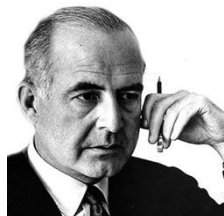


2023 Preview Notes • Week Five • Persons Auditorium

Friday, August 11 at 8 pm



Dover Beach, Op. 3 (1931)

Samuel Barber

Born March 9, 1910, West Chester, Pennsylvania

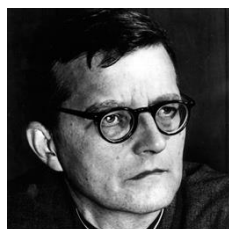
Died January 23, 1981, New York, New York

Duration: approx. 9 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

Barber's setting of Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach* was written in 1931, while Barber was a student at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Barber was a multifaceted student, focusing on piano, composition, and voice. In fact, after writing the work, Barber himself premiered it with "singular charm and beauty". It seems fitting that tonight's performance will be sung by current Curtis student Evan Luca Gray. Barber did not just earn praise for his talent as a singer, however; Ralph Vaughan Williams heard the piece in 1932 and is recalled saying to Barber, "I tried several times to set 'Dover Beach', but you really got it!" The work supports this statement, capturing the dark and melancholic text through Barber's stoic lyricism and meaningful technique. Barber's own later reflections on the piece in 1979 note, "Dover Beach is a very difficult piece because nobody is boss, so to speak – not the singer or the string quartet. It's chamber music."

Participants: Evan Luca Gray, *baritone*; Maria Ioudenitch & Ellinor D'Melon, *violin*; Natalie Loughran, *viola*; Peter Wiley, *cello*



Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 (1940)

Dmitri Shostakovich

Born September 25, 1906, St. Petersburg, Russia

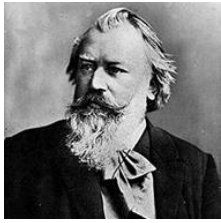
Died August 9, 1975, Moscow, Russia

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2017

Shostakovich's Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 was requested by the Beethoven Quartet; they were impressed by his first string quartet and sought a quintet where they could play with Shostakovich himself on the piano. The composer later performed the piece with various Soviet groups and was recorded joking to a friend that the work was only written so "the 'Glazunovs and the Beethovens' won't be able to do without me—and I'll get a chance to see the world." In the resulting work, Shostakovich expertly interweaves his distinct modern voice with traditional form, creating a success that earned the composer the Stalin Prize, as well as what is presumed to be "the largest sum ever commanded by a chamber music work."

Participants: Cynthia Raim, *piano*; Cherry Choi Tung Yeung & Ellinor D'Melon, *violin*; Sally Chisholm, *viola*; Minji Kim, *cello*



Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 60 (1855-1875)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

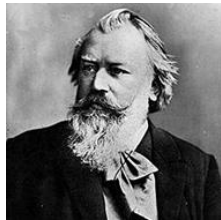
Duration: approx. 35 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

Brahms first began work on what would become his Op. 60 in the 1850s. However, perhaps because of the personal meaning of the piece to him, it took two decades for the composer to complete and publish it. Brahms began writing the quartet when he was helping Clara Schumann run the Schumann household during Robert Schumann's stay in a mental asylum. Brahms uses Robert's own musical motif for Clara, C#-B-A-G#-A, transposed to C Minor, throughout the quartet, and he made no secret of his sense of longing for Clara in his note to his publisher. "On the cover you must have a picture, namely a head with a pistol to it," he wrote, describing the tragic end to the Goethe character, Werther, who takes his own life to resolve a fateful love triangle.

