

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

GRADUATE STRING QUARTET

NOVEMBER 30, 2022
ORGAN RECITAL HALL



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STRING QUARTET

NOVEMBER 30, 7:30 P.M., 2022, ORGAN RECITAL HALL

Quartet in D Major, K.575

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegretto

Andante

Allegretto

Allegretto

Quartet in A minor, Op. 13

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Adagio non lento-Allegro vivace

Adagio non lento

Intermezzo-Allegretto moderato-Allegro di molto

Presto-Adagio non lento

Jessica Monserrat Rosado Azcuaga, violin

Annie Smith, violin

Ethan Buell, viola

Avery Smith, cello

String Quartet No. 21 in D major was written by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the age of 33 in June of 1789. It is the first of three quartets titled the “Prussian” quartets. These would be the last string quartets that Mozart would ever write. It was dedicated to the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II, who was an amateur cellist himself. This is reflected in the music with a very rewarding cello part that streams throughout all four movements. The cello is often given the melody in a high register to highlight the instrument.

Mozart chose the relaxed tempo of Allegretto for three of the four movements. The first movement is sweetly written with the first violin and viola passing the first theme, until the cello takes over with the second theme. The second movement is not much different in tempo marked with andante or walking speed. The melody resembles that of his song “Das Veilchen” giving this quartet the occasionally used nickname “The Violet.” The third movement is a Minuet and Trio that is driven forward with light and repeated staccato notes. The Trio is a sweet solo moment for the cello accompanied by the other instruments. The finale is cheerful and lively. The main theme becomes very contrapuntal between all instruments and like a rondo it comes back throughout the movement. Despite the troubles and depression that Mozart was facing at this point in his life, he put that aside to write this elegant, and joyful quartet in D major.

— Program notes by Annie Smith

Mendelssohn’s **String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 13**, was composed in 1827 when he was 18 years old. It has four movements. At this point in his career, the teenage composer had already written his famous Octet for strings (Op. 20), the Op. 18 string quintet, and several piano quartets.

This quartet is heavily influenced by the work of Beethoven, especially his late quartets. Mendelssohn wrote the Op. 13 quartet shortly after the death of Beethoven, and it bears a particular resemblance to one of Beethoven’s works, his Op. 132 quartet.

Mendelssohn wrote a recurring motif for this quartet, actually a musical quotation from his own song “Ist es wahr?” (or “Is it true?”) that he composed a few months before writing the quartet. He even wrote the title of the song in the score. In fact, the musical motif from his song appears throughout the piece in different forms. It ends the last movement in a form quite similar to the very beginning, except this time, it is extremely quiet, as if heard from a great distance.

This quotation is also an homage to Beethoven; it is quite similar to a quote that Beethoven put in the last movement of his string quartet, Op. 135: “Muss es sein?” (or “Must it be?”). However, Beethoven’s Op. 135 is pensive and brooding, while Mendelssohn’s Op. 13 quartet is passionate and romantic in the way that only Mendelssohn can be.

— Notes by Ethan Buell



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