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The Juilliard School
presents

Lisa Arnhold Memorial Recital

Ivalas Quartet
Reuben Kebede and Tiani Butts, Violins
Aimée McAnulty, Viola
Pedro Sánchez, Cello

Wednesday, May 17, 2023, 7:30pm
Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

OSVALDO GOLIJOV *Tenebrae* (2002)
(b. 1960)

ELEANOR ALBERGA **String Quartet No. 1** (1993)
(b. 1949) Détaché et matellato e zehr lebhaft und Swing It Man
Espressivo With Wonder and Yearning
Frantically Driven Yet Playful

Intermission

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN **String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130** (1826)
(1770–1827) Adagio, ma non troppo—Allegro
Presto
Andante con moto, ma non troppo. Poco scherzoso
Alla danza tedesca. Allegro assai
Cavatina. Adagio molto espressivo
Finale: Allegro

Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes, including an intermission

The members of the Ivalas Quartet are Lisa Arnhold Fellows at Juilliard. Juilliard's graduate resident string quartet is supported by the Arnhold Foundation and the George L. Shields Foundation.

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Notes on the Program

By Gavin Plumley

In 1977, NASA launched the Voyager program. Its two craft are still in operation today, traveling through our solar system and beyond to send data back to Earth. Unique to the probes is their cargo, containing, according to U.S. president Jimmy Carter, “a present from a small, distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts, and our feelings.” Taking the form of the Voyager Golden Record, it was to be emblematic of earthly existence, in the event of discovery by other life forms. The discs began with a recorded statement from Kurt Waldheim, secretary-general of the United Nations:

We step out of our solar system into the universe seeking only peace and friendship, to teach if we are called upon, to be taught if we are fortunate. We know full well that our planet and all its inhabitants are but a small part of the immense universe that surrounds us and it is with humility and hope that we take this step.

As well as speech, the records included works by Bach, Beethoven, Chuck Berry, Mozart, and Stravinsky, along with natural sounds, indigenous songs and dances, and a collection of scientific and mathematical diagrams as well as photos of life on earth. Among the tracks was the Cavatina from Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 13, with which tonight’s program concludes. Considered a pinnacle of creativity by Stravinsky himself, the quartet has, for many, suggested infinite space since it was created nearly 200 years ago.

Tenebrae OSVALDO GOLIJOV

Thoughts of the cosmos are also operative in the first work on this evening's program. Born in the Argentine city of La Plata and now a U.S. resident, Osvaldo Golijov has powerful associations with Israel, having lived in Jerusalem. A return visit to the Holy City in 2000, marked by dismay at the ongoing hostilities, fused with a more localized experience to inspire *Tenebrae* for soprano, clarinet, and string quartet. A couple years later, Golijov created a second version, in which form it was performed by the Kronos Quartet. According to the composer,

Osvaldo Golijov

Born:
December 5, 1960
in La Plata,
Argentina

I wrote *Tenebrae* as a consequence of witnessing two contrasting realities in a short period of time in September 2000. I was in Israel at the start of the new wave of violence that is still continuing today, and a week later I took my son to the new planetarium in New York, where we could see the Earth as a beautiful blue dot in space. I wanted to write a piece that could be listened to from different perspectives. That is, if one chooses to listen to it "from afar," the music would probably offer a "beautiful" surface but, from a metaphorically closer distance, one could hear that, beneath that surface, the music is full of pain. I lifted some of the haunting melismas from Couperin's *Troisième Leçon de ténèbres*, using them as sources for loops, and wrote new interludes between them, always within a pulsating, vibrating, aerial texture. The compositional challenge was to write music that would sound as an orbiting spaceship that never touches ground. After finishing the composition, I realized that *Tenebrae* could be heard as the slow, quiet reading of an illuminated medieval manuscript in which the appearances of the voice singing the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet (from *Yod to Nun*, as in Couperin) signal the beginning of new chapters, leading to the ending section, built around a single, repeated word: Jerusalem.

Closing with an elegy that is, at times, painful and, at others, hopeful, *Tenebrae* also evokes the eponymous liturgy in Holy Week for which Couperin wrote his masterpiece. Beginning with readings from the Book of Lamentations, originally taken from the Hebrew Bible, as well as passages from the Psalms, it describes the destruction of the Holy City, as candles are extinguished, one by one.

String Quartet No. 1 ELEANOR ALBERGA

Eleanor Alberga

Born:

September 30, 1949,
in Kingston, Jamaica

Following Golijov's meditation on proximate pain and the possibility of viewing things from a greater distance, Eleanor Alberga's String Quartet No. 1 reverses the direction of travel by pondering our origins in outer space, as the composer relates:

I was propelled into an intense burst of creativity by a lecture on physics. The details of this lecture—who gave it, where it was given, and so on—are now lost to my memory, but what grabbed me was the realization that all matter—including our physical bodies—is made of the same stuff: stardust. So the first movement might be called “a fugue without a subject,” as particles of this stardust swirl around each other, go their separate ways, collide, or merge. The second movement might be described as “stargazing from outer space,” while the Finale re-establishes gravity and earthbound energy.

