

Chamber Music Conversations from the Clark
2020 – 21 Season

Jupiter String Quartet



May 16, 2021

Nelson Lee, *violin*
Meg Freivogel, *violin*
Liz Freivogel, *viola*
Daniel McDonough, *cello*

PROGRAM

Host

Rogers Brubaker, Professor of Sociology, UCLA

Prerecorded Concert

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

String Quartet No. 6 in F Minor, op. 80

Allegro vivace assai
Allegro assai
Adagio
Finale: Allegro molto

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–1847)

String Quartet in E-flat Major

Adagio ma non troppo
Allegretto
Romanze
Allegro molto vivace

Judd Greenstein (1979–)

Four on the Floor

Q&A

Rogers Brubaker

Bruce Whiteman, Clark Librarian Emeritus

Nelson Lee, Meg Freivogel, Liz Freivogel, Daniel McDonough,
members of the Jupiter String Quartet

PROGRAM NOTES

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) **String Quartet No. 6 in F Minor, op. 80**

Apart from some juvenilia, Mendelssohn's chamber music for strings comprises six string quartets, two string quintets (with an extra viola), and of course the famous Octet, a masterpiece written by a teenager. As a close student of Beethoven and a classically oriented Romantic composer, Mendelssohn found the string quartet form an attractive genre; like Schumann, he invented ways to adapt the form which Beethoven seemed to have perfected, even to have exhausted, to his own sensibility.

The F-minor Quartet was the composer's last one, indeed one of his very last works, although his publisher, after Mendelssohn's death in 1847, strung together four miscellaneous quartet pieces and issued them as op. 81. Mendelssohn was extremely close to his older sister, Fanny, a fine composer herself, and her unexpected death from a stroke on May 14, 1847, deeply affected him. At his wife's suggestion, they spent part of that summer in Switzerland, and by September he had drafted the F-Minor Quartet. On November 4, he himself died, also of a stroke, and the work was published posthumously in 1850 (the parts) and 1851 (the full score). The emotions of the piece clearly arise from Mendelssohn's experience of loss and grief. Its dark cast is almost relentless, although the slow movement does body forth less anguished feelings that are more elegiac than devastated. But the loss of a loved one reigns over this quartet. Perhaps only music and poetry can help one to survive such a profoundly painful experience.

The first movement is in sonata form and is characterized by unrest and instability. The opening theme is played tremolo and quickly leads to one of the defining moments of the piece, a minor ninth played high in the first violin after the tremolo theme comes to a halt. It is like an arrow to the heart, that high D flat. The second theme is in A-flat major and is more lyrical, although it pretty quickly gives way to the development section, which focuses on the harsh harmonies and on unstable fragments of melody. The coda speeds up the music, as though heartbreak could somehow be left behind if the music moved fast enough. The scherzo movement that follows is equally roily. The A section is dominated by syncopation and discord, and while the B section is more restrained, it remains ominous sounding.

The slow movement is in A-flat major, and is full of rich harmony and expressive melodies. Anguish seems banished for the moment, and warm feeling is omnipresent, as the music works its way towards a climax and then gradually fades away into quietude. With the Finale, high emotion returns. This movement is full of outbursts, and the minor ninth returns, now reified in gasps of tremolo that are like symptoms of elevated vital signs: heart in the mouth moments. As he did in the opening movement, here Mendelssohn accelerates the music as it heads to a conclusion. The anguish of those high Cs in the first violin in the final bars testifies that Mendelssohn's grief has not abated one whit.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–1847) **String Quartet in E-flat Major**

Fanny Hensel's story is by now well known. She was Felix Mendelssohn's elder sister and was possibly as gifted a pianist and composer as her younger brother. Only the social restrictions of her day and class—the Mendelssohn family was very distinguished and well-to-do—prevented her from having a musical career, given that women, generally speaking, were not encouraged to perform in public nor to devote themselves to careers rather than to their families. Hensel was well trained as a pianist and composer, but her father's willingness to support her musical aspirations ended there; and though her husband, William Hensel, an artist whom she married in 1829, was more supportive, even of the publishing of her compositions, very few of her pieces appeared in print in her lifetime. To some extent she is more a twentieth-century composer than a nineteenth-century one, as feminist scholars have worked to restore her reputation as a composer over the last few decades, and her music has become more widely performed and admired. The great majority of her works are either songs or piano pieces, and she did not often essay the larger musical forms. A Piano Quartet, a Piano Trio, and a String Quartet are among the exceptions. She recognized that her gifts were in the smaller forms. Like Felix, she died young of a stroke just a few months before his own death. Apoplexy, as doctors in their day would have called it, was a family medical curse.