Participants: Dasol Kim, *piano*; Joseph Lin, *violin*, Cara Pogossian, *viola*; Zachary Mowitz, *cello*

Saturday, August 12 at 8 pm



Clarinet Trio in A Minor, Op. 114 (1892)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

If not for the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, this nuanced contemplation of the lyrical and technical possibilities of the clarinet may not have existed. Around 1890, Brahms remarked, "I have worked enough; now let the young folks take over." Speculation suggests that Brahms' plans to retire were brought forth by a coupling of high expectations and the uncompromising perfectionism that led to the destruction of many of his works. However, on a visit to Meiningen, Mühlfeld's playing restored the composer and inspired several works for the clarinet; in addition to this trio, he composed a clarinet quintet in 1894 and two clarinet sonatas. Whether the works lived up to Brahms' own self-critical expectations or not is unknown, but it is now regarded as one of the most touching works Brahms has written; in a letter to Brahms, librarian Eusebius Mandyczewski wrote, "The inventive conception of the themes, born of the spirit of the wind instrument and, more especially, the harmonious blending of the tones of the clarinet and the cello, are magnificent; it is though the instruments were in love with each other."

Participants: Yuhsin Galaxy Su, *clarinet*; Joseph Staten, *cello*; Anna Polonsky, *piano*



Signs, Games, and Messages (1989 – in progress)

György Kurtág

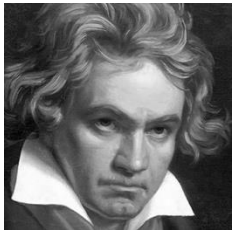
Born February 19, 1926, Lugoj, Romania

Duration: approx. 16 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2003

This will be the second time this work has been performed at Marlboro since Kurtág's residency here in 1997. *Signs, Games, and Messages* is a collection of solo and chamber miniatures for different combinations of instruments; tonight's performance will focus on the works for violin, viola, and cello. The miniatures do not need to be played in a specific order. Each "sign" is linked with a period of time in Kurtág's study in Paris, where he "could not compose, but merely put graphic signs on the paper". "Games" refers to his nine-volume series for piano, and "Messages" encompasses what is likely some of the most personal works in his career. Spanning more than 30 years of his composition career, *Signs, Games, and Messages* evokes a variety of moods, colors, and styles, presenting "a paring down of Kurtág's style to its barest gestural, speech-like core."

Participants: David Bernat, *violin*; Kim Kashkashian, *viola*; Joseph Staten, *cello*



String Quartet in E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2 (1806)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 40 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2019

Beethoven's String Quartet In E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2 is the second of the three quartets associated with Razumovsky, a Russian patron of music, who commissioned the quartets in 1805. These "Razumovsky" quartets are considered a kind of catalyst; they were written during a period in Beethoven's career where he expanded the tradition and set new precedents for the format. The composer approached them with great eagerness, writing to his publisher; "I am thinking of devoting myself entirely to this type of composition." Of course, he did go on to write pieces in other areas of composition, but even if his quartets were his only contribution to music, Beethoven's genius would not have been lost on audiences. No. 2 in particular is considered "the dark center of the triptych ruled by the key of E Minor and a restless volatility of extremes." This will be the third time the work has been performed here since its Marlboro premiere in 1961.

Participants: Claire Bourg & Stephanie Zyzak, *violin*; Cara Pogossian, *viola*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*

Sunday, August 13 at 2:30 pm



String Quartet, Op. 3 (1920)

Alban Berg

Born February 9, 1885, Vienna, Austria

Died December 24, 1935, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2015

Berg's String Quartet, Op. 3 delivers an emotionally intense exploration of the string quartet, introducing atonality into the traditional format. Alongside Anton Webern and Arnold Schoenberg, Berg helped establish the first generation of the "New Viennese School." Their venture into atonality created a unique new voice from each of

them that expertly introduces modern perspectives steeped in classical tradition. This two-movement work contains a distinct character in each, the first more often described as “sonata-form with contrasting themes and recurrent motives,” while the latter is noted to resemble standard rondo form; “a bold and almost swashbuckling theme recurs several times (with great variation) between contrasting episodes.” Berg’s String Quartet, Op. 3 is considered the “first feature-length quartet written in a strikingly new language.”

