Friday, April 13, 2012, 8pm
First Congregational Church

Quatuor Mosaïques

Erich Höbarth, *violin*
Andrea Bischof, *violin*
Anita Mitterer, *viola*
Christophe Coin, *cello*

PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) — Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 76, No. 4, "Sunrise" (1796–1797)

Allegro con spirito
Adagio
Menuetto: Allegro
Finale: Allegro, ma non troppo

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) — Quartet in A major, Op. 13, "Ist Es Wahr?" (1827)

Adagio — Allegro vivace
Adagio non lento — Poco più animato — Tempo I
Intermezzo: Allegretto con moto — Allegro di molto — Tempo I
Presto — Adagio non lento — Adagio

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) — Quartet in in A minor, Op. 29, No. 1 (D. 804), "Rosamunde" (1824)

Allegro ma non troppo
Andante
Menuetto: Allegretto
Allegro moderato

Cal Performances' 2011–2012 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 76, No.4, "Sunrise"

Composed in 1796–1797. Premiered September 28, 1797, in Eisenstadt.

Haydn was universally acknowledged as the greatest living composer upon his return to Vienna in 1795 from his second London venture; he was 63. Though his international renown had been founded in large part upon the success of his symphonies and keyboard sonatas, he repeatedly refused offers to compose further in those genres, and instead concentrated the creative energies of his later years upon the string quartet and the vocal forms of Mass and oratorio. Except for the majestic Trumpet Concerto, his only instrumental compositions after 1795 were the six quartets of Op. 76, the two of Op. 77 and the unfinished torso of Op. 103, and they were the culmination of nearly four decades of experience composing in the chamber medium. "The eight quartets which he completed show no signs of flagging powers," wrote Rosemary Hughes in her study of Haydn's chamber music. "In that last great wave of energy which carried them to completion, he gathers up all the efforts and conquests, all the explorations, all the personal idiosyncrasies too, of nearly half a century of unbroken creative life. Nowhere is his thematic and structural concentration so strong and closely woven, his ranging through the furthest reaches of key so searching and profound. If elsewhere some of his best instrumental finales are based upon folk songs and dances, here he even surpasses them in exhilaration and closeness of texture. The phrase structure is endlessly varied and flexible, now square and symmetrical, now unfolding in long, continuous paragraphs, according to the character and inner life of the themes themselves. And behind this and permeating it all is a quality hard to define, but one in which we can sense the weight of a lifetime's experience, human and musical. No young mind and heart could have conceived this music, could have so tempered exuberance with gentleness, or touched sober steadfastness with vision."

The six Op. 76 Quartets were written on commission from Count Joseph Erdödy, scion of the Viennese family who had encouraged Haydn's work since at least 1776 and whose members became important patrons of Beethoven after his arrival in the capital in 1792. The Quartets were apparently ordered and begun by the end of 1796, because Haydn was able to play them at the piano for the Swedish diplomat Frederik Samuel Silverstolpe the following June. They were probably given their formal premiere on September 28, 1797, when they were played for the visit of Archduke Joseph, Viceroy of Hungary, to Eisenstadt, family seat of Haydn's employer, Prince Nicholas Esterházy II. The Quartets were issued in Vienna by Artaria in 1799 ("Nothing which our house has ever published equals this edition," trumpeted the advertisement in the *Wiener Zeitung* on July 17th), and appeared shortly thereafter in London. "[I have] never received more pleasure from instrumental music," wrote Charles Burney, the preeminent English musical scholar of his day. "They are full of invention, fire, good taste and new effects, and seem the production, not of a sublime genius who has written so much and so well already, but of one of highly cultivated talents, who had expended none of his fire before." Critical opinion has not wavered since.

The Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 76, No. 4, derives its sobriquet—"Sunrise"—from the arching opening theme, one of Haydn's most limpid and sensual melodic inventions. The music is more animated during the transitional passage that leads to the second theme, but again becomes subdued, almost dreamy, when that theme proves to be a sweet variant of the opening subject. These two principal moods are again opposed to close the exposition, and their juxtaposition continues to form the basis of the development section. A full recapitulation achieves formal closure and expressive balance. The *Adagio* is an expression of thoughtful introspection such as could only have been composed by one whose long and rich experience of life is

matched by a transcendent mastery of technique. The movement follows no traditional form, but is rather a fantasia, perhaps even a musical sermon, that refers repeatedly back to the hymnal statement with which it began. The jolly peasant dance of the *Menuetto* stands in striking contrast to the contemplative mood of the *Adagio*, but the curious, winding melody of the central trio, presented by the violins in barren octaves above a drone in the viola and cello, brings a deeper emotional tone to the movement. The exuberant finale, thought to have been based on a folk song that Haydn brought back with him from England, is in three-part form (B-flat major–B-flat minor–B-flat major) with a dashing coda whose youthful effervescence belies the fact that this was at least the 78th quartet that Haydn had composed.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)
Quartet in A minor, Op. 13, "Ist Es Wahr?"

