komsis and Hilary Summers in the work's two vocal roles, accompanied by instrumentalists from Ensemble Modern, directed by Daniel Jeanneteau. The opera has since been performed in over 100 productions throughout Europe, North America, China, and Australia. Benjamin's completion of *Into the Little Hill* marked the beginning of a highly productive collaborative relationship with Crimp; six years later, the two collaborated again on Benjamin's second opera, *Written on Skin* (2012); and again, five years later in writing Benjamin's most recent opera, *Lessons in Love and Violence* (2017).

*Into the Little Hill* is a lyric tale in two parts and eight scenes for soprano, contralto, and an ensemble of 15 players. The opera is a retelling of the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, updated to the modern day. While the tale stays true to the original story—passed down to us from its Medieval origins in lower Saxony via the Brothers Grimm—in his libretto for the work, written with concision and deep, often chilling, ambivalence, Crimp weaves in references to our contemporary world, with its political campaigns, modern machines of war, and brutish, vengeful treatment of those marked as Other. The story goes as follows: A minister seeking re-election promises the people he will rid their country of its rats, even though he knows they do no harm. A faceless stranger offers to lead the rats

away. The stranger and minister strike a bargain for payment and the rats disappear. However, when the minister is re-elected, he reneges on the deal, claiming the money has been better spent on "barbed wire and education." In response, the stranger leads the country's children away to the light "inside the little hill." Though concrete historical references might be perceived—such as to the Shoah or to British, North American, or European attitudes towards immigration—Crimp's text is no simple allegory. Instead, one can perceive on both Crimp and Benjamin's parts the desire to effect a surreal compression of time, dramatically demonstrating the devastatingly distinct commonalities between the Medieval tale and the centuries that have passed since its first telling.

Benjamin's orchestration of the opera is similarly compact. The two vocalists embody a multiplicity of conflicting identities: the soprano takes on the parts of The Crowd, The Stranger, Narrator and The Minister's Child; and the Contralto, The Crowd, the Narrator, The Minister, and The Minister's Wife. Likewise sparing in his choice of instrumentation, Benjamin writes, "The orchestration employs some highly unusual timbres, ranging from bass flute and cimbalom to banjo and basset-horns. The resultant sonority is often discreet and always, I hope, transparent, so that the vocal lines can occupy the foreground without struggle. Above all I wanted to embed these lines as clearly as possible into the harmonic environment that surrounds them. In this fusion, I believe, lies a crucial expressive resource on the lyric stage." Indeed, Benjamin composes lucid, if sometimes violently accented, expressive textures that allow the voices and the text they sing to be understood clearly. This is apparent from the opera's opening measures: After the strike of an opening chord, the soprano and contralto, in the guise of The Crowd, sing the words, "Kill them, they bite! Kill them, they steal!" in straight-tone, a harrowing chorus that will return throughout the opera.

This summer is the second that Benjamin has spent at Marlboro, having previously been in residence in 2005, when he conducted his *At First Light* (1982). This evening's performance of *Into the Little Hill* marks its Marlboro premiere, and a rare opportunity to hear a work that continues to resonate powerfully today.

Participants: Lucy Fitz Gibbon, *soprano*; Jennifer Johnson Cano, *mezzo-soprano*; Joshua Smith, *bass flute/flute/piccolo*; Sang Yoon Kim, *basset horn*; Víctor Díaz Guerra, *contrabass clarinet*; Mary Bowden, *cornet*; Hugo Moreno, *cornet*; Dave Nelson, *tenor trombone*; Nick Tolle, *cimbalom/percussion*; Stephanie Zyzak, *violin*; Joseph Lin, *violin/mandolin*; Yuchen Lu, *viola*; Hélène Clément, *viola/banjo*; Oliver Herbert, *cello*; Zachary Mowitz, *cello*; Nina Bernat, *double bass*; George Benjamin, *conductor*

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Saturday, August 13 at 8pm



String Trio in B-flat Major, D. 581 (1817)

**Franz Schubert**

Born January 31, 1797 (Vienna, Austria)

Died November 19, 1828 (Vienna)

