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MAY 2024



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**THE 35TH
RARITAN RIVER MUSIC FESTIVAL
PRESENTS**

DAEDALUS QUARTET

*Musical Portraits:
String Quartets Across the Centuries*

Saturday, May 4, 2023 at 7:30 PM

**Stanton Reformed Church
1 Stanton Mountain Rd., Stanton, NJ 08885**

More information and tickets:
www.RaritanRiverMusic.org

*Please visit www.RaritanRiverMusic.org
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THE PROGRAM

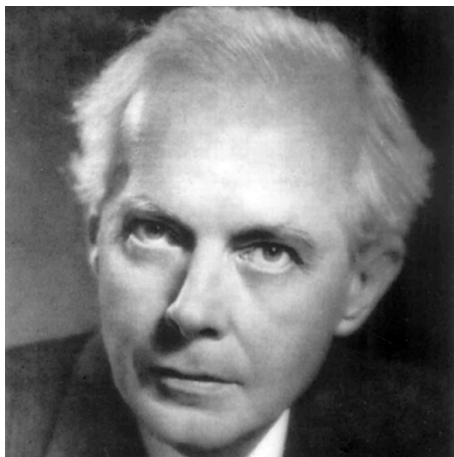


William Grant Still
Lyric Quartette (1960)



Andrew Davis
Deep Summer Folklore (2023)
NJ Premiere Performance

INTERMISSION



Béla Bartók

String Quartet No. 4 (1928)

I. Allegro

II. Prestissimo, con sordino

III. Non troppo lento

IV. Allegretto pizzicato

V. Allegro molto

*Following the concert, please join us for a
reception to meet the performers.*

Daedalus Quartet is represented by
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Photos of Daedalus Quartet by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

About Daedalus Quartet

Min-Young Kim and Matilda Kaul, violins

Jessica Thompson, viola

Thomas Kraines, cello

Praised by *The New Yorker* as “a fresh and vital young participant in what is a golden age of American string quartets,” the Daedalus Quartet has established itself as a leader among the new generation of string ensembles. Since winning the top prize in the Banff International String Quartet Competition in 2001, the Daedalus Quartet has impressed critics and listeners alike with the security, technical finish, interpretive unity, and sheer gusto of its performances. *The New York Times* has praised the Daedalus Quartet’s “insightful and vibrant” Haydn, the “impressive intensity” of their Beethoven, their “luminous” Berg, and the “riveting focus” of their Dutilleux. *The Washington Post* in turn has acclaimed their performance of Mendelssohn for its “rockets of blistering virtuosity,” while the *Houston Chronicle* has described the “silvery beauty” of their Schubert and the “magic that hushed the audience” when they played Ravel, the *Boston Globe* the “finesse and fury” of their Shostakovich, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* the “thrilling revelation” of their Hindemith, and the *Cincinnati Enquirer* the “tremendous emotional power” of their Brahms.

Since its founding the Daedalus Quartet has performed in many of the world’s leading musical venues; in the United States and Canada these include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center (Great Performers series), the Library of Congress, the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., and Boston’s Gardner Museum, as well as on major series in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Abroad the ensemble has been heard in such famed locations as the Musikverein in

Vienna, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Cité de la Musique in Paris, and in leading venues in Japan.

The Daedalus Quartet has won plaudits for its adventurous exploration of contemporary music, most notably the compositions of Elliott Carter, George Perle, György Kurtág and György Ligeti. Among the works the ensemble has premiered is Huck Hodge's *The Topography of Desire*, commissioned by the Fromm Foundation; David Horne's *Flight from the Labyrinth*, commissioned for the Quartet by the Caramoor Festival; Lawrence Dillon's String Quartet No. 4, commissioned by the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts; and Fred Lerdahl's Third String Quartet, commissioned by Chamber Music America, as well as Lerdahl's Chaconne, commissioned by New Music USA.

The Quartet has also collaborated with some of the world's finest instrumentalists: these include pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Simone Dinnerstein, Awadagin Pratt, Joyce Yang, and Benjamin Hochman; Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo; clarinetists Paquito D'Rivera, Ricardo Morales, and Alexander Fiterstein; and violists Roger Tapping and Donald Weilerstein.

