

CHAMBERFEST

MIRÓ QUARTET



JOSEPH HAYDN (1732 – 1809)

String Quartet No. 56 in E-flat major, Hob. III:71, Op. 71, no. 3

When Haydn's longtime patron, Nikolaus Esterházy, died, the London-based impresario Salomon whisked away the esteemed composer. Alongside symphonies, Salomon's famous public concerts featured string quartets, a novelty that may explain Haydn's adoption of symphonic gestures in his next series of quartets. Op. 71, No. 3 opens with one such shot across the bow: "Quiet down and pay attention!" The extroverted style delighted Londoners, to which one review attests: "the new quartetto gave pleasure by its variety, gaiety, and the fascination of its melody and harmony".

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841 – 1904)

String Quartet No. 9 in D minor, Op. 34

Brahms became acquainted with Dvořák's music while serving on a Viennese jury that selected young, poor and talented composers for state awards. "The best qualities a musician needs,

Dvořák has them all," he remarked, singling out two of the young Czech's quartets, including Op. 34. The admiration was mutual: to Brahms, Dvořák dedicated this sumptuous work. Like the Haydn, its moods range widely, from mystery and melancholy in the first movement to affability in the Alla polka second.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 – 1827)

String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 131
Beethoven sent Op. 131 to his publisher with a note that read, jokingly, "patched together from stolen bits of this and that". The jest contains a grain of truth: the quartet pushes the ear to the limit of comprehension via "whimsical fragmentation and hide-and-seek", as an early reviewer noted. Yet the music coheres because Beethoven takes great pains to connect the bits. Standouts among its seven movements include the contemplative, opening fugue and the expansive slow movement whose theme Wagner called "the incarnation of innocence".