Sunday, December 2, 2018, at 3:00
Columbus Park Refectory

All-Access Chamber Music Series

LINCOLN STRING QUARTET
Lei Hou Violin
Qing Hou Violin
Lawrence Neuman Viola
Kenneth Olsen Cello

SCHUBERT
String Quartet No. 12 in C Minor, D. 703 (Quartettsatz)
Allegro assai
LEI HOU
QING HOU
LAWRENCE NEUMAN
KENNETH OLSEN

BEETHOVEN
String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95 (Serioso)
Allegro con brio
Allegretto ma non troppo—
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso
Larghetto espressivo—Allegretto agitato
LEI HOU
QING HOU
LAWRENCE NEUMAN
KENNETH OLSEN

INTERMISSION

RAVEL
String Quartet in F Major
Allegro moderato
Rather fast, very rhythmic
Very slow
Fast and restless
QING HOU
LEI HOU
LAWRENCE NEUMAN
KENNETH OLSEN

The All-Access Chamber Music Series is generously underwritten by an anonymous donor, who attended similar concerts forty-five years ago.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
ALL-ACCESS Chamber Music Series

Featuring musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Center’s Orchestra Hall and around Chicago

Wednesday, February 13, 7:00
ORCHESTRA HALL AT SYMPHONY CENTER
Civitas Ensemble
Yuan-Qing Yu violin
Ni Mei violin
Wei-Ting Kuo viola
Kenneth Olsen cello
J. Lawrie Bloom clarinet
Winston Choi piano
GLINKA Trio pathétique
KHACHATURIAN Trio for Violin, Clarinet and Piano
TANEYEV Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 30

Tuesday, March 19, 7:00
SOUTH SHORE CULTURAL CENTER
The Wabash Avenue Music Collective
Emma Gerstein flute
Rong-Yan Tang violin
Max Raimi viola
Karen Basrak cello
Daniel Paul Horn piano
MOZART Variations on “Ah vous dirai-je, Maman”
MOZART Quartet in D Major for Flute and Strings, K. 285
RAIMI Havenu Sholem Aleichem: Variations and Theme
MENDELSSOHN Piano Quartet No. 3 in B Minor

Wednesday, April 10, 7:00
ORCHESTRA HALL AT SYMPHONY CENTER
CSO Chamber Players
Stephen Williamson clarinet
Robert Chen violin
John Sharp cello
Kuang-Hao Huang piano
BARTÓK Contrasts
MESSIAEN Quartet for the End of Time

Sunday, June 9, 3:00
BEVERLY ARTS CENTER
Chicago Pro Musica
Jennifer Gunn flute
Michael Henoch oboe
John Bruce Yeh clarinet
William Buchman bassoon
Oto Carrillo horn
NIELSEN Wind Quintet, Op. 43
HINDEMITH Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 2
SCHOENBERG Quintet, Op. 26

Presented in partnership with The Advisory Council of South Shore Cultural Center and The Chicago Park District

Reserve your free tickets at cso.org/allaccess or by calling 312-294-3000.

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Franz Schubert
Born January 31, 1797; Himmelpfortgrund, northwest of Vienna, Austria
Died November 19, 1828; Vienna, Austria

String Quartet No. 12 in C Minor, D. 703 (Quartettsatz)

COMPOSED
1820

Toward the end of 1820, Schubert’s creative development underwent a pronounced maturation which revealed a new depth of emotional expression and a more adventurous nature in his musical style. He turned from songs and pieces written for amateur musicians to more large-scale modes of composition intended for professional performance. During his later years, Schubert concentrated on composing quartets, sonatas, and symphonies. Earlier in 1820, he was involved in an incident that may explain the unsettled, romantic state of mind that brought about such a change in his compositional nature: the benign Franz Schubert went to jail. In early nineteenth-century Austria, students were always under suspicion of subversive activities, and when a poet friend of Schubert’s named Johann Senn resisted a police examination of his identification papers, he was hauled off for further questioning. Schubert happened to be visiting Senn when the incident occurred and was arrested for the crime of proximity. Schubert was quickly deemed innocent and released, and his friendship with Senn remained strong. Though criminality was never part of Schubert’s nature, the passion, daring, and individuality of his later music show him to have been a free spirit. He increasingly distanced himself from classical models to find a mode that evolved into the essence of musical romanticism. The Quartet in C minor stands at that crucial threshold in Schubert’s life.

