

Quatuor Akilone
Programme 24-25

Programme 2024

THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827), Streichquartett n.16 in F-Dur op.135 25'

Leoš JANACEK (1854-1928), Streichquartett n.2 « Intime Briefe » 25'

Antonín DVORAK (1841-1904), Streichquartett n.14 in As-Dur, op.105 30'

Dauer: 80 Minuten

- *In link with our upcoming Dvorak CD (to be released in Spring 2024).*
- *In link with our research trip in Czech Republic, funded by the EU.*
- *120 years since the death of Dvorak in case someone thinks this is remarkable.*

In his famous novel, the Czech writer Milan Kundera uses the figure of Beethoven as a link between his two main characters: Tomas and Tereza, who are in the grip of the inexorable - lightness, weight, the bond of love, fate. The paths of life intertwine between Zurich and Prague.

These three works are the last written by these men before they die. Three men whom love has also bitten, blossomed, wounded, accompanied them all their lives. For Janáček, this Lettres intimes quartet recounts his impossible love for the young dancer with whom he fell madly in love at the end of his life. Dvořák, on the other hand, was in love all his life with his wife's sister, Josefina, who did not want him, and whose presence can be seen throughout his work. With his letter to his eternal beloved, Beethoven, a good artichoke heart, caused more ink to flow than he could ever have imagined.

In this last quartet, Beethoven writes in the margin of his score this famous quote: "Muss es sein? Es muss sein! Must it be? It must! Also translatable as "it must be". A quote that Kundera has his main character Tomas say when he returns to Prague for Tereza. The third movement of this quartet, 'Süsser Ruhegesang, Friedensgesang' (sweet song of rest; peace), recalls the scene by the stream from the Pastoral Symphony.

Janáček and Dvořák, both Czechs as well, made their culture shine while remaining open to the world; Janáček through his link with Austria and Dvořák with his move to the United States. Both were great admirers of Beethoven, who was born in Germany and lived practically all his life in Vienna.

Through the prism of Kundera's work, we wish to cross the last glimpses of life of these three men touched by love and art, and let us hear the message they reveal to us about their brief passage in this world.

MEŽA MĀTE - NORTHERN SONGS

Edvard GRIEG (1843-1907), Streichquartett n.1 in G-moll op.27 35'

Grażyna BACEWICZ (1909-1969), Streichquartett n.4 (1951) 22'

Pēteris VASKS (1946-), Streichquartett n.2 "Sommerweisen" (1984) 28'

oder

Einojuhani RAUTAVAARA (1928-2016) Streichquartett n.1 "Quartettino" (1952) 12'

Nordic Folk Tunes (Arr. Danish String Quartet)

Dauer: 70-90 Minuten

- *We are meeting Peteris Vasks and working with him on his 2nd String Quartet in Summer 2023 during our tour in Latvia. We will also have the String Quartet n.4 by Andris Dzenītis (Latvia) in our repertoire (world premiere and dedicated to us, commissioned by the Peteris Vasks foundation) in case some organizers are interested in a Baltic-only program.*

A pagan figure representing the mother goddess of the woods in the Baltic States, Meža māte is a gateway to the Baltic world and thus a window into the Northern imagination.

The Baltic people worshipped the forces of nature above all. As agricultural people, they worshipped trees and forests, the Sun, the Moon and the stars, and all sorts of creatures. Their gods and demons inhabited the fields, lakes and rivers: they were the vele, the kaukis or dwarfs, the lauma (female). Their temples were the sacred forests or alkas. Among the Latvians, this cult takes on a very marked character with the "mothers" or māte, whose existence no doubt refers to a primordial mother-goddess and who bear telling names: Lauka māte (mother of the fields), Meža māte (of the woods), Lopu māte (of the cattle), Jūras māte (of the sea), Dārza māte (of gardens), Vēja māte (of the wind).

In this concert that travels between Norway with Grieg, Latvia with Vasks, Poland with the brilliant composer Bacewicz and Finland with Rautavaara, nature is omnipresent, wild and free, with night winters, northern lights in Norway and Finland, midnight suns in summer, another apprehension of life. Traditional songs are present everywhere and will mark out this programme thanks to the arrangements of the Danish String Quartet. Enjoy the journey to these countries where ice glistens in the woods and nature has been revered and preserved.

A JOURNEY ON THE TRACES OF ANTONIN DVORAK

Antonín DVORAK (1841-1904), Teile folgenden Quartette:

Streichquartett n.1 op.2 in A-Dur B.8

Streichquartett n.10 op.51 in Es-Dur

Streichquartett n.14 in As-Dur, op.105

Cypressen, B.152

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O SOLE MIO

Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805), Streichquartett D-Dur op.8 n.1, G.165 15'

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1805), Streichquartett in A-Dur op.20 n.6 17'

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791), Streichquartett Bb-Dur, K.589 "Preussische" 24'

Juan Crisóstomo de ARRIAGA (1806-1826), Streichquartett n.2 A-Dur 23'

Under the southern sun, la dolce vita: a joyful concert, to leave with a smile on your face, sun in your heart, scented with the perfume of Italy and a hint of Spain.

