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Jeremy Geffen

As many of you already know, last week, Cal Performances announced details of its upcoming 2022–23 season. Beginning in September, with the brilliant **Miami City Ballet** and its legendary production of George Balanchine's iconic *Jewels* (1967), and continuing into June 2023, when the ever-popular **Eifman Ballet** arrives at Zellerbach Hall with its lavish, fully staged *Russian Hamlet*, it's a schedule packed with extraordinary opportunities to experience the very best in live music, dance, and theater.

And what a schedule! More than 70 events, with highlights including the return of the legendary **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra**, under conductor **Christian Thielemann**; the beloved **Mark Morris Dance Group** in Morris' new *The Look of Love: An Evening of Dance to the Music of Burt Bacharach*; revered South African artist

William Kentridge's astonishing new *SIBYL*; a rare Berkeley performance with the **San Francisco Symphony** and conductor **Esa-Pekka Salonen**; and a special concert with chamber music superstars pianist **Emanuel Ax**, violinist **Leonidas Kavakos**, and cellist **Yo-Ma**. And these are only a few of the amazing performances that await you!

Illuminations programming next season will take advantage of Cal Performances' unique positioning as both a renowned international performing arts presenter and a part of one of the world's top-ranked public research universities. Each season, *Illuminations* takes up a pressing theme reflected in both the arts and scholarship, and offers the public a multifaceted understanding of the issue by connecting research on the UC Berkeley campus with exceptional performances. This third season of *Illuminations* centers on the theme of "**Human and Machine**," investigating how technology continues to catalyze and challenge creative expression and human communication. Through programming that includes performances, public events, artist talks, and symposia, we'll be engaging communities on and off campus to examine the evolution of musical instruments, the complex relationships between technology creators and users, technology's impact on the creative process, and questions raised by the growing role of artificial intelligence in our society.

This concept of "Human and Machine" has never been so pertinent to so many. Particularly over the course of the pandemic, the rapid expansion of technology's role in improving communication and in helping us emotionally process unforeseen and, at times, extraordinarily difficult events has made a permanent mark on our human history. Throughout time, our reliance on technology to communicate has—for better or worse—influenced how we understand others as well as ourselves. During this *Illuminations* season, we will investigate how technology has contributed to our capacity for self-expression, as well as the potential dangers it may pose.

Some programs this season will bring joy and delight, and others will inspire reflection and stir debate. We are committed to presenting this wide range of artistic expression on our stages because of our faith in the performing arts' unparalleled power to promote empathy. And it is because of our audiences' openness and curiosity that we have the privilege of bringing such thought-provoking, adventurous performances to our campus. The Cal Performances community wants the arts to engage in important conversations, and to bring us all together as we see and feel the world through the experiences of others.

Please make sure to check out our brand new 44-page season brochure and our website for complete information. We can't wait to share all the details with you, in print and online!

Finally, thank you for joining us for today's concert. It's great that we're all back together again, enjoying the pleasures and rewards of live performance.

Jeremy Geffen

Executive and Artistic Director, Cal Performances



Friday, April 29, 2022, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Danish String Quartet

Frederik Øland, *violin*
Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, *violin*
Asbjørn Nørgaard, *viola*
Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin, *cello*

PROGRAM

Franz SCHUBERT (1797–1828) String Quartet in D minor, D. 810,
Death and the Maiden (1824)
Allegro
Andante con moto
Scherzo. Allegro molto – Trio
Presto

INTERMISSION

Lotta WENNÄKOSKI (b. 1970) *Pige* (2022, Bay Area Premiere,
Cal Performances Co-commission)
Vorüber, ach, vorüber!
Daktylus
Pigen og scrapbogen
(das Mädchen und das Scrapbuch)

Commissioned by the Danish String Quartet with the support of Cal Performances,
Carnegie Hall, Vancouver Recital Society, UC Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures,
Flagey, and Musikgebouw aan 't IJ

SCHUBERT "Der Tod und das Mädchen," D. 531 (1817)
*(Lied arranged for string quartet by
the Danish String Quartet)*

The Danish String Quartet has recorded for ECM, DaCapo, and CAvi-Music/BR Klassik.

