

Lincoln Center's

white light festival

October 18–November 15, 2017

Tuesday, October 24, 2017, at 7:30 pm

Nearing the End

Emerson String Quartet

Eugene Drucker, *Violin*

Philip Setzer, *Violin*

Lawrence Dutton, *Viola*

Paul Watkins, *Cello*

BEETHOVEN **String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 127 (1824–25)**

Maestoso—Allegro

Adagio, ma non troppo e molto cantabile

Scherzando vivace

Finale

DRUCKER, SETZER, DUTTON, WATKINS

SHOSTAKOVICH **String Quartet No. 15 in E-flat minor, Op. 144 (1974)**

Elegy: Adagio—

Serenade: Adagio—

Intermezzo: Adagio—

Nocturne: Adagio—

Funeral March: Adagio molto—

Epilogue: Adagio

SETZER, DRUCKER, DUTTON, WATKINS

This program is approximately 75 minutes long and will be performed without intermission. This performance is also part of Great Performers.

Please join the artists for a White Light Lounge in the Alice Tully Hall lobby following the performance.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater
Adrienne Arsht Stage

*Please make certain all your electronic devices
are switched off.*

Support for Great Performers is provided by Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser, Audrey Love Charitable Foundation, Great Performers Circle, Chairman's Council, and Friends of Lincoln Center.

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Artist Catering provided by Zabar's and Zabars.com

UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

Tuesday, October 31 at 7:30 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

Steven Osborne, piano
MESSIAEN: *Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*
Performed without intermission
Pre-concert talk with Steven Osborne and Steven Mackey at 6:15 pm

Wednesday–Thursday, November 1–2, at 7:30 pm in the Rose Theater

Stabat mater (New York premiere)
Jessica Lang Dance
Jessica Lang, director and choreographer
Orchestra of St. Luke's
Speranza Scappucci, conductor
Andriana Chuchman, soprano
Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor
MOZART: *Divertimento in F major*
PERGOLESI: *Stabat mater*

November 1–11

The Psalms Experience (U.S. premiere)
Choir of Trinity Wall Street
Netherlands Chamber Choir
Tallis Scholars
Norwegian Soloists' Choir
150 psalms. 150 composers. 4 choirs. 12 concerts.
Visit PsalmsExperience.org for full concert schedule.

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit WhiteLightFestival.org. Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a White Light Festival brochure.

Visit WhiteLightFestival.org for full festival listings.

Join the conversation: #WhiteLightFestival

We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

Snapshot

By Paul Schiavo

Ludwig van Beethoven and Dmitry Shostakovich were the foremost composers of string quartets during the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. Each composer cultivated the quartet genre throughout his career, and each produced his most profound music in this medium during his twilight years.

The late quartets of both Beethoven and Shostakovich differ markedly in character from their earlier essays in the genre, and arguably from anything else in either composer's output. Beethoven's music had been, until this point, extroverted and assertive to an unprecedented degree. Gone from his late quartets are the heroic posture and intimations of struggle and triumph that account for the popularity of Beethoven's most familiar compositions.

In their place we find what some commentators have identified as an air of lofty detachment and even transcendence of worldly concerns.

For Shostakovich, detachment was hardly possible, even toward the end of his life. Throughout his career, the composer had been tested by circumstances. Having survived both the epochal Russian Revolution and his country's desperate struggle against the Nazi invasion during World War II, Shostakovich existed for decades in a state of fear as an artist living under a totalitarian regime. Late in his life, poor health and the passing of friends, colleagues, and family forced him to confront mortality. The notion of death informs a number of Shostakovich's late works, not least his Quartet in E-flat minor, Op. 144.

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Notes on the Program

By Paul Schiavo

String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 127 (1824–25)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany
Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna*

Approximate length: 36 minutes

Beethoven published his first string quartets, a group of six pieces collected as his Op. 18, in 1801. During the ensuing decade, he brought forth the three “Razumovsky” Quartets and a pair of individual pieces, the “Harp” Quartet, Op. 74, and the “Quartetto serioso,” Op. 95.

