Jerusalem Quartet

Alexander Pavlovsky / Violin
Sergei Bresler / Violin
Ori Kam / Viola
Kyrii Zlotnikov / Cello

with

Pinchas Zukerman / Viola
Amanda Forsyth / Cello

Saturday Evening, October 6, 2018 at 8:00
Rackham Auditorium
Ann Arbor

Fourth Performance of the 140th Annual Season
56th Annual Chamber Arts Series
This evening’s performance is supported by Carl Cohen, whose bequest will establish an endowment to support a UMS Chamber Arts performance in perpetuity.

Media partnership provided by WGTE 91.3 FM and WRCJ 90.9 FM.

Special thanks to Valerie and David Canter for their gift in honor of this evening’s performance of Schoenberg’s Verklärte Nacht.

The Jerusalem Quartet appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists.

The Jerusalem Quartet records for Harmonia Mundi.

Mr. Zukerman and Ms. Forsyth appear by arrangement with Kirshbaum Associates.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

Any photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.
**PROGRAM**

*Richard Strauss*
**Capriccio, Op. 85** (excerpt)

String Sextet

*Arnold Schoenberg*
**Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4**

Intermission

*Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky*
"**Souvenir de Florence**" for String Sextet in d minor, Op. 70

Allegro con spirito
Adagio cantabile e con moto
Allegretto moderato
Allegro con brio e vivace
An opera about the relationship between music and words in opera? On the face of it, this sounds like a sure recipe for disaster, yet in Richard Strauss’s hands, what started out as a treatise on music and drama became a living piece of music and drama in its own right. In Capriccio, the characters spend a lot of time discussing which is more important in opera: the music or the words? But the discussion is not entirely academic, as the protagonist, a beautiful young Countess, is wooed by a Poet and a Composer, and could really use some help from art theory in deciding which man to choose. Don’t expect a definite answer to the dilemma, though. With inimitable elegance and grace, Strauss leaves the issue open at the end of the opera. Still, if one listens carefully to the music and reads between the lines of the libretto, one may get the impression that after all is said and done, the Countess’s feelings about the composer Flamand may be just a few degrees warmer than her friendship with the poet Olivier, tipping the balance, ever so slightly, in the direction of Strauss’s own art form.

Strauss wrote the libretto of the opera himself, in collaboration with the conductor Clemens Krauss. They were inspired by an 18th-century original by Giovanni Battista Casti, set to music by Antonio Salieri and performed as a double bill with Mozart’s Impresario (Der Schauspieldirektor) in 1786. Casti’s libretto, titled Prima la musica e poi le parole (First the music, and then the words) was brought to Strauss’s attention by the famous writer Stefan Zweig, who had come across it at the British Library in London. Zweig, who had been Strauss’s operatic collaborator after the death of Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1929, was barred from working with the composer after the Nazi’s rise to power. Nevertheless, he was willing to help out from behind the scenes by suggesting subjects and placing them at the disposal of librettists who were not blacklisted. However, in the hands of Strauss’s official librettist, Joseph
Gregor, the opera did not progress to the composer’s satisfaction and was temporarily set aside in favor of other projects. Eventually, Strauss returned to the idea with Krauss’s help; in 1941–42, the composer, then in his late 70s, completed what would remain the last of his 15 operas. In the final version, incidentally, almost nothing of Casti’s story was retained, beyond the fact that there was a poet and a composer onstage.

*Capriccio* begins with a prelude scored, most unusually in opera, as a string sextet. The inclusion of a piece of chamber music in a stage work has its own symbolic meaning. As the first scene of the opera makes clear, this music is being played, as a work by Flamand, to entertain the Countess and her guests, including the Theater Director, who sleeps through the whole performance. The Sextet represents “absolute” music, without words or program, which doesn’t interest the men of the theater, although the sensitive Countess is deeply moved by it.

The parts of the six string instruments in the prelude are woven together in a rich polyphonic tapestry that anticipates Strauss’s masterpiece from 1945, *Metamorphosen Study*, for 23 solo strings. The Sextet is on a smaller scale, yet equally intriguing in its juxtaposition of distant chords and its combination of broad cantabile (singing) melodies with more tempestuous episodes. The action of the opera takes place in a château near Paris around 1775 (well before the French Revolution), and the music contains numerous allusions to the music of that period. At the same time, Strauss remained faithful to his own post-Romantic idiom, which no one handled more beautifully or more convincingly than he.
Arnold Schoenberg was 25 years old when he wrote *Verklärte Nacht*, the work that made him first infamous and, soon afterward, famous. Growing up in Vienna, the young Schoenberg was naturally a follower of Brahms, who dominated musical life in the city. Through his mentor, Alexander von Zemlinsky, he discovered the music of Wagner, Brahms’s antithesis in the eyes of the contemporaries. With *Verklärte Nacht*, then, he managed to infuriate both the Brahms and the Wagner camps, transferring as he did the idea of program music, associated with Wagner and the “New German School,” to the chamber medium, which was Brahms’ser bailiwick and traditionally devoted to “absolute” music only. (The only earlier major chamber work with a program was Bedřich Smetana’s string quartet “From My Life.”) To add insult to injury, Schoenberg used a particular dissonance that could not be found in the existing harmony textbooks, giving the Vienna Composers’ Association the excuse they needed to turn the piece down.

