

3



the  
**Beethoven**  
in  
Cycle  
**6**

The complete string quartets  
of Beethoven in six concerts.



Eight o'clock, Saturday, September 14, 1996  
Campus Auditorium

Robert W. Demaree, Jr.



DIVISION OF THE ARTS



**The Chester String Quartet**

One of America's most distinguished and sought after chamber ensembles, the Chester String Quartet has been called "one of the best and brightest of the country's young string quartets" by the *Boston Globe*. Their engaging style and deep sense of musical commitment have brought them rave reviews from audiences and critics throughout the United States, as well as Latin America and Europe. The Chester's interpretations have also led to top prizes at international quartet competitions in Munich, Germany, Portsmouth, England, and Chicago's Discovery Competition.

Founded at Eastman School of Music, the Chester is currently Quartet-in-Residence at Indiana University South Bend where its members are all full-time faculty. The Chester maintains a busy summer performance and teaching schedule, having appearances at such prestigious festivals as Newport, Aspen, the International Festival in San Jose (Costa Rica), Rotterdam (Holland), Guelph (Canada), Music Mountain, Cape May, Pittsburgh Summerfest, and South Mountain. Members of the quartet have joined in concert with many international solo artists and chamber musicians, including pianists Ruth Laredo, Alexander Toradze, Lydia Artimyw, Ralph Votapek, Steven DeGroot, and Alexander Krianov; members of the Guarneri, Cleveland, and Muir string quartets; string players Carter Brey, Norman Fischer, Marcus Thompson, Karen Tuttle, Alexander Baille, and Boris Pergamenchikof; and vocal artists such as Dawn Upshaw, Lucy Shelton, and Glen Seibert. The quartet previously recorded for the CRI, Stolat, and Pantheon labels and has been heard numerous times on National Public Radio, the BBC, and German State Radio.

As a courtesy to the artists and to other members of the audience, latecomers will be seated at an appropriate time. For the same reasons return to seating following intermission should be prompt. Attendance by children under the age of responsible behavior is discouraged. Audio and video recording equipment and cameras may not be used at a performance in any auditorium of IUSB. Eating and drinking in the Campus Auditorium, Recital Hall and Upstage are prohibited. Smoking is not permitted in any building of Indiana University South Bend.

## Program Notes

### *Quartet in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3*

The D Major Quartet of the Opus 18 set was the first to be composed, and is perhaps the most unpretentious though one of the most delightful and beautifully written of the set. The first movement is constructed around a series of long notes in simple counterpoint, decorated by frilly ornamental figures. The melodic motifs throughout are traditionally elegant and concise, but the occasional offbeat accents and strident *fortissimo* passages are harbingers of a newer style. The almost imperceptible sideslip into the development section is deftly handled, as is the return to the music of the opening. A brief coda ends the movement without ceremony.

A simple theme provides the basis for the slow movement, which is the rondo form, but the treatment of the theme is sophisticated. The melody is prefigured in the second violin before appearing in full; and the scoring and diversity of texture and style throughout provide a constant renewal. Lush chords are juxtaposed with odd fragmentation, strong repeated notes alternate with quietly smooth passages, and the movement ends with an atmosphere of combined calm and mystery.

The third movement is a clever and fascinating piece, again unspectacular and subtly projected. The rhythmic shifts, the harmonic play, the stops and starts of the first part are thrown into relief by a brief central Trio section in the minor mode. The return of the first part is rescored for variety and delicate emphasis.

A resilient energy pervades the finale with its contrast between spiky outline and smooth contour, seamless and fragmentation, declamation and contemplation. The ending is table-thumping in reverse: a rhetorical gesture used here to great effect.

### *Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95, "Serioso"*

The Quartet in F minor, Opus 95, was written at the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century—a decade of immense achievement for the composer. The quartet is a work of great power and density. Beethoven wrote "Quartetto Serioso" on the title page, and the directions for the third movement use the same adjective. The quartet was completed towards the end of 1810 and dedicated to Nicholas Zmeskall von Domanovecz, a close friend of the composer.

