

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

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PREVIEW
NOTES

Jerusalem Quartet

Alexander Pavlovsky, *violin* • Sergei Bresler, *violin* • Ori Kam, *viola* • Kyril Zlotnikov, *cello*

Monday, October 17 –7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM

String Quartet No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 44, No. 2

Felix Mendelssohn

Born: February 3, 1809, Hamburg

Died: November 4, 1847, Leipzig

Composed: 1837

Duration: 26 minutes

Mendelssohn started work on this quartet in the spring of 1837 while on honeymoon, with his young French bride Cécile. The first movement opens with syncopated quarter notes pushing forward, and an optimistically rising theme on the first violin. Soon an even more energetic figure appears – unison sixteenth notes in all four instruments, which are subsequently fragmented and tossed between the players. Some repose comes with a tender theme from the first violin: Mendelssohn develops and combines these contrasting ideas. The *Scherzo* is heir to the light, staccato, tripping scherzo writing of his Octet and *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture. The *Andante* also moves onward with two bars of fluid, pulsing sixteenth notes from the second violin which stretch and open to welcome the first violin's beautiful song. The last movement opens with a restless figure in the minor key; relentlessly energetic eighth notes carry us along until we reach this expansive theme in the major: The eighth notes are persuaded to go into the major for a while too, but return to the minor and power on tirelessly to a triumphant conclusion.

Langsamer Satz

Anton Webern

Born: December 3, 1883, Vienna

Died: September 15, 1945, Mittersill

Composed: 1905

Duration: 10 minutes

Known best as a prominent member of the Second Viennese School, this early work offers a rare glimpse of another side of Webern—the unabashed romanticism exhibited here contrasts with a later style characterized by an extreme

restraint and spare, austere textures, as well as strict adherence to the techniques of the twelve-tone system. Having recently returned from a tour of the Austrian countryside with the woman he would eventually marry, his outlook as he began his first string quartet was rosy. The piece opens in a rich, romantic tone, and as a darker element is introduced in the middle section each individual instrument's pleading voice is answered by sympathetic and comforting commentary from the rest of the group, resolving finally into a peaceful and almost ecstatic close.

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 11

Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Born: May 7, 1840, Kamsko-Votinsk

Died: November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg

Composed: 1871

Duration: 32 minutes

Tchaikovsky's First Quartet was written with the most pragmatic of intentions: to make money. Remarkably, the Quartet was written on the fly just weeks before the concert. The first movement, *Moderato e semplice*, places the gently rocking first theme in a dignified classical setting, with rich harmonies and intense counterpoint that celebrate the sense of unity found in the string quartet sound. The second movement takes its first theme from a Ukrainian folk song; the movement was an immediate hit and has since become renowned as one of music's sentimental, romantic favorites. The jaunty syncopated theme and dark, minor-key flavor of the *Scherzo* movement make it alternately mysterious and festive, while the masculine, forthright sonata-rondo *Finale* contains the lyricism, simple harmonies, and syncopated rhythms that characterize the entire work.