Duration: approx. 21 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2004

The year 1817 was a significant one for Schubert compositionally. That June he began work on a new series of piano sonatas; in August he completed the A Major violin sonata, D. 574; and, after writing the second String Trio in September, composed his sixth symphony, the C Major, D. 589. In the year prior, Schubert had begun work on his first string trio, in B-flat Major, D. 471, though he left it unfinished. Fragments, however, are nothing unusual in Schubert's oeuvre; famous examples naturally include the "Unfinished" Symphony or the quartet movement in C Minor, and they number amongst many unfinished songs, piano sonatas, and other works for various ensembles. The relatively large number of unfinished works was in part a product of the rapidity with which Schubert worked, his attention at times moving on to the next composition if the one before him posed difficulties that could not in the moment be solved, and this seems to have been the case for the first string trio. One might imagine that Schubert felt the weight of Mozart and Haydn's string trios upon his shoulders. In contrast to the first, the second trio in B-flat Major, D. 581, was composed relatively quickly, in September of 1817. Schubert did, however, return to make subtle revisions, such as the redistribution of material among the instruments and the rethinking of transitions between formal sections of movements.

In his usage of classical forms to structure the four-movement Trio, D. 581, one can hear the continued influence of the first Viennese School upon Schubert's writing, particularly in the classical sonata form used to structure the Trio's first movement, marked *Allegro*. But departures from classical expectations are not infrequent in this work, and particularly striking in this regard is an F-sharp Minor episode in the development of the first movement, a highly distant harmonic area from the home key of B-flat Major. The second movement, an *Andante*, is graceful yet humorous, proving how much Schubert was determined to thwart the expectations of Viennese audiences, who were used to a more serious and slower second movement. The beginning of the contrasting second section of this three-part movement also contains something unexpected: a somber F Minor canon between violin and viola over a cello ostinato recalls Schubert's contrapuntal studies under Salieri. The gentle third

movement, a *Minuet*, is based on a simple yet virtuosic melody delivered by the violin, supported by the other instruments. But in the trio section, a *Ländler*, the viola, with its mellow and darker tones, becomes the main character. The final *Rondo*, structured in an ABACA form, begins as a gentle but cheery dance. It soon becomes clear, however, that Schubert is more focused on the extended transitions and increasingly distant harmonic transformations than on melodic material, a quality that eventually became the hallmark of Schubert's late writing. Tonight's performance of Schubert's String Trio in B-flat Major is the sixth time that the work has been programmed on a Marlboro concert. Its first performance here was in 1963, with violinist Michael Tree, violist Samuel Rhodes, and cellist Madeline Foley.

Participants: Hye-Jin Kim, *violin*; Nobuko Imai, *viola*; Brannon Cho, *cello*



Introduction and Andante, Op. 5  
(1911, rev. 1913)

**Benjamin Dale**

Born July 17, 1885 (London, England)

Died July 30, 1943 (London)

Duration: approx. 16 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2015

As a young man, Benjamin Dale showed great promise as a composer. His first work for orchestra was performed publicly when he was only 14 years old, and a year later, in 1900, Dale entered the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), where he studied with Frederick Corder, an exponent of Wagner's music and the English-language biographer of Franz Liszt. While at the RAM, Dale became friends with the viola professor at the academy, Lionel Tertis, for whom he composed a number of works, including his *Suite for Viola and Piano* (1906), the *Phantasy for Viola and Piano* (1910), and the *Introduction and Andante*, which Dale composed for the violists in Tertis's studio. Like many of Dale's early compositions, *The Introduction and Andante* is marked by a late Romantic, even expressionist, style, with thick textures that express emotional pain and tumult. In certain passages, the work evokes Schoenberg's early sextet, *Verklärte Nacht* (1899), though Dale's writing possesses a greater reserve than Schoenberg's instrumental setting of Richard Dehmel's poem of the same name.

Tonight's performance represents a rare opportunity to hear Dale's celebration of the viola, as it has been performed only once previously at Marlboro, in 2015.

Participants: Natalie Loughran, Jing Peng, Nobuko Imai, Haesue Lee, Jonathan Chu & Yuchen Lu, *violins*



String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 127 (1824-25)

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Born Dec. 17, 1770 (Bonn, Germany)

Died March 26, 1827 (Vienna, Austria)