Major support provided by The Bernard Osher Foundation.



Not to Be Reproduced, 1937, by René Magritte

Seeing Double

The *Doppelgänger* Project

by Thomas May

*Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe—
Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt*

*(It horrifies me when I see his face
The moon reveals my own likeness)*

These chilling words from one of the poems in Heinrich Heine's *Buch der Lieder* of 1827 depict the uncanny moment of recognition in "Der Doppelgänger." Franz Schubert set this text to music the following year—shortly before his death—as part of a collection that was published posthumously under the title *Schwanengesang* (Swan Song). Jeremy Geffen, executive and artistic director of Cal Performances, likens the song to "a *Twilight Zone* episode in four minutes."

Heine actually left this poem untitled to intensify the degree of shock and surprise when the narrator realizes he is seeing his own *Doppelgänger*, whereas Schubert clues us in to the troubled emotional atmosphere with the omi-

nous chord sequence heard at the outset. Here, already, is an example of the process of responding to and amending a source that we might call "doppelgänging," in the spirit of the Danish String Quartet's (DSQ) ambitious *Doppelgänger* Project, an initiative that combines late chamber masterpieces by Schubert with new commissions by four contemporary composers. Cal Performances, which has joined the project as a co-commissioner, is presenting these four programs over the course three seasons.

The fuzziness around the German word *Doppelgänger* is intentional. On the one hand, the term is used simply to refer to a harmless lookalike (a person who can even be sought out online via image recognition apps). But the mythic implications reach deep into the psyche, providing an obsessive trope for the Romantics. (The coining of the German term is attributed to the novelist Jean Paul, later a favorite of Mahler.) The notion of deceptively identical appearances that can disguise polarities opens up

yet another dimension embedded within the concept. One of Schubert's own friends described the composer as having "a double nature—inwardly a kind of poet and outwardly a kind of hedonist."

"I think everybody has an idea of what a *Doppelgänger* is," says DSQ violist Asbjørn Nørgaard. "It can be a very mystical term filled with images and history and philosophy, but it's also something that is a very physical thing." Similarly, through its commissioning of the four composers, the DSQ wanted to give ample leeway to each to interpret for themselves how to respond or react to the Schubert work with which they have been paired. "We've only created the framework and want to see some sort of inspiration going back and forth between the two. They might quote the Schubert piece or they might write something completely different. We don't know how they will respond to the challenge."

For example, Danish composer Bent Sørensen wrote his contribution, which launched the *Doppelgänger* Project's Berkeley concerts last fall, as a counterpart to the vast expanse of the String Quartet in G major of 1826, Schubert's final work in the genre. He incorporated *Doppelgänger*-like gestures into his new score—a product of the pandemic lockdowns—right down to the Schubertian title.

This evening's concert features the Bay Area premiere of Finnish composer Lotta Wennäkoski's *Pige*, a new quartet responding to Schubert's String Quartet in D minor from 1824, popularly known as *Death and the Maiden*. Next season brings Icelandic composer Anna Thorvaldsdóttir's commission juxtaposed with the A minor Quartet of 1824 (*Rosamunde*), and Thomas Adès will round out the series in 2023–24 with a piece that reacts to Schubert's String Quintet in C major from 1828.

What was the criterion for choosing the commissioned composers? "It was very hard because on one side we wanted composers we like to work with, who have a musical language that we like; but we also wanted something new, something different," observes Nørgaard. While the members of the DSQ have burnished their reputation as excitingly fresh and insightful interpreters of the classical canon, commissions for the *Doppelgänger* Project offer a way to open up new horizons. "Each of the new pieces will be a challenge, because there's going to be a different 'language' each time."