Schubert’s Quartettsatz (Quartet movement) is incomplete; he composed only the first movement and some forty-one measures of an Andante in A-flat major. It is unknown why he broke off composing at that point. The explanation currently given the greatest credence is that Schubert thought he could not match the wonderful inspiration of the first movement, so he abandoned the quartet for work on another project and simply never returned to complete it. He did not take up the string quartet form again for more than three years.

The Quartettsatz follows a sonata form modified to reverse the repetitions of the themes in the recapitulation. The movement opens with a restless, quick-note motive in the first violin that is soon imitated by the other instruments. In his biography of the composer, John Reed wrote that Schubert took this theme from an incantation scene in his failed 1820 opera, The Magic Harp. The premonitory mood of the main theme brightens and is then displaced by a lyrical, flowing secondary subject that is suspended high in the violin. A chordal passage supported by murmurings from the cello closes the exposition. The compact development section is largely concerned with permutations of the main theme, so the recapitulation begins with an expressive second theme and reserves the agitated opening motive for this unfinished work’s closing gestures.
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Born December 16, 1770; Bonn, Germany
Died March 26, 1827; Vienna, Austria

String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95 (Serioso)

The F minor string quartet is the shortest and most highly compressed example of the repertoire Beethoven wrote for this genre. Its music grapples with a philosophic and artistic problem he broached in the Fifth Symphony: the “apotheosis,” or struggle for victory. “In this quartet,” wrote Kerman, “Beethoven evokes that almost tangible sense of the artist assaulting a demon of his own fancying; we admire the process of assault, conquest, assertion, or becoming that the illusion permits.” The struggle begins immediately in the opening movement. Its music is shorn of everything Beethoven deemed unessential; transitions, unrelated figurations, and even the repeat of the exposition are abandoned in favor of a lean, concentrated, and forceful presentation of musical materials and their subsequent development. Almost in mid-thought and certainly without any sense of resolution, the movement fades away to an inconclusive ending. Though hymnlike in texture and contemplative in mood, the Allegretto ma non troppo doesn’t quite banish the preceding movement’s accumulated unease, due to its chromatic uncertainty and shifting tonalities. The propulsive yet somber scherzo begins without pause. After a brief introduction, the finale follows a haunted rondo form until its closing page, when, at long last, the music is freed from the tragic tonality of F minor into the sunlight of its major-key coda.
MAURICE RAVEL
Born March 7, 1875; Ciboure, France
Died December 28, 1937; Paris, France

String Quartet in F Major

COMPOSED
1902–03

Ravel was admitted to the Paris Conservatory in 1889, but his academic career proved to be less than meteoric. Though he gained a reputation for compositions such as the Pavane for a Dead Princess and Jeux d’eau during the next sixteen years, he slipped in and out of the school, auditing classes with Gabriel Fauré and other teachers and unsuccessfully competing for the Prix de Rome. Despite his own tenuous association with the conservatory, Ravel retained an awed respect for Fauré, whom he regarded as his principal teacher and an important influence and inspiration for his music. At the end of 1902, Ravel felt it necessary (as had Debussy a decade before) to subject the modernity of his musical speech to the rigorous discipline of one of the most demanding of all classical genres: the string quartet. “My quartet represents a conception of musical construction, imperfectly realized no doubt, but set out much more precisely than in my earlier compositions,” he shared. He completed the first movement in time to submit it to a conservatory competition, but the reactionary judges found this glowing specimen of musical color and light laborious and lacking simplicity. Ravel left the Paris Conservatory for the last time and never again set foot in one of its classrooms. More angry than discouraged, he continued work on the quartet and completed the score in April 1903.

Fauré told Ravel that he found the quartet’s finale “stunted, badly unbalanced, in fact a failure,” and suggested its thorough revision. Debussy and D’Indy praised the new piece. “In the name of the gods of music, and in mine, do not touch a single note of what you have written in your quartet,” Debussy admonished. “It is a piece worthy of any composer’s work at the end of a long career,” D’Indy told the twenty-eight-year-old musician. Though its acceptance was not at first unanimous, the quartet ended up being the work that solidified Ravel's reputation as a leading creative figure.