Soon thereafter, however, the piece became accepted as one of the great chamber works of the decade. The title *Verklärte Nacht* comes from a poem by Richard Dehmel (1863–1920), a German poet very highly regarded at the time. Dehmel’s success rested on his individual combination of naturalism and political consciousness with an expressionistic, visionary passion. The poem in question, printed in Dehmel’s 1896 collection *Weib und Welt* (Woman and World) is a good example: its central event (a woman’s admission to her lover that she is bearing another man’s child) is a declaration of war on conventional bourgeois morality. (It has to be stressed, though, that she conceived the child before meeting the love of her life.) This shockingly frank confession, which represents the naturalistic layer of the poem, is, however, immediately “transfigured,” partly by the man’s words of comfort and partly by the background of the magical, moonlit landscape which elevates the somewhat lurid story to...
a completely different, almost cosmic plane.

Schoenberg followed the outline of Dehmel’s poem in his string sextet. There are five sections: introduction—the woman speaks—interlude—the man speaks—postlude.

The “introduction,” “interlude,” and “postlude” share the same thematic material, a descending scale motif with a dotted rhythm, suggestive of the two people walking in the night. At the beginning, this theme is soft and almost neutral. In the middle, it becomes loud and impassioned, with each note heavily emphasized. At the end, it is soft again, but surrounded by sensuous chromatic countersubjects and special devices such as arpeggios (broken chords), tremolos (“trembling” note repeats), and pizzicatos (plucked strings).

The woman’s speech, with d minor as its central tonality, is filled with dramatic passion. Its tension-laden main theme rises from a subdued pianissimo to a desperate outburst. The influence of Wagner and Strauss is evident, though Schoenberg goes considerably beyond both in his bold handling of dissonances.

In a total contrast, the man’s speech begins in a calm and peaceful D Major with an entirely classical cadence. While the continuation is more adventurous, the lyrical element always prevails. The tenderness of the music is underscored by special playing techniques (harmonics, and sul ponticello, or playing near the bridge). The tempo, slow at first, gradually speeds up, but returns to its initial state at the end of the section. In the “postlude,” the protagonists and the lurid details of the story become totally dissolved in Schoenberg’s music, and only timeless feelings remain. We suddenly realize how close the story is to Tristan, where another man (King Mark) casts a transient shadow on the love of two people. It is hard not to feel a little bit “transfigured” when Verklärte Nacht is over.
VERKLÄRTE NACHT ("TRANSFIGURED NIGHT")
Richard Dehmel

Two people walk through a bare, cold grove;
The moon races along with them, they look into it.
The moon races over tall oaks.
No cloud obscures the light from the sky,
Into which the black points of the boughs reach.
A woman’s voice speaks:

I’m carrying a child, and not yours,
I walk in sin beside you.
I have committed a great offense against myself.
I no longer believed I could be happy
And yet I had a strong yearning
For something to fill my life, for the joys of Motherhood
And for duty; so I committed an effrontery,
So, shuddering, I allowed my sex
To be embraced by a strange man,
And, on top of that, I blessed myself for it.
Now life has taken its revenge:
Now I have met you, oh, you.

She walks with a clumsy gait,
She looks up; the moon is racing along.
Her dark gaze is drowned in light.
A man’s voice speaks:

May the child you conceived
Be no burden to your soul;
Just see how brightly the universe is gleaming!
There’s a glow around everything;
You are floating with me on a cold ocean,
But a special warmth flickers
From you into me, from me into you.
It will transfigure the strange man’s child.
You will bear the child for me, as if it were mine;
You have brought the glow into me,
You have made me like a child myself.

