

**THE BRENTANO STRING
QUARTET**

**MARK STEINBERG, VIOLIN
SERENA CANIN, VIOLIN
MISHA AMORY, VIOLA
NINA MARIA LEE, CELLO**

**GUEST ARTIST SERIES
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2008 • 7:30 PM
KATZIN CONCERT HALL**

MUSIC

 **Herberger College**
of the **Arts**

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Program

Final Contrapunctus
from *The Art of Fugue*

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Quijotadas for string quartet

Gabriela Lena Frank
(b. 1972)

- I. Alborada
- II. Seguidilla
- III. Moto Perpetuo: La Locura de Quijote
- IV. Asturianada: La Cueva
- V. La Danza de los Arrieros

*This work was commissioned by Music Accord, Inc. expressly for the
Brentano String quartet*

****There will be a 10 minute intermission****

Five Movements, Op 5

Anton von Webern
(1883-1945)

- Heftig bewegt
- Sehr langsam
- Sehr bewegt
- Sehr langsam
- In zarter Bewegung

String Quartet in B-flat major,
KV 589

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

- Allegro
- Larghetto
- Menuetto (Moderato)
- Allegro assai

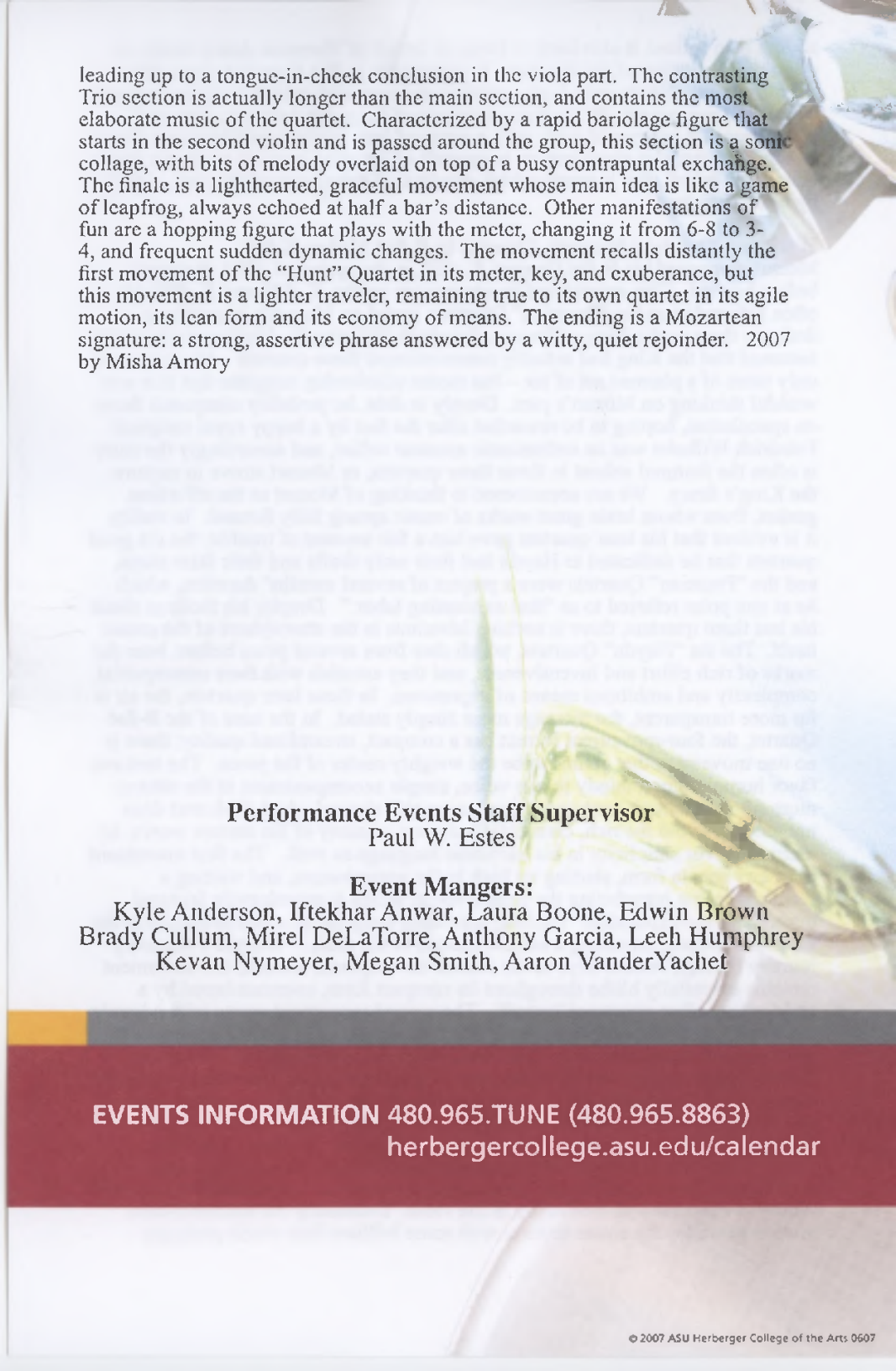
The Brentano String Quartet appears by arrangement with
David Rowe Artists, Marblehead, MA
The Brentano String Quartet record for AEON
(distributed by Harmonia Mundi USA)
www.brentanoquartet.com