Duration: approx. 36 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2013

In 1822, twelve years after Beethoven had last composed a string quartet, his Op. 95 in F Minor (the *Serioso*), he received a commission from Prince Nikolai Borisovich Golitsin, a Russian aristocrat and amateur cellist who greatly admired Beethoven's writing. Prince Golitsin requested of Beethoven "one, two or three new quartets," and Beethoven replied that he would compose three: what would ultimately become the Opp. 127, 130, and 132. It is these three that became the first of Beethoven's five late string quartets, which also include opp. 131 and 135. Due to the long break between Beethoven's completion of the *Serioso* in 1810 and his composition of Op. 127 beginning in May of 1824 (after Beethoven had finished work on his Ninth Symphony), the late quartets are spoken of as a unit, representing as they do not only a chronological break but also a stylistic and formal one. In these final five quartets we can observe Beethoven using a greater degree of chromaticism and formal experimentation, and we can even see this formal ingenuity superficially in the increasing length of all of the late quartets, of which the Op. 127 is no exception. The E-flat Major Quartet received its premiere in Vienna on March 6, 1825 by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, an ensemble led by the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who advocated for Beethoven and premiered the so-called Rasumovsky quartets (Op. 59).

The Op. 127 Quartet takes a classical four movement structure, though it is quite an expansive work that typically takes between 36 and 38 minutes to perform. The first movement begins with a broad and indeed majestic introduction. The main *Allegro* then opens with a gentle theme (marked *sempre p e dolce*—always piano and sweet) in triple meter, a departure from the 4/4 meter of a typical sonata allegro movement. The 3/4 meter lends the movement a lilting, dance-like quality and creates a marked distinction between the 2/4 meter and great breadth of the movement's opening *Maestoso*, material which will return two more times over the course of the movement, though each time in a different key. The second movement, marked *Adagio, ma non troppo e*

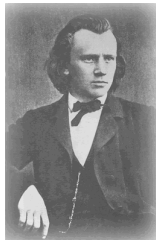
*molto cantabile* (*Adagio*, but not too much so, and very singing) forms the heart of the quartet, not only in its length (the movement is twice as long as the quartet's other movements and typically takes approximately 14 minutes to perform), but in its gentle yet sublime emotional expression. The movement takes the form of theme and variations and emerges tenderly, *pianissimo*, from the depths, as first the cello, then viola, then second violin and finally the first violin enter, building an E-flat dominant seventh chord that hovers with tension before resolving to the tonic of A-flat Major at the violin's delicate singing of the movement's main theme. A scherzo (*Scherzando vivace*) follows upon the heels of the near emotional devastation of the second movement's sublime variations. Despite the frenetic energy and accented dotted rhythms reminiscent of galloping horses, it is not so distant a departure from the previous *Adagio* than it might seem: the thematic material of the *Scherzo* is in fact based upon that of the *Adagio*. This third movement, however, feels unstable in its frequent shifts in mood, effected by sudden changes in tempo, rhythmic syncopation, and drastic dynamic contrasts. After a trio, marked *presto*, that in its B section sounds almost like a raucous barn dance, the scherzo is reprised. But the movement seems not to want to end, as the hushed, almost spooky material from the trio follows the scherzo's reprise; and yet this return is truncated suddenly, interrupted by the dotted figure of the scherzo, which, in a brief coda, concludes this unwieldy movement. The quartet closes with a sonata rondo form, simply marked *Finale*. Here, the lyrical qualities of the quartet's first two movements return, the quiet tenderness of the *Adagio* coming through in the first violin, though it exists alongside a raucousness retained from the previous *Scherzando vivace*. An extended coda, marked *Allegro comodo* (comfortable allegro), brings the work to a close with a bright, lyrical reprise of the movement's opening, and the quartet ends with triumphant, homophonous chords of E-flat Major.

Beethoven's Op. 127 has only been performed two other times at Marlboro, in 1959 and 2013. Tonight thus presents a rare opportunity in the history of the festival to hear this extraordinary beginning of Beethoven's late string quartet writing on a Marlboro program.

Participants: Joseph Lin & Brian Hong, *violins*;  
Natalie Loughran, *viola*; Edvard Pogossian, *cello*

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Sunday, August 14 at 2:30pm



Three Quartets for Voice, Op. 31  
(1859; 1863)

**Johannes Brahms**

Born May 7, 1833 (Hamburg, Germany)

Died April 3, 1897 (Vienna, Austria)

Duration: approx. 12 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 1991

Brahms composed the three songs that make up the *Drei Quartette für vier Solostimmen mit Pianoforte* over four years. This relatively short span, however, is deceptive, for a great deal occurred during this period in Brahms' life. In the late 1850s, Brahms was still living in Hamburg, where he directed a women's choir and was in close contact with Agathe von Siebold, for whom he also composed a number of vocal works, and it was here, in the city of his birth, that Brahms composed the first quartet of what would become three, the "Wechsellied zum Tanze." The second and third Quartets ("Neckereien" and "Der Gang zum Liebchen") were composed four years later, after the painful public rejection of Brahms' D Minor Piano Concerto and his move to Vienna. They set texts by the German-speaking Bohemian poet Josef Wenzig after Moravian and Bohemian folksongs, respectively. All three poems are relatively light in subject matter, dealing with topics of flirtation and dance.

