

# LINCOLN CENTER'S 2017/18 GREAT PERFORMERS

The Program

Tuesday, November 28, 2017, at 7:30 pm

## Emerson String Quartet

Eugene Drucker, *Violin*

Philip Setzer, *Violin*

Lawrence Dutton, *Viola*

Paul Watkins, *Cello*

### BEETHOVEN **String Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130 (1825–26)**

Adagio ma non troppo—Allegro

Presto

Andante con moto, ma non troppo

Alla danza Tedesca: Allegro assai

Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo

Finale: Allegro

DRUCKER, SETZER, DUTTON, WATKINS

*Intermission*

### SHOSTAKOVICH **String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat minor, Op. 138 (1970)**

Adagio—Doppio movimento—Tempo primo

SETZER, DRUCKER, DUTTON, WATKINS

### BEETHOVEN **Grosse Fuge in B-flat major, Op. 133 (1825–26)**

Overtura

Fuga: Allegro—Meno mosso e moderato—

Allegro molto e con brio—Meno mosso e moderato—

Allegro molto e con brio

DRUCKER, SETZER, DUTTON, WATKINS

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

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

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Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater

Adrienne Arsht Stage

## Great Performers

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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### UPCOMING GREAT PERFORMERS EVENTS:

*Sunday, December 3 at 11:00 am in the Walter Reade Theater*

**Conrad Tao**, piano

BACH: Chromatic fantasia and fugue in D minor

JASON ECKARDT: *Echoes' White Veil*

RACHMANINOFF: Étude-tableau in A minor

BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major

*Wednesday, December 6 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall*

**Bach Collegium Japan**

**Masaaki Suzuki**, conductor

**Sherezade Panthaki**, soprano

**Jay Carter**, countertenor

**Zachary Wilder**, tenor

**Dominik Wörner**, bass

BACH: Four Cantatas from *Weihnachts-Oratorium* ("Christmas Oratorio")

*Pre-concert lecture by Michael Marissen at 6:15 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse*

*Sunday, December 17 at 11:00 am in the Walter Reade Theater*

**Calmus**

*Christmas Carols Around the World*

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit [LCGreatPerformers.org](http://LCGreatPerformers.org). Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a Great Performers brochure.

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*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 figure importantly in the history of the string quartet. Each composer used the quartet genre as a vehicle for arresting musical invention, and each produced his most profound music in this medium near the end of his life.

Beethoven published his first string quartets, a group of six pieces collected as his Op. 18, in 1801. In the ensuing decade, he brought forth the imposing three “Razumovsky” Quartets; 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 nothing in the string quartet genre. He returned to it late in 1824, and from then until the end of 1826, he composed five quartets, each comprising several movements, as well as a single-movement work, the *Grosse Fuge*, which was originally conceived as the finale to the Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130. These were his last compositions of any importance. Individually and as a group they are exceptional works—monumental in scale, highly original in their consideration of form, harmony, and thematic treatment, and seeming to convey such an intensely subjective world of thought and feeling that many writers have attributed to them an indefinable mystic significance.

Shostakovich’s late quartets also intimate a unique interior realm. During the last decade of his life, the composer’s poor health and the passing of friends, colleagues, and family members forced Shostakovich to confront the fact of mortality. The idea of death haunts a number of his late works, including his Quartet in B-flat minor, Op. 138.

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## Timeframe

### ARTS

**1825–26**

**Beethoven’s Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, and *Grosse Fuge***

James Fenimore Cooper publishes his historical novel *The Last of the Mohicans*.

**1970**

**Shostakovich’s Quartet No. 13 in B-flat minor, Op. 138**

The Beatles release their final album, *Let it Be*.

### SCIENCE

**1825–26**

Construction of the Erie Canal is completed, linking the Great Lakes and New York City.

**1970**

Launch of the Apollo 13 space mission

### IN NEW YORK

**1825–26**

The Bowery Theater opens on Canal and Hester streets, an early competitor to Broadway.

**1970**

The first New York City Marathon is held in Central Park.

By Paul Schiavo

**String Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130 (1825–26)**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany*

*Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna*

*Approximate length: 36 minutes*

Beethoven began writing his Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, in August 1825 and finished it the following January. The composition elicited a mixed reaction when it was first performed in Vienna on March 21, 1826. Most of the music was favorably received; indeed, two of the movements—the *Presto* and *Alla danza Tedesca*—had to be encored. But the conclusion, an imposing work featuring extended contrapuntal passages and a challenging tonal idiom, troubled many listeners, so much so that Beethoven was persuaded to replace it with a new finale. The composer later published the original movement as an independent piece under the title *Grosse Fuge*, or “Great Fugue.”