Out of respect for the performers and those audience members around you,
please turn all beepers, cell phones and watches to their silent mode. Thank you.

all that is to follow. It also hints at times at the lilt of Viennese dance music, so often representative of the life force to composers in this time and place. Here the music has a lonely cast, both nostalgic and regretful, which is taken up again in the final movement. By the final moments of the piece a woozy, distorted waltz becomes heavy and dark, with a sense of loss. Webern told his close friend Alban Berg that this piece was an outgrowth of his grief over his mother's death; eloquently bereft, this is music which speaks to the shadows of the soul. 2005
by Mark Steinberg

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Quartet in B-flat Major, K 589

Mozart composed his B-flat Quartet, K. 589, in the spring of 1790, the year before he died. This quartet and its companion works, K. 575 and K. 590, are often referred to as the "Prussian" Quartets, based on Mozart's intention to dedicate them to the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II. Until recently it was assumed that the King had actually commissioned these quartets – Mozart wrote only three of a planned set of six – but recent scholarship suggests that this was wishful thinking on Mozart's part. Deeply in debt, he probably composed them on speculation, hoping to be rewarded after the fact by a happy royal recipient. Friedrich Wilhelm was an enthusiastic amateur cellist, and accordingly the cello is often the featured soloist in these three quartets, as Mozart strove to capture the King's fancy. We are accustomed to thinking of Mozart as the effortless genius, from whose brain great works of music sprang fully formed. In reality, it is evident that his later quartets gave him a fair amount of trouble: the six great quartets that he dedicated to Haydn had their early drafts and their false starts, and the "Prussian" Quartets were a project of several months' duration, which he at one point referred to as "that exhausting labor." Despite his feelings about his last three quartets, there is nothing laborious in the atmosphere of the music itself. The six "Haydn" Quartets, which date from several years before, bear the marks of rich effort and inventiveness, and they astonish with their contrapuntal complexity and ambitious means of expression. In these later quartets, the air is far more transparent, the message more simply stated. In the case of the B-flat Quartet, the four-movement format has a compact, streamlined quality; there is no one movement that claims to be the weighty center of the piece. The textures favor homophony (melody in one voice, simple accompaniment in the others) more often, although contrapuntal passages still abound. And if Mozart does not entirely avoid the rich, chromatic harmony of many of his mature works, he seems to favor simplicity in his harmonic language as well. The first movement is an airy sonata form, starting up high in the upper voices, and waiting a few bars before introducing the cello's voice, which is prominently featured throughout the exposition. Triplets, appearing early on, proceed to dominate the rhythmic texture, imparting a nimble motion to the music. Despite a shadowy journey through remote keys in the central development section, the movement remains essentially blithe throughout its compact form, unencumbered by a coda or any other structural "extra". The second movement opens with a lovely cantilena for the cello, with a simple accompaniment; it is hard to imagine a more perfect showcase for this instrument's lyrical upper register. After this melody is echoed by the first violin, swirling sixteenth-note figurations carry the music to a different key and to the other melodic idea of the movement, a grave and elegant statement passed between first violin and cello. The movement as a whole evokes the composer's finest love arias from Figaro and The Magic Flute. The minuet movement is a stately dance, which attempts to proceed with dignity, but is chuckled at by sixteenth-notes in the lower instruments, first loudly in the cello and then softly in the viola. Eventually the sixteenth-note motion pervades the entire texture, with some brilliant first-violin passages



