

RUSSIAN STRING ORCHESTRA • SUN, OCT. 23, 2016 • 3PM



With an extensive discography and touring history, Russian String Orchestra's equally impressive breadth of repertoire is reflected in this all-Viennese program featuring Mozart's sparkling Divertimento, Schoenberg's lush tone poem "Transfigured Night," and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden."

CHING-YUN HU, PIANO • SUN, NOV. 20, 2016 • 3PM



Recognized and acclaimed worldwide for her dazzling technique, deeply probing musicality and directly communicative performance style, Rubinstein award-winner Hu will be performing Scriabin Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp Minor, Op. 19, "Sonata-Fantasy;" Schubert Three Piano Pieces, D. 946; Chopin Variations on "Là ci darem la mano," Op. 2; Rachmaninoff Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 36 (1931).

PHANTASM • SUN, JAN. 29, 2017 • 3PM



An award-winning quartet of viols, Phantasm has been recognized as the most electrifying active consort of its kind. Explore Elizabethan-era composers, such as Tallis and Byrd, and later works by Bach and Mozart in this eclectic offering. Their distinctive timbre resonates, and is inspired by, the ensemble's diverse American, Scottish, and Finnish origins. Featuring OBF principal cellist, Jonathan Manson.

**DOVER QUARTET with AVI AVITAL
SAT, FEB. 18, 2017 • 7:30PM**



Dubbed by *The New Yorker* as "the young string quartet of the moment," the Dover Quartet exudes an unmatched refinement among their peers and demonstrates adventurous programming. Appearing with the virtuosic, charismatic, and Grammy Award-winning mandolin player Avi Avital, the quartet showcases their prodigious talents with works from Bach to Bruce.

TRIO SOLISTI • SUN, MAR. 12, 2017 • 3PM



Praised by *The Washington Post* for its "unrelenting passion and zealous abandon," Trio Solisti has forged a reputation for passionate performance style that combines exceptional virtuosity and penetrating musical insight. Discover the German masters Beethoven and Brahms, and France's Chausson in an exceptional array of masterworks for piano trio.

**CHAMBER
MUSIC @ BEALL
2016-17**

EMERSON STRING QUARTET

Eugene Drucker, violin | Philip Setzer, violin | Lawrence Dutton, viola | Paul Watkins, cello

October 2, 2016 | 3 p.m. | Beall Concert Hall

String Quartet in F major

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)
28 minutes

- I. Allegro moderato (très doux)
- II. Assez vif – (très rythmé)
- III. Très lent
- IV. Vif et agité

String Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 27

Edvard Grieg
(1843-1907)
35 minutes

- I. Un poco Andante – Allegro molto ed agitato
- II. Romanze: Andantino – Allegro agitato
- III. Intermezzo: Allegro molto marcato
- IV. Finale: Lento – Presto al Saltarello

INTERMISSION**String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10**

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
25 minutes

- I. Animé et très décidé
- II. Assez vif et bien rythmé
- III. Andantino, doucement expressif
- IV. Très modéré

String Quartet in F major**Maurice Ravel**

Maurice Ravel had a contentious relationship with the Paris Conservatoire, where he began studying piano at age 14. Expelled in 1895, Ravel re-enrolled in 1897 as a composition student of Gabriel Fauré's, who encouraged the young man's singular vision. In 1900, Ravel was again expelled, having irked the Conservatory's narrow-minded director, Théodore Dubois, who disliked Ravel's forward-leaning musical and political leanings. Ravel continued to study with Fauré for the next two years, but left the Conservatory for good in 1903.

Ravel's String Quartet in F major owes much to Fauré's guidance, as the composer acknowledged in his dedication; it also pays direct homage to Debussy's String Quartet in G minor, written approximately ten years earlier. Both quartets feature pizzicato in their feather-light second movements; both link their respective second and third movements with identical keys, and both use recurring rhythmic and melodic fragments throughout all four movements as a unifying device. But the sound of Ravel's quartet is entirely his own, particularly the interplay among the instruments, and the rich colors of his harmonic palette.

String Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 27**Edvard Grieg**

With this string quartet, Grieg intended to establish his bona fides as an authentic Norwegian composer who could successfully incorporate Norwegian sound into the string quartet. Although performers and audience alike responded with enthusiasm at Op. 27's premiere, chauvinist German critics savaged it in print. "We have felt only displeasure and repugnance toward all the boorish and absurd stuff that is gathered together under the guise of a Norwegian national stamp ... and toward the lack of any talent for structure and development," sniffed the influential critic Eduard Bernsdorf. Grieg was stung by this review, having toiled over every aspect of the music. In 1878, Grieg wrote to a friend, "I feel that in this work are hidden traces of that life's blood of which the future will hopefully see more than mere drops."

Time has vindicated Grieg, and today his Op. 27 is regarded as a major work in every sense. Two years before he wrote Op. 27, Grieg set a poem by Henrik Ibsen, "Spillemænd," (Fiddlers). The plaintive melody of this song provides the melodic and harmonic foundation for all four movements. Grieg's writing for the four instruments verges on orchestral; all the players execute double-stops, thickening the overall texture of the ensemble. The double-stop technique also suggests the rich sound of the Hardanger fiddle, a Norwegian instrument with two sets of strings: one bowed, and another that vibrates sympathetically.

String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10**Claude Debussy**

Meticulous research supports the idea that Claude Debussy both heard and admired Grieg's quartet, which was performed in Paris in 1890. Several scholars have pointed out the similarities between the two quartets: they share a common key and each work opens with a theme consisting of the same four notes (Debussy's distinctive rhythm sets off his version clearly from Grieg's). And, like Grieg, Debussy also uses this initial motif, particularly its rhythm, as a unifying device that reappears throughout.

The influence of Grieg notwithstanding, however, Debussy's sole string quartet is – unequivocally and unapologetically – completely new. Hailed as a startling innovation at its premiere, this densely packed work essentially reinvents the string quartet genre, particularly with regard to how the music evolves. Debussy dispenses with standard Germanic forms; instead, the entire quartet is generated from the opening theme. Debussy's genius lies in his ability to make this short, intense burst of music sound agitated, thoughtful, dramatic, melancholy, lyrical, and triumphant. Each time we hear this theme, it sounds fresh, and invites us to experience the music in a new guise.