

EMERSON STRING QUARTET

Eugene Drucker, Violinist
Philip Setzer, Violinist

Lawrence Dutton, Violist
David Finckel, Cellist

Saturday Evening, November 2, 1991, at 8:00
Rackham Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

PROGRAM

Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 44, No. 3 (1838) Mendelssohn
Allegro vivace
Scherzo: assai leggiero vivace
Adagio non troppo
Molto allegro con fuoco

String Quartet No. 4 (1990) Richard Wernick
(Commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society
with the support of the Pew Charitable Trusts)
I. Introduction and Allegro
II. Scherzo I (homage to A.D.) Arioso II
 Arioso I Scherzo I
 Scherzo II Epilogue

INTERMISSION

String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132 (1824-5) Beethoven
Assai sostenuto; allegro
Allegro ma non tanto
Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit,
in der lydischen tonart: molto adagio; Neue Kraft
führend: andante
Alla marcia, assai vivace
Allegro appassionato

Note: Eugene Drucker is first violinist in the Mendelssohn and Wernick Quartets; Philip Setzer is first violinist in the Beethoven Quartet. Immediately following this evening's concert is a record signing and reception hosted by SKR Classical, 539 E. Liberty Street, Ann Arbor. All are invited to come and greet the members of the Emerson Quartet. The Emerson Quartet is represented by IMG Artists, New York City. The University Musical Society is a member of Chamber Music America.

String Quartet in E-flat, Op. 44, No. 3

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

A wonderful genius . . . so pleasing and amiable.

— Queen Victoria

In the Queen's slightly patronizing opinion, we may glimpse some of the contradictions and conflicts of Felix Mendelssohn, the so-called "gentle genius": a genius, prodigiously gifted from his earliest years, who aimed to please; who frantically busied himself at all levels of the music world, as conductor, composer, and promoter, and who knew *everybody* — Goethe, Chopin, Berlioz, Hoffmann, Schumann, Liszt, Hegel, Tennyson, Dickens; who participated in most of the major musical trends of the time and wrote music that expressed the modern Romantic ethos, obeyed the time-honored principles of beauty and perfection while pleasing the audience; and who died, burned out, at the age of 37, seemingly from cumulative inner and outer pressures.

To think that . . . a Jew should give back to the people the greatest Christian music in the world.

— Mendelssohn, on his revival, the first "modern" one, of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, to his friend Eduard Devrient, 1829

Mendelssohn came from an immensely cultured and supportive family — his grandfather was the great philosopher, writer, and businessman Moses Mendelssohn, and his father, a banker who further increased the family's fortune. Although his father had the family baptized in 1822 (not without some misgivings on the part of his children), Mendelssohn was still of Jewish descent and compelled, therefore, to overcompensate in order to succeed in a Christian society. This may partly illumine some of that driven quality one can sense in his activities and in much of his music, especially chamber music such as the present quartet. It was written in 1838, in the midst of his wildly busy six-year stint in Leipzig (1835-41), during which he built up the Gewandhaus Orchestra from a mediocre, local band into one of Europe's finest and most adventurous ensembles.

My dear boy, from this day you are no longer an apprentice, but a full member of the brotherhood of musicians. I hereby proclaim you independent in the name of Mozart, Haydn, and old father Bach.

— Karl Friedrich Zelter to the 14-year-old Mendelssohn

Zelter, self-taught son of a stonemason, Mendelssohn's most formative teacher, friend of Goethe and pupil of Kirnberger (who had been Bach's pupil), instilled in his precocious student a profound sense of historical continuity. This can be both a legacy and a burden, and generally speaking, the Baroque influence — energetic, yet relatively unchanging rhythmic motion and active contrapuntal texture grounded by a strong, harmonically oriented bass line — was more successfully integrated by the early Romantic composers than was the formal dynamism of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. (That any continuity at all with "old-fashioned" music was integral to modern composition was a relatively new idea at the time.)

The Baroque influence is noticeable in Mendelssohn's fabulous *scherzi*, among them the second movement of this quartet. It is a "woodland"—set piece in bouncy, equestrian 6/8 meter, a genre much beloved by German composers. The movement has an impulsive rhythm, evocative of the Baroque, and its middle section begins with a fugal passage, after which the music assumes a thoroughly contrapuntal aspect: the main theme acquires various countersubjects, and imitation abounds.

A more Classical influence, especially that of Haydn, is apparent in the third movement — not so much formally, but in the way the lines of the four instruments seem to grow out of each other. Themes become accompaniments and vice-versa, with the aching chromatic motive of the main theme permeating the music at all levels. Gradually, an undulating, Bachian sixteenth-note motion is established, which provides the ground for the middle section and for the amazingly deft and simple transition back to the opening. In this masterly movement, Classical and Baroque influences seem most in balance.