The DSQ's new undertaking, Geffen explains, also resonates with an important aspect of the Cal Performances mission: "It is incumbent on any arts organization to move the repertoire forward, to create those works that in 50 years will be considered canonical. So this project very much aligns with Cal Performances, which has a history of taking risks in supporting new work. I appreciate so much the curiosity of our audience, as well as the fact that the DSQ is using its platform to lift up contemporary composers."

Geffen adds: "Schubert, during his lifetime, heard relatively few of his works played and did not have the benefit of fame as a composer to launch performances. It is inconceivable—and humbling—that someone who died so young could have such a deep understanding of the complexities of the human experience."

Thomas May is a writer, critic, educator, and translator. Along with essays regularly commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony, the Juilliard School, and other leading institutions, he contributes to the New York Times and Musical America and blogs about the arts at www.memeteria.com.

PROGRAM NOTES BY THOMAS MAY

Last fall, the Danish String Quartet launched its multi-season *Doppelgänger* Project, which combines four chamber music milestones by Franz Schubert with contemporary responses and reactions commissioned by the ensemble. [See accompanying essay on pp. 7–8.] The first program paired Schubert's final Quartet in G major, D. 887, with the Danish composer Bent Sørensen's new *Doppelgänger* Quartet.

The DSQ now continues with a program focused on the most famous of Schubert's works for the medium, known by its nickname *Der Tod und das Mädchen* (*Death and the Maiden*), and the contemporary "twin" that the Finnish composer Lotta Wennäkoski has dreamed up. Using the Danish word that is an equivalent of "Mädchen," she has titled her new work *Pige*. You are among the very first audiences to get to hear this music as part of this series co-commissioned by Cal Performances. The DSQ gave the world premiere just over a week ago at Carnegie Hall.

For all the finality of its relentless, headlong, diabolical conclusion—ending with a massive, quadruple-stop ensemble chord of D minor as grim as a freshly sealed tomb—Schubert's String Quartet No. 14 is the sort of masterpiece that is never really "over." Certainly for its performers, but also for its listeners, every encounter promises another round of discoveries. And for Lotta Wennäkoski, *Death and the Maiden* leaves some very important questions unanswered—an ideal springboard for creative re-engagement with this profoundly influential composition.

Shrouded by Darkness:**Schubert's *Death and the Maiden***

A whole mythology has arisen around the 14th of Franz Schubert's 15 completed string quartets. *Death and the Maiden* has inspired not only other works of music (classical and popular) but paintings (such as a famous canvas by Egon Schiele from 1915) and literature. The Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman used the title for his best-known play (1990), which Ro-

man Polanski made into a film in 1994 starring Sigourney Weaver. Set in the context of an unnamed Latin American country coming to terms with the reign of terror of a recently ended dictatorship, Dorfman's drama turns the Schubert source into a horrifying trigger for its protagonist's traumatic memories of torture under the former regime. It was this music, written by her favorite composer, that her tormentor, a sadistic doctor, had forced her to listen to—an emblem of civilization twisted into depraved cruelty.

The quartet exists as part of a larger constellation that includes the earlier song from which it derives its nickname, "Der Tod und das Mädchen" ("Death and the Maiden"). The song (D. 531), which dates from February 1817, sets a text by the German poet and journalist Matthias Claudius, who went by the pseudonym Asmus. The 20-year-old Schubert created a compact, dramatically vivid song from the scenario depicted in the two-stanza poem. The DSQ will round out this evening's program with their own arrangement of the song for string quartet.

Following an eerily subdued introduction on the piano in D minor, the first stanza presents the words of the young woman as she pleads, in a state of agitation: "Vorüber, ach, vorüber!" ("Pass me by! Oh, pass me by!"). In the second stanza, Death personified responds by singing, to the music of the introductory passage, in montones. Deep in the singer's range, Death offers a message of consolation, claiming to be a "friend" rather than a force to be feared as meting out punishment. With his last line—"Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!" ("Softly shall you sleep in my arms!")—Death heralds a shift to D major, leaving the final gestures to the piano.