He grasps her around her ample hips.
Their breath kisses in the breeze.
Two people walk through the lofty, bright night.
“SOUVENIR DE FLORENCE” FOR STRING SEXTET IN D MINOR, OP. 70

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Born May 7, 1840 in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia
Died November 6, 1893 in St. Petersburg

UMS premiere: Vienna Chamber Orchestra conducted by Philippe Entremont; January 1993 in Hill Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1890:
· The wooden steam ship Mackinaw burns in a fire on the Black River in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula
· Vincent van Gogh dies by suicide
· The United Mine Workers of America labor union is founded

Tchaikovsky loved Italy and especially Florence, where he spent extended periods of time on a number of occasions. But the Souvenir de Florence is far from being a medley of Italian melodies like the Capriccio italien, written in Rome a decade earlier. Tchaikovsky’s memories of Florence were not necessarily all musical ones. It was here that he had become infatuated with a young man named Vittorio, who sang many Italian songs for him in 1877. Another Florentine “souvenir” had to do with his patron Nadezhda von Meck, who was staying just down the street from Tchaikovsky. The two had made a pact never to meet in person; when he accidentally ran into her in the street one day, he had to apologize profusely in a letter. Finally, he became utterly disenchanted with the city after finishing his opera The Queen of Spades there in the spring of 1890. He composed the Sextet in the summer of the same year, back home in Russia. (He would never set foot on the banks of the Arno again.)

The memories invoked in the work are, therefore, of a highly complex nature. Some dark passions lurk behind the ingratiating tunefulness of the music. The first movement opens in the traditionally tragic key of d minor with a dramatic diminished harmony, and it is “storm and stress” all the way through, in spite of the presence of a lyrical second theme (itself made more complex by its constant two-against-three cross-rhythms).

The second movement, in D Major, is a beguiling love duet for the first violin and the first cello (switching their parts in the recapitulation), accompanied mostly in pizzicato (plucked strings) by the rest of the group. Yet here, too, we hear some emotional outbursts in triple fortissimo; there is also a brief and mysterious middle section with sudden dynamic changes and a strong rhythmic profile, played by all six instruments in strict homophony (perfect vertical alignment).

Next comes a graceful intermezzo
in a minor that, once again, builds up considerable momentum as its theme is developed. The middle section seems to anticipate the famous “Trepak” — a Russian dance — from the ballet Nutcracker, written just after the sextet.

In fact, Souvenir de Florence might just as easily be called “A Russian in Florence.” The main theme of the finale has the rhythmic shape of a Russian folk dance. It is elaborated quite masterfully, with extensive fugal counterpoint. For the most part, the music remains in the “dark” d-minor tonality, with the turn to the Major delayed until the last quarter of the movement.

*Program notes by Peter Laki.*
“Passion, precision, warmth, a gold blend: these are the trademarks of this excellent Israeli string quartet.” Such was the New York Times’ impression of the Jerusalem Quartet. Since the ensemble’s founding in 1993 and subsequent 1996 debut, the four Israeli musicians have embarked on a journey of growth and maturation. This journey has resulted in a wide repertoire and stunning depth of expression, which carries on the string quartet tradition in a unique manner. The ensemble has found its core in a warm, full, human sound and an egalitarian balance between high and low voices. This approach allows the Quartet to maintain a healthy relationship between individual expression and a transparent and respectful presentation of the composer’s work. It is also the drive and motivation for the continuing refinement of its interpretations of the classical repertoire as well as exploration of new epochs.

The Jerusalem Quartet is a regular and beloved guest on the world’s great concert stages. With regular biannual visits to North America, the Quartet has performed in cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Washington, and Cleveland as well as in the Ravinia Festival. In Europe, the Quartet enjoys an enthusiastic reception, with regular appearances in London’s Wigmore Hall, Tonhalle Zürich, Munich Herkulessaal, and Theatre des Champs-Elysées, as well as special guest performances at the Auditorium du Louvre Paris, the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and festivals such as Salzburg, Verbier, Schleswig-Holstein, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Rheingau, Saint Petersburg White Nights, and many others.

The Jerusalem Quartet records exclusively for Harmonia Mundi. The Quartet’s recordings, particularly the albums featuring Haydn’s string quartets and Schubert’s Death and the Maiden, have been honored with numerous awards, such as the Diapason d’Or and the BBC Music Magazine Award for Chamber Music. In 2018, the Quartet released two albums, an album of Dvořák’s String Quintet Op. 97 and Sextet Op. 48, and a much-awaited recording of the celebrated quartets by Ravel and Debussy. In the spring of 2019, the Quartet will release a unique album exploring Jewish music in Central Europe between the wars and its far-reaching influence. Israeli soprano Hila Baggio will join the Quartet to perform a collection of Yiddish cabaret songs from Warsaw in the 1920s. The Quartet has commissioned composer Leonid Desyatnikov to arrange these songs, which will be sung in Yiddish. Schulhoff’s Five Pieces (1924), a collection of short and light cabaret-like pieces, and Korngold’s Quartet No. 2 (1937) will complete the program.