[Chopin and Hiller] rather toil in the Parisian spasmodic and impassioned style, too often losing sight of time and sobriety and of fine music; I, again, do so perhaps too little, but we all mutually learn something and improve each other, while I feel rather like a schoolmaster, and they a little like "mirliflors" or "incroyables."

— Mendelssohn, in a letter to his mother, 1834

Mendelssohn's insistence on decorum and self-control is evident not only in his personal dealings — essentially sympathetic to colleagues Berlioz and Schumann, for instance, he was disturbed by their lack of these qualities (they in turn thought him slightly cold and withdrawn) — it is also apparent musically, especially in Classically derived forms such as the first and last movements in a string quartet. In the first movement of this quartet, as indeed in most nineteenth-century sonatas, "sonata form" is treated as a pre-established, almost divinely given form, like the Mass. The movement is a stately succession of themes and their contrapuntal elaboration. It has a certain repressed moodiness.

The last movement, however, traditionally looser in structure than the first, is exuberant and expansive and, to a great extent, synthesizes the three preceding movements. It has a driving, climbing sixteenth-note theme derived from the slow movement, a contrapuntal richness reminiscent of the scherzo, and a wide range of themes, a secondary one with a sharp, stabbing shape and harmony, and a wonderfully serene closing theme, each of which grows out of the preceding music with drama and grace.

— Note by Paul Epstein

String Quartet No. 4

RICHARD WERNICK (b. 1934)

Anative of Boston, Massachusetts, Richard Wernick received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Brandeis University and his Master of Arts degree from Mills College, studying under teachers including Irving Fine, Harold Shapero, Arthur Berger, Ernst Toch, Leon Kirchner, Boris Blacher, and Aaron Copland. He has taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Chicago, and is presently the Irving Fine Professor of Music at the University of Pennsylvania.

In addition to winning the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for Music, Mr. Wernick has been honored by awards from the Ford Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has received commissions from the Fromm Music Foundation, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Aspen Festival Conference on Contemporary Music, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society that commissioned the quartet heard on tonight's program. The composer's numerous other works include solo, chamber, and orchestral compositions, vocal, choral, and band compositions, as well as a large body of music for theater, films, ballet, and television. Last year, two of his symphonic works were performed at Carnegie Hall during its Centenary Season: the Symphony No. 1, by The Philadelphia Orchestra and Riccardo Muti; and his new Piano Concerto, by the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich and Lambert Orkis as soloist. Currently, Mr. Wernick serves as Consultant for Contemporary Music to Riccardo Muti and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Richard Wernick's Quartet No. 4 was commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society in 1990 and was premiered by the Emerson Quartet in Philadelphia in April 1991. The composer offers the following note:

The completion of a piece of music, for most composers, is a time of mixed emotions: total delight at seeing that final double bar on the page, and a certain



Richard Wernick

madness that this particular part of your life, into which you have poured so much emotional and physical energy, is over. It's a bit like watching the kids grow up and leave the nest. There is also the knowledge that much still remains to be done — the piece must be copied, and parts for the individual players must be extracted. Even if the composer is fortunate enough to have someone else do this for him, the process must be closely supervised. And then comes the first of the "terrors": proofreading. This requires the composer to scrutinize, note by note, the accuracy of every pitch, rhythm, dynamic, and articulation. The total number of possible errors approaches infinity; good luck and a good copyist will result in only a few hundred, but every speck on the page must be checked and double checked while trying not to fall asleep. To neglect this task and put the music in front of players unproofread, is the equivalent of jumping out of a tenth-floor window and hoping you won't hit the ground.

Next comes the second of the "terrors." One day, when least expected, the phone rings, and a lovely voice on the other end asks for a program note! My first reaction is to tell the innocent caller that my right hand

is in an inexplicable state of paralysis and is expected to recover only after the performance. Perhaps this is still a conditioned reflex brought on by attending too many new music concerts in New York during the Sixties, when much musical nonsense was compounded by even more verbal nonsense.

But all that having been said, and having used up most of my allotted space without even mentioning the Fourth Quartet, I would like to make one or two general comments about the piece. First of all, and most importantly, is my gratitude to the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society for providing me with the opportunity to compose this piece for the Emerson Quartet, one of the premier string quartets of our time. In regard to the piece itself, it is in two movements that relate to each other both thematically and harmonically. The first movement consists of two themes that are developed harmonically and contrapuntally throughout. The second of these themes recurs as a parody of itself in the Scherzo II section of the second movement (one is permitted to laugh). Although the movement is not "tonal" in the traditional sense and is not in any real "key," it does modulate constantly to other "keys" that are not real "keys" either. The main body of the first movement is surrounded by a more or less "majestical" introduction and coda.

The second movement consists of alternating Scherzos and Ariosos, in a kind of lopsided rondo form, ending with an Epilogue derived from the "melody" of Scherzo I. The dedication "homage to A.D." refers to a phenomenon we have all experienced: the inability of getting a certain piece out of our heads, sometimes for days on end. It can be maddening. In my case, it was the opening of the second movement of the Dvořák F-minor Trio, with its juxtaposition of duple and triple rhythms. I finally came to the conclusion that the only way to rid myself of this mini-obsession was to use it. So each of the Scherzo I sections is derived from the F-minor Trio opening, and developed motivically and harmonically in a way that might well make poor Dvořák weep. The audience, however, is once again permitted to laugh, or at least titter discreetly.

— Note by Richard Wernick



String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

While working on his Opus 132 quartet during the winter of 1824-1825, Beethoven fell gravely ill with liver disease, bowel inflammation, and other painful and debilitating abdominal maladies. The condition left him seriously weakened, but he was still able to finish the work by July 1825. Although it has the highest opus number of the three quartets (Opp. 127, 130, and 132) that he composed at the behest of Russian nobleman and amateur cellist Prince Galitzin, it was actually second in order of composition. Study of his sketchbooks shows that he originally planned the quartet in the traditional four movements, but on recovering from his sickness decided to replace the two middle sections with three movements, including the central *Heiliger Dankgesang*.

The quartet starts with a short, slow introductory motif that bears a similarity to the ones heard at the opening of the quartet Opus 131 and the *Grosse Fuge*, Opus 133. Some think Beethoven used this motif — a slow, rising half-step followed by a large leap — as a way of unifying these three works; others believe that the motifs resemble each other because they were all composed around the same time, and the inadvertent repetition of certain favorite melodic turns is almost inevitable. Emerging from the introductory measures is a brilliant violin flourish that leads to the main theme, played high in its register by the cello. Following some expansion, a new idea, starting with three repeated notes, is heard and quickly passed through the quartet, leading to still another distinctive idea — a flowing melody in the second violin over a nervous, agitated triplet accompaniment. Although one can conceive these themes as the subjects of traditional sonata form, such analysis violates the free spirit in which Beethoven created this amazing movement.

Wistful and nostalgic in tone, the second movement has two motifs that run throughout the entire opening section. The first is a pair of rising three-note figures; the other, and more important, is a long note that drops down with a little flurry of faster notes. After many repetitions of the two melodic cells, Beethoven moves on to the middle section, a sort of *musette*, with the first

violin sustaining a bagpipe-like drone under its high-pitched melody. The movement ends with a literal repeat of the opening section.

Over the third movement Beethoven inscribed the words, *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart* (“Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Divinity by a Convalescent, in the Lydian mode”). The sublime hymn expresses his gratitude for the return of good health; use of the Lydian mode, an ancient ecclesiastical scale (corresponding to the modern F scale, but without a B-flat), gives the music a spiritual tone. The music consists of five lines of a slow, solemn chordal hymn, with each line preceded by a faster moving contrapuntal prelude. The vital and vigorous contrasting second section, *Neue Kraft fühlend* (“Feeling of new strength”), evokes a sense of strength through alternating loud and soft measures that surge with a powerful, propulsive force. After varied returns of both sections, the movement ends with a free restatement of the *Heiliger Dankgesang*, marked on the score by Beethoven to be played *Mit innigster Empfindung* (“with the most intimate emotions”).

The raucous *Alla marcia* provides the sudden change in mood, from heavenly to earthy, which Beethoven seems to need following moments of deeply emotional expression. After a brief aggressive march, the music completely changes character and takes on the style of a recitative, a rhythmically free section, in which the first violin plays an improvisatory speechlike melodic line over a minimal accompaniment in the other parts.

The finale follows the recitative without pause. Structurally, it combines rondo and sonata form. The basic songful and lyrical character is modified by an underlying turbulent rocking motion that throws an uneasy cast over the proceedings.

The first private performance of the A-minor Quartet was before an audience of fourteen persons at the Tavern Zum Wilden Mann in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet on September 9, 1825. The same players gave the public premiere two months later, on November 6, 1825.