Fanny Hensel's String Quartet dates from 1834 when she was twenty-nine years old. The manuscript went unpublished during her lifetime and is now in the State Library in Berlin. The piece was not published until 1989, but it has now been

performed often. It shares a number of characteristics with Felix Mendelssohn's music; but that does not make it secondary, only a reflection of a similar musical education, a similar zeitgeist, and a, well, similar family. The opening movement is unusual in being slow and rather solemn. It is in C minor, not E-flat major, and being rather short, functions somewhat as a slow introduction to the movement that follows. The second movement, also as much in the minor key as the major, is a typical Mendelssohnian (if that adjective can be used to refer to both composers, and not just to Felix) scherzo in ABA form. The middle section is very fast and elfin-like in spirit. The slow movement is lyrical, indeed songlike, and embodies a melodiousness characteristic also of Hensel's many *lieder*. The middle section grows more lush and warm, and contains many modulations that, despite Fanny's brother's criticism, sound just fine to our ears. The main theme returns at the end at a higher register, where the movement concludes. The finale is fast and high-spirited and more thoroughly in E-flat major. It has a somewhat subdued second theme, with a pizzicato accompaniment, and the development section turns roily and quite earnest. The first violin eventually leads the music back to the central theme, and the movement ends in a burst of joy.

Judd Greenstein (1979–) ***Four on the Floor***

Judd Greenstein was born in New York City and continues to be closely associated with the new music scene there. His music has been lauded for its combination of classical traditions with a cutting-edge sensibility. He works closely with a number of new music ensembles and venues, but has also received commissions from the Minnesota Orchestra, the Lucerne Festival and other impressive sources.

Greenstein has written about his string quartet, *Four on the Floor*—a phrase applied normally to fast cars with four-speed transmissions, though it is also a musical term for a four-beat dance tune—that he “wanted to write a piece that really rocked, not in the easy sense of writing out rock chords, but in the energy and vibe that would be conveyed in the music.” He has also noted that his frequent use of double-stopping, when a string player plays on two strings at once, creates the effect at times of the work being a sextet or even an octet.

Four on the Floor is in a modified sonata form with two main thematic areas in two main key areas (E-flat major and D major). The first of the themes is full of off-beats and is heard at the outset of the work in the viola and cello parts. The second theme enters almost right away in fragmentary form as a sixteenth-note figure. These two themes, which are as much texture as themes in any conventional sense, are explored in a leisurely fashion in the exposition, before being expanded and explored more thoroughly in a development section. The beat, which Greenstein specifies should be “Steady, and always feeling the metric pulse,” is compelling and at times mesmeric. Towards the end of the recapitulation, the music grows very quiet before breaking out into a series of repeated and highly rhythmic E-flat triads. A coda follows that is marked to be played “free and funky,” with a theme that can be “embellished...like a blues solo.” The propulsive nature of the music is screwed to the pitch here, and *Four on the Floor* finishes with a loud and rhythmic declaration of the key of E flat.

Program Notes © Bruce Whiteman 2021

ABOUT BRUCE WHITEMAN

Bruce Whiteman has been writing the program notes for the Chamber Music at the Clark series since 1998. He was Head Librarian at UCLA’s Clark Library from 1996–2010, and is now a full-time poet, writer, and translator. He lives in Canada.



ABOUT JUPITER STRING QUARTET



Front cover and above photo credit: Sarah Gardner

The Jupiter String Quartet is a particularly intimate group, consisting of violinists Nelson Lee and Meg Freivogel, violist Liz Freivogel (Meg's older sister), and cellist Daniel McDonough (Meg's husband, Liz's brother-in-law). Now enjoying their 19th year together, this tight-knit ensemble is firmly established as an important voice in the world of chamber music. *The New Yorker* claims, "The Jupiter String Quartet, an ensemble of eloquent intensity, has matured into one of the mainstays of the American chamber-music scene."

The quartet has performed in some of the world's finest halls, including New York City's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London's Wigmore Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center and Library of Congress, Austria's Esterhazy Palace, and Seoul's Sejong Chamber Hall. Their major music festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival and School, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, Rockport Music Festival, Caramoor International Music Festival, Music at Menlo, the Banff Centre, the Seoul Spring Festival, and many others. In addition to their performing career, they have been artists-in-residence at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana since 2012, where they maintain private studios and direct the chamber music program.

Their chamber music honors and awards include the grand prizes in the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition; the Young Concert Artists International auditions in New York City; the Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America; an Avery Fisher Career Grant; and a grant from the Fromm Foundation. From 2007–2010, they were in residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Chamber Music Two.

