

Julie Himmelstrup Music in the Park Series

Ariel Quartet
with Orion Weiss, *piano*

Sunday, October 1, 2023

Saint Anthony Park UCC

Welcome to the new Schubert Club season!



We are delighted to have the opportunity to experience glorious music and outstanding artistry with you this Fall. In the month of October alone, we are excited to welcome extraordinary guest artists like pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet who returns to the Ordway stage with Lisa Batiashvili and Gautier Capuçon with a program of piano trios by Haydn, Ravel and Mendelssohn. The Ariel Quartet opens Music in the Park Series, with Orion Weiss joining them to play the Shostakovich Piano Quintet; the ever-popular ensemble Accordo play string quartets by Dvorak and Shostakovich together with a Bach Sonata for Keyboard and Violin; and we welcome British a cappella

choir Stile Antico to perform a program of music by William Byrd at Landmark Center to open the 23–24 Schubert Club Mix series.

If you didn't hear our news already, students and young people ages 6-17 may attend any Schubert Club concert free this year. If you know students or parents or grandparents who might be interested, please help spread the word! In addition, we are launching a new club specifically for students, Connections. Connections will offer opportunities for students to gather with peers, and to discover and celebrate music together. There's a sign-up page on our website.

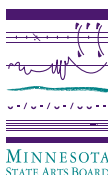


One other change for this season. Following David Evan Thomas's retirement from giving live pre-concert talks in the Ordway prior to International Artist Series performances, we are introducing "IAS Concert Insights," short pre-recorded video presentations sharing program insights compiled by our friend Mark Bilyeu. These will be available to watch online one week before each International Artist Series performance. Note that pre-concert conversations at Music in the Park Series concerts hosted by Barry Kempton, remain live events at 3:00pm on concert days.

Barry Kempton
Artistic & Executive Director



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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund, and a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota.

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Sunday, October 1, 2023, 4:00 PM

Saint Anthony Park United Church of Christ

Pre-concert conversation one hour before the performance

ARIEL QUARTET WITH ORION WEISS, PIANO

Gershon Gerchikov, violin • Alexandra Kazovsky, violin
Jan Grüning, viola • Amit Even-Tov, cello

*American Dream: Unannounced works and movements
by Walker, Porat, Bartók, Price and others*

“We chose to leave the first half of the program unannounced as a metaphor for how we aspire to see others and be seen – freed from prior judgment and labels, simply experienced for who we are and what we can share with others.”

- Ariel Quartet

Intermission

Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 (1940)

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Prelude: Lento

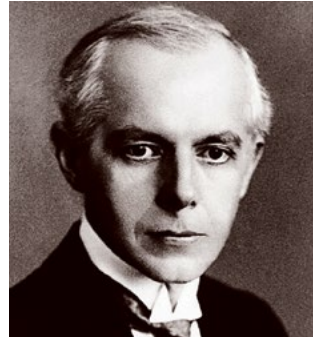
Fugue: Adagio

Scherzo: Allegretto

Intermezzo: Lento

Finale: Allegretto

PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES



From left: Matan Porat, Florence Price, Béla Bartók, George Walker

American Dream

“Our journey in the USA is now spanning more than two decades. We came from Israel and Germany, with roots in Russia and Eastern and Western Europe, and our path in this country was transformative. Arriving here as students we recently completed the long-awaited transition from being Aliens to becoming Residents.”

“The question of identity is often at the heart of the immigrant’s experience, and so was the case for generations of artists, creators, and composers who settled in this country. Their work and our connection to it have become a central point of interest to us in the last few years, and especially during and following the difficult years of the pandemic. The disproportionate devastation COVID-19 brought upon vulnerable communities, the wave of police killings of members of the Black community, the violence towards the Asian community, all made us question our openness as a society and confront our own biases and cultural blind spots.”

“This program is a result of our exploration into the musical voices that evolved as a consequence of the composers’ experiences in the United States. We’ll journey into works by Americans, visitors, and immigrants, representing different cultures and backgrounds, from various parts of the world. What they share is the pursuit of their unique version of an American Dream. It is the musical wonders we picked up on this journey that we want to share with you this evening.”

“We chose to leave the first half of the program unannounced as a metaphor for how we aspire to see others and be seen – freed from prior judgment and labels, simply experienced for who we are and what we can share with others.”