leading up to a tongue-in-cheek conclusion in the viola part. The contrasting Trio section is actually longer than the main section, and contains the most elaborate music of the quartet. Characterized by a rapid bariolage figure that starts in the second violin and is passed around the group, this section is a sonic collage, with bits of melody overlaid on top of a busy contrapuntal exchange. The finale is a lighthearted, graceful movement whose main idea is like a game of leapfrog, always echoed at half a bar's distance. Other manifestations of fun are a hopping figure that plays with the meter, changing it from 6-8 to 3-4, and frequent sudden dynamic changes. The movement recalls distantly the first movement of the "Hunt" Quartet in its meter, key, and exuberance, but this movement is a lighter traveler, remaining true to its own quartet in its agile motion, its lean form and its economy of means. The ending is a Mozartean signature: a strong, assertive phrase answered by a witty, quiet rejoinder. 2007 by Misha Amory

Performance Events Staff Supervisor
Paul W. Estes

Event Mangers:

Kyle Anderson, Iftekhar Anwar, Laura Boone, Edwin Brown
Brady Cullum, Mirel DeLaTorre, Anthony Garcia, Leeh Humphrey
Kevan Nymeyer, Megan Smith, Aaron VanderYacht

EVENTS INFORMATION 480.965.TUNE (480.965.8863)
herbergercollege.asu.edu/calendar

Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach: Final Contrapunctus from The Art of Fugue

With the Art of Fugue, a veritable Bible of fugal techniques and expression, Bach produced a monumental edifice. (The idea of fugue, for the uninitiated, is that of a musical form which deals with a number of voices all discoursing on shared thematic material, a "subject," in much the same way debates focus on a subject.) A compilation of fugues based on a single subject (and its variations), the Art of Fugue seems to be an exhaustive study of the possibilities of the form, a composer testing his mettle, expanding his horizons. It has long been debated whether the work is in fact a study, theoretical or conceptual, never meant to be performed. Were it meant to be performed there is much speculation on what instrumentation was intended; is it a keyboard work, a work for a consort of like instruments, for a broken consort, a vocal group? The piece is written in "open score" – on four staves, one per part, with no other indications. There is much room for discussion, for scholarly musings and musicological excavation. What is clear to us is that this is a golden treasure trove of riveting musical rhetoric, elevated, intricately woven round-table discussions which make for an engaging concert experience. It is music for which we have a deep love and which we feel we can bring to life effectively through the medium of the string quartet. The Art of Fugue as a whole forms a sort of treatise comprising a set of discussions related to a common theme. Imagine hosting a series of fascinating evenings devoted to discoursing on politics, or a specific political problem, dealing with one main insight on each such evening. In much the same way as such a series of evening sessions would, we find that this set of fugues exhibits a certain shared "aboutness," rooted in descent from a common fugue subject. Sometimes other, secondary subjects are brought in to comment on and shed light on the first (such as in Contrapunctus XI, which has two additional subjects), or a theme is turned upside down to be viewed from a new angle (Contrapuncti IV, VI and XI), or it is stated rather more slowly or quickly in order to lend it a different weight (Contrapunctus VII). Parts support or challenge one another. All these are familiar concepts to anyone who has been engaged in fruitful debate, and make for stimulating repartee. Such a mammoth achievement from the great composer's last days comes to us only incomplete, as the final fugue (Contrapunctus XVIII) trails off unended, thus inviting romantic speculation. There is the most likely apocryphal story of Bach dying as he dictated the final fugue, having just incorporated his own name as a musical cipher into the fabric of the piece. Of all the parts of the Art of Fugue, this final, unfinished fugue is the lengthiest, even truncated as it is, and arguably the loftiest as well. Alone in this work it does not feature the subject common to all the other fugues, although its first subject can be understood as a variation on it. Instead it features fugal writing on three different subjects that get intertwined as the piece progresses. The third of these subjects is Bach's own name, spelled out in pitches (H being the German signifier of our B-natural) as if he were signing his own piece. Just after the integration of all three themes the piece breaks off. It has been shown, however, that these themes can all be combined with a fourth, the fourth being the principal subject of the entire Art of Fugue, thus gloriously contextualizing this much mused-on subject as the crowning achievement of the entire work. Without the final section, the main subject remains implied, its aura having been fully illuminated. It is rather like figuring out who a man is through his influence on others, or learning the story of the life of Jesus through the accounts of competing gospels. We are able to arrive at the fullest truth of the subject by encountering its reflections in other themes that fit with it. And although I would give (almost) anything to know the rest of this