The Jupiter String Quartet feels a particular connection to the core string quartet repertoire; they have presented the complete Bartok and Beethoven string quartets on numerous occasions. Also strongly committed to new music, they have commissioned works by Michi Wiancko, Syd Hodkinson, Hannah Lash, Dan Visconti, Mark Adamo, Pierre Jalbert, and Kati Agócs.

The quartet’s latest album, *Metamorphosis* (Marquis Classics, 2020), features Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 14, and Ligeti’s Quartet No. 1 “Métamorphoses nocturnes.” Of the album, *Cleveland Classical* proclaimed, “Perhaps what stands out most is the Jupiter Quartet’s precise, unified, and spirited sense of ensemble.” The quartet’s discography also includes numerous recordings on labels including Azica Records and Deutsche Grammophon.

The Jupiter Quartet remains strongly committed to making music during these challenging times. In July 2020, the Jupiter Quartet gave the world premiere of Michi Wiancko’s *To Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores*, which was commissioned for the ensemble and presented via livestream by Bay Chamber Concerts. Other recent and upcoming livestream concerts include performances presented by Bowdoin International Music Festival, Asheville Chamber Music Series, and Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music, as well as virtual residencies with the University of Iowa and Middlebury College.

The Jupiters place a strong emphasis on developing relationships with future classical music audiences through educational performances in schools and other community centers. They believe that, because of the intensity of its interplay and communication, chamber music is one of the most effective ways of spreading an enthusiasm for “classical” music to new audiences. The quartet has also held numerous masterclasses for

young musicians at Northwestern University, Eastman School of Music, the Aspen Music Festival, Encore Chamber Festival, Madeline Island Music Festival, and Peabody Conservatory.

The quartet chose its name because Jupiter was the most prominent planet in the night sky at the time of its formation and the astrological symbol for Jupiter resembles the number four.

www.jupiterquartet.com

Jupiter String Quartet is represented by Jensen Artists:
www.jensenartists.com/

CHAMBER MUSIC CONVERSATIONS FROM THE CLARK

Today's concert and previous performances from this season will be available for a limited time on the Center for 17th-& 18th-Century Studies' YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/channel/UCbqHRq2d7cM5kobB27Hs4vA

THE HENRY J. BRUMAN SUMMER CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Ambroise Aubrun, D.M.A., Artistic Director

After a pandemic-related hiatus, we are pleased to announce that The Henry J. Bruman Summer Chamber Music Festival will return virtually this July. Please join us on Zoom for performances and live conversations with the artists. All concerts are free of charge and will be held from 12 noon-1:00 p.m. Registration is required; programs and registration details will be available soon at www.1718.ucla.edu/events.

The festival was founded in 1988 by Professor Henry J. Bruman (1913-2005), who sought to introduce new audiences to chamber music at informal concerts on the UCLA campus. The festival is made possible by the Henry J. Bruman Trust, Professors Wendell E. Jeffrey and Bernice M. Wenzel, by a gift in memory of Raymond E. Johnson, and with the support of the UCLA Center for 17th- & 18th-Century Studies.

Neave Trio

Friday, July 23, 2021

Zelter String Quartet

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Dalí Quartet

Friday, July 30, 2021

Petanova & Hoft Duo

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Colón Duo

Thursday, August 5, 2021

CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE CLARK 2021-22 SEASON PREVIEW

(Concerts on Sundays except as otherwise noted)

Schumann Quartet

Saturday, November 20, 2021

Notos Piano Quartet

February 6, 2022

Polonsky-Shifrin-Wiley Trio

March 20, 2022

Borromeo Quartet

April 3, 2022

Parker Quartet

May 15, 2022

Horszowski Trio

May 22, 2022

PUBLIQuartet

Saturday, June 25, 2022

FRIENDS OF THE CLARK LIBRARY

Annual membership in Friends of the Clark Library provides essential support to expand the Clark's holdings, support innovative research, offer affordable academic and cultural programs, and sustain the historic Library facility and grounds. To help the Clark and Center fulfill their mission, please consider joining at any level.

For more details, please visit: www.1718.ucla.edu/giving/friends/



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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbqHRq2d7cM5kobB27Hs4vA>

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In 1926 philanthropist William Andrews Clark Jr. donated his library of rare books to the burgeoning UCLA campus in honor of his father, a copper magnate and United States senator from Montana. The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, a unique resource for the humanities, today includes major holdings in English literature and history (1580–1820) and fine printing, as well as the world’s most comprehensive collection of the works of Oscar Wilde, attracting scholars throughout the world. The library hosts a range of activities, including scholarly lectures and conferences, theatrical performances, and music concerts—organized by the UCLA Center for 17th- & 18th-Century Studies. The acclaimed *Chamber Music at the Clark* series honors the musical passion of William Andrews Clark Jr., an accomplished violinist and founder of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.