The quartet opens with a sonata-form Allegro whose precise structure effortlessly accommodates its piquant themes. The principal subject is a lovely violin melody, accompanied by scalar harmonies in the lower instruments, that rises and falls in a long arc with elegance and ease. Passages of greater animation lead to the complementary theme: a melancholy song given in octaves by first violin and viola above rustling background figures from the second violin. The development section is as concerned with the aforementioned figures as it is the thematic material. Its recapitulation returns to balance the earlier themes and complete the movement. The second movement (Rather fast and very rhythmic) is a modern scherzo with snapping pizzicatos and superimposed rhythms. Its center is occupied with a wistful melody initiated by the cello. The third movement serves as a structural foil to the earlier movements’ carefully defined forms. With quickly changing sonorities, frequent juxtapositions of mood and tempo, and continually evolving themes, it sounds almost improvisatory. A powerful and metrically irregular motive launches the finale, and it returns as the music recalls musical events from the quartet’s earlier movements.

Richard E. Rodda, a former faculty member at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, provides program notes for many American orchestras, concert series, and festivals.
Lei Hou Violin

Appointed by Daniel Barenboim, Lei Hou joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1997. Previously, she played in the first violin section of the Cleveland Orchestra and served as assistant principal second violin of the National Symphony Orchestra for six years, appointed by Mstislav Rostropovich. As an active chamber musician and soloist, Hou has performed with Pinchas Zukerman, Yefim Bronfman, and members of the Guarneri and Alban Berg quartets. She also toured Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Luxembourg with musicians from the German Radio Orchestra. Hou is a former member of the Manchester String Quartet of Washington, D.C. She has been a featured soloist in concerts broadcast on National Public Radio, WFMT-FM Chicago, and WBJC-FM Baltimore, and has recorded chamber music by Mozart, Hoffmeister, and Beethoven for German radio. She has served on the faculties of the University of Maryland and Den Nye Opera Academy in Bergen, Norway, and given master classes at Seoul National University, the Korea National University of Arts, and Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music and Middle School. Hou studied at Shanghai's Middle School of Music and Conservatory of Music as well as the Peabody Conservatory. Her festival experience includes performances at the Marlboro, Tanglewood, Sun City, and Western Maryland music festivals; the Sun Valley Summer Symphony; and with the Ravinia Festival’s Steans Music Institute. Hou shares the stage with her sister Qing, who also is a violinist with the CSO. She frequently performs with the Lincoln Quartet and has toured South America with the ensemble.

Qing Hou Violin

Qing Hou has been a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1997. A native of China, she studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing before coming to the United States in 1988 to continue her studies. She holds degrees from the Peabody and New England conservatories. Before joining the CSO, Hou was a member of the San Francisco Symphony. An avid chamber musician, she has performed for the Andover Chamber Music Society and at festivals in Madison, Napa, El Paso, and Sun Valley. She has been heard on NPR's Performance Today and regularly appears in the Chicago area with various ensembles. In 1997, she founded the Lincoln Quartet with her sister, CSO violin Lei Hou, and CSO viola Lawrence Neuman. As a soloist, Hou has appeared with orchestras in Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, and China. In the fall of 2003, she made her first appearance with the Orchestra, performing Mozart's Violin Concerto in G major conducted by Daniel Barenboim.
Lawrence Neuman Viola

Lawrence Neuman has been a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1991. A founder of the Lincoln String Quartet, he is regularly heard throughout the Chicago area and was violist of the Miami String Quartet before coming to Chicago. He also has performed in chamber ensembles across the United States, Europe, and South America and at festivals in Marlboro, La Jolla, Madison, Portland, Davenport, and Napa. Neuman’s chamber music collaborations include appearances with Daniel Barenboim, Pinchas Zukerman, Lydia Artymiw, Gil Shaham, Yefim Bronfman, and Simone Lamsma. He frequently collaborates with the Boston chamber group Mistral. During the 1998–99 season, Neuman took a leave of absence from the CSO to serve as principal viola of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. A native of Saint Louis, Missouri, he attended the Eastman School of Music, the University of Southern California, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. His teachers include Heidi Castleman, Donald McInnes, and Robert Vernon. Neuman teaches viola and coaches chamber music at Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts.

Kenneth Olsen Cello

Kenneth Olsen joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as assistant principal cello in 2005. He is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and winner of the school’s prestigious concerto competition. Other awards include first prize in the Nakamichi Cello Competition at the Aspen Music Festival and second prize at the 2002 Holland-America Music Society Competition. His teachers have included Richard Aaron at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Joel Krosnick at the Juilliard School of Music, and Luis García-Renart at Bard College. He also has been a participant at the Ravinia Festival’s Steans Institute for Young Artists and at Boston University’s Tanglewood Institute.

A native of New York, Olsen is a founding member of the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, which consists of young musicians from ensembles nationwide.
November & December

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