Schubert drew on this song for the slow movement of his string quartet, thus locking in the association. Having composed the bulk of his quartets in his teenage years—the young composer typically joined in as violist to perform these works with family members—he returned to the medium in 1824, after a lengthy gap, and produced two substantial works, one right after the other: the Quartet in A minor

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WILLIAM KENTRIDGE'S *SIBYL*



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(*Rosamunde*) and the D minor Quartet. The epic Quartet in G major, Schubert's last, appeared in 1826, two years before his death at 31. The only quartet to be published during Schubert's lifetime was the *Rosamunde*.

"I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched person in the world," confided Schubert in a letter of March 31, 1824—just as he was composing his *Death and the Maiden* Quartet. "Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair over this always makes things worse and worse, instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most brilliant hopes have perished, to whom the felicity of love and friendship have nothing to offer but pain, at best... is he not a miserable, unhappy being?"

The cause of Schubert's distress is believed to be a recent outbreak of the syphilis he contracted in 1822, likely from a male or female prostitute. (His premature death six years later resulted, according to some interpretations, from the mercury treatment that was inflicted on patients in that era rather than the disease itself.) The psychological as well as physical pain of Schubert's condition seems to have altered his outlook artistically, leading to a new level of intensity and ambition.

The composer even quotes the words from one of his own lieder in his letter, the lines from Goethe's *Faust* he had set in "Gretchen am Spinnrade" in 1814: "My peace is gone, my heart is heavy, peace shall I find nevermore." And in the D minor Quartet, he similarly quotes his music from the 1817 song "Death and the Maiden." While the song is not quoted until the second movement, the Quartet No. 14 begins and ends in D minor, the key of the lied. This was the key of pathos for Schubert's idol Mozart. (None of Beethoven's quartets is in D minor, though he chose that tonality for his *Ghost* Trio, Op. 70, No. 2.) Indeed, all four movements of Schubert's quartet are in the minor—the figure of Death personified in the song casting his shadow across the entire work, in one guise or another.

The sense of ambition and enlarged scale that found expression in such works as the "Great"

C major Symphony (sketched in the following year) is already apparent in the D minor Quartet—both in its overall architecture and in its sound world. The piece starts off with boldly dramatic, sweeping unison gestures in the introductory section. A triplet figure that plays a significant role throughout the quartet is immediately introduced. Fortissimo attacks are contrasted with soft, chorale-like phrases, while Schubert alternates between a kind of violent compression in the first theme and relaxed, lyrical sweetness in the second—though even here, the accompanying figures weave in a spirit of restlessness. For all their contrast, these elements are combined as the movement continues. It ends in an uneasy *sotto voce*.

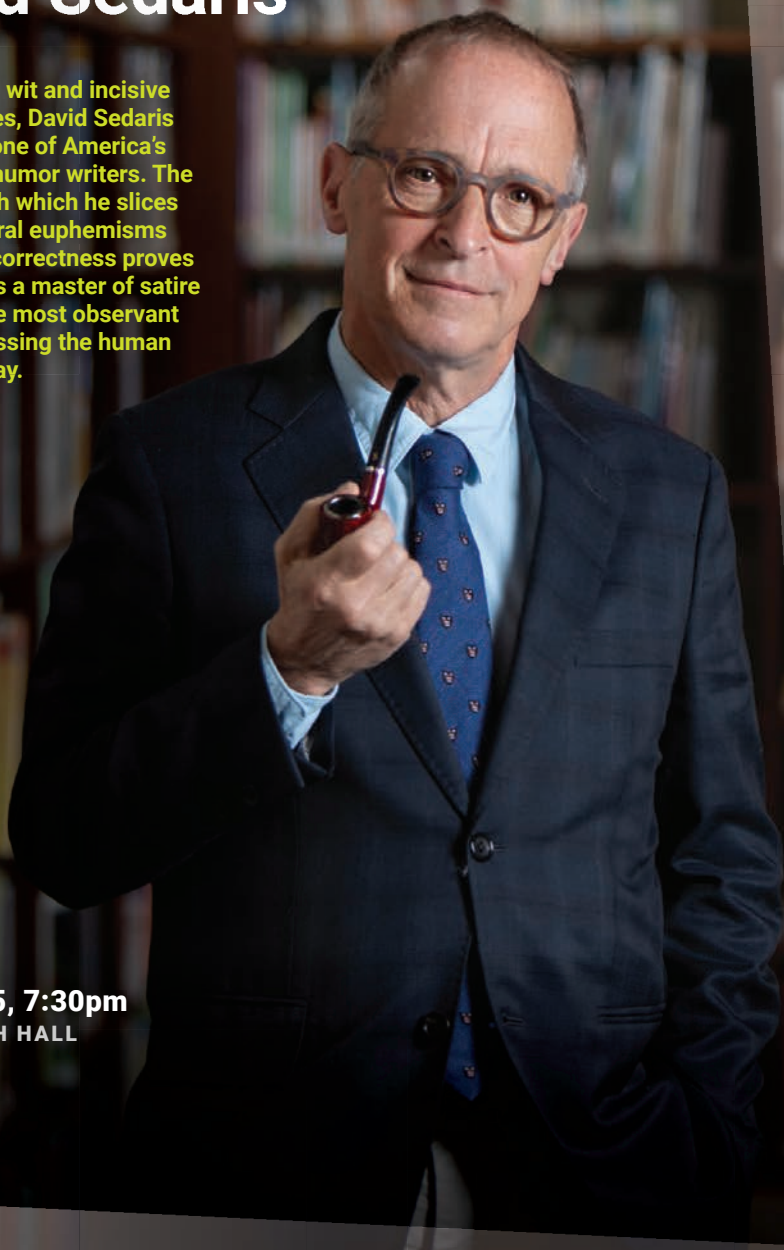
The song "Death and the Maiden" makes its entrance in the Andante con moto—but transposed from its original D minor to G minor. Schubert homes in on the music associated with Death, a persistent, dirge-like rhythm coursing through a repeated harmonic sequence. It's not really a melody so much as a series of shifting harmonic colors. Of the five variations on this theme, the fourth is the only one to turn to a major key, as if to imply Death's consoling promise of peace.

Schubert foreshadows the doggedly hammering motif of the Nibelung blacksmiths from Wagner's *Ring* cycle in the driving rhythms that propel the Scherzo; these even intrude, albeit in subtler form, into the trio section. For his finale, Schubert plugs back into the relentless urgency of the first movement. Another driving rhythm serves as the motor of the finale—this time, a pattern associated with the tarantella folk dance of South Italy—so called because, according to lore, it was the hysterical dance resulting from (or perhaps intended to cure) a spider's venomous bite.

The second, chorale-like theme has been linked to the music Schubert wrote for his early lied "Der Erlkönig"—yet another song about the specter of death haunting and speaking to its young victim. Violent contrasts between loud and soft as well as rhythmic disorientation intensify the musical drama. Schubert accelerates the frantic tempo still more in

David Sedaris

With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America's pre-eminent humor writers. The great skill with which he slices through cultural euphemisms and political correctness proves that Sedaris is a master of satire and one of the most observant writers addressing the human condition today.



Thu, May 5, 7:30pm
ZELLERBACH HALL

a coda that promises a resolution into D major, only to slip tragically back into the minor as the players hurtle toward their ominous, final cadence—back into the darkness with which the quartet began.

