

MARLBORO MUSIC

MITSUKO UCHIDA & JONATHAN BISS, ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

PREVIEW NOTES

WEEK FOUR • PERSONS AUDITORIUM

Friday, August 7, 2026 at 8 pm

String Quartet in One Movement, Op. 29 (1921)

Adolf Busch

Born August 8, 1891, in Siegen, Germany • Died June 9, 1952, in Guilford, VT

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Co-founder of Marlboro Music and one of the twentieth century's greatest violinists, Adolf Busch was also a gifted composer whose chamber music reflects the same intellectual rigor and expressive warmth that distinguished his performances. His String Quartet in One Movement, completed in the years following the First World War, unfolds as a continuous span of richly contrapuntal writing, balancing late-Romantic lyricism with a restless harmonic language. Its seamless structure and conversational interplay reveal Busch's deep understanding of the quartet tradition that he championed throughout his career.

Participants: Felicitas Schiffner, violin; Itamar Zorman, violin; Sally Chisholm, viola; Elena Ariza, cello

On Wenlock Edge (1909)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Born October 12, 1872, in Down Ampney, England • Died August 26, 1958, in London, England

Duration: approx. 24 minutes

Composed between 1906 and 1909, *On Wenlock Edge* sets six poems from A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* for tenor, piano, and string quartet. Rather than illustrating the texts literally, Vaughan Williams creates a richly atmospheric landscape in which windswept hills, memories of lost youth, and reflections on mortality merge into a single emotional world. The piano and strings function as equal partners with the singer, alternately evoking storms, pastoral calm, and quiet introspection. The cycle stands as one of Vaughan Williams's earliest masterpieces and helped establish his distinctive musical voice.

Participants: *Eric Finbarr Carey, tenor; Alex Redington, violin; Angela Sin Ying Chan, violin; Cara Pogossian, viola; Dilshod Narzillaev, cello; Ieva Jokubaviciute, piano*

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op 87, B. 162 (1899)

Antonin Dvořák

Born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Bohemia • Died May 1, 1904, in Prague, Czechia

Duration: approx. 37 minutes

Written during one of the happiest and most productive periods of Dvořák's career, the Piano Quartet in E-flat Major combines expansive lyricism with the rhythmic vitality of Czech folk music. Unlike the dramatic contrasts of his earlier piano quartet in D Major, this later work unfolds with remarkable confidence and generosity, from its sweeping opening movement to a sparkling finale. A deeply expressive slow movement and an energetic scherzo reveal Dvořák's gift for balancing intimate chamber dialogue with symphonic breadth, making the work one of the great masterpieces of the piano quartet repertoire.

Participants: *Juho Pohjonen, piano; Angela Sin Ying Chan, violin; Beth Guterman Chu, viola; Chase Park, cello*

Saturday, August 8, 2026 at 8 pm

Piano Trio in C Minor, Op. 1, No. 3 (1795)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany • Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Published as part of Beethoven's Op. 1 set, this trio immediately announced the young composer's ambition to push beyond the graceful conventions of the Classical piano trio. The C Minor key, one Beethoven would later reserve for some of his most dramatic works, lends the music unusual intensity, from its turbulent opening movement through a fiercely energetic finale. The trio's bold harmonic language and technical demands signals the arrival of a composer determined to expand the expressive possibilities of the genre.

Participants: *Solomon Ge, piano; Mark Steinberg, violin; Annie Jacobs-Perkins, cello*

Vier Gesänge aus Wilhelm Meister, D. 877 (1826)

Franz Schubert

Born January 31, 1797, Vienna, Austria • Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 15 minutes

These four songs set texts from Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, whose poetry inspired Schubert throughout his life. Written in 1826, the collection includes settings associated with the mysterious harpist and the young Mignon, characters whose longing, solitude, and spiritual searching find deeply sympathetic expression in Schubert's music. Rather than treating the songs as theatrical scenes, Schubert distills each poem into an intimate psychological portrait, supported by piano writing that is both understated and profoundly expressive.