A remarkable sense of compression and urgency colors the music, and this is immediately evident at the outset, when a kaleidoscopic series of motifs, of a potent grittiness, are forced onto the attention of the listener. The second key area (an unexpected D flat) is momentarily of a more relaxed contour, but the forceful declamatory atmosphere returns. A short and stormy development section precedes the compressed and epigrammatic review of the opening material. The ending is quiet, but with an electric energy not fully discharged.

The transition to the second movement is made by means of a single descending scale in the cello. The atmosphere is dark and restrained. After some contemplative hesitations, a chromatic fugue takes over the central portion of the movement. Long ethereal chords are combined with the descending cello passage, and a little staccato figure pervades the texture before the recapitulation. The coda is open-ended, and leads straight into the third movement, which is persistent and intense. A jerky rhythmic figure contrasts with a smoothly flowing melody in the central section with a change of key accomplished by brilliant sleight-of-hand. The movement ends with abrupt concision.

The slow introduction to the last movement generates a pathos that is quickly, and rather impudently, dispelled by the beginning of the **Allegro agitato**. The impetus no sooner gets under way than a series of mood changes and dramatic pauses and outbursts are woven into the texture. The forward energy, however, is relentless, and all is resolved by a light and skittering final coda, unassuming and gay.

*Quartet in B flat Major, Op. 130*

The B flat Major Quartet, Opus 130, is an extraordinary work, written in 1826, and abandoning any pretensions to orthodoxy. It is composed in six movements in a continuous alternation of fast and slow tempos, and enclosing two dance movements and two slow movements. The slow introduction to the first movement is integrated into the fabric of the movement proper. Its smoothly burnished surface is contrasted with the jagged emphasis of the **Allegro**, with its irregularly patterned sixteenth notes and repetitive rhythm. This contrast is gradually resolved, until, in the central development section, a complete synthesis of polarities is achieved, and, just before the end of movement, the smooth style of the **Adagio** is heard, but in the tempo of the **Allegro**.

The Scherzo is a wispy sketch in duple time, with a Trio section that returns to the normal triple meter, but does not seem to know when to end. A chromatic sliding figure leads to the impressionistically embellished return of the opening.

The third movement is an unusual combination of mechanical rhythms and a simple childish melody. The piece is an exploration of the expressive possibilities inherent in eccentric juxtaposition and textural dissolve—in combination and disintegration. The ending is curt.

The fourth movement [**Alla danza tedesca**], like the second, employs simple, popular elements in a stylized and emotionally charged context, and, like the preceding **Andante**, experiments with embellishment and fragmentation of the theme.

A rich texture and timeless trajectory characterize the next slow movement [**Cavatina**], whose name is taken from an eighteenth-century aria form, and whose exquisite scoring and expressive melody are matchless in the literature. An extraordinary passage in the middle of the movement, marked "beklemmt" ("oppressed"), projects the first violin, in truncated gasps, over quietly insistent chords in the other instruments. Here is one of the most telling examples in all music where silence may be said to speak as eloquently as any notes.

Beethoven's original finale for this quartet was the remarkable, dense, and demanding "Grosse Fuge." He was ultimately persuaded, however, for the first time in his life, to alter his original plans and to publish the "Grosse Fuge" separately (Opus 133). He wrote a new final movement for Opus 130, and attractive **Allegro** that features a catchy contradance as its principal theme. If less weighty and intellectually demanding than its predecessor, this finale is nonetheless full of diversity and showy skill. It ends the quartet with color and force.

CHESTER STRING QUARTET

## The Beethoven Cycle

Aaron Berofsky, violin . Kathryn Votapek, violin  
David Harding, viola . Thomas Rosenberg, cello

### Program

Quartet in D. Major, Op. 18 No. 3

Allegro  
Andante con moto  
Allegro  
Presto

Quartet in f-minor, Op. 95 "Serioso"

Allegro con brio  
Allegretto ma non troppo  
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso  
Larghetto espressivo - Allegretto agitato

### Intermission

(There will be one intermission of 15 minutes)