The work opens with a dance, a setting of Goethe's "Wechsellied zum Tanze." The poem's title, which can be translated as "changing song," references the medieval poetic form of the *Wechsel*, a subgenre of the Middle High German *Minnelied*, in which two voices—usually a male and female subject—exchange brief monologues on the topic of love. In his text, Goethe labels the two poetic subjects, though does not gender them, grouping them instead by affect: the poem opens with a carefree strophe from "the indifferent ones" (*die Gleichgültigen*), which is followed by a gentler strophe from "the tender ones" (*die Zärtlichen*). Taking his cue from Goethe's dramatization of courtship through dance, Brahms sets the poem as a minuet. The poem's two groups are defined by key area, Brahms assigning them the keys of C Minor and A-flat Major, respectively. Brahms also takes advantage of the quartet's SATB voicing to divide the singers into two groups, though following Goethe, not by gender: the lower voices (A & B) are assigned the role of the Indifferent and the higher voices (S & T) that of the Tender. The movement concludes, however, with a reconciliation of the groups, as all four voices sing together, in rhythmic unison, the phrase, "Wandeln der Liebe ist himmlischer Tanz" ("The transformation of love is heavenly dance"). The voices join together, however, after a modulation to A-flat Major, thus suggesting that it

is in fact the tender emotions of *die Zärtlichen* that have triumphed over the indifference of *die Gleichgültigen*.

The middle quartet, *Neckereien* (Teasing), is set in the bright key of E Major and takes the form of a dialogue between lovers. Brahms' setting of the teasing exchange is almost madrigal-like in its word painting, as the lyrical subjects imagine themselves as various animals using metaphors of chase. Brahms reflects the various characteristics of these anamorphic transformations in the music, such as suddenly quickening the tempo at the line, "So werd' ich ein Häschen von Schnelligkeit, und lauf' in die Felder, die Fleder breit" (Thus I will be a quick rabbit and run in the broad fields). The movement reflects its lively character with an *Allegretto con grazia* tempo marking and for this dialogue, Brahms divides the voices by gender, the two male voices taking on the part of the hunter, the women the part of the chased.

The final song, *Der Gang zum Liebchen* (The Path to the Lover), features chorale-style writing for the voices, thus creating great contrast with the preceding movements, with their playful divisions of characters (and gender). This final movement, marked *Con moto e grazioso* (With motion and graceful), begins with a *dolce piano* introduction before all voices join in simultaneously. The song expresses the worries of a lover, who rushes to his sweetheart, concerned that she might be swept away from him by another. Articulating the subject position of one rather than two individuals, the voices are united in Brahms' close, chorale-style writing, accompanied by the sweeping virtuosic writing in the piano.

Brahms' *Drei Quartette*, Op. 31 have only been heard once before on a Marlboro program, in 1991, when the work was performed by vocalists Carol Ann Allred, Mary Westbrook, Gregory Hopkins, and Paul Rowe, with Luis Batlle at the piano.

Participants: Yvette Keong, *soprano*; Eira Huse, *mezzo-soprano*; Patrick Bessenbacher, *tenor*; Jarrett Porter, *baritone*; Lydia Brown, *piano*



Serenade for Winds in D Minor, Op. 44

**Antonín Dvořák**

Born Sept. 8, 1841 (Nelahozeves, contemporary Czech Republic)

Died May 1, 1904 (Prague)

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2017

At the end of 1877, Dvořák attended a Vienna Philharmonic concert whose program included Mozart's Serenade in B-flat Major for wind instruments. Dvořák was so impressed that he began writing his own wind serenade, completing it within the space of two weeks.

Following Mozart's example, Dvořák supplemented the wind ensemble with a part for cello and a part for double bass (attached *ad libitum*, due to the rarity of this instrument in Dvořák's time). Its first performance was given at a concert of the orchestra of the Prague Provisional Theater, under the composer's baton, entirely dedicated to Dvořák's works. He conducted his Serenade once again years later, in 1892, at a farewell concert in Prague before his departure for the US, where he directed the National Conservatory of Music of America.