beautiful, haunting piece, I also believe that as it stands it makes a moving and powerful statement. It is the torso of a magnificent, powerful ancient sculpture, and we apprehend it even without direct knowledge of its entirety. 2007 by Mark Steinberg

Gabriela Lena Frank: "Quijotadas"

Quijotadas (2007) for string quartet is inspired by *El Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616). Widely considered the birth of the modern novel, this tale satirizes post-Conquest Spain by relating the story of a middle-aged lesser nobleman who undertakes absurd adventures in pursuit of romantic — and seriously outdated— knightly ideals. Cervantes' brilliant and colorful social commentary still reverberates for us today. Quijotadas, which is Spanish for extravagant delusions wrought in the Quixotic spirit, is in five movements. They are: I. Alborada: Traditionally a Spanish song of welcome or beginnings, this is in the style of music for the chifro, a small high-pitched wooden panpipe played with one hand. It is often employed by a traveling guild worker to announce his services as he walks through the streets of town. II. Seguidilla: This free interpretation of the spirited dance rhythms of Don Quijote's homeland of La Mancha also evokes two typical instruments — The six-stringed guitar, and its older cousin, the bandurria, which finds its origins in Renaissance Spain. III. Moto Perpetuo: La Locura de Quijote: This movement is inspired by an early chapter in the novel that describes Don Quijote sequestering himself in his hacienda, reading nothing but novels of chivalry, the pulp fiction of his time. The teasing promises of grandeur make him dizzy and he eventually goes mad. IV. Asturianada: La Cueva: The style of this traditional mountain song (whereby a young male singer issues forth calls that rise and fall with great emotion and strength) is used to paint a portrait of the Cave of Montesinos. In an important episode of the novel, Don Quijote fantasizes about the legendary hero Montesinos trapped under enchantment in a highland cave. V. La Danza de los Arrieros: Throughout the tale, Don Quijote constantly rubs up against arrieros (muleteers) who, for Cervantes, are the embodiment of reality in contrast to Don Quijote's fantasy world. The encounters with these roughnecks are always abrupt and physical, usually resulting in a sound thrashing for Quijote. Each beating brings him closer to reality, and in the end, he must poignantly reconcile himself to the fact that his noble ideals do not find a hospitable home in the contemporary world.
© 2007 Gabriela Lena Frank