Quartet in B Major, Op. 130

Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro  
Presto  
Andante con moto ma non troppo  
Alla danza tedesca: Allegro assai  
Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo  
Finale: Allegro

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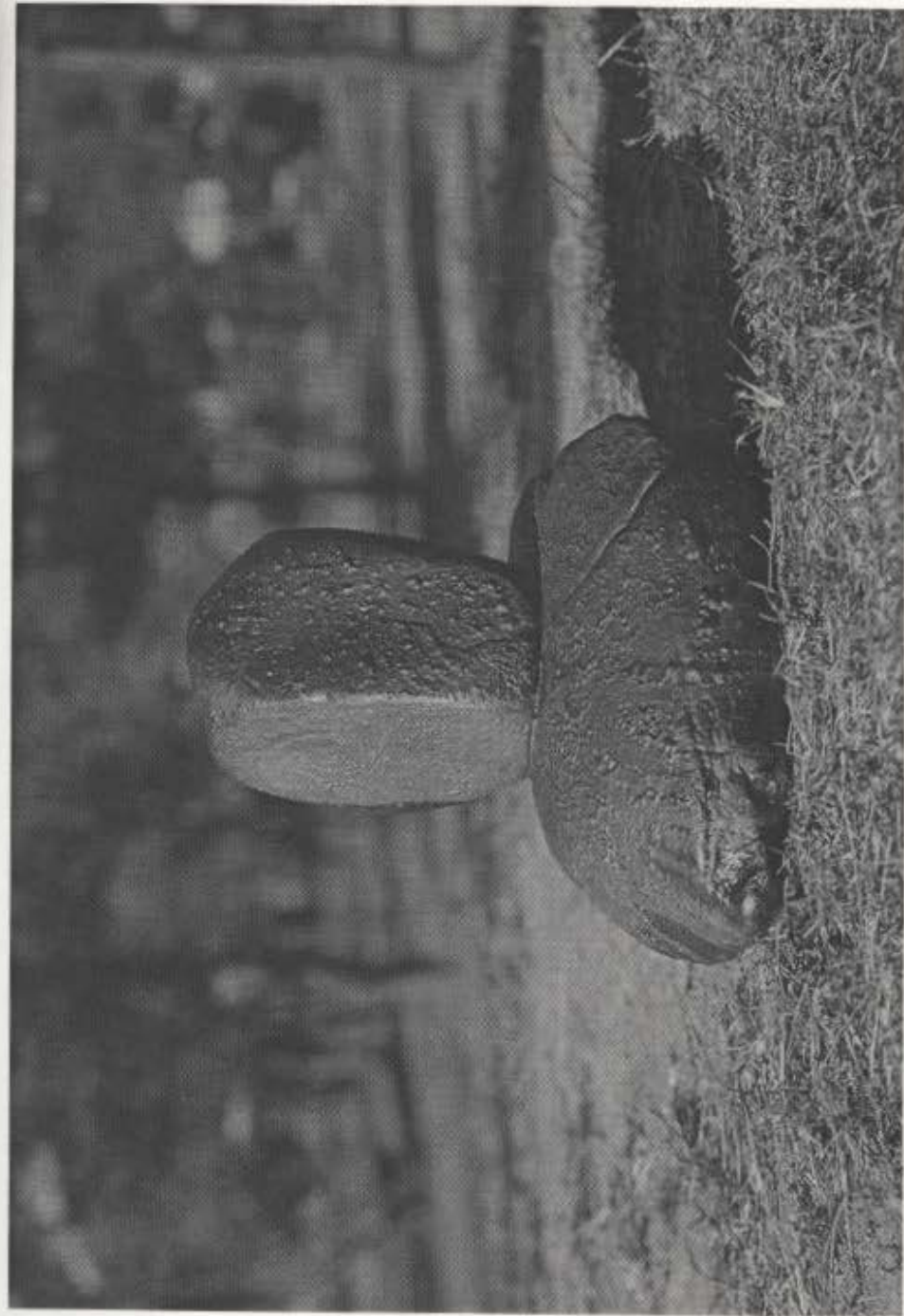
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DIVISION OF THE ARTS  
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