

The third movement (*Scherzo: Allegro molto*), in an ABA format, is driven by a forcefully syncopated rhythmic pattern that is unrelenting until the entry of the trio (B) section offers a gentle reprieve. At its close the opening theme (A) is reiterated. Writing about this movement, Michael Steinberg notes: "By temperament, Schubert was more inclined to the plan in which the center of gravity is in the first movement, and a finale relatively light by comparison. Yet often he liked to work with at least the externals of a 'grand' finale. One solution is the unleashing of an amazing storm of physical energy, and the present movement is a glorious example of it."

The finale (*Presto*), using the sonata-rondo format, is a grotesque, Gothic dance of death with the tempo of a tarantella and a daring coda marked *prestissimo*. As stated by Harold Truscott in Arthur Cohn's *The Literature of Chamber Music*: "The mood is that of a dance of death informed with the spirit of the *Dies irae*."

Program notes on Bolcom, Thomas, and Kellogg  
by the Ying Quartet, adapted and edited by Elmer Booze  
Program notes on Schubert by Elmer Booze

*The use of cameras or recording equipment during  
the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all  
electronic devices are turned off.*

*For the convenience of concertgoers  
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*The Sixtieth Season of*

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

**National Gallery of Art**



*2424th Concert*

**THE YING QUARTET**

**TIMOTHY YING, violin**   **JANET YING, violin**  
**PHILLIP YING, viola**   **DAVID YING, cello**

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Sunday Evening, 9 June 2002  
Seven O'clock  
West Building, East Garden Court

*Admission free*

## PROGRAM

William Bolcom  
(b. 1938)

Three Rags  
(Arranged for String Quartet in 1989)

Poltergeist (1971)  
The Graceful Ghost (1970–1971)  
Incineratorag (1971)

Augusta Read Thomas  
(b. 1964)

\*Eagle at Sunrise  
(2001)

Daniel Kellogg  
(b. 1976)

\*Three American Hymns for String Quartet  
(2001)

How Firm a Foundation  
Were You There When They Crucified My Lord  
I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord

## INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert  
(1797–1828)

String Quartet in D Minor  
“Death and the Maiden”  
D. 810 (1824)

Allegro  
Andante con moto  
Scherzo: Allegro molto  
Presto

*\*Works from the Ying Quartet’s “LifeMusic” commissioning project,  
supported by the Institute for American Music*

Formed in 1992, **The Ying Quartet** has undertaken a constant quest to develop ways of making artistic and creative expression an essential part of everyday life. In celebration of its tenth season, the quartet has included a visiting residency at Symphony Space in New York City linking music with poetry, a project with Da Camera of Houston to bring chamber music into the lives of Houston’s working people, and an exploration with the Turtle Island String Quartet of jazz, improvisation, and the classical string quartet tradition.

Natives of Chicago, the Ying siblings began their career as an ensemble in 1992 in the farm town of Jesup, Iowa (population 2,000), as the first recipients of a National Endowment for the Arts grant to support chamber music in rural America. The Quartet participated fully in the community, performing on countless occasions for audiences of six to six hundred in a residency so successful that it was widely chronicled in both the national and international media, including feature articles in the *New York Times* and *STRAD* magazine and coverage on *CBS Sunday Morning*.

While the quartet was in Jesup, its earned the 1993 Naumburg Chamber Music Award for its exceptional musical qualities. As the quartet in residence at the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, the Ying Quartet plans and directs a rigorous, sequential chamber music curriculum that integrates intensive musical instruction with training in creative presentation and communication skills. In addition, the quartet presents concerts throughout the greater Rochester community.

