

**Chamber Music Raleigh presents  
The Calidore String Quartet  
North Carolina Museum of Art  
Sunday, March 16, 2025**

Jeffrey Myers, violin  
Ryan Meehan, violin  
Jeremy Berry, viola  
Estelle Choi, cello

**String Quartet No. 16 in F Major, Op. 135**  
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

- I. Allegretto
- II. Vivace
- III. Lento assai, cantate e tranquillo
- IV. Der schwer gefaßte Entschluß (Grave – Allegro – Grave ma non troppo tratto – Allegro)

***Strum***

JESSIE MONTGOMERY (1981)

~~ Intermission ~~

*complimentary airline snacks in the lobby*

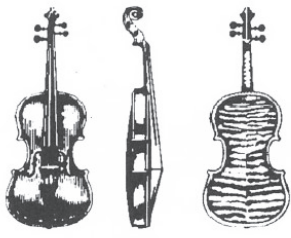
**String Quartet No. 12 in C minor, D. 703, "Quartettsatz"**  
FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

- I. Allegro assai

**String Quartet No. 3 in D Major, Op. 34**  
ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD (1897-1957)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Scherzo. Allegro molto
- III. Sostenuto. Like a Folk Tune
- IV. Finale. Allegro con fuoco

The Calidore String Quartet appears by arrangement with  
IMG Artists, LLC, 7 West 54<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10019. 212-994-3500.  
[www.calidorestringquartet.com](http://www.calidorestringquartet.com)



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North Carolina Museum of Art

## Calidore String Quartet – March 18, 2025

### String Quartet in F major, Op. 135

Ludwig van Beethoven  
1770-1827

Beethoven's final string quartet – if we do not count the alternate finale for Op.130 – presents something of an enigma. It was composed in 1826, during the last year of Beethoven's life, in which he was embroiled in both internal and external turmoil, physical as well as psychological. Unable to handle his own affairs, the composer was living in conditions best comparable to a modern teenager's bedroom. He also suffered from paranoia, which took itself out in his stormy relationship with his nephew Karl, climaxing in the latter's attempted suicide (thought to have been caused by Beethoven's possessive hectoring).

Yet, following this traumatic event, with Karl still recuperating in the hospital, Beethoven composed this quartet, which presents a set of paradoxes: it is a return to classical form, almost in imitation of Haydn, and this hard on the heels of the monumental Opus 131 quartet with its seven movements and unconventional structure; it combines moments of lightness – even musical wit – with passages of the darkest contrast; and it is the composer's second shortest string quartet.

While the opening movement harks back to Haydn in its overall structure, the thematic material is frankly quirky late Beethoven. The motives tumble out all over each other in odd phrase lengths that seem to stop in the middle and abruptly go on to something else. Beethoven ingeniously employs the motives in different ways, including combining them contrapuntally. After a false recapitulation *à la* Haydn, Beethoven presents the real one, but ends the movement on his opening theme.

The Scherzo also has its peculiarities. It rushes by like a passing front, obscuring the break between the main Scherzo and Trio. Its syncopation, plethora of short motives and, again, irregular phrase lengths keep the listener constantly off balance.

Beethoven provides some relief in the third movement, which is a slow, lyric cantabile with a reprise of the main theme in a variation reminiscent of the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony.

The final movement presents another mystery. Beethoven titled the movement, "*Der schwer gefasste Entschluss*" (the difficult decision). The dark opening, a somber three-note motive that opens the movement, ends with an unresolved tritone (the medieval *Diabolus in musica*, or devil in music). It presents musically the question notated in the autograph "*Muss es sein?*" (Must it be), to which comes the decisive and almost jaunty response motive, resolving the tritone, "*Es muss sein!*" (It must be), also notated in the autograph. Some scholars have interpreted the construct as Beethoven's personal *memento mori*, or reminder of death, and his acceptance of perhaps a better afterlife.

Another story, more in line with the mood of the movement, posits that it is actually one of Beethoven's bits of musical humor, referring to his altercation with an amateur quartet player, one Ignaz Dembscher, who still owed him money for the parts to Op. 130. The question and answer are said to be Dembscher's doleful question as to whether he must pay, followed by Beethoven's response in the affirmative. The movement, in classic sonata form, alternates in mood between these two motives.

### *Strum*

Jessie Montgomery  
b. 1981

Jessie Montgomery is a violinist, composer and educator with a graduate degree in Composition and Multimedia from New York University. She is a member of the Catalyst Quartet, and toured with cellist Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. She performs and composes regularly for the Sphinx Organization, the Detroit-based social justice ensemble dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts.

Montgomery composed *Strum* in 2006 for string quartet and revised it in 2012 for string orchestra for the Sphinx Organization. The work was featured on The Black Composer Speaks concert series by Fulcrum Point New Music Project, which explores different voices within the generations of Black American composers, ranging from impressionistic to pop-inspired minimalism to free jazz improv.

Complex pizzicato lines on all instruments, sometimes as complex as in a Bartok quartet, other times recalling banjo strumming, provide a rhythmic base upon which Montgomery hangs bursts of fiddle music.