The Serenade consists of four movements. Following the tradition of wind serenades, it starts with a march, a robust theme played by the whole ensemble. After a gentler middle section, the beginning is reprised, and after a short reference to the second section, the march slowly fades away. While preserving a Classical structure, the Minuetto is based on two Czech folk-dance rhythms. The first is the lyrical *Sousedská* (a semi-slow Bohemian dance in triple meter) while the second one is a vigorous *furiant* (a very rapid Bohemian dance in alternating duple and triple meters). The third movement, scored mostly by the oboe and the clarinet, is like a long romantic duet. Finally, the last movement returns to the opening march, the polka, which, thanks to its marked rhythm and inventive thematic treatment, brings the work to its climax.

With beautiful melodies, luscious harmonies, and darkly rich sonorities, Dvořák's Serenade is one of the most glorious works ever written for the genre. It has been particularly popular at Marlboro, having been programmed 22 times since its first performance here in 1957, when the piece was conducted by Louis Moyse.

Participants: Frank Rosenwein & Kate Wegener, *oboes*; Yoonah Kim & Víctor Díaz Guerra, *clarinets*; Jake Thonis & Marlène Ngalissamy, *bassoons*; Ryan Williamson, Gabriel Kovach, & Richard King, *horns*; Edvard Pogossian, *cello*; Nina Bernat, *double bass*



Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488 (1786)

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Born Jan. 27, 1756 (Salzburg, Austria)

Died Dec. 5, 1791 (Vienna, Austria)

Duration: approx. 31 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 1959

Mozart composed his Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488 over a period of several months during 1785-86 while also working on the piano concertos in E-flat Major K. 482 and in C Minor K. 491, as well as the operas, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Der Schauspieldirektor*. At the time, Mozart was residing in Vienna, making ends meet with performing rather than composing. The piano concerti

were likely premiered in Vienna in 1786, with Mozart himself at the keyboard. It is possible that Mozart intended these pieces only for his own performance, for they all remained unpublished at the time of his death; however, it is also possible that he was unable to engage enough interest from a publisher. Since his death, Mozart's three last piano concerti have become fixtures in the classical music canon and for good reason: the A Major concerto is one of his most intimate and expressive works. The orchestration of the concerto departs slightly from the typical usage of winds found in Mozart's earlier concerti: the scoring of the concerto's wind section calls for one flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns. The omission of oboes allows for darker colorations that are reinforced likewise by the omission of trumpets and timpani. And the presence of the clarinet is in fact quite special: the final three piano concerti were the first of the genre in Mozart's oeuvre to include a clarinet part. In this concerto, winds play a much more significant role than was usual for the time. The soloistic nature of the writing and the work's gentle mood results in an intimacy that is typically only encountered in chamber music.

The concerto's first movement is written in a Classical double exposition sonata form, in which the tutti orchestra presents the primary melodic material before the entrance of piano, who then articulates that material in its own voice, accompanied by the orchestra. The A Major tonality lends a graceful lyricism to the whole movement. The second movement, an *Adagio*, is the only movement Mozart ever wrote in the dark-hued key of F-sharp Minor, the relative minor key of A Major, that due to non-tempered tuning would have been heard as a harmonic world of elevated tension. The movement has a gently rocking siciliano rhythm, lent to it by its setting in 6/8 meter. The middle of the movement transitions back to the brighter world of A Major, introduced in a (dulcet) passage in the flute and clarinet. Set in an ABA' form, the respite in A Major is fleeting, the movement concluding with a return to F# Minor. This *Adagio* is some of the most poignant and pensive music Mozart would ever compose and presents a manner of writing for the clarinet that Mozart would go on to employ in the opera he was composing simultaneously (*Figaro*). Finally, the last movement of the concerto is in rondo form. Themes bounce back and forth between the soloist and orchestra, with unexpected key changes, until a return to the home key of A Major and the work's playful conclusion.

This concerto has only been performed twice before at Marlboro, in 1956 with Marlboro co-founder Rudolf Serkin at the piano (Alexander Schneider, conductor) and in 1959, with Joy Pottle at the piano (Ling Tung directing).

Participants: Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*; Marlboro Music Festival Orchestra, led by Itamar Zorman, *violin*