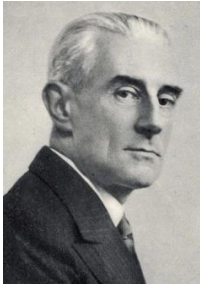


2022 Preview Notes • Week One • Persons Auditorium

Saturday, July 16 at 8 pm



Chansons madécasses (1925-6)

Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, 1875 (Ciboure, France)

Died December 28, 1937 (Paris)

Duration: approx. 13 minutes

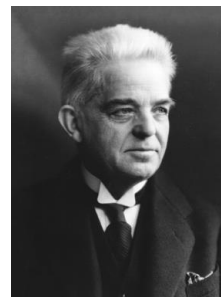
Last Marlboro performance: 2011

In late 1925, Ravel found himself in the midst of final rehearsals for the premiere of his opera *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. Thus, in late December of that year, he wrote an apologetic letter to the American pianist and patroness of music, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864-1953), explaining the delay in his completion of a commission she had made of him: a setting of “Madagascan Songs” for mezzo-soprano, flute, cello, and piano. All anxieties to the contrary, and despite the stress of a Northern European tour Ravel undertook in early 1926, the *Chansons madécasse* were completed and premiered a short five months later in Rome.

Named after an eponymously titled poetry collection by the late eighteenth-century poet Évariste de Parly, the *Chansons madécasse* are thought to be the first prose poems to be composed in French. Dedicated to Coolidge, the work consists of three movements: I. “Nahandove,” II. “Aoau!” and III. “Il est doux”. As the title of the cycle suggests, Parly’s Madagascan Songs are exoticist in nature, portraying intimate scenes of longing and desire in the cycle’s outer movements. Responding to the relatively explicit material of the first movement, “Nahandove”, Ravel undergirds the visceral poetry with subtle and transparent instrumental textures that communicate the lyrical subject’s rapturous praise of his lover. The second movement, which begins with the exclamation of pain, “ouch!”, speaks in a cautioning tone, the poetic subject warning his audience to “beware of white men” and describing colonial scenes of exploitation and violence. Ravel responds sensitively to these texts, painting an unstable, dissonant world in the middle movement. Finally, in “Il est doux” [It is sweet], a Lento tempo sets a meandering, contemplative tone. The flute and cello exchange modally-inflected solos, which accompany the voice as she sings of the transition from day to night, the moon rising—almost ominously—over the sensual scene. The *Chansons madécasse* have been a favorite at Marlboro over the years: their first appearance on a Marlboro program occurred in 1955, with baritone Martial Singher,

flautist Marcel Moyse, cellist Yuan Tung, and pianist Claude Frank, and tonight’s performance marks their nineteenth sounding at the festival.

Participants: Eira Huse, *mezzo-soprano*; Marina Piccinini, *flute/piccolo*; Oliver Herbert, *cello*; Ariel Lanyi, *piano*



Wind Quintet, Op. 43 (1922)

Carl Nielsen

Born June 9, 1865 (Sortelung, Denmark)

Died October 3, 1931 (Copenhagen)

Duration: approx. 25 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2016

In 1922, while living in Gothenburg, Sweden, the Danish composer Carl Nielsen composed his *Kvintet for Flöte, Obo, Klarinet, Horn og Fagot*, a three-movement work that over the twentieth century became a staple of the wind quintet repertoire. Tonight’s performance marks its seventh appearance on a Marlboro program; its first was in 1956. Nielsen’s woodwind quintet received its premiere at the Gothenburg home of Herman and Lisa Mannheimer, and six months later was given its first public performance at a small hall in Copenhagen, the Odd Fellows Mansion. Nielsen was inspired by hearing the Copenhagen Wind Quintet rehearsing Mozart’s *Sinfonia Concertante for Four Winds* (K. 297b), and one can hear traces of Mozart in the work’s mixing of neo-classical and modernist styles.