And then, silence. During a fallow period that lasted from 1812 to 1818, Beethoven composed little of consequence and nothing in the quartet genre. He returned to the string quartet—after an interval of some 14 years—late in 1824, and between that time and the end of 1826, wrote five works of this type. These were his last compositions of any significance. Individually and as a group they are exceptional works: monumental in scale and highly original in their handling of form, harmony, and thematic treatment.

Beethoven had established his reputation in part by giving expression to heroism, strife, and volcanic energy. This defined his great “middle period” works, which included compositions like the Third and Fifth Symphonies, the “Emperor” Concerto, the “Appassionata” Piano Sonata, and the opera *Fidelio*. By contrast, the late quartets seem to intimate a relatively dispassionate consideration of compositional possibilities, a desire for lyrical outpouring, and, occasionally, an ironic sense of humor.

But perhaps the most striking quality of the late quartets is the least tangible: a character of introspection and tranquility that distinguishes this music from that which

Beethoven had produced earlier in his career. These works seem to convey a very personal world of thought and feeling, prompting many commentators to attribute to them an indefinable mystic significance.

The first of these late quartets is the work published as Beethoven’s Op. 127. It unfolds in four movements—a classic design. But if the broad outlines of the composition seem conventional, its musical details show considerable originality. Beethoven begins the first movement with six measures of sonorous chords in slow tempo, a gesture that contrasts sharply with the blithe melody that constitutes the movement’s principal idea and which reappears twice more during the course of the movement.

The second movement presents a set of variations on an arching melody that magically springs forth from a tense chord in the opening measures, while the ensuing scherzo entails all sorts of subtle musical humor. In the finale, Beethoven’s principal theme hints at folk song, and much of the movement conveys a rustic quality, except for the concluding passage. Here, the music grows light and delicate—at times almost ethereal—as it flows swiftly to its close. The joyous, perhaps naive, perhaps divine serenity some observers have perceived in Beethoven’s late music is nowhere more evident.

String Quartet No. 15 in E-flat minor, Op. 144 (1974)

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH

*Born September 25, 1906, in St. Petersburg
Died August 9, 1975, in Moscow*

Approximate length: 37 minutes

Shostakovich began writing what would be the last of his 15 string quartets in the spring of 1974. He had hardly commenced this task when poor health forced a prolonged hospital stay. The composer had for some time been suffering from several serious conditions: cardiac disease, which

had already caused him two heart attacks; polio, which not only weakened his legs but crippled his right hand; and cancer. Were this not enough to darken his spirits, death had recently claimed a number of people close to him. These included his elder sister, Mariya, who had passed away the year before, as well as his longtime secretary. And there were others—old friends, fellow musicians, people who had helped or supported him at different times in his life.

Shostakovich continued composing the final string quartet during his hospital stay, completing it while he was still confined. With this composition, he ventured the most audacious design to be found in any of his string quartets: six connected movements, all in slow tempo. A number of commentators have attributed the persistently slow tempi throughout the movements to an overall funereal character. A leading Shostakovich scholar, Laurel Fay, asserts in her biography of the composer that “the bleak introspection and elegiac cast of its unprecedented succession of six adagio movements left no doubt in his contemporaries’ minds that the [quartet] could be regarded as a personal requiem.”

Perhaps so, though it should be noted that there is no firm evidence that Shostakovich wrote this work to mourn his own

prospective demise. Despite his illness, he still had more than a year to live and still had creative projects in mind. Indeed, he would complete several major works in the time that remained to him. Shostakovich was an intensely private person who consistently rebuffed those who sought to have him attribute particular meanings to his works. Although he certainly was mindful of death during the last years of his life, he continued to cling tenaciously to life.

