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Faculty Chamber Music Recital: Ariadne String Quartet

Ariadne String Quartet

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ITHACA
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
FACULTY CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL

ARIADNE STRING QUARTET

Ellen Jewett, violin
Margaret Cooper, violin
Debra Moree, viola
Elizabeth Simkin, cello
with guests
Read Gainsford, piano
Roberta Crawford, viola

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, K. 493 (1786)  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegrro  
Larghetto  
Allegretto

Trio for violin, viola and cello (1933)  
Jean Francaix (1912-1997)

Allegretto vivo  
Scherzo  
Andante  
Rondo

INTERMISSION

Quintet No. 2 in G Major, opus 111 (1890)  
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo, ma con brio  
Adagio  
Un poco Allegretto  
Vivace, ma non troppo presto

New Recital Hall  
Sunday, November 14, 1999  
8:15 p.m.
Mozart Piano Quartet in E flat Major, K. 493 (1786)

Mozart was living in Vienna and Prague during the years 1785 to 1788, and during this time his fame as a composer and virtuoso pianist was at its pinnacle. His life was intensely busy and bustling, and the music from this time reflects this character.

Mozart was one of the first composers to write for piano quartet. He wrote a pair of them during the opening run of his opera *Figaro*, and just after the completion a set of six string quartets (K. 499, 546, 575, 589 and 590). The first piano quartet in g minor (K. 478) is ruminating, intense, and dusky, and is the antithesis of the later E-flat Major quartet. The K. 493 quartet is lyrical and expansive; chamber music in the truest sense of the word—consisting of independent and substantial string parts which balance a highly virtuosic piano score.

Francaix String Trio (1933)

A renowned French composer and accomplished pianist, Jean Francaix was born into a well-known family of musicians and received his first music lessons from his father. He was a prodigious child, and penned his first compositions at the age of six (*Pour Jacqueline and Piano Concertino*). As a teenager, he was enrolled in the Paris Conservatory where he won the premier prix in piano (1932), and studied composition with Nadia Boulanger. Francaix was a productive composer, writing some five operas, eleven ballets and a host of large and small scale instrumental and vocal works. As a piano virtuoso, he toured Europe and the United States regularly.

His music is infused with charm, wit and humor, offset by a sensuous and poetic lyricism. The writing is highly polished and classically reserved. Francaix claimed that early in his life he had absorbed all he needed to know about composition, and as a result his writing style changed little during his lifetime.

Brahms String Quintet in G Major, Opus 111 (1890)

Brahms originally conceived the G Major String Quintet, Opus 111, as his fifth symphony and final work, but eventually abandoned the idea because he felt his fifth symphony would never achieve the greatness of Beethoven’s. In the months preceding the completion of the quintet, Brahms experienced a persistent and looming sense of his own
impending mortality, so much so that he wrote his publisher saying, "The time has now come for you to say goodbye to any further compositions of mine." Haunted and yet urged on by the legacy of Beethoven, his choice of this particular composition as his final work is yet another link in the spiritual connection he felt with Beethoven. (Beethoven's last piano sonata is the Opus 111 and eerily, Brahms' G Major quintet was premiered on November 11, 1890.)

Brahms frequently sought peace and solitude in an exquisite spot in the Austrian countryside called Bad Ischl. It was here that he spent some of the most content and inspired periods of his life. The lay of the land was not unlike the beautiful Finger Lakes area, replete with rolling hills, distant vistas, dramatic gorges and peaceful lakes. The G Major Quintet was finished in this idyllic setting during the summer of 1890.

Debra Moree, 1999

About the performers

The Ariadne String Quartet was formed in 1994 by members of the string faculty of the Ithaca College School of Music. Violinists Ellen Jewett and Margaret Cooper, violist Debra Moree and cellist Elizabeth Simkin bring to the ensemble a broad and diverse background in chamber music which has taken them around the globe—from Poland to South Korea, New Zealand to Italy. Members have been heard in recent performances at the Tanglewood Music Center (Lenox, Massachusetts), the Festival of Two Worlds (Spoleto, Italy), the Killington Music Festival (Vermont) and the Chautauqua Center for the Arts (New York). Dedicated teachers as well, the members of the Ariadne String Quartet maintain large teaching studios at the Ithaca College School of Music and have had extensive and previous experience as faculty members at several universities and summer programs including the Interlochen Center for the Arts (Michigan), the Meadowmount School for Strings (New York) and the Tanglewood Young Artists Program (Lenox, Massachusetts).
Read Gainsford, piano, was born in New Zealand and pursued music studies at the Auckland University School of Music. He studied with New Zealand's top piano teachers, and while there won all of the main prizes available within New Zealand, including the National Concerto Competition and the 1984 Television New Zealand Young Musician of the Year. In 1985 he moved to London to study with Brigitte Wild, a protégé of Claudio Arrau. Soon after, he won a place at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied with Joan Havill, graduating with the Concert Recital Diploma (Premier Prix). He has won numerous competitions abroad and in 1989 he took first place in New York's East and West Artists Competition. Gainsford has performed in concert in the United States, throughout the United Kingdom, in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and was appointed to the Ithaca College School of Music faculty in 1997.

Violist, Roberta Crawford appears throughout the region as a soloist and chamber musician and is a founding member and associate director of the Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble. She has performed with the Catskill Chamber Players and in the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra Sunday Chamber Series, and is heard regularly in recital at Binghamton University. Ms. Crawford is a member of the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and has also played with the Portland and Syracuse Symphonies, as well numerous festivals including the Skaneateles Festival. An advocate of new music, Ms. Crawford has been a featured guest of Chiron New Music and has premiered works in many venues including Cami Hall and the Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York City. She has been a guest instructor at Phillips Academy and Ithaca College, as well as the Eastman School of Music where she received her masters degree and served as assistant to Heidi Castleman. Ms. Crawford is a faculty member at Binghamton University and is dedicated to working with young musicians. She is co-director of Music Studios in Ithaca and is frequently invited to adjudicate competitions and present master classes.