— Note by Melvin Berger from
Guide to Chamber Music,
published by Anchor/Doubleday





..... **About the Artists**

Recognized worldwide for its musicianship and dynamic performance style, the Emerson String Quartet is firmly ensconced as one of the premier chamber ensembles of our time. The Quartet boasts an impressive list of achievements: an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon recording contract, two Grammy Awards, for Best Classical Album and Best Chamber Music Performance, regular appearances with virtually every important series and festival worldwide, a schedule that includes over 100 concerts each season, and an international reputation as a quartet that approaches both the classics and contemporary music with equal enthusiasm.

Their extensive 1991-92 season includes a series of concerts at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art and performances as resident quartet of the Smithsonian Institution and the Hartt School of Music. North American engagements include concerts in Houston, Detroit, Cleveland, Seattle, Baltimore, San Francisco, Montreal, New Orleans, and Los Angeles. The Quartet will also be featured with the Omaha Symphony in multiple performances of the concertos for string quartet and orchestra by Walter Piston

and Ludwig Spohr. They will tour Italy, Austria, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and France and will perform at London's Royal Festival Hall in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death.

In 1987, the Emerson signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, which brought the release of their Grammy Award-winning recording of Bartók's complete string quartets. The Emerson received the Grammy for Best Classical Album and *Gramophone* magazine's Record of the Year award. This was the first time in the history of each award that a chamber music ensemble has ever received the top prize. Forthcoming releases for DG include Prokofiev string quartets and the Prokofiev duo for violins, the six string quartets of Mozart dedicated to Haydn, and the Schubert Cello Quintet with Mstislav Rostropovich.

Dedicated to the performance of the classical repertoire, the Emerson Quartet also has a strong commitment to the commissioning and performance of twentieth-century music. Important commissions and premieres include compositions by Richard Wernick (1991), Gunther Schuller (1986), and John Harbison (1987). A disc featuring these quartets will be released in 1992.

The Emerson String Quartet took its name from the great American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson in the Bicentennial year. Violinists Eugene Drucker and Philip Setzer were original quartet members and continue to alternate in the first chair position. Lawrence Dutton joined the ensemble in 1977, and David Finckel became cellist of the quartet in 1979. All four members support world peace through nuclear disarmament and have presented concerts to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and the fight against world hunger. The quartet has been the topic of two award-winning films and is featured on a laser disc released by Teldec.

The Emerson Quartet now returns for its second Ann Arbor appearance after its debut here in March 1989.

UMSCard

The Musical Society wishes to thank these Ann Arbor restaurants and stores for offering special savings to subscribers whose UMS ticket purchases total \$200 or more. *UMSCard* participants for the 1991-92 season are:

Amadeus Restaurant, 122 E. Washington

Kerrytown Bistro, 415 N. Fifth Ave.

Washington Street Station,
116 E. Washington

Gandy Dancer, 401 Depot Street
(one-time discount only)

L & S Music, 715 N. University

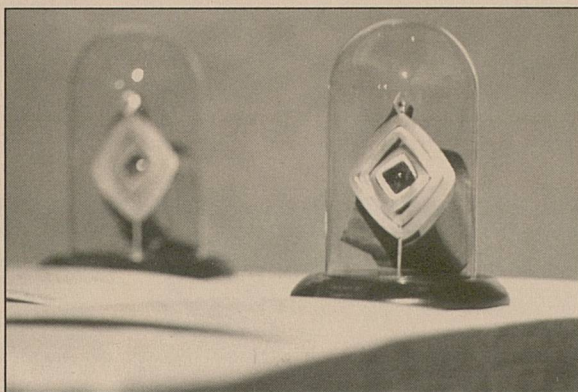
SKR Classical, 539 E. Liberty



The Emerson Quartet Accepts 1990 Grammy Award
Standing, left to right, David Finckel, cellist, Philip Setzer, violinist, Lawrence Dutton, violist; Seated, Eugene Drucker, violinist.

The University Musical Society is proud to accept The 1991 Governors' Arts Organization Award

This award honors the UMS for excellence and longevity in programming and presentation of outstanding national and international artists and events.



The Award — designed by Matthew C. Hoffmann

The Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan is dedicated to the belief that the arts must be a part of our everyday lives, both at work and at leisure. The Musical Society applauds this very worthy effort and mission. This CCAM Governors' Arts Award serves to promote and support the arts in Michigan as one of the state's most precious resources.

The University Musical Society is delighted to receive this award and appreciates the recognition of the UMS commitment to presenting the finest international artists of our time.

It is with the support of you, our patrons and contributors, that we have continued this tradition for 113 seasons.

We salute you!

**Seventh Annual Governors' Arts Awards
Ceremony and Dinner
ClubLand at the State Theatre
Detroit, Michigan
Monday, November 4, 1991**