Composed in 1827.

Felix Mendelssohn, in 1827, must have been the most musically sophisticated 18-year-old in Europe. Upon the foundation of his fine general education had been placed disciplined training in theory and composition from Carl Friedrich Zelter (a distinguished pedagogue who was then the director of the Berlin Singakademie), tutelage in violin with Carl Wilhelm Henning (a respected member of the Berlin Opera orchestra) and Eduard Rietz (a close friend who succeeded Mendelssohn as director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts upon the composer's death in 1847), and in piano with his mother (a student of the noted German theorist Johann Philipp Kirnberger, himself a pupil of Johann Sebastian Bach) and Marie Bigot (an esteemed Alsatian virtuoso and friend of Haydn and Beethoven). Mendelssohn's first dated composition, a cantata, was completed on January 3, 1820, three weeks before his eleventh birthday, though this piece was almost certainly preceded by others whose exact dates are not recorded. Two years later began the twice-monthly Sunday family concerts at the Mendelssohns' Berlin mansion, for which Felix selected the programs, led the rehearsals, appeared as piano and violin soloist and chamber musician, and even conducted, though as a young teenager he was still too short to be seen by the players in the back rows unless he stood on a stool. By 1825, he had written over 80 works for these concerts, including operas and operettas, string quartets and other chamber pieces, concertos, motets, and a series of 13 symphonies for strings.

Mendelssohn possessed a boundless curiosity and enthusiasm about all music, old and new. By age 18, he was intimately familiar with the Classical forms and idioms of Mozart and Haydn, and he erected upon them the creative precocities of his youth (including the magical Octet of 1825, among the greatest pieces of music ever composed by one so young), but he was also one of the leading Bach scholars of the time. Zelter had guided him fruitfully through *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, and his musically knowledgeable maternal grandmother, who had known Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel when she grew up in Berlin, obtained for him a copy of the rare, unpublished score of the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1823 or 1824. Before the end of 1827, Mendelssohn had enlisted the town's best vocalists to rehearse the *Passion* and determined to perform it in public—the renewal of interest in Bach's music, and, indeed, the entire baroque revival, date from that concert, on March 11, 1829, at the Singakademie. Complementing Mendelssohn's antiquarian strain was his interest in the most daring, avant-garde music of the day—the last works of Beethoven. In the years before his death, in March 1827, Beethoven explored uncharted continents of style and expression in his sonatas, quartets, *Missa Solemnis* and Ninth Symphony, and Mendelssohn eagerly studied those amazing and challenging creations.

The Quartet in A minor that Mendelssohn completed on October 26, 1827, was the product of this entire congeries of influences—Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, plus, of course, his own genius—which were further enflamed by a *petite affaire de le cœur*. The previous spring, shortly

before matriculating at Berlin University, Mendelssohn had indulged in a short holiday at Sakrow, the Magnus family estate near Potsdam, and there he fell in love, at least a little. The circumstances, even the maiden's name, are uncertain (one Betty Pistor, a family friend and a member of a choir for which Mendelssohn was then piano accompanist, has been advanced as a possibility), but he was sufficiently moved by the experience to set to music a poem of his friend Johann Gustav Droyson that began, "Is it true [*Ist es wahr?*] that you are always waiting for me in the arbored walk?" The piece, published two years later under the title *Frage* ("Question") as the first number of his Op. 9 set of songs, was woven as thematic material into the new A minor Quartet. The score was published in 1829 as Mendelssohn's Op. 13.

