

2023 Preview Notes • Week Two • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, July 22 at 8 pm



Märchenerzählungen, Op. 132 (1854)

Robert Schumann

Born June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Saxony

Died July 29, 1856, Endenich, Germany

Duration: approx. 16 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2015

Märchenerzählungen is generally translated as Fairy Tales, an apt title for this charming cycle of miniatures for clarinet, viola, and piano. This work is one of few widely regarded as a successful combination of these voices, alongside Mozart's 'Kegelstatt' Trio and Bruch's Eight Pieces for clarinet, viola, and piano. Märchenerzählungen demonstrates Schumann's fondness for literature, as well as his ability to interweave picturesque ideas through expressive lyricism. The work was written late in Schumann's life, a period plagued by struggles both in his mental health and career. However, the piece appears to capture a brighter moment near the end of the composer's life. It is dedicated to Albert Dietrich who, alongside a young Brahms, brought fresh inspiration to the composer's final weeks of artistic productivity.

Participants: Sang Yoon Kim, *clarinet*; Natalie Loughran, *viola*; Evren Ozel, *piano*



String Quartet in F Major, Op. 41, No. 2 (1843)

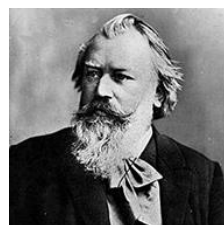
Robert Schumann

Duration: approx. 23 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2011

Schumann wrote Opus 41 in what would later be referred to as his "chamber music year". He left the tour of his wife, Clara, to return to Leipzig where he fought mental health struggles through counterpoint exercises and studied string quartets by Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn. Dedicated to Mendelssohn but premiered as presents for Clara on her 23rd birthday, this opus succeeds not in the grand gestures and romantic sensitivity for which Schumann would later be celebrated but rather in its sincerity, tenderness, and humor. This work in particular illustrates Schumann's intrinsic control over the established quartet format, serving as both a strong testament to his studies as well as a celebration of his inspiration, Clara.

Participants: Stephanie Zyzak & Maria Ioudenitch, *violin*; Hiroki Kasai, *viola*; Peter Stumpf, *cello*



Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34 (1865)

Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833

Died April 3, 1897

Duration: approx. 43 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2018

Brahms's only piano quintet actually began as a string quintet that was later rewritten into a double piano sonata and, finally, into its present form. Brahms was in contact with Clara Schumann throughout the composition process, and it was she who urged him to refashion the piece a final time, having been captivated by the musical content outlined in the string quintet but unimpressed with its presentation as a piano sonata, which seemed to her like an awkward reduction of the original thoughts. The quintet begins with an intense, probing theme that is introduced in

unison by the violin, cello, and piano and repeated immediately by the entire ensemble, showing the strengths of including both the piano and strings in the quintet. The piece's first movement unfolds in sonata form that leads into a calm second movement, an electrifying scherzo, and a final movement that blends pensive chromaticism with animated folk elements for a transformative finale. This will be the 14th Marlboro performance of this magnificent work; it was last performed here in 2018, by a group that also included Mitsuko Uchida and another current Marlboro participant, cellist Peter Stumpf.

Participants: Mitsuko Uchida, *piano*; Rubén Rengel & Julian Rhee, *violin*; Natalie Loughran, *viola*; Marie Bitlloch, *cello*

Sunday, July 23 at 2:30 pm



Phantasy, Op. 2 (1932)

Benjamin Britten

Born November 22, 1913, Lowestoft, England

Died December 4, 1976, Aldeburgh, England

Duration: approx. 13 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2021

Britten's *Phantasy* for oboe and strings was written when he was just 19 and enrolled at the Royal College of Music. Written for a competition for single-movement chamber works established in 1905 by Walter Wilson Cobbett, the work won Britten the prize and brought him national and international attention. The *Phantasy* for oboe, violin, viola, and cello combines a march-like figure, a lyrical and intense oboe melody, and a swift violin motive within a single movement. Britten does not attempt to deny the oboe its natural tendency to pierce through the ensemble's blend, giving the soloist an extraordinarily interesting and engaging piece of music, with the opportunity to combine technical proficiency with ample room for artistic expression.

Participants: Russell Hoffman, *oboe*; Isabelle Durrenberger, *violin*; Sally Chisholm, *viola*; Chase Park, *cello*



String Quartet in F Major (1905)

Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées

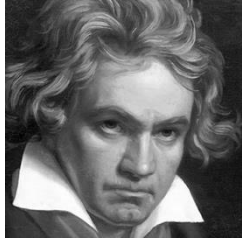
Died December 28, 1937, Paris, France

Duration: approx. 29 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2022

Ravel composed his *String Quartet in F Major* over the winter months of 1902, finishing the work in early April, 1903. The four-movement work was heavily influenced by Debussy's *String Quartet in G Minor*, written a decade prior—its structure is in fact modeled upon that of Debussy's—though Ravel's quartet is dedicated to his teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, Gabriel Fauré. However, the premiere had a mixed reception, with Fauré recorded describing it as "stunted, badly balanced, in fact a failure." Despite the harsh feedback, the inspiration behind the work, Debussy himself, wrote to Ravel, "In the name of the gods of music and in my own, do not touch a single note you have written in your Quartet." Beautifully rhapsodic, delightfully complex, and full of Ravel's mastery of impressionistic style, the work is now widely regarded as his first masterpiece. It is also a particular favorite at Marlboro, with this year marking its 11th performance since 1967.

Participants: David Bernat & Leonard Fu, *violin*; Hiroki Kasai, *viola*; Marie Bitlloch, *cello*



Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2 (1809)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 31 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2021

Beethoven's E-flat Trio is one of the most lovable, as well as one of the most subtle, of all of his chamber works, with a mellow, intimate tone that recalls the contemporary A Major Cello Sonata, Op. 69. The first performance of the piece took place in Vienna at the home of Countess Marie Erdödy. The intimate setting of the work's premiere and its dedication to the Countess herself may account for the gentle tone that characterizes its four movements. Notable in its formal layout is the lack of a deeply emotional slow movement, the inner core of the work being comprised instead of two allegrettos. With its square symmetrical phrasing and decorative piano textures, the compositional style of this trio is distinctly 'retro', looking back to the period of Mozart and Haydn, with the formal procedures of Haydn, in particular, being an important point of reference. This is the 17th summer that the E-flat Trio has been heard at Marlboro. It was first performed here in 1954, by Rudolf Serkin, Felix Galimir, and Hermann Busch, and most recently in 2021 by Mitsuko Uchida, Stephanie Zyzak, and Oliver Herbert.

Participants: Evren Ozel, *piano*; Isabelle Durrenberger, *violin*; Peter Stumpf, *cello*