Haydn, considered to be the founding father of the quartet, illuminates the musical world with his op. 20 "sun quartets", nuggets of inventiveness. In response to a critic who claimed that his music was not contrapuntal enough and who doubted that he was capable of writing fugues, he ended most of the quartets in this cycle with fugues, pianissimo, in sotto voce, with a surprise coda fortissimo, like a masterly and refined nose-thumbing, proof of his powerful humor.

At the same time, Boccherini in Italy also invented the string quartet, writing over a hundred of them! A virtuoso cellist, he composed as he breathed, and to better savor the pleasures, he composed pieces to play with his friends, wherever he went. He went to live in Spain, wrote quintets with guitar, including the famous fandango, and in a quintet with two cellos, had fun playing castanets! He was inspired by everything around him, and in his quintet, inspired by the nights of Madrid, he added effects that were quite innovative for the time. His music is often very cheerful and joyful, and leaves room for improvisation.

Mozart travelled to Italy and Spain at a very early age, touring the country. He was inspired by Italy for his operas, which he revolutionized. Here we are at the end of his life, he is in financial distress, and he will come across these so-called "Prussian" quartets written for the Prince of Prussia who was a good amateur cellist. This cycle returns to a childlike innocence and a simplicity of motives and forms. This quartet is one of his last works, full of light.

To finish, a quartet by Arriaga, a young Spanish musician and composer of genius who died too young, a contemporary of Beethoven. Here too, joy, light and sunshine to warm the soul and pay homage to the southern sun that makes hearts sing!

Programme 2025

MUSIC OF THE INNEFABLE

György Ligeti (1923-2006), Quartett Nr. 2 (1967-1968) 21'

Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Quartett a-moll D 804 „Rosamunde“ 38'

Dauer : 70 Minuten

"Clocks and clouds'. This is the term used to describe the period during which Ligeti wrote his Second Quartet. It is music made of pulsation and texture. After a youth strongly influenced by his compatriot Bartók, Ligeti, who had fled communist Hungary, began this second period, which was marked by the search for a more unstructured, less "speaking" music, made up of snatches and whispers, dialogue dust and shadows calling for movement.

The central and masterly movement of Ligeti's 2nd quartet, Come un meccanismo di precisione, in pizzicati, brilliantly transcends a work of timbre already present in Ravel or Debussy. The poem "Pluie" by Francis Ponge, an iridescent reference and magical extension of this movement, is a sumptuous poetic echo.

The ineffable is also Schubert's realm. This last quartet, the most 'contrapuntal', very close in its vision to the quintet for two cellos, was written in the only year after Beethoven's death, a year that was a phenomenal creative space for Schubert. This work opens up a world of chiaroscuro legends. Schubert's works are like scenes without images. With the power of tales and legends rooted in the mists of time, they are ultimately the impalpable material of which our dreams are made, the music of the ineffable.

DIE MAINACHT

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Quartett Es-Dur n.10 op.74 "Harfen" 30'

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847), Quartett Es-Dur 20'

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), Quartett a-moll op.51 n.2 33'

Dauer : 85 Minuten

Die Mainacht (Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty)

Wann der silberne Mond durch die Gesträuche blinkt,
Und sein schlummerndes Licht über den Rasen streut,
Und die Nachtigall flötet,
Wandl' ich traurig von Busch zu Busch.
Überhüllet vom Laub, girret ein Taubenpaar
Sein Entzücken mir vor; aber ich wende mich,
Suche dunklere Schatten,
Und die einsame Träne rinnt.
Wann, o lächelndes Bild, welches wie Morgenrot
Durch die Seele mir strahlt, find' ich auf Erden dich?
Und die einsame Träne
Bebt mir heißer die Wang' herab.

The Night of May, a poem by Hölty and set to music by Fanny Hensel and Brahms, both born in Hamburg and brought up in these lands near the North Sea, expresses well the enchanting spirit and evocative power of Nature in Romantic thought. Brahms and Hensel were both inspired by the work of Beethoven, who himself drew his inspiration from his country ballads,

as well as from many poets in common: he even tinkles the magic lyre in his quartet called the Harps.

Three German-born composers, very good pianists, with an open mind on an enchanted nature that serves as a vector for the most intimate emotions.

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ELAN LYRIQUE

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Quartett B-Dur n.13 op.130 50'

Alban Berg (1885-1935) Lyrische Suite 30'

Dauer: 80 Minuten

Two monuments that changed the thinking of their time and influenced future generations. Two lyrical forms, where the love song is the very essence of the work. A plunge into the world of Vienna, the cradle of so-called "learned" music, for several centuries.

- *An album with Berg and Webern is planned for release in 2025*

CREATIONS

This program is the result of an important research work around the form of the concert. It explores the relationship of the artist to the space and the public.

In partnership with the GMEA of Albi, MERITA and the Gresinhol festival...

Creations by Xu Yi (1963-), Jérôme Désigaud (1979-) and others.

Andere Programme / Quartett plus + :

OKTETT

Mit Quatuor Zaïde

Enescu, Oktett op.7 40'

Mendelssohn, Oktett Es-dur op.20 32'

- *If everything goes well, we're having a first octet concert in Switzerland in August 2024*