Melodic material reminiscent of Mozart is found alongside a musical language inspired by the natural world: different bird calls are passed around the ensemble, singing a vibrant yet pastoral dialogue, in the quintet’s first movement, marked *Allegro ben moderato*. A lilting duet in triple meter between the clarinet and bassoon opens the *Menuet*, the middle movement of the quintet. The flute and oboe then respond in kind with their own duet, the horn being used only sparingly in this movement, allowing the player to rest. The simple nature of the neo-classical writing is contrasted in the Trio, which presents a dense and imitative texture that is far more chromatic than the simpler harmonic language with which the movement began. The work concludes with an idiosyncratic final movement composed of a harmonically adventurous and virtuosic *Præludium*, followed by a theme and variations form. The almost exuberant modernism of the *Præludium*

is rebuked by the placid classicism with which the *Tema con variazioni* begins, the thematic material reminiscent of the Mozartian opening of the work's first movement. A series of eleven variations follow, which provide ample opportunity for Nielsen to showcase not only the virtuosity of each quintet member but his own compositional and stylistic breadth. After the soloistic nature of the variations, the return to the theme's chorale-like quality at the conclusion of the work provides a sense of closure and a return to the calm, pastoral world with which the movement began.

Participants: Marina Piccinini, *flute*; Kate Wegener, *oboe/cor anglaise*; Víctor Díaz Guerra, *clarinet*; Nelson Ricardo Yovera Perez, *horn*; Jake Thonis, *bassoon*



Piano Quintet in F Minor (1879)

César Franck

Born December 10, 1822 (Lüttich, the Netherlands)

Died November 8, 1890 (Paris)

Duration: approx. 35 minutes

Last Marlboro performance: 2012

Franck composed the Piano Quintet in F Minor in 1879 during a period in his life that has been described as an apex in his compositional output: during the last fifteen years of Franck's life, he produced works for which he is known today, such as the Symphony in D Minor, his String Quartet and his perhaps most popular composition, the Violin Sonata (also well-beloved in its transcription for

cello). For its premiere performance, Camille Saint-Saëns, to whom Franck dedicated the work, joined the Marsick String Quartet at the piano. A scandal, however, erupted when Saint-Saëns walked off stage at the conclusion of the performance, leaving the score open on the piano. Despite Saint-Saëns' seeming disdain, the Quintet has enjoyed enduring popularity, in particular for its expansive and emotionally turbulent nature.

The Quintet is composed of three movements. The "Molto moderato quasi lento," with which the work begins, provides an alternately explosive and brooding introduction to the Allegro. In this expansive sonata form, the piano is often placed in dialogue with the string quartet, continuing the passionate character of the movement's introduction. The middle movement of the Quintet, marked *Lento con molto sentimento*, moves from the work's home key of F minor to A minor. This key shares only one common tone with the work's tonal center, thus representing a harmonically quite distant space. Set in 12/8, this second movement is pensive, expressing an elegiac nature. For the work's finale, Franck reprises thematic material from the opening Allegro. The final movement is labeled *Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco* and opens with a devilish, repeating sixteenth note figure, that in its relentless insistence creates a foreboding atmosphere as it is passed amongst all string instruments. After a fiery and harmonically adventurous allegro-finale, the Quintet culminates in a dramatic coda, whose frenetic energy belies the sunnier key of F major, in which the work concludes.

Participants: Evren Ozel, *piano*; Claire Bourg & Rubén Rengel, *violins*; Natalie Loughran, *viola*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*

2022 Preview Notes • Week One • Persons Auditorium

Sunday, July 17 at 2:30pm



String Quartet in D Major Op. 76,
No. 5, Hob. III:79 (1797)
Joseph Haydn
Born March 31, 1732 (Rohrau, Austria)
Died May 31, 1809 (Vienna, Austria)
Duration: approx. 19 minutes
Last Marlboro performance: 2017

The Opus 76 string quartets represent the last complete set of quartets that Haydn composed, and were written between 1796 and 1797 and published in 1800. That very same year, a young Beethoven finished his own first set of quartets, his Opus 18, while a 65-year-old Haydn was essentially retired from service to the Esterhazy family, esteemed and admired after his decades of work and two successful tours in England. Commissioned by a nobleman connoisseur, Georg von Erdödy, the quartets of Op. 76 represent a remarkable peak in Haydn's career as well as a touchstone for all future quartet composers. Each of the six quartets of Op. 76 has its own nickname, and Quartet Number 5, a four-movement work, receives its nickname from its second movement, a particularly affecting slow movement, marked *Largo. Cantabile e mesto*. Considered one of the most beautiful movements ever written by Haydn, it conceals a melancholic surprise: what might initially seem like a contradiction, with the opening statement, *singing and melancholy*, but with such a fresh and heartfelt *incipit*, the movement slowly darkens into a minor key, creating a magical musical *chiaroscuro*. While the most recent Marlboro performance of this quartet occurred in 2017, tonight's performance is only the fourth time that it has been programmed in the festival's history.

