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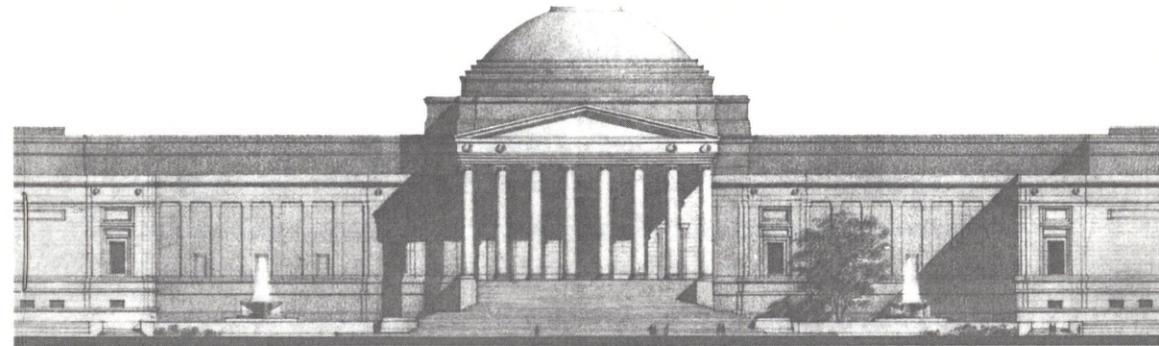
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

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The Seventy-second Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,991st Concert

Auryn String Quartet
Matthias Lingenfelder and Jens Oppermann, violins
Stewart Eaton, viola
Andreas Arndt, cello

April 13, 2014
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–1847)

String Quartet no. 6 in F Minor, op. 80 (1847)

Allegro vivace assai

Allegro assai

Adagio

Finale: Allegro molto

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

String Quartet in F Major, op. 77, no. 2 (1799)

Allegro moderato

Menuetto: Presto ma non troppo

Andante

Finale: Vivace assai

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

String Quartet no. 14 in C-sharp Minor, op. 131 (1826)

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo

Allegro molto vivace

Allegro moderato

Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile

Presto

Adagio quasi un poco andante

Allegro

The Musicians

Taking its name from an amulet that grants intuition in novelist Michael Ende's *Neverending Story* (1979), the Auryn String Quartet has for more than thirty years been one of the foremost string quartets of its generation, repeatedly praised for its interpretive mastery, individuality, and intensity of expression. Having studied with the Amadeus Quartet in Cologne as well as with the Guarneri Quartet at the University of Maryland, the quartet won first prizes at the prestigious ARD Competition Munich, the International String Quartet Competition Portsmouth, and the Competition of European Radio Stations. The ensemble has been heard in most of the major music centers of the world and has appeared at festivals that include Les Arcs, Beethovenfest and Rheinisches Musikfest in Bonn, Berliner Festwochen, and Klangbogen Wien, as well as those of Bregenz, Edinburgh, Flanders, Gstaad, Kuhmo, Lockenhaus, Lucerne, Mondsee, Montepulciano, Salzburg, and Schleswig-Holstein. The quartet has its own festival in Este in northern Italy, and is artistic advisor to the Mondseefestival.

The ensemble regularly tours in North America and has appeared in the United States at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, the Da Camera Society Los Angeles, the Frick Collection, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Notre Dame University, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. In Canada the quartet has performed in Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City, and Vancouver. For many years, it was the quartet-in-residence at the Schubert & Schubert Festival at Georgetown University.

Often heard in concerts that are devoted to the music of one composer, the ensemble has performed an eight-concert cycle of the music of Robert Schumann at the Tonhalle in Düsseldorf, various works by Mendelssohn at the Robert Schumann Saal in Düsseldorf and the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and Schoenberg's complete quartets at the Schoenberg Festival in Essen. Since 2000 the Auryn Quartet has recorded exclusively for the German label

Tacet. Its complete cycle of Franz Schubert's quartets, released on the CPO label, received the Diapason d'Or award, and its recordings of Hugo Wolf and Schumann won the German Record Reviewers prize. Other releases include the string quartets of Debussy, Faure, and Ravel. The Auryn's 2004 recording of the complete Beethoven quartets was hailed by *Gramophone* magazine as the best performance of these works currently available.

Program Notes

This evening's program features the final string quartets of Felix Mendelssohn, Joseph Haydn, and Ludwig van Beethoven. Mendelssohn began his *String Quartet no. 6 in F Minor* as an homage to his sister, Fanny, who died on May 14, 1847. Distraught at the news, the composer returned home to Berlin and refused to resume his conducting duties in Leipzig. His friends described Mendelssohn as listless and depressed that entire summer. He completed the quartet in July 1847, and Joseph Joachim's quartet premiered the piece in Leipzig on November 4, not yet having been informed that Mendelssohn had died earlier that day.

