

# PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW  
NOTES

**Belcea Quartet**

**Tuesday, March 17 – 7:30 pm**

*Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center*

## **PROGRAM**

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

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

*Born: December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Electorate of Cologne*

*Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria*

*Composed: 1798-1800*

*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. Before this quartet, though, he'd used C minor without any special sense of tragedy; now, for the first time, he invests his C minor music with a special emotional depth, particularly in the sonata form *Allegro ma non tanto*.

**Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 74, Harp**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

*Composed: 1809*

*Duration: 22 minutes*

On account of the special pizzicato (plucked) notes in the first movement, this work received the nickname Harp Quartet relatively soon after it was written. The allusion to that romantic instrument is in keeping with the entire quartet, which is one of the most emotional Beethoven ever composed. The work dates from the summer and fall of 1809, when Beethoven was madly in love with Therese Malfatti, to whom he would soon propose marriage, only to be turned down. Haydn had died earlier that year, a few weeks after Napoleon's troops invaded Vienna. These were turbulent times indeed, even if Beethoven had just entered a lucrative agreement with the Archduke Rudolph and the Princes Kinsky and Lobkowitz, in terms of which he would receive from them an annual sum that would guarantee him a comfortable life for the next few years. The quartet was dedicated in gratitude to Lobkowitz, who had received the dedication of the Op. 18 quartets a decade earlier.

**Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

*Composed: 1806*

*Duration: 40 minutes*

Beethoven wrote three quartets in 1806 and dedicated them to Russian nobleman Count Rasumovsky. This F major effort is generally regarded as the greatest of the set, as well as one of the composer's finest chamber works. A lot has been made of the fact that it was one of the compositions that heralded his second period. The "Eroica" Symphony, coming slightly earlier, is generally viewed as the starting point. All three quartets are lengthy works and considerably difficult to execute. That they were all written in a six-month period beginning in April 1806 divulges the speed and mastery Beethoven possessed. The String Quartet No. 7 was first performed in February 1807, and published in Vienna the following year.