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PREVIEW
NOTES

Belcea Quartet

Wednesday, March 30 • 8:00 PM — *Perelman Theater*

Background

The London-based Belcea Quartet has gained a reputation as one of the leading quartets of the new generation. Established at the Royal College of Music in 1994, they were resident quartet at Wigmore Hall from 2001-06 and today are Associate Ensemble at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and Quartet in Residence at the Atheneum Concert Hall in Bucharest. Their recordings include a double disc of Britten's quartets and the complete Bartók quartets.

Program

Quartet in G Major, Op. 77, No. 1

Franz Joseph Haydn

Born: Mar. 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Austria

Died: May 31, 1809, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1799

Last PCMS performance: Johannes Quartet in 2001

Duration: 23 minutes

Op. 77, No. 1, one of Haydn's last quartets, begins with a pastoral burst of delighted energy and concludes with a presto finale that allows the listener's spirit to soar. It is a testament to the sublime capabilities existing inside individuals, and that certainly existed inside the aging Haydn.

Twisted Blues with Twisted Ballad

Mark-Anthony Turnage

Born: Jun. 10, 1960 in Grays, Essex, U.K.

Composed: 2008

Last PCMS performance: Philadelphia Premiere

Duration: 21 minutes

British composer Mark-Anthony Turnage is known for his skillful blending of classical and jazz idioms. The Belcea gave the world premiere performance of this quartet at Wigmore Hall followed by concerts at the Cologne Philharmonie, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and Vienna Konzerthaus.

Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130

w/ Grosse Fugue, Op. 133

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: Dec. 16, 1770 in Bonn, Germany

Died: Mar. 26, 1827 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1825-26

Last PCMS performance: Guarneri Quartet in 2007

Duration: 45 minutes

This piece is among Beethoven's final works and is the last of the three quartets he composed to meet the commission of Prince Nikolai Golitzin. Its original finale was replaced by a new one finished in late 1826—said to be Beethoven's last completed composition. Beethoven agreed to replace the original, the so-called Grosse Fugue, Op. 133, at the behest of his publisher, as it proved quite difficult for the performers and audience who heard it at its premiere. Beethoven probably recognized that the Grosse Fugue was a rather outsized piece, too grand to serve as the finale for this quartet, a great piece in its own right but a work whose character in the preceding five movements is less epic-sounding.