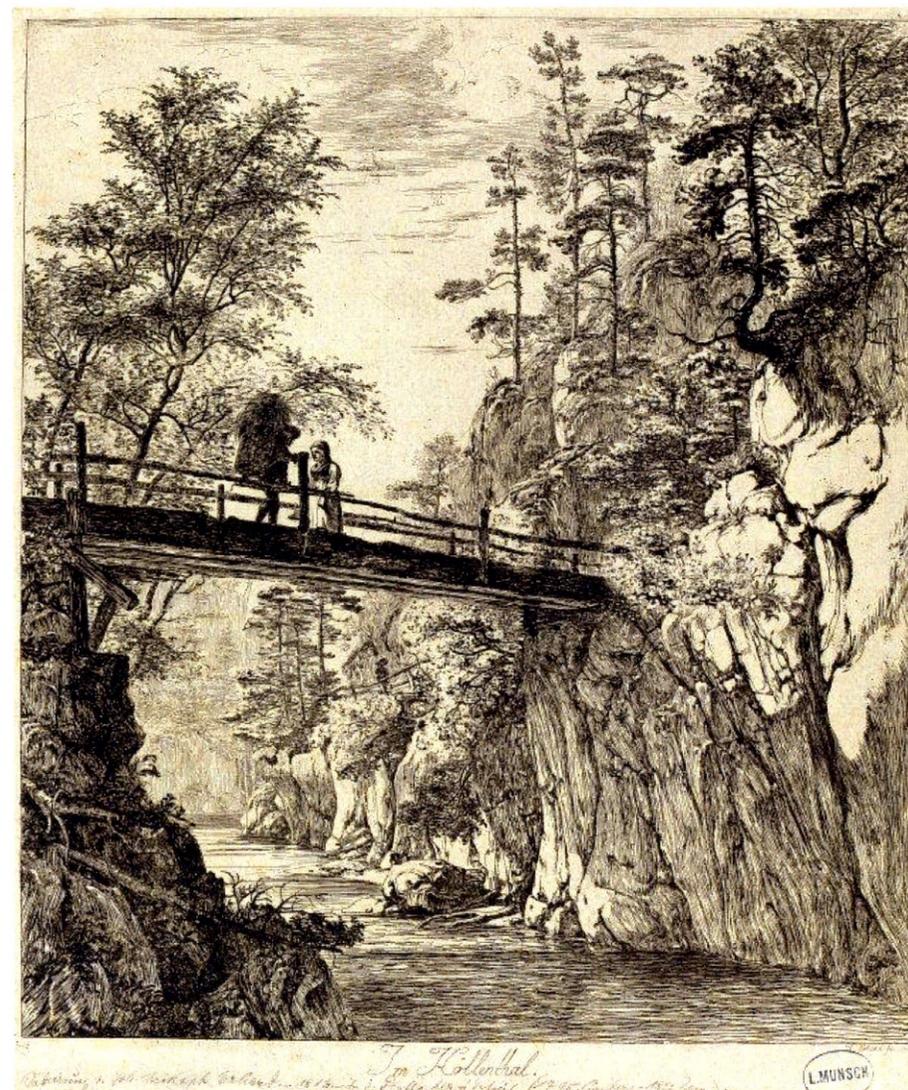
In this late work, the composer's characteristic emotional reserve gives way to a heartfelt expression of desperation and rage. The first movement shifts themes frequently and changes character abruptly, from fiery to elegant and tragic to noble. The primary theme of the second movement derives from the second theme of the first, adapting that rather subdued theme to create a *furiant*—a fiery Bohemian dance in 2/4 and 3/4 time that features rapidly shifting accents. Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) and Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884) would later implement the *furiant* into their own symphonic works. The third movement, a peaceful elegy, provides the only sustained respite from Mendelssohn's inner turbulence. The Finale begins as any joyous allegro finale might, but it quickly devolves into a relentless, minor-key movement, reflecting the composer's bleak attitude in the wake of his heartbreaking loss.

Having composed more than one hundred symphonies in his lifetime, Joseph Haydn earned the sobriquet "Father of the Symphony." His works for string quartet, though not as plentiful as his symphonic output, include sixty-seven quartets written between 1762 and 1799. Though Haydn intended his op. 77 to consist of six quartets, he could not muster more than two as a result of his labor on his oratorio, *The Creation*. Commissioned by the Bohemian Prince Joseph Franz Maximilian Lobkowitz (1772–1816), the *String Quartet in F Major*, op. 77, no. 2, proved to be Haydn's final quartet.

The first movement, in a standard sonata-allegro form, begins with a simple, graceful melody in the first violin. This melody functions not only as the first theme, but also as the second, following a course of embellishment and variation. The middle two movements reverse their standard order, as Haydn places the Minuet and Trio second and the Andante third. The Andante, uncharacteristic of Haydn's typical long and thematically varied slow movements, relies on the development of a single theme throughout. Likewise the Finale traces a single theme across a sonata construct, presenting a basic rhythm characteristic of the Polonaise. The quartet concludes unceremoniously, unlike the emotional tour-de-force of Mendelssohn's *String Quartet no. 6*, showing the contrast between Haydn the classicist and Mendelssohn the romantic.

Ludwig van Beethoven's *String Quartet no. 14 in C-sharp Minor*, op. 131, is often grouped with opp. 130 and 132, as the three works share various motives, and they were Beethoven's final three quartets. Commissioned by Prince Nikolai Galitzin (1794–1866) and dedicated to Baron Joseph von Stutterheim (1764–1831), op. 131 contains seven distinct movements, making it the most extensive of his late quartets. If this work had conformed to the four-movement standard for early nineteenth-century string quartets, it would have consisted of the second movement in sonata-allegro form, the fourth movement (Andante), the fifth (a scherzo, marked Presto), and the closing Allegro. Beethoven's additions are a fugal prelude, and the third and sixth movements, which function as interludes. This quartet represents the composer at his formal best, as its transitional material is tight and its seven movements impeccably paced. A tragic and powerful coda concludes this masterwork, which has inspired glowing responses from every generation of Beethoven enthusiasts. Franz Schubert remarked, "After this, what is left for us to write?" and Robert Schumann asserted that opp. 127 (composed in 1825) and 131 had a "grandeur... which no words can express. They seem to me to stand... on the extreme boundary of all that has hitherto been attained by human art and imagination."

*Program notes by Michael Jacko, music program assistant,
National Gallery of Art*



Johann Christoph Erhard, *Im Höllenthal (In the Höllen Valley)*, 1818, etching on laid paper sheet, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund