



FRIENDS OF  
CHAMBER  
MUSIC  
DENVER

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**FELIX UMANSKY**, CELLO

# HARLEM QUARTET

JANUARY 12, 2017

**W.A. MOZART**  
**QUARTET**  
(1756-1791)

**No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 458 “The Hunt”**

Allegro vivace assai

Menuetto and Trio. Moderato

Adagio

Allegro assai

**DIZZY GILLESPIE**  
(1917-1993)

**“A Night in Tunisia”**

arr. Dave Glenn

**ANTÔNIO CARLOS**  
**JOBIM**  
(1927-1994)

**“The Girl from Ipanema”**

arr. Dave Glenn

## INTERMISSION

**JOHANNES**  
**BRAHMS**  
(1833-1897)

**Sextet No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 18**

Allegro ma non troppo

Andante, ma moderato

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Rondo: Poco Allegretto e grazioso

*Basil Vendryes, viola*

*Matthew Zalkind, cello*



**ILMAR GAVILÁN**

*violin*

**MELISSA WHITE**

*violin*

**JAIME AMADOR**

*viola*

**FELIX UMANSKY**

*cello*

## HARLEM QUARTET

The Harlem Quartet, praised for its “panache” by *The New York Times*, is “bringing a new attitude to classical music, one that is fresh, bracing and intelligent,” says the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. The quartet’s mission is to advance diversity in classical music, engaging young and new audiences through the discovery and presentation of varied repertoire that includes works by minority composers. The 2015-16 concert season marked the debut of Felix Umansky, formerly of the Linden String Quartet, as Harlem Quartet’s cellist.

Since its public debut in 2006 at Carnegie Hall, the New York-based ensemble has performed throughout the U.S. as well as in France, the U.K., Belgium, Brazil, Panama, Canada, Venezuela, and South Africa, where under the auspices of the U.S. State Department in May 2012 they spent two weeks performing concerts and engaging in outreach activities. In 2013 they completed their third and final year in the Professional String Quartet Training Program at New England Conservatory and participated in the conservatory’s string quartet exchange program in Paris, working with violinist Günter Pichler in a masterclass setting.

In addition to performing on chamber music series around the country, they have collaborated with such distinguished performers as violinist Itzhak Perlman; cellist Carter Brey; clarinetist Paquito D’Rivera; pianist Misha Dichter, with whom the quartet made their Kennedy Center debut in February 2013; and jazz legends Chick Corea

and Gary Burton, whom they joined for their six-month “Hot House” tour that began at Tanglewood in summer 2012. Later that year the quartet made their performance debut with another jazz virtuoso, the British saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer Tim Garland.

Harlem Quartet has been featured on WNBC, CNN, the *Today Show*, WQXR-FM, and the *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. In 2009 they performed for President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House and appeared Christmas morning on NBC’s *Today Show*. They made their European debut in October 2009 performing at the residence of the U.S. ambassador to the U.K., and returned to Europe as guest artists and faculty members of the Musica Mundi International Festival in Belgium. In early 2011 they were featured guest artists at the Panama Jazz Festival in Panama City. In June 2012 they made their debut with the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Their recording career began in 2007 when White Pine Music issued *Take the “A” Train*, a release featuring the string quartet version of that jazz standard by Billy Strayhorn; the CD was highlighted that year in the November issue of *Strings* magazine. A second CD, featuring works of Walter Piston, was released in 2010 by Naxos. The quartet’s third recording, released in early 2011, is a collaboration with pianist Awadagin Pratt and showcases works by American composer Judith Lang Zaimont. More recently the quartet collaborated with jazz pianist Chick Corea in two recording projects, including a Grammy-winning *Hot House* album that included “Mozart Goes Dancing,” which won a separate Grammy as Best Instrumental Composition.

Harlem Quartet was founded in 2006 by The Sphinx Organization, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to building diversity in classical music and providing access to music education in underserved communities. The quartet is represented worldwide by Sciolino Artist Management in New York City.