Participants: Lun Li & Cherry Choi Tung Yeung, *violins*;
Yuchen Lu, *viola*; Marcy Rosen, *cello*



An die ferne Geliebte, Op. 98
Ludwig van Beethoven
Born December 17, 1770
(Bonn, Germany)
Died March 26, 1827 (Vienna, Austria)
Duration: approx. 14 minutes
Last Marlboro performance: 2016

While known primarily for his instrumental music, Beethoven was in fact a lover of the voice and actively followed the developments of Vienna's rich literary-philosophical scene, attending lectures by the young Schlegels and avidly reading local magazines and literary almanacs. Beethoven composed for the voice throughout

his life; however, he wrote only one song cycle: *An die ferne Geliebte* (*To the distant beloved*), which was written in April of 1816, a turbulent period in his life. It was in 1812 that Beethoven wrote his famous letter to his "Immortal Beloved" and in the following years, Beethoven also found himself in the midst of a bitter custody battle for his nephew Karl and, in 1815, gave his final piano concert, his hearing having deteriorated to such a degree that public performance was no longer feasible. The through-composed *An die ferne Geliebte* consists of six movements, which set texts by the Viennese physician and amateur poet Alois Isidor Jeitteles. Beethoven may have commissioned the text, which expresses themes of longing for a distant lover. Unlike Schubert's later song cycles, *An die ferne Geliebte* does not tell a chronological tale. Beethoven referred to the work, in fact, as a "Liederkreis," literally a song "circle," anticipating a similar cyclical treatment of narrative time in Robert Schumann's later *Liederkreis* Op. 39, or *Dichterliebe* Op. 48.

Folksong is a dominant element in *An die ferne Geliebte*, which opens with a simple melodic phrase, as the tenor sings of how he sits upon a hill, gazing into the distance, where he first found his beloved ("I sit on the hill, gazing"). The sublime presence of nature surrounds the narrator as he sings of his inner torment; he communes, for instance, in the third and fourth songs ("Easy sailors on high" and "These clouds on high"), with the birds, the glittering voice of the piano representing first the babbling brook, later the twittering birds and wisping clouds, carried by the soft west wind. With the final text, "Accept, then, these songs," the simple, folk-like quality, with which the work began, returns, as the lover implores his beloved to accept this songful offering of his love. In the work's finale, Beethoven recapitulates the cycle's melodic material in the same key, E-flat major, effecting the closure of the "circle" or "ring" (*Kreis*) and emphasizing the symbolism of the circle, which might be taken literally as a ring, as well metaphorically as representing the immortality the beloved and the poet's love. Tonight's performance of *An die ferne Geliebte* is a rare occurrence in the history of Marlboro: it is only the third time the work has been sung at the festival, most recently in 2016.

Participants: Daniel McGrew, *tenor*; Ignat Solzhenitsyn, *piano*



Six Bagatelles, Op. 9 (1911/1913)
Anton Webern
 Born December 3, 1883 (Vienna, Austria)
 Died Sept. 15, 1945 (Mittersill, Austria)
 Duration: approx. 5 minutes
 Last Marlboro performance: 2013

