

SONO
LUMINUS



the
Jasper
string
quartet

THE KERNIS PROJECT: BEETHOVEN

the
Jasper
string
quartet

THE KERNIS PROJECT: BEETHOVEN

STRING QUARTET No.9 IN C MAJOR, OP.59 No.3 (“RAZUMOVSKY No.3”)

– LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

- [1] I. INTRODUZIONE: ANDANTE CON MOTO - ALLEGRO VIVACE – 10:43
- [2] II. ANDANTE CON MOTO QUASI ALLEGRETTO – 9:58
- [3] III. MENUETTO GRAZIOSO – 5:22
- [4] IV. ALLEGRO MOLTO – 6:23

STRING QUARTET No.2 “MUSICA INSTRUMENTALIS”

– AARON JAY KERNIS (B.1960)

- [5] I. OVERTURE – 11:29
- [6] II. SARABANDE DOUBLE, SARABANDE SIMPLE – 16:14
- [7] III. DOUBLE TRIPLE GIGUE FUGUE (AFTER BEETHOVEN) – 10:59

TOTAL TIME – 71:09

Our quartet's love of Beethoven Op. 59 No. 3 began as conservatory students in 2004,

when Sam, Rachel and I cooked dinner to a record of the original Cleveland Quartet playing the piece. The music is so joyous and the memory so distinct that I recall heartily clinking glasses together at the peak of each climbing cascade in the first movement. We were giddy with excitement about the music and listened to this movement over and over. To think, we had not even reached the finale! When Sae joined the quartet two years later, we chose the Beethoven as our first piece to play together. We have since performed it in concert halls, outreach events, and even the top of a mountain. It has forged our quartet, challenging our musical and technical expertise and it is truly a masterpiece. We are honored to have it on our debut album.

Despite studying at Yale School of Music, where Aaron Jay Kernis teaches, we had not worked with him during our studies and were delighted when Astral Artists introduced us to his Quartet No. 2 “musica instrumentalis” in 2010. Sometimes there are pieces that we connect with right from the start and this was the case with his second quartet. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1998, the year after it was written, and there is a wonderful complexity to the music that works much like a kaleidoscope—unveiling its beauty with each musical turn. In composing the piece, Kernis took inspiration from Beethoven’s quartets as a whole and Op. 59 No. 3 specifically. The final fugue of Op. 59 No. 3 is one of the great finales to any quartet; Kernis chose this movement on which to base his final movement, *Double Triple Gigue Fugue (after Beethoven)*. The two works were a natural pairing for our season’s programs and for this album.

Much as Kernis took his inspiration from Beethoven, we take our inspiration from the two great works on this album. The emotional, musical, and technical demands are so fantastic that we can happily play these pieces again and again, continually finding new layers.

— J Freivogel

STRING QUARTET No.9 IN C MAJOR, OP.59 No.3 (“RAZUMOVSKY No.3”)

The three Op. 59 quartets signify a distinct shift in Ludwig van Beethoven’s string quartet writing to a progressive and individualistic approach. Beethoven’s earlier Op. 18 quartets are stylistically quite Classical, surely inspired by Franz Joseph Haydn’s works. In the Op. 59 quartets, Beethoven develops new techniques that ultimately lead him to become the most innovative, influential, and revered composer of string quartets to this day.

He completed his ninth string quartet, Op. 59 No. 3, in 1806. It is the last in the set of three commissioned by Count Andreas Kyrillovich Razumovsky, an avid second violinist who likely played these works in a group that included the famous Viennese violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh and the cellist for whom Beethoven later wrote the two Op. 102 cello sonatas, Joseph Linke.

Of the three quartets, Op. 59 No. 3 garnered the best reception at its premiere, likely due to its exuberant nature and rousing finale. Each Op. 59 quartet finishes in fine form, but it is hard to top the virtuosic fugue of No. 3.