"In this work, the mature composer stands revealed," wrote Homer Ulrich of Mendelssohn's A minor Quartet in his comprehensive survey of the chamber repertory. "All the melodic charm, all the perfection of detail, all the deftness of touch we associate with the later works are present in this Quartet from his eighteenth year." This Quartet is also the most Beethovenian of Mendelssohn's works, embracing bold contrasts, adventurous harmonies, complex counterpoint, cyclical procedures, multi-compartmented movements and a pervasive impassioned expression that lend this music an urgency which Mendelssohn seldom recaptured. At a performance of the Quartet at a Paris salon, a music-loving priest nudged Mendelssohn during the finale, and whispered, "He does that in one of his symphonies." "Who?" asked the composer. "Why, Beethoven, the author of this Quartet," came the reply. "That was bittersweet," Mendelssohn allowed.

The Quartet opens with a slow introduction whose A major tonality serves as an emotional foil for the tempestuous main body of the movement. Two arching phrases—the second soaring high in the first violin's compass—preface the quotation of the searching motto phrase from *Ist Es Wahr?*, recognizable by its long–short–long rhythm. The music's tempo and energy are quickened by scurrying filigree before the viola initiates the principal theme, based on the motto rhythm. The cello posits a lyrical melody as the complementary subject. The scurrying phrases return to mark the onset of the development section, which is remarkable for the intensity of its counterpoint and its nearly febrile mood. The recapitulation serves both to return and to enhance the earlier themes before the movement closes with an explosive coda that stops without resolving the music's strong tensions. The deeply felt *Adagio* offers another paraphrase of the motto theme at beginning and end as the frame for the somber, densely packed fugal episode that occupies the middle of the movement. The third movement, titled *Intermezzo*, uses a charmingly folkish tune, daintily scored, in its outer sections to surround an ethereal passage of musical featherstitching at the center. Both ideas are deftly combined in the coda. A dramatic cadenza-recitative for the violin over tremolo harmonies, reminiscent of the fourth movement of Beethoven's A minor Quartet, Op. 132, launches the finale. A clutch of highly charged motives is presented and worked out with great intensity as the music unfolds. The work closes not with a wail of tragedy or with a sunburst of redemption, but with a recall of the Quartet's most introspective moments—first the theme of the *Adagio*, and then the introduction from the opening movement, bringing with it a final reflection upon the music and thought, *Ist Es Wahr?*.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Quartet in A minor, Op. 29, No. 1 (D. 804), **"Rosamunde"**

Composed in 1824. Premiered on March 14, 1824, in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet.

When Wilhelmine von Chezy's play *Rosamunde*, with extensive incidental music by Franz Schubert, was hooted off the stage at its premiere in Vienna on December 20, 1823, the 27-year-old composer decided to turn his efforts away from the theater, where he had found only frustration, and devote more attention

to his purely instrumental music. The major works of 1823—the operas *Fierrabras* and *Der häusliche Krieg* ("The Household War"), the song cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* ("The Beautiful Maid of the Mill") and *Rosamunde*—gave way to the String Quartets in D minor ("Death and the Maiden") and A minor, the A minor Cello Sonata ("Arpeggione"), several sets of variations and German Dances, and the Octet.

At that time in Schubert's life, composition seems to have been almost an escape from the difficulties of his personal situation. He was suffering from anemia and a nervous disorder as the result of syphilis and its treatment (mercury in the early 19th century!), and was constantly broke, living largely on the generosity of his devoted friends, with only an occasional pittance from some performance or publication. In March 1824, he poured out his troubles in a letter to Leopold Kupelweiser, a close friend recently moved to Rome: "In a word, I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and whose sheer despair over this makes things constantly worse instead of better; imagine a man whose most brilliant hopes have perished, to whom the felicity of love and friendship have nothing to offer but pain; whom enthusiasm (at least of the stimulating kind) for all things beautiful threatens to forsake, and I ask you, is he not a miserable, unhappy being?" Schubert then quoted some forlorn lines from Goethe's poem *Gretchen am Spinnrade* ("Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel"), which he had set in 1814: "'My peace is gone, my heart is sore, I shall find it never, nevermore' [are words which] I may well sing every day now, for each night on retiring to bed, I hope I may not wake again, and each morning but recalls yesterday's grief." Such anguish, however, did not seem to thwart Schubert's creative muse, and the year 1824, when his physician was able to somewhat restore his health through regular mineral baths, a strict diet and confinement to his room, was one of the most productive periods of his life. Moritz von Schwind, the artist who captured so well the decorous atmosphere of the Biedermeier period and whose woodcuts for children were to inspire the third movement ("Frère Jacques") of Mahler's First Symphony 60 years later, reported on Schubert's absorption with his creative activity at the time: "Schubert has now long been at work with the greatest zeal. If you go to see him during the day he says, 'Hello, how are you?—Good!' and simply goes on working, whereupon you depart."