### **String Quartet in C minor, D. 703**

Franz Schubert “*Quartettsatz*”  
1797-1828

Probably no composer left more incomplete works to tantalize us than Franz Schubert, in most cases abandoned in mid-phrase. Numerous theories have been proffered to explain Schubert’s frequent lack of follow-through, but in most cases, it has remained an enigma.

The *Quartettsatz*, composed in 1820, is usually considered Schubert’s first fully mature instrumental composition. Apparently intended as the first movement of a complete string quartet, Schubert broke off abruptly 41 bars into the *Andante*. The manuscript remained among Schubert’s papers after his death, ending up in the hands of Johannes Brahms who gave it to Vienna’s *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*. Its first public performance took place in 1867 in Vienna.

The emotional scope and technical demands of this quartet movement go far beyond those of Schubert’s earlier quartets, which were written for performance by his technically limited family members. By 1820, however, Schubert had amassed a large circle of musically gifted friends who enabled him to compose for a more professionally competent ensemble of players.

The movement opens with an agitated chromatic first theme, the first violin starting with a hyperactive repeated-note figure. The lyricism of the second theme comes in sharp contrast, but the breathless momentum of the opening is never lost and dark harmonies clearly dominate. The movement ends with a repeat of the opening phrase rounded off in a final cadence.

### **String Quartet No. 3, Op. 34**

Erich Wolfgang Korngold  
1897-1957

Erich Wolfgang Korngold is a representative of the last gasp of Late Romanticism in Vienna. Despite the abandonment of tonality by his contemporaries, Arnold Schoenberg and Bela Bartók, he never veered from this established idiom nor ventured into modernistic experiments.

Korngold was a true child prodigy – admired by Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler no less – whose works were performed in public in Vienna by the time he was 11, although the fact that his father was the music critic of Vienna's most prestigious newspaper, *Neue freie Presse*, may have helped.

In the early part of the century Korngold was known mainly through his operas (*Violanta*, *Die tote Stadt*, *Das Wunder der Heliane*), but today he is primarily remembered by his pioneering film music. At the urging of the director Max Reinhardt, with whom he had staged *Die Fledermaus* in Berlin in the 1920s, he came to Hollywood in 1934 where he wholeheartedly embraced the new medium. He settled there permanently in 1938 after the Nazis took over his beloved Vienna, where he had already written two string quartets.

By the time Korngold came to Hollywood, his “classical” compositions were regarded as superficial and irrelevant to the proponents of mainstream twentieth-century modernism. But Hollywood adored him. Korngold saw film as the true successor to the operatic stage. His success as film music composer was phenomenal, two of his scores – *Anthony Adverse* (1936) and *Robin Hood* (1938) – won Oscars.

Korngold’s film work consumed his time during the war years, giving him little time to compose absolute music. Moreover, Los Angeles was no Vienna, and chamber music was certainly not to the public’s taste. As his dream of returning to his home evaporated, so too did his motivation to compose. Nevertheless, without even saying anything to his wife, Korngold began working on a third quartet in 1944 and finished it a year later. It was his last significant chamber work.

Meanwhile, in 1939, Peter B. Yates, a wealthy music lover, initiated a chamber music series in a small, specially built concert hall on the roof of his home so that L. A. Symphony musicians could play for each other both Classic chamber works, as well as the latest twentieth-century compositions. Gradually, the city’s

cognoscenti swelled the ranks of the audience, and a new series and a bigger hall were required, although the series retained its name, *Evenings on the Roof*. The series had featured Korngold's Second Quartet in 1947, and two years later, the New Art Quartet premiered the Third.

Much of the material for the diatonic thematic passages Korngold adapted from the film *The Sea Wolf*, and he appears to have been comfortable creating music that falls between the cracks of what are usually regarded as mutually exclusive musical styles – the concert hall and the movie theater. Nothing in the Quartet so exemplifies his attitude as the difference between the first and second themes in the first movement and between the scherzo and trio in the second.

A review of the premiere, Albert Goldberg, L.A. Times music critic, captured the essence of the Quartet admirably:

In this latest work of a prolific and distinguished composer, Korngold has steered a certain but slightly indeterminate course between early 20th century modernism and a late and slightly overripe romanticism. The first movement and the interesting scherzo, with their shifting and restless chromaticism suggest the Schoenberg of the “*Verklarte Nacht*” period, a style that relapses in the expressive and folk-like slow movement into an austere, post-Wagnerian reminiscence of “*Tristan*.”



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Jeffrey Myers, Violin

**Jeffrey Myers**, first violinist of the Calidore String Quartet, makes his home in New York City. His chamber music career with the award winning Calidore String Quartet has established an international reputation for its informed, polished, and passionate performances. The quartet won the \$100,000 Grand Prize at the inaugural 2016 M-Prize International Chamber Music Competition along with grand prizes in the Fischhoff, Coleman, Chesapeake, and Yellow Springs competitions and captured top prizes at the 2012 ARD Munich International String Quartet Competition, and Hamburg International Chamber Music Competition. The CSQ is a recipient of a 2018 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award. The quartet was the first North American ensemble to win the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, and is currently in residence with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program.

