

# PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW  
NOTES

## Aizuri Quartet

Emma Frucht, *violin*; Miho Saegusa, *violin*; Brian Hong, *viola*; Caleb van der Swaagh, *cello*

Sunday, March 24 – 3 PM

*Benjamin Franklin Hall, American Philosophical Society*

### PROGRAM

#### ***Fantasia (Bihag) from Ragamala***

**Reena Esmail**

***Born:*** 1983, Chicago, IL

***Composed:*** 2013

***Duration:*** 14 minutes

Fantasia is the first movement from Esmail's string quartet *Ragamala*. The Fantasia is inspired by the beautiful raag Bihag which layers phrases over one another to create large shapes separated by the silence of pure drones.

#### **Capriccio from Quartet, Op. 81**

**Felix Mendelssohn**

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

***Died:*** November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

***Composed:*** 1843

***Duration:*** 7 minutes

The first movement of the Capriccio starts with a barcarolle sung by the first violin. This section is punctuated by a recitative, possibly hearkening back to Mendelssohn's use of this operatic device in his first two string quartets. He then launches into a fugue in the style of J.S. Bach, paying homage to the composer who re-appeared in European musical consciousness due in no small part to Mendelssohn's staging of the St. Matthew Passion. The set of pieces is then rounded out by a Fugue in E-flat Major.

#### ***Lyre of Orpheus***

**Shulamit Ran**

***Born:*** 1949, Tel Aviv, Israel

***Composed:*** 2008

***Duration:*** 15 minutes

Shulamit Ran was commissioned as one of six different composers to contribute to a collection of six new string

sextets, each of which features a different instrument in the ensemble. Ran's writing highlights one of the cellists. The cello leads the "intermittently songful, caressing, passionate, pained, ferocious, and longing" composition, which Ran identified with Orpheus and Eurydice only after having completed the piece. Starting with open sounds, almost like the sound of tuning, the cello's line soars over the rest of the voices to press onward through sounds both airy, like the chirping of birds, and subterranean, like the crunch of Orpheus' footsteps as he descends in vain to reclaim the love of his life in a place of death.

#### **Sextet from Capriccio, Op. 85**

**Richard Strauss**

***Born:*** June 11, 1864, Munich, Germany

***Died:*** Sept. 8, 1949, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

***Composed:*** 1941

***Duration:*** 10 minutes

*Capriccio* is Strauss's final opera; its theme can be summarized as "Which is the greater art, poetry or music?" This question is dramatized in the story of a countess torn between two suitors: Olivier, a poet, and Flamand, a composer. At the Countess's château, a rehearsal of Flamand's newly composed sextet is in progress. This sextet is played in concert form as a piece of chamber music and is the work we will hear this afternoon.

#### ***Die stille Lotosblume from Sechs Lieder, Op. 13, No. 6***

**Clara Schumann**

***Born:*** Sept. 13, 1819, Leipzig, Germany

***Died:*** May 20, 1896, Frankfurt, Germany

***Composed:*** 1842

***Duration:*** 4 minutes

Clara Schumann's "Die stille Lotosblume" explores themes of beauty, purity, spirituality, and the interplay between

different elements of nature, inviting contemplation about the connection between the human experience and the natural world.

**Quartet in E-flat Major**

**Fanny Mendelssohn**

***Born:** November 14, 1805, Hamburg, Germany*

***Died:** May 14, 1847, Berlin, Germany*

***Composed:** 1834*

***Duration:** 20 minutes*

Fanny Mendelssohn's quartet is based on an unfinished piano sonata she wrote five years before. This extraordinary, rhapsodic work is her only mature string quartet, and, among those currently known to us, is one of the first surviving string quartets written by a woman. Mendelssohn herself reflected wonderingly how she, 'not an eccentric or overly sentimental person', had come to write such music; for her this arose from having encountered the 'exceedingly moving and emotional' style of Beethoven when she was a child.