The A minor Quartet dates from February and March 1824. It had been more than three years since Schubert had written in the genre, and that earlier example, the so-called *Quartetsatz* ("Quartet Movement") in C minor (D. 703), was abandoned after a single movement had been completed. Schubert's eleven previous specimens of the form had all been written as *Hausmusik* for the family quartet (his two brothers on violin, his father playing cello and Franz as violist), so the A minor Quartet therefore stands as the gateway to the incomparable chamber music of his maturity. The piece was inspired by the enthusiastic and meticulously prepared performances of the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the greatest early interpreter of the quartets of Beethoven (who often referred to him as "Milord Falstaff" because of his well-fed condition). After returning to Vienna from seven years of performing in Russia, Schuppanzigh had established a highly regarded subscription series of chamber programs with his distinguished quartet (violinist Karl Holz, violist Franz Weiss and cellist Josef Linke) in the hall that the Philharmonic Society reserved in "The Red Hedgehog," a popular local inn of the day that was later also a favorite haunt of Brahms. The A minor Quartet was premiered at the concert of March 14th with gratifying success; Schwind reported that Schuppanzigh played it "rather slowly, but with great purity and tenderness." The work was issued as Op. 29, No. 1, by the firm of Sauer and Leidesdorf in September, the only one of Schubert's quartets published during his lifetime. (The D minor Quartet, originally intended as the second number of the set, was not published until 1831 as Op. 161; the projected third piece was never written.)

Though Schubert spoke of the D minor and A minor Quartets and the Octet of 1824 as preparatory exercises for a "grand symphony," there is nothing tentative or unpolished in the structure, style or expression of any of these splendid creations. Indeed, these compositions rank with the greatest instrumental works that Schubert ever wrote—the A minor Quartet was described by musicologist Joseph Wechsberg as "the distilled essence of Schubert's genius… the true expression of his musicianship." The Quartet is music of sweet sadness, of the precise, touching melancholy sometimes rising to tragedy of which Schubert and Mozart are the unrivaled masters. The pensive opening, the emotional platform upon which the entire work is built, recalls Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. The complementary theme, graced with a demure trill upon its introduction by the second violin, provides an episode of brighter outlook, but it is the main theme and its troubled prospect that serve as the principal material for the development section. As was Schubert's wont, the recapitulation returns the earlier themes in full, with a recall of the main subject serving as the sorrowful coda.

The lovely melody of the *Andante* was taken from the Entr'acte No. 3 in B-flat for the music to *Rosamunde*, Schubert's stage flop of the preceding December. The composer must have been particularly fond of this ingratiating theme, since he used it once again as the subject for the set of variations that makes up the Impromptu No. 3 in B-flat (D. 935), composed in 1827. The *Menuetto* is one of Schubert's most haunting creations, the bittersweet memory of a happy dance rather than the dance itself. Schubert borrowed the theme from his 1819 song to Schiller's poem *Die Götter Griechenlands* ("The Greek Gods"), whose text expresses a yearning for days gone by: "Fair world, where art thou, Come again glorious age of Nature." The trio, in the warmer clime of A major, provides a brief respite before the repeat of the sullen *Menuetto* rounds out the movement. The finale, a hybrid of rondo and sonata forms, is predominantly cheerful in demeanor, a determined turning-away from the dark feelings of the preceding movements. Sir J. A. Westrup said that it was "rather like one of those peasant dances that one finds in the operas of Weber or Marschner—a townsman's view of the way in which country folks enjoy themselves." (Gustav Mahler, the greatest of all musical poets of *Weltschmerz*, created some of his most powerful and moving compositions by juxtaposing the innocence of folk music with the jaded sophistication of high culture.) Moritz von Schwind captured something of the lyrical and emotional essence of the great A minor Quartet with his simple description sent to a friend following the premiere: "It is very smooth and gentle, but has the kind of melody one associates with songs—full of feeling and quite distinctive."