- Ariel Quartet

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† in remembrance

Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 (1940)**Dmitri Shostakovich**

(b. Saint Petersburg, 1906; d. Moscow, 1975)

When Shostakovich wrote his Piano Quintet in 1940, Nazi Germany was marching eastward through Poland and war with the Soviet Union seemed inevitable. On a personal level, Shostakovich had been denounced four years earlier, by Stalin himself over his opera *Lady Macbeth*, so the immediate success of the Piano Quintet was a great relief to him. This was reinforced a year later when the piano quintet was awarded the inaugural Stalin Prize for Composition, accompanied by a 100,000 ruble prize. This is often cited as the largest sum ever awarded for a chamber music work, yet Shostakovich promptly handed over the money for the benefit of his fellow Muscovites during the war.

As an emerging composer, Shostakovich had been hyped as the great musical hope of the young Soviet Union, the first composer trained entirely under the new Soviet system. But after the *Lady Macbeth* incident, his relationship with the government officials of the Association of Composers was often rocky. Following Stalin's denouncement and his public humiliation, Shostakovich obsessed over getting the dreaded knock on the door in the middle of the night, followed by a generous "sabbatical" at a Siberian gulag, never to be seen again. This happened to quite a few of his friends, relatives, fellow composers, and writers. As a result, he always carried a toothbrush and a bar of soap in case he was hauled off unexpectedly by the secret police.

As such, Shostakovich spent his entire professional life walking a tightrope over the shark-filled waters of the Soviet cultural authorities who were always on guard for artists who displayed "western, formalist, elitist tendencies" (whatever that means). This constant (and very real) threat exacted a terrible toll on Shostakovich, who was chronically depressed, anxious and in ill health. He spoke in a nervous and shaky voice. He slept poorly. Polio struck him as an adult and crippled his right hand, ending his days as a performing pianist.

To survive artistically, Shostakovich maintained a clever balancing act, writing earthy, populist music that could appeal to the less sophisticated listener, while hidden on the inside—at great risk to himself and his family—were statements of harsh dissent, cleverly camouflaged to fool the government censors. It only became clear after his death how much he despised the oppression of the Soviet system and the people who ran it. Shostakovich spent his entire life trying to serve two masters, without entirely selling his soul.

The Piano Quintet though, does not harbor hidden messages, but is instead refreshingly direct, and unpretentious, providing easy access for the listener. A glance at the movement titles reveals that he was experimenting with older styles, in this case the baroque era and the composer he admired most, J.S. Bach, and his keyboard preludes and fugues.

The piano opens with a proud, exclamatory theme that invites a full-throated response from the strings, ending quite unexpectedly in a glorious G major cadence. After dispensing with the solemn introductions, Shostakovich begins the Prelude proper, now in a simpler, more intimate voice.

The Fugue that follows is not the fast, virtuosic fugue one might expect, but rather, one in slow motion, as if time stands still. The entry of each new voice is like another brick in a slowly-building wall of sound, a process that generates enormous musical tension. Just as gradually, the intensity dies away, before fading away on the breeze.

The Scherzo changes moods completely, depicting a raucous village fair, with a demonic, driven energy, a movement that is often reprised as an encore. The Intermezzo functions as the work's slow movement, a poignant, often mournful tale that concludes optimistically, a perfect segue (without a pause) to the finale, that is lighthearted, even humorous at turns. Shostakovich clearly wanted to leave a smile on everyone's face.

Program note © 2023 by Michael Adams



Ariel Quartet © Marco Borggreve

ARIEL QUARTET

Distinguished by its virtuosity, probing musical insight, and impassioned, fiery performances, the Ariel Quartet has garnered critical praise worldwide for more than twenty years. Formed when the members were just teenagers studying at the Jerusalem Academy Middle School of Music and Dance in Israel, the Ariel was named a recipient of the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award, granted by Chamber Music America in recognition of artistic achievement and career support. The Quartet serves as the Faculty Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, where they direct the chamber music program and present a concert series in addition to maintaining a busy touring schedule in the United States and abroad.

Recent highlights include the Ariel Quartet's Carnegie Hall debut, a series of performances at Lincoln Center together with pianist Inon Barnatan and the Mark Morris Dance Group, as well as the release of a Brahms and Bartók album for Avie Records. In 2020, the Ariel gave the U.S. premiere of the Quintet for Piano and Strings by Daniil Trifonov, with the composer as pianist for the Linton Chamber Music Series in Cincinnati.

