

# Lincoln Center's 2018/19 GREAT PERFORMERS

The Program

**Sunday, February 3, 2019 at 11:00 am**

*Sunday Morning Coffee Concerts*

## Van Kuijk Quartet

Nicolas Van Kuijk, *Violin*

Sylvain Favre-Bulle, *Violin*

Emmanuel François, *Viola*

François Robin, *Cello*

SCHUBERT **String Quartet in D minor ("Death and the Maiden")  
(1824)**

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Presto

*Please join us for a cup of coffee following the performance.*

*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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Walter Reade Theater

## Great Performers

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

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Endowment support for Symphonic Masters is provided by the Leon Levy Fund

Endowment support is also provided by UBS

Nespresso is the Official Coffee of Lincoln Center

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### UPCOMING GREAT PERFORMERS EVENTS:

*Tuesday, February 12 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall*

**Accademia Bizantina**

**Giuliano Carmignola**, violin and guest conductor

MOZART: Symphony No. 10 in G major; Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major

HAYDN: Symphony No. 80 in D minor

*Wednesday, February 20 at 8:00 pm in David Geffen Hall*

**Russian National Orchestra**

**Kirill Karabits**, conductor (New York debut)

**Mikhail Pletnev**, piano

ALL-RACHMANINOFF PROGRAM

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor

Symphonic Dances

*Pre-concert lecture by Harlow Robinson at 6:45 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse*

*Sunday, February 24 at 11:00 am in the Walter Reade Theater*

**Verona Quartet**

MOZART: String Quartet in F major ("Prussian")

JANÁČEK: String Quartet No. 2 ("Intimate Letters")

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.

**Visit [LCGreatPerformers.org](http://LCGreatPerformers.org) for more information relating to this season's programs.**

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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.*

By Kathryn L. Libin

**String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D.810 (“Death and the Maiden”)  
(1824)**

FRANZ SCHUBERT

*Born January 31, 1797, in Vienna*

*Died November 19, 1828, in Vienna*

*Approximate length: 40 minutes*

Franz Schubert’s engagement with chamber music originated at home, where he played string quartets and other music with his brother, father, and friends. He received his first violin lessons from his father when he was eight years old and, according to his brother Ferdinand, began shortly thereafter to write pieces for quartet. Though he also studied with court composer Antonio Salieri, Schubert’s earliest important influences were Haydn and Mozart; after listening to a Mozart quintet, Schubert wrote, “O Mozart, immortal Mozart, how endlessly many comforting perceptions of a brighter and better life hast thou brought to our souls!”

Such solace would prove particularly valuable during later periods of tribulation. Two of Schubert’s most famous quartets, in A minor and D minor, date from the early spring of 1824, when Schubert decided to devote himself, for the first time in three years, to writing chamber music. At this time he was in poor health, having been diagnosed with syphilis; he suffered from pain in his bones, and had lost the ability to sing or even to play the piano. Writing in his diary, he reflected, “Pain sharpens the understanding and strengthens the mind; whereas joy seldom troubles about the former and softens the latter or makes it frivolous.”

Schubert’s creativity was also stimulated by poetry, which he voraciously read and interpreted in song. He ultimately completed over 600 songs, setting poems by over 150 poets. In February 1817, Schubert selected a brief, dramatic poem by the journalist and poet Matthias Claudius (1740–1815), titled *Der Tod und das Mädchen* (“Death and the Maiden”). It addresses youthful terror of death, and embraces the notion of death as a comforting friend rather than an enemy. Each protagonist speaks directly to the other in clear, vivid language:

*Das Mädchen:*

Vorüber! ach, vorüber!  
Geh, wilder Knochenmann!  
Ich bin noch jung, geh Lieber!  
Und rühre mich nicht an.

*The Girl:*

It’s all over! alas, it’s all over!  
Go, savage man of bone!  
I am still young—go, devoted one!  
And do not molest me.

*Der Tod:*

Gib deine Hand, du schön und zart  
Gebild!

*Death:*

Give me your hand, you fair and  
tender form!

<p>Bin Freund, und komme nicht zu strafen. Sei gutes Muts! Ich bin nicht wild, Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen.</p>	<p>I'm a friend, and do not come to punish. Be of good cheer! I am not savage. You shall sleep gently in my arms.</p>
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In his song Schubert underscores the girl's fear with short, breathless phrases, a sharply rising line, and unstable harmonies with dissonant chords. For Death, in contrast, he adopts a slow and declamatory style that unfolds in calm, measured rhythms with simple harmonies. Death renders his speech in a deliberate tone that is designed to soothe the fearful child.

Seven years later, anxious and ill, Schubert expressed despair at his condition by quoting one of his own songs (the 1814 "Gretchen am Spinnrade"), saying "My peace is gone, my heart is sore, I shall find it never more, I might as well sing every day now..." As always he buried himself in work, completing two quartets that both make internal reference to earlier songs. The string quartet in D minor, completed in March 1824, reaches back to the song *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, borrowing its tragic D-minor key and embedding the song in the slow movement at the heart of the work. When the quartet was first played, within the private circle of friends that surrounded Schubert, they would have immediately recognized the song and realized that the composer was revealing his own mortal terror in this extraordinary union of musical and poetic mediums.

