

STRING QUARTET SYLLABUS

Four Voices, One Conversation: The Art of the String Quartet.

Considered the ideal ensemble, a model democracy and the ultimate chamber music experience, the unique combination of 2 violins, viola and cello have inspired some of our greatest composers to some of their greatest works, and a unique breed of string players to dedicate their lives to performing string quartets.

Each class will feature an in-depth discussion of one famous classical composer and include a close listening and musical analysis of one of their string quartets. The lives and careers of four well-known ensembles – the Budapest, Guarneri, Amadeus and Juilliard String Quartets – will be woven into the curriculum

Week one

We begin our musical journey with our “founding father”, Franz Josef Haydn, whose 83 brilliant string quartets provided a springboard for the further development of the genre. We will also explore the life and times of the greatest 20th century string quartet, the Budapest Quartet, whose unparalleled success brought chamber music in general, and the string quartet specifically, to widespread international popularity in the 1930’s to 1960’s.

Featured work: Haydn String Quartet in G Major, Op. 76 no. 1

Week two

We move on to the 23 string quartets of the classical master Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Inspired by Haydn, Mozart’s quartets are among his best and most popular works, bringing the form to new heights of balance and expression. We’ll visit the Amadeus String Quartet, the Austrian group that reigned from 1947 – 1987 without a single change of personnel.

Featured work: Mozart String Quartet in C Major, K. 465

Week three

The groundbreaking string quartets of Ludwig van Beethoven are cornerstones of the classical chamber music repertoire. These 16 works begin where Haydn left off, and the late quartets launch the genre well into the future. The Guarneri String Quartet came out of the Eastern European tradition of the Budapest Quartet and carried their legacy into the 21st century.

Featured work: Beethoven String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

Week four

Like Mozart, Felix Mendelssohn was a child prodigy who composed many of his greatest works as a teenager. Inspired by Beethoven, Mendelssohn’s string quartets forged a balance of Classicism and Romanticism. Our fourth string quartet profile will feature the

Julliard String Quartet, founded in 1946 as the Quartet-in-Residence at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, and still on the front edge of the contemporary music curve.

Featured work: Mendelssohn String Quartet in A minor, Op. 13

Contact info:

Ben Simon

Bs1234@gmail.com