Changing the Subject:

Lotta Wennäkoski's *Pige*

"I don't know where they are, the young girl and this Death who is following her—I suppose somewhere in the dark," says Lotta Wennäkoski about the scenario conjured by the combination of poetry and music in Schubert's song. An important impulse for her new string quartet was the first stanza of the song, in which the "maiden" voices her fear. The agitated music from this section, she points out, does not play a role in his quartet of 1824. "I wanted to include the her song in my piece, whereas Schubert uses only Death's song."

Wennäkoski, who was born in Helsinki in 1970 and is based there, spent a period studying violin at the Bartók Conservatory in Budapest, where she developed an abiding fascination with Hungarian folk song. One of her hobbies

is to arrange this material, which she enjoys performing in a family duo. She earned her composition degree at the Sibelius Academy, where Eero Hämeenniemi and Kaija Saariaho were among her mentors, and she also studied with the late Louis Andriessen in The Hague.

Wennäkoski emerged on the scene around the turn of the century with compositions featured at various new-music festivals, as well as scores for radio plays and short films. She has written chamber and orchestral music and works for the stage, such as the opera *Regine* (about Søren Kierkegaard's fiancée, Regine Olsen), which she recently completed on a commission from the Savonlinna Festival. Bay Area audiences can hear her 2019 orchestral work *Helsinki Variations* in a June concert with the San Francisco Symphony under Ruth Reinhardt.

The Danish String Quartet's commission brought Wennäkoski back to a medium for which she had not composed since the first decade of the century. She describes *Culla d'aria* (*Cradle of the Air*) from 2003–04, which has become one of her most frequently performed

Something fierce, something soundless—so have I written in my notebook when planning the string quartet *Pige*. It has been an inspiring task to write a work to be paired with Franz Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* quartet. The *Doppelgänger* idea greatly fed my imagination from the very beginning. It's also been an honor to write music for the hugely expressive musicians of the Danish String Quartet.

The first movement, "Vorüber, ach, vorüber!," is based on the first half of Schubert's lied that lies behind his *Death and the Maiden* quartet. This "maiden's song" has not found its way to into string quartet, so I wanted to use its material in mine. The second movement, "Daktylus," borrows its idea from the haunting pulse of Schubert's chant of Death. Something fierce and something soundless can be heard here—along with other aspects to the dactyl rhythm.

Schubert's quartet is wonderful music and, of course, an unavoidable boulder, and the "death and the maiden" motif is a tempting and gloomy one in art history. On the other hand, I just couldn't help seeing the motif also as the never-ending image of a dirty old man desiring the young female body.... The third movement thus turns its gaze to the girl herself. "Pigen og scrapbogen" ("The Girl and the Scrapbook") is joyful textural music—compiled of fragments and freely handled quotations that might spring to mind when thinking of a vital girl's life.

"Pige" is Danish for "girl." I wish to thank the Danish String Quartet and the co-commissioners for the opportunity to write this music.

—Lotta Wennäkoski
March 2022



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21/22
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Lila Downs

Mexican American singer and activist Lila Downs is adored by her many fans for staying true to her roots even while she is always moving forward. Through a long career that has earned her multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards, she now ranks as one of the most recognizable singers in Latin alternative music.

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scores, as “on the one hand, disconsolately ethereal, but on the other, swelling to vigorously Romantic.” Her catalogue also includes *Metsäkoulu* (2009), a work for “speaking string quartet,” in which the strings not only play but alternate in reciting a text from the children’s writer Albert Sixtus’ *Waldschule* translated into Finnish.

As a violinist herself, Wennäkoski notes she is especially intrigued by trying out a spectrum of string techniques in her composition. The opening of *Pige*, for example, juxtaposes random arpeggios and quick slides with harmonics, while also exploring even more extreme versions of the harsh dynamic contrasts that figure in Schubert’s quartet.