The quartet unfolds in six movements. The first begins with a slow introduction, still in progress when the faster main body of the movement begins; Beethoven recalls the music of the introduction briefly during the *Allegro*. The two sections of the movement—the introduction and the main *Allegro*—thus interpenetrate each other rather than follow in a purely linear succession.

The four inner movements are alternately fast and slow in tempo. Beethoven’s designation of the second slow movement as a “Cavatina” suggests its song-like character, though not the depth of feeling it conveys. The composer reportedly stated that no music he had written moved him so deeply.

The quartet’s finale is entirely unlike the one it was written to replace. Whereas the *Grosse Fuge* is weighty, densely textured, and severe in tone, the new movement is relatively light and airy, its thematic ideas and the developments that flow from them—straightforward and accessible. Nothing here hints of Beethoven’s former anguish, deep meditations, or heroic struggles with fate, and it is not difficult to believe that the composer, having transcended the well-known trials of his life, had attained that “second naiveté” that some philosophers consider the ultimate goal of human existence.

**String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat minor, Op. 138 (1970)**

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH

*Born September 25, 1906, in St. Petersburg*

*Died August 9, 1975, in Moscow*

*Approximate length: 20 minutes*

Shostakovich composed the 13th of his 15 string quartets in the summer of 1970. Although he still had five years before him, death was evidently much in his thoughts at this time. His health, never robust, had begun to decline alarmingly. Already he had suffered an acute heart attack (a second would follow in 1971), and he had been diagnosed with poliomyelitis, which crippled his right hand. Were this not enough, a number of his friends and colleagues were failing in health or already departed.

All of this colored Shostakovich's creative output. A year earlier, in 1969, he wrote his Symphony No. 14, structured as a cycle of orchestral songs on poems whose common theme was mortality. He then composed music for a film version of *King Lear*, a drama explicitly concerned with death—his music being suitably grim, mournful, and broken. The new string quartet, a composition in the dark key of B-flat minor, extended the composer's meditation on death.

Shostakovich cast this new work as a single, long movement in three broad sections framed by passages for the viola alone. The thematically connected outer panels bring slow, lyrical, and mournful music. Between them comes a *Totentanze*, a dance of death replete with nervous sonic twitches, brittle plucking, hushed tremolos, and percussive tapping, alongside fully bowed lamentations, sometimes moving at different speeds, that all combine in a surreal and at times frightful collage. A varied reprise of the opening section concludes with another long passage for the viola.

**Grosse Fuge in B-flat major, Op. 133 (1825–26)**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany*

*Died March 26, 1827, in Vienna*

*Approximate length: 15 minutes*

In connection with his String Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, Beethoven initially conceived the work we know as the *Grosse Fuge* as that quartet's finale. He agreed to replace it with a lighter movement on the condition that the original finale be issued as an independent composition.

The work we hear this evening provides considerably more than the "Great Fugue" of its title. It begins with what Beethoven labels an "Overtura," 30 measures of prelude that present a single thematic idea in several rhythmic

forms. Beethoven soon begins to treat this nascent theme in echoic counterpoint, adding a vigorous second idea as a counter-subject, and developing theme and counter-theme together in a complex double fugue. Eventually, the strict contrapuntal treatment gives way to other developments of startlingly diverse character: a euphonious cantabile episode, scherzando passages that might sound trite in a less elevated context, another large fugal section, and more. Such extraordinary juxtaposing of fugal counterpoint with very different sorts of musical invention explains, and is explained by, Beethoven's famous heading of the *Grosse Fuge* score: "*Tantôt libre, tantôt recherchée*"—"Sometimes free, sometimes rigorous."

No work of Beethoven's has provoked such controversy. The composer's contemporaries were hardly alone in rejecting the *Grosse Fuge* finale. Since their day, many have concurred with their disapproval, including the composer and analyst Daniel Gregory Mason who branded it "long, complicated, and through many hearings repellent if not unintelligible." Others, however, regard the "Great Fugue" as the summit of Beethoven's thought, and it seems proper to give the last word to one of these admirers. For Igor Stravinsky, Beethoven's work was "this absolutely contemporary piece of music that will remain contemporary forever...I love it beyond any other."

*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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LISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO

## Emerson String Quartet

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' 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.

## **Lincoln Center's Great Performers**

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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.**

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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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