When Webern composed his *Six Bagatelles for String Quartet* in 1911/1913, he had garnered quite a lot of experience writing for the ensemble, having already composed the *Langsamer Satz* (1905), the *String Quartet* (1905), and the *Fünf Sätze für Streichquartett* Op. 5 (1909). By the Op. 5 “Five Pieces for String Quartet” Webern had already departed from the earlier late-Romantic style that is characteristic of his own, as well as of his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg’s musical language at the turn of the twentieth century. The *Six Bagatelles* take the sparse, free atonal world of Op. 5 even further: the work takes less than five minutes to perform and each of its six musical aphorisms are composed with an exquisite concentration and economy of gesture. They are labelled “bagatelles,” a French term for a “trifle” or “triviality;” it was Beethoven who first used the term in a musical context, writing a series of bagatelles for solo piano that were, despite their title, experimental in nature. With Op. 9, Webern takes up Beethoven’s mantle, likewise using the brevity of the form to push against the boundaries of the string quartet genre. Though forward thinking in aesthetic, Webern writes with clear knowledge and indebtedness to the past, and in his portrayal of an intimate discourse between the four voices of the quartet, one can hear traces of Haydn, his Viennese predecessor and so-called father of the genre.

Each of the six movements of the quartet are marked with German-language tempi markings, as is typical of Second Viennese approaches to score writing. The first movement, marked *mäßig* or “moderate,” is suffused with pointillistic gesture and movement; Webern staggers the entry of each voice, moving upwards in register from the cello to the violin. After the first muted, gently swelling gestures of each entry, the legato texture is suddenly broken with the insistent staccato sixteenth-notes of the viola, which are made all the more haunting by the gesture’s articulation at the bridge, creating a raspy, metallic sound. Each of the six movements build their own respective worlds with a diversity of timbral and textural changes in the brief space of between 30 and 75 seconds, the work finding its emotional center in the devastatingly tender fifth movement, marked *Äußerst langsam* (Extremely slow) and performed in a dynamic range between *ppp* and *pp*. Schoenberg once wrote of Webern that he was able to “convey a novel through a single gesture, or felicity by a single catch of the breath.” In the *Six Bagatelles*, these fleeting, often nearly inaudible

glimmers of sound draw the ear in, inviting one to grasp the meaning of each intertwining voice, each glance, every movement, the slightest of which, as Webern demonstrates, can contain a world. Tonight’s performance is only the sixth time that the *Six Bagatelles* has been performed at Marlboro.

Participants: Anna Göckel & Stephanie Zyzak, *violin*; Hsin-Yun Huang, *viola*; Chase Park, *cello*



Spanisches Liederspiel, Op. 74 (1849)
Robert Schumann
 Born June 8, 1810 (Zwickau, Germany)
 Died July 29, 1856 (Bonn, Germany)
 Duration: approx. 21 minutes
 Last Marlboro performance: 2018

Robert Schumann’s late song cycle for vocal quartet and piano, the *Spanisches Liederspiel*, Op. 74, sets translations of Spanish texts by the popular German poet Emanuel Geibel (whose texts were also set by Felix Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Wolf). With his *Spanisches Liederspiel*, Schumann experimented with the genre of the song cycle, hoping to create a new genre, literally a “song play,” which would contain different constellations of solo and ensemble writing. It can be seen as representative of a distinctly *Biedermeier* period in Schumann’s life, during which he strove to compose works that were educational, intimate, and convivial: the epitome of house music (*Hausmusik*).

In the ten movements that make up the *Spiel*, the text tells the story of two lovers, who first in the fourth movement find each other. In the three introductory duets, the two women and two men speak of love separately from each other: first the women, in the opening duet, *Erste Begegnung* (First Meeting), then the men in the second movement, the *Intermezzo*, upon which the women reply with the duet, *Liebesgram* (Love’s Sorrow), whose tone turns darkly melancholic as they express the desire for self-annihilation brought about by unrequited love. After these opening duets, movements of solo (such as the sixth movement, *Melancholie*, for soprano), duet (*Botschaft*, for soprano and mezzo-soprano) or quartet-constellations follow, allowing for dynamic contrasts in style and content. The final movement of the work is set for the full quartet, *Ich bin geliebt* (I am loved), bringing all voices together to conclude the work with a jovial tone, in which the lovers sing, in contrarian spirit, “Let all evil tongues always say what they like: Whoever loves me I love back, and I know that I am loved”!

Participants: Sara LeMesh, *soprano*; Marie Engle, *mezzo-soprano*; Daniel McGrew, *tenor*; Jarrett Porter, *baritone*; Jonathan Biss, *piano*