The first movement, *Introduzione: Andante con moto - Allegro vivace*, opens with an F# diminished seventh chord, a shockingly tension-filled place to begin a piece, especially a piece in C major! The unresolved feeling and dissonant appoggiaturas that follow harken back to the opening of Mozart’s famous “Dissonance” Quartet, K. 465. Over the 29 bars of introduction, the cello line descends chromatically in the “lament bass” style, which creates a feeling of dark uncertainty and a direction to the unknown. After the cello exhausts its range (if only there were a low B!), there is a halting silence. The chord is then restated, with the viola’s A-flat creating a B fully-diminished chord. Where are we? Everything is still uncertain, until finally the viola resolves to a G, creating the dominant of the home key, C major.

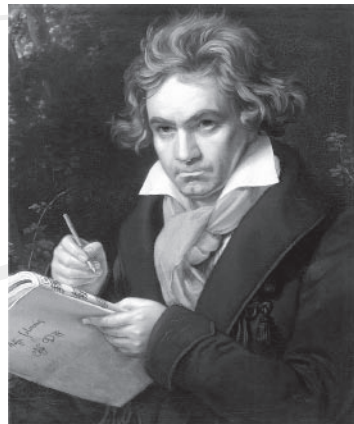
Beethoven wrote on one of the sketches for the Op. 59 quartets “Let your deafness no longer be a secret—even in art”.¹ We (the Jasper Quartet) interpret this introduction as Beethoven coming to terms with the world knowing about his deafness. Instead of hiding what would have been perceived as a handicap, he illuminates his anxiety through his music with chillingly deep beauty. After the dark introduction comes an exuberant *Allegro vivace*. The writing for each instrument is more equal than in the Op. 18 quartets and each player gets a chance to highlight his virtuosity, passing around fiendish 16th note runs.

The second movement has a slow dance lilt with the unusual texture of cello pizzicato throughout. Perhaps as a tribute to Count Razumovsky, the use of an augmented second gives the melody a Russian flavor, which is contrasted with the distinctly Viennese lilt of the second theme.

The third movement, *Menuetto grazioso*, is a gracious, lyrical dance. Here, as in the first movement, Beethoven writes 16th notes, which must be passed seamlessly from one player to the next. The heroic trio is punctuated with *forte* arpeggios and fanfares. The subito dynamic shifts, a particularly Beethovenian characteristic, create excitement in their virtuosity. After the restatement of the Menuetto, there is a curious development. Instead of proceeding directly to the last movement after a short pause, Beethoven writes a coda to connect the third and fourth movements. The minor key and meandering cello line allude to the uncertainty of the first movement’s introduction. As if undoing the descending chromatic scale from the opening, the cello creeps upward chromatically, leading once again to the same chord that precedes the main section of the first movement.

Now, having resolved the tension and darkness that thread throughout the piece, we arrive at one of the most joyful movements ever written for string quartet, the *Allegro molto*. The Viola begins alone, with the playfully nimble fugue subject. The Second Violin, Cello and First Violin follow, each with their own version of the fugue. In the development, Beethoven showcases each instrument again with a solo *sul una corda*, or on one string. Following the recapitulation, Beethoven writes a joke à la Papa Haydn. The music builds to a culminating cadence then suddenly jolts away harmonically, creating a false ending. After a Grand Pause, the violins begin again and the crescendo is even more satisfying the second time. With all voices playing in octaves the piece triumphantly reaches C Major, emphatically ending one of Beethoven’s great string quartets.

— Rachel Henderson Freivogel



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)

¹Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), p. 201

STRING QUARTET No.2, “MUSICA INSTRUMENTALIS”

My Second String Quartet uses elements of Renaissance and Baroque dance music and dance forms as its basis and its inspiration. I have been playing various suites of Bach’s and pieces from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book at the piano for my own pleasure for years, and I think that I had suspected for some time that their influence would eventually show up in my work.

The first movement is a kaleidoscope, an overstuffed medley of many types of dances played separately and sometimes simultaneously. It is in three large sections. The first section is an exposition of many different strands of energetic music, while the second opposes two gentler dances, the Canzonetta and a Musette. The final section brings back most of the diverse elements of the opening in many varied guises and leads to a climactic uncovering of a simple direct version of the main tune of the movement.

The second movement alternates two different slow Sarabandes (a slow dance in triple time) with short bursts of frenetic, furious music. It is dedicated to the memory of Bette Snapp, a much beloved supporter of new music and composers, who passed away as the movement was being written.