As her title *Pige* suggests, Wennäkoski rejects the implicit male gaze of Death associated with Schubert’s song and quartet, centering the perspective instead on the young girl, whose pleading words in the song’s opening stanza go unheeded. Wennäkoski uses these very words as the subtitle of the first of *Pige*’s three movements (“Vorüber, ach, vorüber!”). This first movement is based on this often overlooked music from the first half of the lied, where the Maiden’s anxiety is depicted. Wennäkoski distantly quotes Schubert’s melodic material sung by the Maiden. The movement ends very quietly, with the cello sustaining a pedal tone and the first violin ascending into its highest reaches. Wennäkoski indicates that the first movement can also be performed separately as a “prologue” to Schubert’s quartet.

The second movement, “Daktylus,” is named after the dactylic (long–short–short) rhythmic pattern that characterizes Death’s march-like music; in the Andante of Schubert’s quartet, it accompanies the theme and its variations. Wennäkoski explores and transforms this rhythm through subdivisions and a wide array of string techniques, such as left-hand pizzicati combined with *col legno* bowing or “brushing” down and up the fingerboard. The dactyl is always present in some form, yet Wennäkoski grafts lyrically flowing elements onto it.

For the third and final movement, “Pigen og scrapbogen” (“The Maiden and the Scrapbook”), Wennäkoski again brings the young woman into the spotlight, where she imagines a light-hearted denouement in which her protagonist is the subject—“somebody who has a good time enjoying life and is not full of worries. I thought a young girl like this might keep a scrapbook where she cuts and pastes things from her life, like a diary.”

Wennäkoski writes joyful, texturally based, energetic music (“Giocoso, molto energico”) that incorporates several musical quotations, including from the Sibelius song “Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte” (“The Maiden Came from Her Lover’s Tryst”) from 1900, which ends with the realization that the young woman’s lover has been unfaithful. Wennäkoski additionally quotes from her 2015 music-theater work *Wunderbar* for two sopranos, mezzo-soprano, violin, cello, and piano, as well as from her earlier quartet *Culla d’aria*. In the midst of composing the latter, Wennäkoski had her second child, who is now the age of the “pige” she imagines in her new work.

Looking back over the commission, the composer remarks that she had initially thought she would respond more directly to Schubert’s music in the quartet. “But now I notice that what I grasped onto is mostly the subject from the lied that is not in the quartet. And I found that very moving.”

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Among today’s many exceptional chamber music groups, the Grammy Award-nominated **Danish String Quartet** continuously asserts its preeminence. The quartet’s playing reflects impeccable musicianship, sophisticated artistry, exquisite clarity of ensemble, and, above all, an expressivity inextricably bound to the music. The recipient of many awards and prestigious appointments—including *Musical America*’s 2020 Ensemble of the Year and the Borletti-Buitoni Trust—the Danish String Quartet was named in 2013 as BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists and appointed to the Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two).

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In 2021–22, the Danish String Quartet introduces *Doppelgänger*, an ambitious four-year international commissioning project that pairs world premieres from four renowned composers—Bent Sørensen, Lotta Wennäkoski, Anna Thorvaldsdóttir, and Thomas Adès—with four major works from the masterful chamber music repertoire of Schubert. The first commission, composed by Bent Sørensen and inspired by Schubert's Quartet in G Major (D. 887), received its premiere in Amsterdam last fall and was heard in a Cal Performances concert on October 10, 2021.

In addition to performances that are part of the *Doppelgänger* Project, the Danish String Quartet gives over 20 performances throughout North America during the 2021–22 season. Highlights include debuts at the University of Georgia, Virginia Tech's Moss Arts Center, Shriver Hall, and Virginia Arts Festival; return trips to Boston's Celebrity Series, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Ensemble Music Society of Indianapolis, Chamber Music Cincinnati, and University of Washington's Meany Hall; and a tour of Florida. European highlights include tours of Denmark, France, Germany, and Amsterdam.