Alongside its regular programs, the 2018–19 season will open with a premiere of the Quartet’s new Yiddish program. In October, the Quartet will be joined by Pinchas Zukerman and Amanda Forsyth for a US tour featuring string sextets by Strauss, Schoenberg, and Tchaikovsky. March will include a return of their Brahms project featuring quartets, sonatas, and quintets together with clarinetist Sharon Kam and pianist Matan Porat. After a second US tour in April, Bartók’s six string quartets will be presented at London’s Wigmore Hall in May and then combined with Beethoven and performed in various venues in Bavaria. For more information, please visit www.jerusalemstringquartet.com.
With a celebrated career encompassing five decades, Pinchas Zukerman reigns as one of today’s most sought-after and versatile musicians: violin and viola soloist, conductor, and chamber musician. He is renowned as a virtuoso, and admired for the expressive lyricism of his playing, singular beauty of tone, and impeccable musicianship, which can be heard throughout his discography of over 100 albums.

The 2018–19 season marks Mr. Zukerman’s 10th season as principal guest conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and his fourth as the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra’s artist-in-residence, and includes over 100 concerts worldwide. Highlights of the season include two European tours with the Royal Philharmonic and Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestras, and concerto appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra; the Pittsburgh, Colorado, and New World symphonies; and the Gulbenkian Orchestra. Serving as both soloist and conductor, Mr. Zukerman leads the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, and the Toronto and Indianapolis symphony orchestras. In chamber music, he travels with the Zukerman Trio and joins the Jerusalem Quartet as guest artist on tour in Chicago, Houston, Atlanta, Vancouver, Berkeley, and Ann Arbor.

Canadian Juno Award-winning cellist Amanda Forsyth is considered one of North America’s most dynamic cellists. Describing a recent performance, California’s Ventura County Star raved, “In Forsyth’s hands, it was sheer magic.” She has achieved her international reputation as a soloist, chamber musician, and principal cellist of Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra from 1999–2015. Her intense richness of tone, remarkable technique, and exceptional musicality combine to enthral audiences and critics alike.

Ms. Forsyth has performed on international tours with the Royal Philharmonic and Israel Philharmonic orchestras. Orchestral appearances include the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Lisbon’s Gulbenkian Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony, the Luxembourg Philharmonic, the Gyeonggi Philharmonic; the Sydney, Perth, and Adelaide symphonies; and the Chicago, National, San Diego, Colorado, Oregon, New West, Dallas, and Grand Rapids symphonies in the US. As a founding member of the Zukerman Chamber Players and cellist of the Zukerman Trio, Ms. Forsyth has performed on six continents and has appeared at prestigious music festivals around the world. Highlights from the current season include a world premiere performance of Marjan Mozetich’s Cello Concerto with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, as well as her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, performing the Brahms Double Concerto with Zubin Mehta conducting.

Ms. Forsyth’s recordings appear on the Sony Classics, Naxos, Altara, Fanfare, Marquis, Pro Arte, and CBC labels. Her most recent disc features the Brahms Double Concerto with Pinchas Zukerman and the National Arts Centre Orchestra, released by Analekta Records. Born in South Africa, Ms. Forsyth moved to Canada as a child and began playing cello at age three. She became a protégé of William Pleeth in London, and later studied with Harvey Shapiro at The Juilliard School. Ms. Forsyth performs on a rare 1699 Italian cello by Carlo Giuseppe Testore.
This evening’s concert marks the Jerusalem Quartet’s sixth appearance under UMS auspices, following the Quartet’s UMS debut in April 2005 in Rackham Auditorium. The Quartet most recently appeared under UMS auspices in April 2016 in Rackham Auditorium. Pinchas Zukerman makes his 10th UMS appearance this evening, following his UMS debut in January 1981 in an all-Brahms violin recital with pianist Marc Neikrug in Hill Auditorium. He most recently appeared under UMS auspices in January 2016, conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, and as a violin soloist performing the Beethoven Violin Concerto in Hill Auditorium. UMS welcomes cellist Amanda Forsyth as she makes her UMS debut tonight.
MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

10/24 Yuja Wang and Martin Grubinger, Jr.
10/26 Aizuri Quartet
11/15 Danish String Quartet

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

10/19 UMS 101: Dance (Hubbard Street Dance Chicago)
(Power Center Green Room, 121 Fletcher Street, 6:00 pm)
Paid registration is required for this event; please visit bit.ly/UMSClasses (case sensitive) to register.
In partnership with Ann Arbor Public Schools Rec & Ed.

10/19–20 Post-Performance Artist Q&A: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
(Power Center Auditorium)
Must have a ticket to that evening’s performance to attend.

10/20 You Can Dance: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)
Registration opens 45 minutes prior to the start of the event.

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.