The final movement is based in some fundamental ways on the last movement of Beethoven’s Op. 59 No. 3 String Quartet. It is a propulsive and energetic Double Fugue, Tarantella, Rondo, Gigue, and eventually a Triple Fugue, all wrapped in an overarching sonata form. String Quartet No. 2, “musica instrumentalis” was commissioned for the Lark Quartet by the Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center in New York City, Ohio University, and The Schubert Club of St. Paul, with additional funds from Chamber Music America. It is dedicated to Linda Hoeschler “in gratitude for her friendship, generosity, and support, and in honor of her perpetual faith in the creative spirit.”

— Aaron Jay Kernis





THE JASPER STRING QUARTET

J FREIVOGEL, VIOLIN
SAE CHONABAYASHI, VIOLIN
SAM QUINTAL, VIOLA
RACHEL HENDERSON FREIVOGEL, CELLO

The Jasper String Quartet has been hailed as “sonically delightful and expressively compelling” (*The Strad*) and as “powerful” (*The New York Times*). They play “with sparkling vitality and great verve, ...polished, engaged, and in tune with one another.” (*Classical Voice of North Carolina*)

Based in New Haven, CT, the Jasper Quartet enjoys prestigious appointments as 2010-12 Quartet-in-Residence at Oberlin Conservatory (Oberlin, OH), Ensemble-in-Residence at Classic Chamber Concerts (Naples, FL), and the 2009-11 *Ernst C. Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence* at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts (Katonah, NY).

After winning the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the 2008 Plowman Chamber Music Competition, the Jaspers went on to win the Grand Prize at the 2008 Coleman Competition, First Prize at Chamber Music Yellow Springs 2008, and the Silver Medal at the 2008 and 2009 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competitions. They were the first ensemble to win the Yale School of Music’s *Horatio Parker Memorial Prize* (2009), an award established in 1945 and selected by the faculty for “best fulfilling... lofty musical ideals”. And in 2010, they joined the roster of Astral Artists after winning their national auditions.

Originally formed at Oberlin Conservatory, the Jasper Quartet began pursuing a professional career in 2006 when they studied with James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith as Rice University’s Graduate Quartet-in-Residence. In 2008, the quartet continued its training with the Tokyo String Quartet as Yale University’s Graduate Quartet-in-Residence.

They are named after Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada and J and Rachel are married. Barrett Vantage Artists represents the quartet throughout the world and Astral Artists represents the quartet in Pennsylvania.

For more information, please visit www.jasperquartet.com or [facebook.com/jasperstringquartet](https://www.facebook.com/jasperstringquartet)





AARON JAY KERNIS

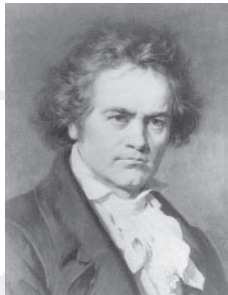
Winner of the coveted 2002 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition and one of the youngest composers ever to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize, AARON JAY KERNIS is among the most esteemed musical figures of his generation. His music figures prominently on orchestral, chamber, and recital programs worldwide and he has been commissioned for many of America's foremost performing artists, including sopranos Renee Fleming, Dawn Upshaw and Hila Plittmann, violinists Joshua Bell, James Ehnes, Pamela Frank and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, guitarists David Tanenbaum and Sharon Isbin, and by institutions including the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, VocalEssence, Minnesota Orchestra, and Los Angeles and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestras, the Walt Disney Company, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and Rose Center for Earth and Space at the Museum of Natural History in New York, among many others. Recent and upcoming commissions include works for James Ehnes at the BBC Proms, his monumental 3rd Symphony (Symphony of Meditations) for the Seattle Symphony, Concerto in Echoes for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, a trumpet concerto for Philip Smith, the New York Philharmonic and the Big Ten Band Association, a chamber work for a two-year Astral Artists residency in Philadelphia, and a work for Eighth Blackbird.