Participants: Claire Bourg & Carmit Zori, *violin*; Cara Pogossian, *viola*; Joseph Staten, *cello*



Nacht & Der Blick, Op. 3b & 3c (1918 & 1915)

Adolf Busch

Born August 8, 1891, Siegen, Germany

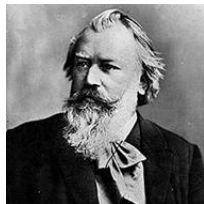
Died June 9, 1952, Guilford, Vermont

Duration: approx. 9 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2021 & 2013

Busch’s “Nacht” and “Der Blick” were written three years apart, but they both share inspiration from the Romantic German poetry of Joseph von Eichendorf. “Der Blick” was specifically written for Busch’s wife, Frieda, with a dedication in the score written, “Meiner Lieben Frau” which translates to “My dear wife.” Although the past two Marlboro performances of these pieces happened in separate years, this pairing of Busch’s Nacht & Der Blick has happened before, notably in 1991. As a tribute to Busch and Rudolf Serkin, Busch’s son-in-law and Marlboro co-founder, these songs were performed at Carnegie Hall alongside works such as Schubert’s String Quintet in C Major, D. 956. Soprano Benita Valente sang the two Busch songs, which a *New York Times* critic described as “attractive pieces in a Brahmsian style.” Her collaborators were violinist Isidore Cohen, cellist Jerry Grossman, and pianist Luis Batlle.

Participants: Sara LeMesh, *soprano*; Evan Luca Gray, *baritone*; Claire Bourg, *violin*; Joseph Staten, *cello*; Lydia Brown, *piano*



Horn Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 40 (1865)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

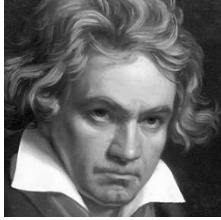
Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2018

Composed just months after his mother’s death, Brahms’s horn trio is the last chamber piece he wrote before taking an eight-year break from chamber composition. At once inventing a new trio instrumentation and providing what would become the most beloved example of it, Brahms scored the piece for natural horn rather than the more modern valved horn, prizing the open tones of the natural horn and having learned the instrument under his father’s tutelage. Rife with references, the piece quotes the folk song that he had learned from his mother, “Dort in den Weiden steht ein Haus” in the second movement. The third movement features a quotation of the funeral chorale “Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten,” which Brahms would use in his *German Requiem*, which was begun in the same year the horn trio was completed.

Participants: Alberto Menéndez Escribano, *horn*; Rubén Rengel, *violin*; Sahun Sam Hong, *piano*



Fantasia for Piano, Chorus, and Orchestra, Op. 80 ("Choral Fantasy") (1808)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2019

The Choral Fantasy began with Beethoven's own improvisation at the keyboard during the finale to a titanic concert that premiered both his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. 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 Honegger Moysé's chorale. Serkin's last appearance in the Choral Fantasy was in 1989, two summers before his death. For two years after, Peter Serkin performed the solo part in his father's memory, but then the tradition ended until 2003. As then co-director Richard Goode told Alex Ross, "Many people felt that Serkin playing the Choral Fantasy was a unique experience that could never be duplicated. After he died, the work was retired, and I thought that was the right decision. To my surprise, a few years later people said, 'You know, I think we have to have a Choral Fantasy.' We needed the catharsis." This year the tradition continues with Co-Artistic Director Jonathan Biss as soloist. Biss also performed the work in 2019.

Participants: Jonathan Biss, *piano*; Kristina Bachrach, *soprano*; Sara LeMesh, *soprano*; Eira Huse, *mezzo-soprano*; Patrick Bessenbacher, *tenor*; Evan Luca Gray, *baritone*; David McFerrin, *baritone*; The Marlboro Music Festival Orchestra and Chorus led by Joseph Lin