Anton von Webern: Five Movements, Op. 5

With one foot firmly in the kingdom of late Romantic music and the other pointing towards Webern's later, more abstract, style, the Five Movements for String Quartet, Op. 5 represents the first step toward a distillation of the aesthetic of Wagner and Strauss. Broad melodic inspirations are still to be found here, but the lush supporting textures one might find in the music of Webern's predecessors have been removed, lending a more intimate and almost haunting quality to some of these lines. And if we find in Wagner an outward manifestation of a rich inner life in full bloom, in these pieces we have an inward reflection of outer life, the individual's often anxiety-ridden response to an uncertain world, sensitive and intense. The piece is arch-like as a whole. Extremely brief, the central third movement is perhaps as pure a musical portrait of dread and anxiety as one is apt to encounter, a moment of existential terror. This is flanked by two delicate, almost spectral slow movements composed of bittersweet sighs and whispers. The outer movements are more substantial. The first movement contains wild contrasts of energy and expression, with seeds of

The Brentano String Quartet

Since its inception in 1992, the Brentano String Quartet has appeared throughout the world to popular and critical acclaim. "Passionate, uninhibited and spellbinding," raves the London Independent; the New York Times extols its "luxuriously warm sound [and] yearning lyricism"; the Philadelphia Inquirer praises its "seemingly infallible instincts for finding the center of gravity in every phrase and musical gesture"; and the Times (London) opines, "the Brentanos are a magnificent string quartet... This was wonderful, selfless music-making." Within a few years of its formation, the Quartet garnered the first Cleveland Quartet Award and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award; and in 1996 the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center invited them to be the inaugural members of Chamber Music Society Two, a program which has become a coveted distinction for chamber groups and individuals ever since. The Quartet had its first European tour in 1997, and was honored in the U.K. with the Royal Philharmonic Award for Most Outstanding Debut. That debut recital was at London's Wigmore Hall, and the Quartet has continued its warm relationship with Wigmore, appearing there regularly and serving as the hall's Quartet-in-residence in the 2000-01 season.

In recent seasons the Quartet has traveled widely, appearing all over the United States and Canada, in Europe, Japan and Australia. It has performed in the world's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York; the Library of Congress in Washington; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; the Konzerthaus in Vienna; Suntory Hall in Tokyo; and the Sydney Opera House. The Quartet has participated in summer festivals such as Aspen, the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, the Edinburgh Festival, the Kuhmo Festival in Finland, the Taos School of Music and the Caramoor Festival.

In addition to performing the entire two-century range of the standard quartet repertoire, the Brentano Quartet has a strong interest in both very old and very new music. It has performed many musical works pre-dating the string quartet as a medium, among them Madrigals of Gesualdo, Fantasias of Purcell, and secular vocal works of Josquin. Also, the quartet has worked closely with some of the most important composers of our time, among them Elliot Carter, Charles Wuorinen, Chou Wen-chung, Steven Mackey, Bruce Adolphe, and György Kurtág. The Quartet has commissioned works from Wuorinen, Adolphe, Mackey, David Horne and Gabriela Frank. The Quartet celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2002 by commissioning ten composers to write companion pieces for selections from Bach's Art of Fugue, the result of which was an electrifying and wide-ranging single concert program. The Quartet has also worked with the celebrated poet Mark Strand, commissioning poetry from him to accompany works of Haydn and Webern.

The Quartet has been privileged to collaborate with such artists as soprano Jessye Norman, pianist Richard Goode, and pianist Mitsuko Uchida. The Quartet enjoys an especially close relationship with Ms. Uchida, appearing with her on stages in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

The Quartet has recorded the Opus 71 Quartets of Haydn, and has also recorded a Mozart disc for Acon Records, consisting of the K. 464 Quartet and the K. 593 Quintet, with violist Hsin-Yun Huang. In the area of newer music, the Quartet has released a disc of the music of Steven Mackey on Albany Records, and has also recorded the music of Bruce Adolphe, Chou Wen-chung and Charles Wuorinen.

In 1998, cellist Nina Lee joined the Quartet, succeeding founding member Michael Kannen. The following season the Quartet became the first Resident String Quartet at Princeton University. The Quartet's duties at the University

are wide-ranging, including performances at least once a semester, as well as workshops with graduate composers, coaching undergraduates in chamber music, and assisting in other classes at the Music Department.

The Quartet is named for Antonie Brentano, whom many scholars consider to be Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved", the intended recipient of his famous love confession.