

# PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW  
NOTES

Vera Quartet  
Roberto Diaz, *viola*  
Thursday, December 12 – 7:30 PM  
*American Philosophical Society*

## **PROGRAM**

**Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 33, No. 2, *Joke***

**Joseph Haydn**

*Born: March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Austria*

*Died: May 31, 1809, in Vienna, Austria*

*Composed: 1781*

*Duration: 18 minutes*

The joke of the quartet's title doesn't come until the last movement. The Presto, a rondo finale, is based entirely on a quick, silly little repeated-note tune of four giddy two-bar clauses. After a couple of variations, the music pulls up short for a brief, bleak Adagio passage, whereupon the inane theme starts up again. But now in the coda—here comes the joke—the tune is split into its four tiny components, with a two-bar rest after each one. And just when the melody seems finally to have spurted its final section, Haydn inserts a four-measure rest, suggesting that the work is over, but then has the quartet blurt out the tune's first clause again—taking the audience by surprise, and leaving the movement hanging in mid-air with an unfinished phrase.

**Quartet (*World Premiere/PCMS Commission*)**

**Richard Brodhead**

*Born: April 17, 1947, in Dayton, Ohio*

*Composed: 2019*

*Duration: 25 Minutes*

“I began composing my String Quartet No. 2 during the fall of 2018 and completed it the following June. Commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, it is dedicated to the Society and to the memory of my beloved father-in-law Albert Meglin, who passed away during the time of its composition. The piece is cast in three movements. At the center is a fast, energetic Rondo alla commedia, which juxtaposes the actions of three musical “characters”:

agitated, lyrical, and childish martial. Two slow and expressive movements frame the longer rondo: the opening Prologue presents material heard in different guises throughout the work, and has a searching, questioning quality; the concluding Song of Farewell, which follows without pause from the rondo, is a lament, often hymn-like in its simplicity, that ends with a return to the questions of the first movement. I am deeply grateful to PCMS for commissioning this work, and to the Vera Quartet for the extraordinary artistry they have devoted to its preparation and premiere. Thank you for bringing this music to life!”

- Richard Brodhead

**String Quintet in B-flat Major, Op. 87**

**Felix Mendelssohn**

*Born: February 3, 1809 in Hamburg, Germany*

*Died: November 4, 1847 Leipzig, Germany*

*Composed: 1845*

*Duration: 30 minutes*

Often compared to the composer's extraordinary Octet, Op. 20 (1825), the work of a 16-year-old genius, Felix Mendelssohn's String Quintet No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 87 (1845) indeed shares many characteristics with the earlier work, though the two are separated by nearly two decades. As in the Octet, the first movement of the Second Quintet opens with a rising triadic theme. Likewise, much of the emotional content of this movement is disarmingly exuberant.