© 2012 Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Wolfgang Krautzer

Quatuor Mosaïques is the most prominent period-instrument quartet performing today. The ensemble has garnered praise for its atypical decision to use gut-stringed instruments, which, in combination with its celebrated musicianship, has cultivated the group's unique sound. The Quartet has toured extensively, won numerous prizes, and established a substantial discography. Formed in 1985, the group comprises Austrians Erich Höbarth (violin), Andrea Bischof (violin), Anita Mitterer (viola) and the French cellist Christophe Coin. The Quartet has appeared in Europe, the United States, Australia and Japan, and regularly performs in Vienna, London's Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Berlin's Philharmonic Hall. Quatuor Mosaïques often appears at such prestigious European festivals as Edinburgh, Salzburg, Lucerne, Bremen, Bath, Styriarte Graz, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and Oslo, among others. The Quartet has collaborated with many international artists, including pianists András Schiff and Patrick Cohen, clarinetists Wolfgang Meyer and Sabine Meyer, and cellists Miklós Perényi and Raphael Pidoux. In 2006, Quatuor Mosaïques was invited to Spain to perform for King Juan Carlos I, using the Monarch's personal collection of Stradivari instruments.

In 2011–2012, Quatuor Mosaïques makes its second tour of North America in ten years, visiting Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Vancouver, and Berkeley, San Diego and Stanford, California. They will be featured in a two-concert series at New York Citys's 92nd Street Y, performing Haydn's Opp. and 76 ("Sunrise"), Mendelssohn's Op. 13, Mozart's K. 458 ("Hunt"), Beethoven's Op. 135 and Schubert's "Rosamunde."

Quatuor Mosaïques has an extraordinarily extensive discography, which includes works of Haydn, Mozart, Arriaga, Boccherini, Jadin, Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn, as well as modern composers. Of the group's latest release, Schubert's *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, *The Times of London* writes that "their performance of *Death and the Maiden* is music-making of a high order, felt and carried out by players animated as though by a single mind and impulse, yet each of them seeming to respond afresh at every moment." Recordings of the Wiener Klassik repertoire (Haydn string quartets: Opp. 20, 33, 77 and the quartets of Mozart dedicated to Haydn) have been awarded numerous prizes, such as the Diapason d'Or, the Choc du Monde de la Musique and a Gramophone Award.

The four members of Quatuor Mosaïques met while performing with Nikolaus Harnoncourt's Concentus Musicus in the 1980s, and decided to perform on original instruments as a classical "caper quartet." Although the Quartet performs on period instruments, it embraces the European quartet tradition, constantly allowing for the evolution of its repertoire as it strives to reveal the music's psychological underpinnings.

Quatuor Mosaïques is represented exclusively by Kirshbaum Demler & Associates, Inc., 711 West End Avenue, Suite 5KN, New York, New York 10025.

Erich Höbarth (*violin*) was born in Vienna, where he studied with Grete Biedermann and Franz Samohyl, and later at the Musikhochschules of Vienna and Salzburg. He was a member of the Végh Quartet from 1978 to 1980, and subsequently held the position of Konzertmeister of the Wiener Symphoniker for seven years. Since 1981, Mr. Höbarth has been Konzertmeister and soloist for the Concentus Musicus Wien; he also teaches at the Musikhochschule in Vienna. He has also served as Konzertmeister of András Schiff's chamber ensemble Cappella Andrea Barca. Mr. Höbarth plays a Joseph Guarnerius violin made in Cremona in 1705.

Andrea Bischof (*violin*) was born in Vorarlberg and studied in Vienna with Grete Biedermann and Thomas Christian. Since 1980 she has held the position of Konzertmeisterin and soloist of the Austrian Bach Soloists, and is also a permanent member of the Concentus Musicus and Professor of Chamber Music at the Musikhochschule in Vienna. Ms. Bischof plays a violin made in France in the 18th century, maker unknown.

Anita Mitterer (*viola*) was born in Lienz in the Ostirrol, and studied with Jürgen Geise in Salzburg, Antonin Moravec in Prague and Thomas Christian in Vienna. She is a member of the Concentus Musicus, Director of the Baroque Ensemble of Salzburg and teaches violin and viola at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Ms. Mitterer plays a Carolus le Pot viola made in Lille in 1725.

Christophe Coin (*cello*) was born in Caen and studied with André Navarra in Paris, Nikolaus Harnoncourt in Vienna and Jordi Savall in Bâle. He has performed with l'Orchestre des Champs-Elysées, Concentus Musicus de Vienne and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, among many others. Mr. Coin teaches baroque violin and viola de gamba at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris and at the Schola Cantorum in Bâle. He also teaches annually at the International Academies of Granada and Innsbruck and gives master classes throughout France. Mr. Coin plays an Alessandro Gagliano cello made in Naples.