Although he won the Pulitzer Prize in music for his *Twelve New Etudes for Piano*, the American pianist and composer William Bolcom is probably best recognized for stimulating a 1970s revival of public interest in a turn-of-the-century American art form known as ragtime. Among the many ragtime compositions he composed for his own revival concert performances are the three rags on tonight’s program. Bolcom subsequently arranged them for string quartet. *Poltergeist* and *The Graceful Ghost* are part of Bolcom’s rag trilogy entitled *Three Ghost Rags*, of which *Dream Shadows* is the third. According to Bolcom, “*The*



*Graceful Ghost* is a reminiscence of my father. In this piece I have tried to imagine an extension of Louis Chauvin's gentle French Creole quality. [Chauvin was the co-writer of *Heliotrope Bouquet* with Scott Joplin.] It was written in 1970, the year my father passed away."

In her program note for *Eagle at Sunrise*, composer Augusta Read Thomas writes: "My favorite moment in any piece of music is the moment of maximum risk and striving. Whether the venture is tiny or large, loud or soft, fragile or strong, passionate, erratic, ordinary, or eccentric...! Maybe another way to say this is the moment of exquisite humanity and raw soul. All art that I cherish has an element of love and recklessness and desperation. I like music that is alive and jumps off the page and out of the instrument as if something big is at stake.

*Eagle at Sunrise* is a modest seven-minute work that features the cello, largely in the higher registers. The music is immediate, bold, colorful, and dramatic. The work celebrates the passionate sound of the strings and is built from a tightly wrought harmonic scheme and its resultant counterpoint. The spirit of America, symbolized by the eagle, our national bird, at sunrise, is an image of hope and implicit faith in the inevitability of new beginnings and ardent dreams."

The Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress commissioned *Eagle at Sunrise*. It is dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky and to the members of the Ying String Quartet. The work premiered in January 2002 at the Library of Congress.

*Three American Hymns for String Quartet* was commissioned for the Ying Quartet by the Hanson Institute for American Music of the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester. Composer Daniel Kellogg writes: "[The quartet] *Quartet* seeks to celebrate American hymns and the power and purpose they have had in American Lives. Each movement...seeks to express the meaning of the hymn that is quoted. *How Firm a Foundation* celebrates the strength of God and how he will sustain us through all difficult times. The melody from this hymn comes from a collection of hymns called *The Sacred Harp*. *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord* is a song of lament that sings of the sorrow and pain endured in the death of Christ. It is a Black

American spiritual and has also served as a song of lament for the pain and suffering in our own lives. *I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord* is a hymn that speaks of the joy found by being in the presence of God. It talks about meeting with God through Sunday worship, [in addition] to looking toward a full restoration with God in heaven. Although this melody has a slight Irish flavor, it is an American folk tune."

*Der Tod und das Mädchen (Death and the Maiden)*, the eponym of Schubert's *Quartet No. 14 in D Minor*, is from the poem of the same name by the German poet Matthias Claudius (1740–1815). According to writer A. Neumann (translated from the German by E. Berg): "Claudius stirred up experiences and sounds in the composer that came from the innermost depth of his nature.... The dying girl is startled when Death enters, she implores him for her life, but Death takes her fear away, for—according to his words—he comes as a friend and not as a judge." The music Schubert produced in response to Claudius' words is so charismatic as to place it in a lofty musical realm where there is a romantic connection between music and death.

Set in the sonata-allegro format, the first movement (*Allegro*), with its outset of explosive fortissimos and sudden contrasting pianissimos, figuratively portends tragedy as a mood for the entire quartet. The daring rhythmic drive of the triplet figures gives the main theme its ominous tension with a contrasting second theme in thirds and sixths that presages the music of Brahms. After an extensive development section, motivic elements from the opening movement endorse the recapitulation, as well as the *più mosso* coda, which ends pianissimo.

The second movement (*Andante con moto*), clothed in the ambiance of death, relates most directly to Schubert's celebrated song *Death and the Maiden, D. 531*. The theme on which the variations are based comes from the introductory piano accompaniment to Schubert's song of the same title. Death is here a pacifier, contrary to its presence in the first and last movements as an awesome specter. Each of the five variations is emotionally expressive without resorting to abandon or wretchedness. The brief four-measure coda follows the fifth variation and continues the established key of G minor, although it ends in G major with the raised third (*tierce de Picardie*).