In their 2023-24 season, the Ariel Quartet presents performances of an anniversary commission by Matan Porat. A longstanding friend of the Ariel Quartet, Matan Porat's new work is a universally relatable journey about the complexities of string-quartet-life over the years. Upcoming performances include ones for the Aspect Chamber Music Series, Perlman Music Program, Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, Charleston Chamber Music Society, and the Chamber Music Society of Central Kentucky.

The Quartet has dedicated much of its artistic energy and musical prowess to the groundbreaking Beethoven quartets and has performed the complete Beethoven cycle on five occasions throughout the United States and Europe. The Ariel Quartet regularly collaborates with today's eminent and rising young musicians and ensembles, including pianist Orion Weiss, cellist Paul Katz, and the American, Pacifica, and Jerusalem String Quartets. The Quartet has toured with cellist Alisa Weilerstein and performed frequently with pianists Jeremy Denk and Menahem Pressler. In addition, the Ariel served as Quartet-in-Residence for the Steans Music Institute at the Ravinia Festival, the Yellow Barn Music Festival, and the Perlman Music Program, as well as the Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Festival.

Formerly the resident ensemble of the Professional String Quartet Training Program at the New England Conservatory, from which the players obtained their undergraduate and graduate degrees, the Ariel was mentored extensively by acclaimed string quartet giants Walter Levin and Paul Katz. It has won numerous international prizes in addition to the Cleveland Quartet Award: Grand Prize at the 2006 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and the Székely Prize for the performance of Bartók's String Quartet No. 4, and Third Prize at the Banff International String Quartet Competition. About its performances at the Banff competition, the *American Record Guide* described the group as "a consummate ensemble gifted with utter musicality and remarkable interpretive power" and noted, in particular, their playing of Beethoven's monumental Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132, as "the pinnacle of the competition."

The Ariel Quartet has received significant support for its studies in the United States from the American-Israeli Cultural Foundation, Dov and Rachel Gottesman, and the Legacy Heritage Fund.

Most recently, they were awarded a grant from the A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett Family Foundation.

For further information visit
www.arielquartet.com

ORION WEISS

One of the most sought-after soloists and chamber music collaborators of his generation, Orion Weiss is widely regarded as a “brilliant pianist” (*The New York Times*) with “powerful technique and exceptional insight” (*The Washington Post*). With a warmth to his playing that reflects his engaging personality, Weiss has dazzled audiences with his passionate, lush sound and performed with dozens of orchestras in North America including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and New York Philharmonic.

Recent seasons have seen Weiss in performances for the Lucerne Festival, the Denver Friends of Chamber Music, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center’s Fortas Series, and the 92nd Street Y, and at the Aspen, Bard, Ravinia, Seattle, and Grand Teton summer festivals, among others. Highlights also include his third performance with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a live-stream with the Minnesota Orchestra, a performance of Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the release of his recording of Christopher Rouse’s *Seeing*, and recordings of Gershwin’s complete works for piano and orchestra with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and JoAnn Falletta.

Known for his affinity for chamber music, Weiss performs regularly with violinists Augustin Hadelich, William Hagen, Benjamin Beilman, and James Ehnes; pianists Michael Brown and Shai Wosner; cellist Julie Albers; and the Ariel, Parker, and Pacifica Quartets. As a recitalist and chamber musician, he has appeared across the United States at venues and festivals including Sheldon Concert Hall, the Broad Stage, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, the Schubert Club, Chamber Music Northwest, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, and Spivey Hall.

Weiss can be heard on the Naxos, Telos, Bridge, First Hand, Yarlung, and Artek labels in recordings such as *The Piano Protagonists* with The Orchestra Now led by Leon Botstein; *Scarlatti’s Complete Keyboard Sonatas*; a disc of Bartók, Dvorák, and Prokofiev; Brahms Sonatas with violinist Arnaud Sussmann; a solo album of J.S. Bach, Scriabin, Mozart, and Carter; and a recital disc of Rachmaninoff, Beethoven, Schumann, Massenet, and Piatigorsky with cellist Julie Albers.



Orion Weiss © Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

His career honors include the Classical Recording Foundation’s Young Artist of the Year, Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Gina Bachauer Scholarship at The Juilliard School, and the Mieczyslaw Munz Scholarship.

A native of Ohio, Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music and made his Cleveland Orchestra debut performing Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in 1999. The next month, with less than 24 hours’ notice, Weiss stepped in to replace André Watts for a performance of Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and was immediately invited to return later that year. In 2004, he graduated from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax. In 2005, he toured Israel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Itzhak Perlman. That same year, he made his New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall, and his European debut in a recital at the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

Learn more www.orionweiss.com