

Mark Steinberg | violin
Serena Canin | violin
Misha Amory | viola
Nina Maria Lee | violoncello

Programme I | NOT the Eroica's E-flat Major

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)	String Quartet No. 31 in E flat major, Op. 20, No. 1 Hob. III:31
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847) ***	String Quartet No. 1 in E flat major, Op. 12
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)	String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 127

Beethoven's Eroica Symphony marks the key of E-flat Major as one that is grand and, indeed, heroic. However, the key has another, warmer and gentler side. In his quartet, Op. 127, Beethoven begins as if to recall the Eroica, and then turns inward, away from that character, again and again. Likewise, Haydn and Mendelssohn exploit the key's more lyrical and gentle, embracing alter-ego.

Programme II | Metamorphoses

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	3 Fugues from <i>the Art of Fugue</i> BWV 1080
Claude Debussy (1862-1918) ***	String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)	String Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 131

In all three of these works, immediately recognizable musical motifs recur throughout, both generating and being transformed through the works they inhabit. The technique makes for works that dazzle with a potent amalgam of cohesion and variegation.

Programme III | Influence of Eastern Europe

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)	String Quartet in G minor, D 173
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) ***	String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4
Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)	String Quartet No. 11 in C major, Op. 61, B 121

The Romani influence, from eastern Europe, infiltrates both the Schubert and Beethoven works here, most especially in their somewhat wild finales. The Dvorak is deeply indebted to both Schubert and Beethoven (the opening practically a quote from Schubert's cello quintet), and is amongst the more "Viennese" of his works. Nonetheless, it can't conceal its folk-like, Slavonic heritage, and thus keeps the other two works company beautifully.