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PREVIEW
NOTES

Ysaÿe Quartet

Tuesday, March 1 • 8:00 PM — *American Philosophical Society*

Background

The Ysaÿe Quartet was formed in 1984 while the members were still students at the Paris Conservatoire. The quartet is named after the violinist, quartet-player and composer Eugene Ysaÿe (1858-1931) who was a powerful influence on the musical world of his day. In 1988 the group gained international recognition by being the first French quartet to win the Grand Prix at the Evian International Competition. The Ysaÿe's discography includes recordings of works by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Ravel and Fauré. They currently teach at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Paris.

Program

Quartet in G Major, K. 387

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born: Jan. 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria

Died: Dec. 5, 1791 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1782

Last PCMS performance: Tokyo Quartet in 2007

Duration: 30 minutes

The first of Mozart's six "Haydn" quartets, this G Major work subtitled "Spring" may divulge a few characteristics of the older master's style, but would in the end influence Haydn in his subsequent quartets. The opening movement features fairly intricate instrumental writing and a complex development section; yet the music is easy for the listener to grasp.

Quartet in E Minor, Op. 121

Gabriel Fauré

Born: May 12, 1845 in Pamiers, France

Died: Nov. 4, 1924 in Paris, France

Composed: 1923-24

Last PCMS performance: Ysaÿe Quartet in 2009

Duration: 25 minutes

Fauré labored over this quartet in his final years and died before its premiere. The intimate first theme suggests a muted *de profundis clamavi* and the second an aspiring prayer. Likewise the themes of the Andante are polyphonically wrought to a quietly intense contemplation that radiates tenderness, and the rondo finale casts a wry yet compassionate eye on life.

Quartet in C Minor, Op. 51, No. 1

Johannes Brahms

Born: May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany

Died: Apr. 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1865-73

Last PCMS performance: Leipzig Quartet in 2008

Duration: 32 minutes

This quartet represents the clearest, most pervasive example of Brahms's "developing variation" technique in which an entire work was generated from a single motive or group of motives. This quartet is so pervaded by the motives of the first movement that it can be considered cyclic (a multi-movement work that uses recurring passages or themes throughout). The close tonal relationships and integrated key structure of the four movements add to the overall coherence.