Born in Columbus, Ohio to music educators, Jeffrey began playing the violin at the age of five. As a graduate of the Colburn Conservatory of Music, he studied with renowned pedagogue Robert Lipsett. His other teachers and mentors include Paul Kantor, Michelle Kim, Arnold Steinhart, and Mary Irwin. Committed to sharing his passion for music, Jeffrey is currently an associate professor of music at the University of Delaware.

Jeffrey plays on a rare Italian violin made by Francesco Rugeri in Cremona c1680, owned by a private benefactor and on loan through the Leonhard Fellowship with strings kindly sponsored by [Thomastik-Infeld](#), Vienna.

**Ryan Meehan** has garnered top prizes in competitions, including the Washington International Competition, ASTA National Solo Competition and NFAA Young Arts. He has performed as soloist with the Colburn Orchestra and the Bellingham Festival Orchestra and played recitals throughout the North America, South America, Asia and Europe. As a chamber musician, he won grand prize at the \$100,000 M-Prize, Coleman, Chesapeake and St. Paul chamber music competitions, as well as prizes at the ARD Munich, Hamburg and

Fischhoff competitions. He has collaborated with such esteemed musicians as Anne-Sophie Mutter, Julia Fischer, Menahem Pressler, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Anthony McGill, Lawrence Power and the members of the Emerson and Ebène String Quartets.



Ryan Meehan, Violin

Ryan serves on the faculty of the University of Delaware School of Music as Associate Professor of Violin and co-directs the UD Graduate Fellowship Quartet Program and Calidore String Quartet Seminar. He also served as the String Chamber Music Director at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theater and Dance and artist-in-residence at the University of Toronto and Stony Brook University. In response to the 2020 summer festival cancellations caused by the Covid-19 epidemic, Ryan co-founded the Virtuosi Virtual Summer Academy (VVSA), which connected a diverse group of young violinists and pianists with the world's leading soloists, chamber and orchestral musicians. In the summer season, he serves on the faculty of Music@Menlo Chamber Music Institute and Center Stage Strings at the University of Michigan. A dedicated teacher, Ryan's violin students have won top prizes and awards in national and international violin competitions such as the Klein, Cooper, Sphinx, Concert Artist Guild Competitions (Grand Prize) and the Avery Fisher Career Grant. They have been invited to prestigious summer festivals such as the Verbier Festival Academy, Perlman Music Program and Music@Menlo, performed as soloist with numerous orchestras and were accepted to prestigious collegiate conservatory programs such as the Curtis Institute, Juilliard School, Colburn School and the Harvard/New England Conservatory dual degree program. His students perform professionally as soloists, chamber musicians and in orchestras across the world. Ryan is a graduate of the Colburn School Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles and the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid. His teachers include Almita and Roland Vamos, Robert Lipsett, Arnold Steinhardt, Julia Fischer, Günther Pichler with significant influence from Ana Chumachenco. He plays a violin by Vincenzo Panormo c. 1775 and is sponsored generously by Thomastik-Infeld, Vienna.



In 2014, **Jeremy Berry** graduated from the Colburn Conservatory of Music where he received a Professional Studies Certificate and an Artist Diploma studying with Paul Coletti. Jeremy also holds a Bachelor of Music degree from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Heidi Castleman and Misha Amory. Solo experiences include a concerto performance with the American Youth Symphony and the Bellingham Festival of Music as well as receiving first place in The Marrowstone Music Festival Concerto Competition. Jeremy has participated in a variety of summer festivals, including the Perlman Music Program, The Aspen Music Festival and School, The Verbier Academy, Kneisel Hall, Youth Orchestra of the Americas, and the Sarasota Music Festival. Jeremy was born in Bellingham, Washington and began his viola studies with Elizabeth Stuen-Walker at the age of 5.



Born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, cellist **Estelle Choi** has garnered top prizes as a soloist and as a chamber musician. She has gained international recognition as a founding member of the Calidore String Quartet, an ensemble that celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2020. Praised by *the New York Times* for its "deep reserves of virtuosity and irrepressible dramatic instinct" the Calidore won the Grand-Prize of the 2016 M-Prize International Chamber Music Competition. As a member of the Calidore, Choi is an Avery Fisher Career Grant winner, recipient of the Lincoln Center Emerging Artist award, BBC 3 New Generation Artist and Borletti-Buitoni Trust recipient. Choi and the Calidore are members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and alumni of the Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two). Choi's artistry with the Calidore has been broadly praised by critics like Mark Swed of the *Los Angeles Times* who wrote that "her tone is rich, deep and powerful, giving the impression that music and

the room are a single living being.” Choi studied with John Kadz in Calgary, Aldo Parisot at the Yale School of Music and Ronald Leonard at the Colburn Conservatory. She instructed cello performance and chamber music at the University of Houston. With the Calidore, Choi teaches and performs at the University of Delaware. She holds a Masters degree from the Yale School of Music, and a Bachelor and Artist Diploma from the Colburn Conservatory of Music.

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