The first of the composition’s six linked movements is by far the longest, and its character is indicated by its title, *Elegy*. It begins with a repeated-note motif, one that recurs in each ensuing movement. Those include, among other things, a ghostly waltz, a song of ethereal beauty, and a funeral march that alludes to the Marcia funebre of Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony. The concluding *Epilogue* serves a retrospective function, recalling ideas set forth in the preceding movements.

Paul Schiavo serves as program annotator for the St. Louis and Seattle Symphonies, and writes frequently for concerts at Lincoln Center.

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We thirst at first

By Emily Dickinson

We thirst at first—'tis nature's act—
And later, when we die,
A little water supplicate
Of fingers going by.

It intimates the finer want
Whose adequate supply
Is that great water in the west
Termed Immortality.

*For poetry comments and suggestions, please write
to programming@LincolnCenter.org.*

Meet the Artists

LISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO



The Emerson String Quartet has amassed an unparalleled list of achievements over four decades: more than 30 acclaimed recordings, nine Grammys (including two for Best Classical Album), three Gramophone Classical Music Awards, the Avery Fisher Prize, Musical America's Ensemble of the Year award, and collaborations with many of the greatest artists of our time.

Having celebrated its 40th anniversary last season, the Quartet looks toward the future by collaborating with today's most esteemed composers and premiering new works. In 2016, Universal Music Group reissued the Quartet's entire Deutsche Grammophon discography in a 52-CD boxed set, and the ensemble's latest album, *Chaconnes and Fantasias: Music of Britten and Purcell*, was released earlier this year on Universal Music Classics's new U.S. classical record label, Decca Gold. The 2017–18 season reflects the Quartet's venerable artistry with high-profile projects, collaborations, and tours, including two concerts at Alice Tully Hall; a performance at Princeton University of *Shostakovich and The Black Monk: A Russian Fantasy*, a new theatrical production co-created by acclaimed theater director James Glossman and the Quartet's violinist, Philip Setzer; collaborations with the Calidore String Quartet at Segerstrom Center for the Arts and with the Dover Quartet at the Kennedy Center; as well as tours to South America, Asia, and Europe. In April 2018, the renowned pianist Evgeny Kissin joins

the Quartet for three performances at Carnegie Hall, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, and Boston's Jordan Hall, and appears with the ensemble in France, Germany, and Austria.

Formed in 1976 and based in New York City, the Emerson was one of the first quartets whose violinists alternated in the first chair position. The Emerson continues its series at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. for its 39th season and is quartet-in-residence at Stony Brook University. During the spring of 2016, full-time Stony Brook faculty members Philip Setzer and Lawrence Dutton received the honor of distinguished professor, and part-time faculty members Eugene Drucker and Paul Watkins were each awarded the title of honorary distinguished professor. In 2015, the Quartet received the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award, Chamber Music America's highest honor, in recognition of its significant and lasting contribution to the chamber music field.

White Light Festival

I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colors. Only a prism can divide the colors and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener.
—Arvo Pärt. Now in its eighth year, the White Light Festival is Lincoln Center's annual exploration of music and art's power to reveal the many dimensions of our interior lives. International in scope, the multidisciplinary festival offers a broad spectrum of the world's leading instrumentalists, vocalists, ensembles, choreographers, dance companies, and directors, complemented by conversations with artists and scholars and post-performance White Light Lounges.

Lincoln Center's Great Performers

Initiated in 1965, Lincoln Center's Great Performers series offers classical and contemporary music performances from the

world's outstanding symphony orchestras, vocalists, chamber ensembles, and recitalists. One of the most significant music presentation series in the world, Great Performers runs from October through June with offerings in Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Walter Reade Theater, and other performance spaces around New York City. From symphonic masterworks, lieder recitals, and Sunday morning coffee concerts to films and groundbreaking productions specially commissioned by Lincoln Center, Great Performers offers a rich spectrum of programming throughout the season.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter

of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

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