

PCMS Preview Notes

Miró Quartet: Sunday, March 28, 2010 – 3:00 PM
American Philosophical Society

Background

The Miró Quartet is named for the Catalan artist Joan Miró. In 2005 they became the first ensemble to be awarded the coveted Avery Fisher Career Grant, and they received the Cleveland Quartet Award that year as well. Also bringing the Miró great acclaim are their series of Beethoven recordings, renditions of which PCMS audiences were treated to in a two-part all-Beethoven concert at the Philosophical Society in 2006.

All-Beethoven Program

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770 in Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827 in Vienna, Austria

Quartet in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4

Composed: 1798–1800

Last PCMS performance: Tokyo Quartet in 2006

Duration: 24 minutes

The only quartet from Beethoven's Opus 18 set to be cast in a minor key, this was also, despite its number, the last of the six to be completed. C Minor would come to be a key Beethoven reserved for highly dramatic works, including most famously the Fifth Symphony.

Quartet in F Major, Op. 135

Composed: 1826

Last PCMS performance: Ysaye Quartet in 2007

Duration: 25 minutes

Beethoven's final quartet is surprisingly small-scaled, finding inspiration in the quartets of his one-time teacher Haydn. Beethoven wrote the bulk of it in a two-month burst of activity amid health problems and shortly after his nephew's attempted suicide. There's not a hint of self-pity or anguish, however, in this compact, good-natured work.

Quartet in E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2

Composed: 1806

Last PCMS performance: Takács Quartet in 2010

Duration: 37 minutes

One of the three "Rasumovsky" quartets, this piece was dedicated to Count Andreas Kirillovich Rasumovsky (1752-1836), the Russian Ambassador in Vienna who commissioned it and was one of Beethoven's principal supporters.