The Jamaican-born British composer, who initially made her name as a pianist, wrote her first string quartet in 1993. Commissioned by the Maggini Quartet, it had its premiere at that year's Rye Festival in the U.K. The opening “fugue without a subject” is, as its description would suggest, highly discursive. Marked “Détaché et matellato e zehr lebhaft und Swing It Man,” the music has the effect of dancing in a particle accelerator. The second movement, “Espressivo With Wonder and Yearning,” speaks of eerie, suspended beauty, its pregnant, long-spun melodies coalescing in harmonic “stardust.” Finally, as if to highlight the intense rhythmic profile of much of Alberga's music, the last movement, marked “Frantically Driven Yet Playful,” is a hurtling jig, with fleet-of-foot, occasionally pizzicato textures skipping over the Earth's atmosphere, before it re-enters with a decisive thud.

String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Beethoven knew nothing, of course, of intergalactic travel. Nonetheless, the stars were a constant feature in the poetry of his time, while the teleological drive of his end-weighted forms—symphonic and otherwise—speaks of a philosophical leap into the unknown. Not for nothing is Beethoven associated with Hegel. The spur for some of the composer's most insightful chamber works, as written towards the end of his career, was, however, rather more mundane. In composing his Op. 130 quartet, Beethoven was answering a November 1822 commission from Prince Nikolay Golitsin, "as passionate an amateur as an admirer of your talent," who played the cello and required "one, two, or three new quartets."

In January 1823, Beethoven fixed a price and promised to begin immediately, though work on his Ninth Symphony and the *Missa solemnis* intervened. It was not until February 1825 that Beethoven managed to conclude the Op. 127 quartet. The piece had its premiere that March, played by Ignaz Schuppanzigh's group, which then gave the first performances of Op. 132 six months later. By the time that quartet had been heard in public, Beethoven was writing its B-flat Major successor.

That is not quite the end of the story. While the composer had honored his promise, the prince was now unable to pay, with the debt still left outstanding at Beethoven's death in 1827. And while he had secured publishers for all three quartets, there were problems with Op. 130. Like many who witnessed the first performance in Vienna on March 21, 1826, the Viennese firm of Artaria had misgivings about the original Finale: a staggering contrapuntal creation known as the *Grosse Fuge*. Instead, the firm encouraged Beethoven to write an easier alternative, even drafting in Karl Holz, who played second violin at the premiere:

I maintained to Beethoven that this fugue, which departed from the ordinary and surpassed even the last quartets in originality, should be published as a separate work and that it merited a designation as a separate opus. I communicated that Artaria was disposed to pay him a supplementary honorarium for the new Finale. Beethoven told me he would reflect on it, but the next day I received a letter giving his consent.

Even without its cerebral fugue, the quartet is revolutionary, entirely surpassing the needs of a "passionate amateur." It opens with an inscrutable Adagio, which, despite its initial B-flat, introduces various tonal deviations and a strongly contrapuntal vein. Then comes the Allegro proper, the enthusiasm of which is at the other end of the emotional spectrum. When its energy wanes, the introverted Adagio returns, albeit briefly, before the Allegro resumes afresh with unflagging runs, skittish imitation

**Ludwig van
Beethoven**

Born:
December 16
or 17, 1770,
in Bonn, Germany

Died:
March 26, 1827,
in Vienna

and leaping arpeggios. The development is almost bathetic in comparison but throws light on the mutable nature of the whole movement, including its recapitulation. Finally, Beethoven brings the ideas together, though his mind has turned to the next part of the quartet's unfolding structure.

The second movement is as terse as the development in the first movement, juxtaposing an obsessive Presto with a rollicking Trio. The latter recalls the Adagio's chromaticisms, now sounding rather cussed, as do the trills that decorate the final section. The expected slow movement comes next, with its tongue firmly in its cheek, at least according to the marking of "poco scherzoso." The fourth movement likewise observes tradition, using a Scherzo and Trio originally intended for Op. 132 (transposed from A to G Major). After the jollity of its German dance, the Cavatina offers one of Beethoven's most heartrending utterances; even the composer wept when writing it. Little wonder the initial audiences hoped for a lighter conclusion. In response, mirroring the juxtapositions of what has gone before, Beethoven wrote some of his blithest music for the Finale, the very last thing he created, but which he never witnessed in performance.

Gavin Plumley specializes in the music and culture of Central Europe and appears frequently on BBC radio as well as writing for newspapers, magazines, opera houses, and concert halls around the world. He is the commissioning editor of English-language program notes for the Salzburg Festival.

About the Ivalas Quartet



Composed of violinists Reuben Kebede and Tiani Butts, violist Aimée McNulty, and cellist Pedro Sánchez, the Ivalas Quartet has been changing the face of classical music since its inception at the University of Michigan in 2017. Dedicated to the celebration of BIPOC voices, Ivalas seeks to disrupt and enhance the classical music world by introducing more audiences to BIPOC composers. The Ivalas Quartet had the pleasure of performing George Walker's *Lyric for Strings* at Carnegie Hall in January 2020. Later that year, the members worked in collaboration with Walker's son to program George Walker's String Quartet No. 1 with Friends of Chamber Music Denver and the Colorado Music Festival. In 2021, the quartet created the first recording of Carlos Simon's *Warmth of Other Suns* for string quartet under Lara Downes' digital label Rising Sun Music. The Ivalas Quartet, the graduate resident string quartet at Juilliard, spent 2019 to 2022 in residence at the University of Colorado-Boulder under the mentorship of the Takács Quartet. It has performed in numerous festivals, including the Aspen Music Festival, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Madeline Island Chamber Music, and Bowdoin International Music Festival, and is a proud partner in performance and community engagement with the Sphinx Organization. The quartet received the grand prize at the 2022 Coltman Competition in Austin, Texas. Members of Ivalas play instruments generously on loan from the Juilliard Collection.

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