Recent recordings include a disc of orchestral works by the Grant Park Festival Orchestra and a disc of "Goblin Market" and "Invisible Mosaic II" with The New Professionals, Rebecca Miller conductor and Mary King narrator. Previously issued CDs include a widely acclaimed CD with Hugh Wolff conducting the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Kernis' Symphony No. 2, "Invisible Mosaic III," and "musica celestis". Nominated for a GRAMMY®, the disc won France's Diapason d'or Palmares for Best Contemporary Music Disc of the Year. Other CDs include a disc of his Pulitzer-Prize winning String Quartet No. 2 "musica instrumentalis" and String Quartet No. 1 "musica celestis" with the Lark Quartet.

He has become an especially familiar and much-admired presence in Minnesota's Twin Cities, and served as New Music Advisor to the Minnesota Orchestra for ten years. As an educator he is Director of the Minnesota Orchestra's Composer Institute, a program that gives young composers the opportunity to hear their works played by one of the world's great orchestras, and teaches composition at Yale School of Music. His conducting and performing opportunities have continued to increase in recent years, and he has appeared with members of the San Francisco and Minnesota Orchestras, the New York Philharmonic and with major chamber music festivals in Chicago and Portland.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)



Without a doubt, Ludwig van Beethoven was one of the most important musicians who ever lived. He was the son of a drunken court musician and a court cook. Baptized on December 17, 1770, Beethoven's early years were a succession of miseries – poverty, privation, toil, a loveless life, but never discouragement. In 1792 he went to Vienna to study, and remained there the rest of his life, becoming a pupil of Joseph Haydn and Johann Georg Albrechtberger. In Vienna he and his compositions and his piano playing were welcomed everywhere. Noble patrons such as Prince Lichnowsky, Count Waldstein, Prince Lobkowitz, and the Archduke Rudolph treated him generously. Recognition came to him in 1800 when his first symphony, melodious Septet and a piano concerto were premiered. Within a year or two, he experienced unmistakable indications of his approaching deafness, so that the sun had no sooner shone than the clouds were shadowed forth.

The years 1800-1816, known as his Middle Period, mark the transition from the classic to the romantic composers who came later. Masterpieces such as his last three piano concertos, first eight symphonies, first ten string quartets, nine violin sonatas, seventeen piano sonatas, Mass in C, and the opera Fidelio all were products of this period. From 1817 until his death on March 26, 1827 Beethoven's unmistakably deteriorating health and especially his deepening deafness did not deter him from producing his greatest works – Symphony No.9, Missa Solemnis, the last quartets and final piano sonatas.

Beethoven had the good fortune to live just when the whole world was filled and thrilled with grand ideas of freedom, individualism, and every man's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness -- ideas which were to vitalize his music. Beethoven was always and uncompromisingly himself. But for all of his fierce independence, Beethoven was a savage self-critic. The famous sketch-books show any amount of good material rejected as not good enough. And that which he did keep was altered again and again. Beethoven's genius could indeed be defined as "the infinite capacity for taking pains." A biographer writing a century ago, perhaps stated it best: "The wonder of Beethoven's music is, to use two very awkward words, its unpredictability and its inevitability. You never know what to expect, for Beethoven followed no formula, yet whatever happens seems the one and only thing that could have happened!"

Recorded at Sono Luminus in Boyce, VA, May 7-9, 2011

Producer: Dan Merceruio

Editing Engineer: Daniel Shores, Dan Merceruio

Mixing Engineer: Daniel Shores

Mastering Engineer: Daniel Shores

Photo of Mr. Kernis (p. 11): Richard Bowditch

Session Photography (pp. 6, 7-8, 14): Nate S. Rhodes

Photo of Quartet (p. 10): David Long

Cover Photo: Meriah Mozingo

Graphic Design: Brandon Bloodworth

Beethoven Biography: Marina A. Ledin and Victor Ledin, © 2011, Encore Consultants LLC

SPECIAL THANKS:

Aaron Jay Kernis

James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith

Tokyo String Quartet

Vera Wilson, Julian Rodescu, and Bonnie Slobodien of Astral Artists

Emmy Tu of Barrett Vantage Artists

Our families for their support



© & © 2011 Sono Luminus LLC All Rights Reserved.
328 Independence Drive, Winchester, VA 22602, USA

www.SonoLuminus.com • Info@SonoLuminus.com

WARNING: Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited by law
and will result in criminal prosecution.



DSL-92142 — © & © 2011 Sono Luminus LLC All Rights Reserved