Participants: *Bridget Esler, soprano; Mitsuko Uchida, piano*

Vocal Quartets: selections (1796)

Joseph Haydn

Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Austria • Died May 31, 1809, Vienna, Austria

Duration: approx. 8 minutes

Haydn's late part-songs (*Mehrstimmige Gesänge*) pair solo voices with piano in miniature, contemplative gems, setting texts by some of the era's most prominent Enlightenment poets. This selection opens with *Der Augenblick* (drawn from Karl Wilhelm Ramler's popular anthology *Lyrische Blumenlese*), a brief meditation on fleeting emotion. It is followed by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's *Betrachtung des Todes*, a sober reflection on death, and closes with Gellert's *Abendlied zu Gott*, an evening prayer of gratitude.

Participants: *Bridget Esler, soprano; Veronica Siebert, mezzo-soprano; Eric Finbarr Carey, tenor; Brandon Bell, baritone; Lydia Brown, piano*

String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135 (1826)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Completed in 1826, Beethoven's final completed composition in the string quartet genre is at once disarmingly direct and deeply philosophical. The work concludes with the famous inscription "Der schwer gefasste Entschluss" ("The Difficult Resolution"), above the musical question "Must it be?" and the answer "It must be!" Whether intended humorously or as a meditation on fate, the motto has become inseparable from the

quartet's radiant finale. Throughout the work Beethoven combines extraordinary structural economy with a spirit of warmth and serenity that distinguishes it from the more experimental late quartets preceding it.

Participants: Clara Neubauer, violin; Stephanie Zyzak, violin; Cara Pogossian, viola; Nagyeom Jang, cello

Sunday, August 9, 2026 at 2:30 pm

Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 17 (1846)

Clara Schumann

Born September 13, 1819, Leipzig, Germany • Died May 20, 1896, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Duration: approx. 30 minutes

Composed in 1846 during one of the busiest periods of her career as both performer and mother, Clara Schumann's Piano Trio stands among her finest large-scale works. While reflecting the influence of Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann, the trio speaks with a distinctive voice, combining lyrical elegance with rhythmic vitality and a keen sense of instrumental balance. Its four movements move effortlessly between passionate intensity and intimate reflection, revealing the composer's mastery of chamber music at a time when female composers faced significant professional barriers.

Participants: Juho Pohjonen, piano; Felicitas Schiffner, violin; Marcy Rosen, cello

From the Grammar of Dreams (1998)

Kaija Saariaho

Born October 14, 1952, Helsinki, Finland • Died June 2, 2023, Paris, France

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

In *From the Grammar of Dreams*, Saariaho sets texts by Sylvia Plath for two sopranos, exploring themes of memory, identity, and transformation through an extraordinary palette of vocal color. Rather than presenting conventional song settings, the work weaves the two voices into shimmering textures that blur the boundary between language and sound. The result is music of remarkable delicacy and emotional intensity, characteristic of Saariaho's fascination with timbre as a primary expressive force.

Participants: Bridget Esler, soprano; Lucy Fitz Gibbon, soprano

String Quintet in G Major, Op. 77, B. 49 (1875)

Antonin Dvořák

Duration: approx. 35 minutes

Composed in 1875, Dvořák's String Quintet in G Major belongs to the remarkable burst of creativity that first brought him international recognition. Scored for string quartet with double bass rather than a second viola or cello, the work enjoys an unusually rich sonority, allowing the upper voices to soar above a resonant foundation. The outer movements combine expansive lyricism with infectious dance rhythms, while the famous Scherzo draws inspiration from the Czech *furiant*, alternating accents in a display of exhilarating rhythmic energy. The quintet's warmth, melodic abundance, and effortless craftsmanship have made it one of Dvořák's most beloved chamber works.

Participants: Yebin Yoo & Itamar Zorman, violin; Sally Chisholm, viola; Annie Jacobs-Perkins, cello; Tobias Vigneau, double bass
