

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Jaime Laredo, *violin*; Nokuthula Ngwenyama, *viola*;

Sharon Robinson, *cello*; Anna Polonsky, *piano*

Friday, May 12 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM

Piano Quartet in G Minor, K. 478

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

***Born:* January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria**

***Died:* December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria**

***Composed:* 1785**

***Duration:* 30 minutes**

This quartet “furnishes conclusive proof, more than any other single masterpiece of his,” wrote Hans Keller, “that Mozart’s was the only omniscient ear of which we know.” Einstein called the G Minor tonality in which the quartet is cast the composer’s “key of fate.” So profligate is Mozart’s melodic invention in the thematically rich closing Rondo that he borrowed one of its themes for the principal subject of his K. 485 piano rondo, composed three months later.

Elegy

Nokuthula Ngwenyama

***Born:* 1976, Los Angeles, CA**

***Composed:* 2022**

***Duration:* 12 minutes**

Elegy was composed in response to the tragic events of spring 2020, including the killing of George Floyd. It mourns the souls lost to systemic racism. Rather than suffering in unsatisfying despair, it aims to honor human triumph through recognition of our painful history while commemorating how far we have come in this collective societal struggle.

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 87

Antonín Dvořák

***Born:* September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Czechia**

***Died:* May 1, 1904, Prague, Czechia**

***Composed:* 1889**

***Duration:* 36 minutes**

From the first bold statement of the strings in octaves to the rousing final notes, this work is filled with the joy, excitement, depth of feeling, and distinctive character that can only be attributed to Dvořák. Big, rich, and powerful, it spans a traditional four-movement plan. The first movement is a grand sonata form movement that features both the composer's penchant for long, lyrical themes as well as a somewhat uncharacteristic emphasis on a small motive that saturates the texture in a very Viennese classical style. The slow movement is a deep song of tremendous beauty that combines grace, color, and passionate emotional outpouring. There are three primary themes: the first is tender and poised, the second explosive and unbridled, and the third sparkles with a pleasant charm. A scherzo follows, but its features are not quite typical. The super-charged finale recalls the bold unison lines of the first movement, and it appears that Dvořák will conclude with a characteristically upbeat rondo, but the movement is actually another sonata form contrasting the boisterous opening material with something soft, lyrical, and golden. Dvořák concludes with a nearly orchestral sonic might and a definitive exuberance equally matching that of either Brahms or Schumann.