The *Allegro* opens on a fierce, fortissimo unison D, and introduces the relentless triplet rhythm that will pervade the rest of the movement. After a brief, soft choral introduction, the quartet launches into a long crescendo with a frantically rising line that recalls the girl's anguished vocal line in the song. Indeed, this first movement largely mirrors the anxious expression that characterized the girl's music; even the F-major secondary theme offers no repose but retains the relentless triplet motion and brings in a new melodic idea that will soon be re-interpreted as cries of desperation. Throughout the movement the sharp accents, jagged leaps, extreme dynamic contrasts, harsh dissonances, and propulsive rhythms create a profoundly disquieting impression.

With the *Andante con moto* we enter the world of Schubert's earlier song. The first eight bars present the song's original piano introduction (now transposed to G minor), foreshadowing Death's utterance with its calm surface and stately, dactylic rhythms. Schubert inserts a new continuation of this section during the next eight bars, and concludes with a direct quote from Death's music: "Sei gutes Muts! Ich bin nicht wild, sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen." On this substantial 24-bar theme Schubert now builds a series of variations that once again recreates the terror of the girl—the first violin line in the opening variation, for example, borrows her breathless phrasing—and also offers a dazzling exploration of quartet textures. Though the first violin is a dominant force throughout, all the instruments play important roles, with the robust tenor range of the cello sounding with special potency. In the coda we

once again hear Death's hushed phrase, followed this time by the song's epilogue, which moves with unexpected tenderness into a major key, apparently hinting that trust in Death's words would not be misplaced.

The D-minor *Scherzo* features rhythmic complexities, with many syncopations and strong off-beat accents carried out at a swift tempo. The contrasting D-major *Trio* is the one point in the quartet where the dark urgency relents, and softness prevails; the return of the *Scherzo*, however, banishes that tranquility. The finale is swifter still, with many repeated notes in 6/8 rhythms that evoke the tarantella, an old Italian folk dance of frenetic energy. For some listeners, the galloping rhythms are reminiscent of the ominous night ride in Schubert's 1815 song *Erlkönig*, in which a father hastens home with a dying child in his arms. In the song, tragedy strikes at the end. In this final movement of Schubert's most dramatic quartet, the relentless urgency only intensifies with the *Prestissimo* coda; though the powerful ending is a relief, there is no doubt that it is also tragic.

*Musicologist Kathryn L. Libin teaches music history and theory at Vassar College.*

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NIKOLAJ LUND

## Van Kuijk Quartet

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The Van Kuijk Quartet's international accolades include First Prize and Best Beethoven and Haydn Performances at the 2015 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet competition, as well as First Prize and an Audience Award at the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition. The quartet's members were BBC New Generation Artists from 2015 to 2017, joined the prestigious ECHO Rising Stars roster for the 2017–18 season, and are laureates of the Aix-en-Provence Festival Academy.

The Van Kuijk Quartet has performed at such major venues as Wigmore Hall (London), the Philharmonie, Louvre, Théâtre des Champs Élysées, and Salle Gaveau (Paris), Tonhalle (Zurich), Konzerthaus and Musikverein (Vienna), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Philharmonie (Berlin, Cologne), Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), Konserthuset (Stockholm), on the Tivoli Concert Series in Denmark, and at festivals including the BBC Proms, Cheltenham, Heidelberg, Lockenhaus, Davos, Verbier, Aix-en-Provence, Montpellier/Radio France, Stavanger (Norway), Concentus Moraviae (Czech Republic), Haydn/Esterházy in Fertod (Hungary), and Eilat (Israel). The quartet tours each season to North America, appearing at the Frick Collection, Phillips Collection (Washington D.C.), and Salle Bourgie (Montreal), among others, and makes its Lincoln Center debut with today's performance. This season the quartet also returns to Australia and Taiwan, and makes its first tours of Japan and China.

The Van Kuijk Quartet records exclusively for Alpha Classics. Its debut recording, *Mozart*, was released to outstanding acclaim and was followed by a CD of French music. In October the quartet released a highly anticipated disc of Schubert's Quartets Nos. 10 and 14 ("Death and the Maiden"). The ensemble was resident at ProQuartet, Paris, where it studied with members of the Alban Berg, Artemis, and Hagen quartets. Having been early students of the Ysaée Quartet, the young musicians have also worked with Günter Pichler at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía

in Madrid. The Van Kuijk Quartet is supported by Pirastro and SPEDIDAM, and is grateful to Mécénat Musical Société Générale for its sponsorship.

## **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 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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[www.allianceartistmanagement.com](http://www.allianceartistmanagement.com)