To date the Quartet has forged associations with some of America's leading classical music and educational institutions: Carnegie Hall, through its European Concert Hall Organization (ECHO) Rising Stars program; and Lincoln Center, which appointed the Daedalus Quartet as the Chamber Music Society Two quartet for 2005-07. The Daedalus Quartet has served as Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Pennsylvania since 2006. In 2007, the Quartet was awarded Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award. The Quartet won Chamber Music America's Guarneri String Quartet Award,

which funded a three-year residency in Suffolk County, Long Island from 2007-2010.

The Daedalus' most recent recording, for Bridge Records, features the string quartets of George Perle, and has been described as "disc with some unforgettable contemporary chamber music" (Classical Lost and Found), and the Strad Magazine praised the quartet's "exemplary intonation and balance." In the spring of 2014, the Daedalus Quartet recorded Joan Tower's "White Water" (written for Daedalus) as well as her "Dumbarton Quintet" (with pianist Blair McMillen). The quartet's debut recording, music of Stravinsky, Sibelius, and Ravel, was released by Bridge Records in 2006. A Bridge recording of the Haydn's complete "Sun" Quartets, Op. 20, was released on two CDs in July 2010. An album of chamber music by Lawrence Dillon (Fall 2010) and the complete string quartets of Fred Lerdahl (Fall 2011) followed.

The award-winning members of the Daedalus Quartet hold degrees from the Juilliard School, Curtis Institute, Cleveland Institute, and Harvard University.

About Composer Andrew Davis

Andrew Davis is a composer and electric guitarist from Boston, MA who has written for a variety of media both acoustic and electroacoustic. Davis' early experiences in music were in local concert bands where he played trombone and in rock bands where he played electric guitar. Fused with a strong background in popular music, his music seeks to explore a variety of different genres and musical aesthetics.

His works have been performed by groups such as the JACK Quartet, PRISM Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, Daedalus

Quartet, the Argento Ensemble, loadbang, the Boston New Music Initiative, the Luna Nova Ensemble, the University of Texas Wind Ensemble, the Yale Concert Band, the Florida State Wind Ensemble, and the University of Texas New Music Ensemble. He has received honors from ASCAP, BMI, The Lyra Society, and ISCM-Texas among others. Additionally, his music has been heard at a variety of festivals including the TUTTI Festival, RED NOTE Music Festival, Mizzou New Music International Composers Festival, New Music on the Point, and SEAMUS. He has held residencies at Atlantic Center for the Arts and ACRE.

He earned a B.A. in music from Yale University, an M.M. in composition from the University of Texas at Austin in 2012, a PhD in composition from the University of Pennsylvania in 2017, and M.S. in computer science from Stanford University in 2018. He currently teaches at Ursinus College.



About the music

William Grant Still Lyric Quartette (1960)

Though regarded principally as a composer of large orchestral works, ballets, and operas, or even more generally as “the dean of Afro-American composers” - a label which tells us more about the public’s need to categorize and rank artists than it does about his works or personality - William Grant Still composed a significant body of chamber music as well. Still had studied violin as a child, and taught himself cello, among other instruments; while studying medicine at Wilberforce University, he formed a string quartet and arranged music for the group to play. Throughout his life, Still would return to smaller-form ensemble writing, and while these pieces do not compare in ambition and scope with his works for orchestra, they offer a fascinating insight into his artistic persona.

Still’s life covered a wide swath of the American musical scene: after studying composition at briefly Oberlin, he enlisted in the navy during World War I and played violin for the officer’s mess on the USS Kroonland; he moved to New York City in 1919 at the onset of the Harlem Renaissance where he arranged music for W. C. Handy, Eubie Blake, and Paul Whiteman (his orchestration of James P. Johnson’s music for the show *Runnin’ Wild* introduced the Charleston craze), and studied in Boston with the conservative George Chadwick and the avant-garde Edgard Varèse. In 1934, Still, having received a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation to compose the opera *Blue Steel*, moved to Los Angeles, where he remained for the rest of his life.

The *Lyric Quartette* is subtitled “Musical Portraits of Three Friends.” It’s unclear who these friends are, but their characters emerge vividly in these beautiful pieces. All three movements show a confident command of melodic shape, musical form, and textural variety; melodies and countermelodies emerge and converse with charm and clarity, and no instrument is relegated exclusively to a single role in the texture. The first movement, “The Sentimental One,” is the most distinctly “American” of the three; the opening theme in particular evokes the tradition of the spiritual or perhaps the cowboy song. The second movement, “The Quiet One,” is apparently based on an Incan melody, and the rollicking, playful music of “The Jovial One” conveys some characteristics of an eastern European dance as it might have been composed by Bartók or Janáček. This stylistic inclusiveness was important to Still; the diversity of his formative experiences led him to advocate for what he called a “universal idiom,” drawing inspiration from the plethora of sources that make up the musical landscape. In a 1955 letter to the scholar Richard Bardolph, Still wrote, “when we all awaken to the fact that each group has something important and worthwhile to contribute to the culture of the entire country, then we will have a society that is well integrated – in which all of us will be working for the common good.”

Andrew Davis
Deep Summer Folklore (2023)

I wrote *Deep Summer Folklore* over the summer of 2023 for my friends in the Daedalus Quartet. At the time, I had been thinking about the relationship between instruments and genre. What kind of music do we hear when we think of a particular instrument? Something like the oboe feels firmly rooted in Classical music, for instance. But string instruments, especially the violin, occupy several spaces. The violin has an

incredibly rich history in Classical music, but it is also an important folk instrument and crossed over into other genres such as blues, hip hop, and rock. This piece taps into the stylistic eclecticism of string instruments, borrowing elements from multiple types of music. The folk and rock influences are quite strong and overt, and several of the parts were written on electric guitar initially. These varied elements all coalesce – hopefully – to form a driving and effervescent piece that goes through various distinct but related sections. I am incredibly thankful to the Daedalus Quartet whose thoughtful consideration and comments helped bring this piece to life.

Béla Bartók

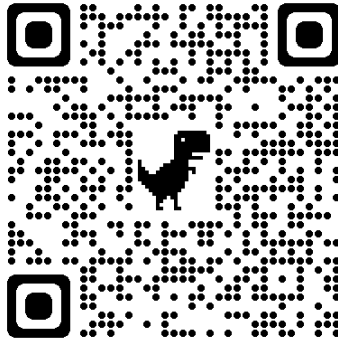
String Quartet No. 4 (1928)

Béla Bartók's *String Quartet No. 4*, written in 1928, is one of his most progressive and dissonant works, and also one of his most intense and satisfying. It is a perfectly structured work: the five movements of the quartet form an arch in which the first and fifth movements are related allegros in sonata form, the second and fourth movements are related scherzos, and the slow third movement functions as the keystone of the arch. The related movements share thematic material and also balance each other in dramatic effect. The first and fifth movements are both strong, powerful, large scale movements, while the second and fourth movements are lighter and provide relief from the overall intensity of the work.

The emotional centerpiece of the quartet is the third movement, which Bartók described as the “kernel of the work.” The movement is in ABA' form, mirroring the larger arch formed by the work as a whole. The opening section is an extended cello solo in a recitative style with a strong folk element. The other three instruments hold chords underneath

the cello line, alternating between vibrato and non-vibrato, creating an eerie effect, meant to evoke the night and its colors and sounds. The cello solo is followed by bird like trills in the first violin, *tremolando* in all the voices, often played on the bridge, creating an insect like effect, and then a stentorian outburst from the second violin. The music winds down and we return to the opening material, now in the form of a dialogue between cello and first violin.

On either side of the third movement are the scherzos, the first of which is incredibly fleet and played with mutes, creating a hushed effect. The fourth movement, played entirely pizzicato, is folksy and full of unusual effects, including Bartók's first use of the snap pizzicato, a device which is familiarly known to string players as the "Bartók pizz." The first and fifth movements are complete contrasts from their neighboring movements. The first is very muscular and grounded. Right from the outset of the piece, Bartók shows his complete mastery of the quartet medium in how he plays the voices off of each other, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in four separate parts, often in canon. It is an incredibly rich dialogue-argument between four equal partners. The final movement has the most driving rhythms and an almost ferocious intensity, all the more effective after the humorous close of the pizzicato movement which precedes it.



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UPCOMING CONCERTS 35TH RARITAN RIVER MUSIC FESTIVAL



**Hot Club of Philadelphia
(violin, bass, guitars, vocals)**

In Django's Footsteps: Paris, 1935

**Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 7:30 PM
Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Pittstown (Grandin), NJ**



Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo
Feat. Celil Refik Kaya and João Luiz, guitars
More Music from Raritan River:
New Commissions plus Leo Brouwer 85th Celebration

Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 7:30 PM
Historic Hunterdon County Courthouse,
Flemington, NJ



Manhattan Chamber Players
Brahms & Dvořák: Titans of the Romantic Era
Saturday, May 25, 2024 at 7:30 PM
Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church, Stewartsville, NJ

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May is National Chamber Music Month
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