Violinists Frederik Øland and Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen and violist Asbjørn Nørgaard met as children at a music summer camp, where they played soccer and made music together. In 2008, the three Danes were joined by Norwegian cellist Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin. Their latest album, *Prism III* (ECM)—featuring Beethoven's String Quartet No. 13, Op. 131; Bartók's String Quartet No. 1; and Bach's Fugue in C-sharp minor, BWV 849 from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*—was released in March 2021.

For more information, visit www.danishquartet.com.

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Lotta Wennäkoski spent a year at a conservatory in Budapest before transferring to the Sibelius Academy to study theory and composition with Eero Hämeenniemi, Paavo Heininen, and Kaija Saariaho. She then completed her studies in Amsterdam with Louis Andriessen. Artistic co-ordinator of the Tampere Biennale from 2008 to 2010, she was composer-in-residence of the Tapiola Sinfonietta for the 2010–11 season. Works by her have been released on the Alba and Ondine record labels.

Wennäkoski began composing with scores for radio plays and short films. The first work designed for a concert hall was *Läike* (1994) for clarinet, violin, and piano, first performed at a concert of innovative contemporary repertoire. Another major landmark was a concert of her works at the Musica nova Helsinki festival in 1999, since when she has established her reputation as a distinctive lyricist on the Finnish contemporary music scene. Her many commissions have included *Sakara* for orchestra (HPO/Esa-Pekka Salonen, 2003), the string quartet *Culla d'aria* (Kuhmo Chamber Music, 2004), *Hava* (Tapiola Sinfonietta, 2008), and the flute concerto *Soie* (2009) commissioned by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and chosen as one of the recommended works at the Unesco International Rostrum of Composers in 2012. The Scottish Chamber Orchestra commissioned an orchestral work (*Verdigris*) from Wennäkoski and premiered it in 2015.

Lotta Wennäkoski's works are often marked by transparent timbres and dreamy glissandos. She herself likens the composition process to baking bread: there is an idea—a recipe—according to which the ingredients are added and the “dough” is kneaded. Her works are designed to make a statement and she considers it important for her music to engage in dialogue with society. Vocal music therefore ranks high among her priorities, for she can then combine it with another of her passions: poetry. The song cycle *Naisen rakkautta ja elämää* (“The Love and Life of a Woman,” 2003) weaves together a modern idiom, the Romantic lied tradition and diverse texts portraying female life. Human trafficking is the topic of her half-hour mon-

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odrama *Lelele*, which has been heard since its premiere at three festivals outside Finland. Other works by Wennäkoski include music for the Finnish silent movie *Amor omnia*, premiered in 2012 by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and *Jong* (2013), in which the soloist with a chamber orchestra is a juggler. The Kymi Sinfonietta and the Tapiola Sinfonietta co-commissioned a guitar concerto, *Susurrus*, from Wennäkoski, and it was premiered by guitarist Petri Kumela in 2017.

Among her several commissions is *Flounce*, commissioned by the BBC for a premiere at the Last Night of the Proms in September 2017 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo—a short piece that has become extremely popular since. *Uniin asti* was commissioned by the Polytech Choir and the Finnish RSO and premiered in December 2017 in Helsinki and *Foliage* was commissioned for the Turku International Cello Competition in 2018 (available both as a version for cello and piano and cello and orchestra). *Hele* for 12 players was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association and Gustavo Dudamel and premiered in November 2018, conducted by Susanna Mälkki. Among the most recent commissions is *Om fotspår och ljus (Of Footprints and Light)*, commissioned by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra as the first part of a set of *Helsinki Variations* commissioned from six composers (world premiere in September 2019). Wennäkoski is a spotlight composer of the Finnish RSO during the 2021–22 season, with the upcoming world premiere of a new commission, Wennäkoski's Harp Concerto, on May 18, 2022.

The Savonlinna Opera Festival has commissioned an opera, *Regine*, from Wennäkoski. The opera's libretto is written by Laura Voipio, and it tells the story of philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's fiancé, Regine Olsen.