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## BASIL VENDRYES

**Basil Vendryes**, viola, has been Principal Violist of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra since 1993. He is a former member of the San Francisco Symphony, the New York Philharmonic and the Rochester Philharmonic orchestras. He studied at the Manhattan School of Music and the Eastman School of Music, working with Sally O'Reilly, Francis Tursi, and Heidi Castleman. He currently serves on the faculties of the Lamont School of Music of the University of Denver, the Quartet Program at SUNY Fredonia, New York, the Green Mountain Chamber Music festival in Vermont, and the Interharmony International Music Festival in Italy. He is also the founder/director of the Colorado Young Sinfonia, comprised of some of the best young talent in the Denver area, now in its 14th year. Vendryes plays on a rare Italian viola made in 1887 by Carlo Cerruti.

Photo credit: Peter Lockley



### **BASIL VENDRYES**

*viola*

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## MATTHEW ZALKIND

**Matthew Zalkind**, cello, performs regularly as a recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician. As a soloist, he has performed concerti with such organizations as the Utah Symphony, the Moscow Chamber Players, the Albany Symphony, the Juilliard Symphony Orchestra, and many orchestras here and abroad. A frequent recitalist, he has performed concerts at the Phillips Collection, Moscow Conservatory, Carnegie Hall, Juilliard School, Kennedy Center, and Beijing Concert Hall. Zalkind regularly participates in chamber music festivals, including Marlboro and "Musicians from Marlboro" tours, Olympic Music Festival, and Ravinia's "Steans Institute." He was a former member of the Harlem String Quartet and toured with them to Japan, England, Ethiopia, and every region of the United States. Zalkind is in his second year as Assistant Professor at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music.



### **MATTHEW ZALKIND**

*cello*

# NOTES

Program notes © Elizabeth Bergman

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## IN BRIEF

**BORN:** January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Germany

**DIED:** December 5, 1791 in Vienna, Austria

**WORK COMPOSED:** Completed in 1784

### **MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** April 26, 1995, Saint Lawrence String Quartet

**ESTIMATED DURATION:** 30 minutes

**INTERESTING FACT:** Mozart did not call the quartet "The Hunt." The name comes from the opening theme, which evokes the sound of a hunting horn.

W.A. MOZART:  
QUARTET IN B-FLAT  
MAJOR, K. 458  
"THE HUNT"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed twenty-three quartets in his thirty-five years. All are acclaimed and beloved, but perhaps first among equals are the six so-called "Haydn Quartets," dedicated to the elder Classical composer and published as a set in 1785.

The "Hunt" Quartet acquired its nickname from the descending hunting-call motif heard at the very opening. The motif returns at the end of the movement, where it saturates the entire musical texture. The same descending call is heard again and again in overlapping layers, creating an exciting climax. Mozart knew that this kind of memorable, enjoyable, and familiar subject would appeal to audiences. At the same time, however, the quartet is presented as a weighty, serious undertaking rather than mere light entertainment. The goal was to appeal to both learned listeners and earnest enthusiasts. Even the second movement Minuet and Trio (often a light-hearted dance movement) exudes intensity, and the third movement Adagio does not so much harken back to Haydn as look forward to Beethoven in terms of profundity and passion. The finale is utterly Haydn-like, brisk and witty with the instruments seeming to banter among themselves. There's even an inside joke: the main theme of the rondo ends, softly, with a musical gesture (a series of repeated notes) that Mozart lifted from Haydn's own String Quartet in B-flat, Op. 33.

DIZZY GILLESPIE:  
"A NIGHT IN  
TUNISIA" (ARR.  
DAVE GLENN)

**IN BRIEF**

**BORN:** October 21, 1917 in Cheraw, South Carolina

**DIED:** January 6, 1993 in Englewood, New Jersey

**WORK COMPOSED:** circa 1941-42

**FIRST RECORDED:** 1953

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series

**ESTIMATED DURATION:** 10 minutes

**INTERESTING FACT:** Gillespie called the work "Interlude" and then said that "...some genius decided to call it 'Night in Tunisia.'"

In the winter of 1941-42, trumpeter, pianist, and all-around jazz genius Dizzy Gillespie was playing with alto sax player Benny Carter at Kelly's Stable on 52nd Street in New York City. (Pianist Art Tatum and the Nat King Cole Trio were also on the bill that season.) One night "I sat down at the piano to improvise some chord changes," Gillespie recalled. "I looked at the notes of the chords as I played the progression and noticed that they formed a melody." Harmony begat melody under the name of a new tune, the now classic "A Night in Tunisia." Quickly the tune spread down the street and through various bands, becoming a bebop standard.

"A Night in Tunisia" is most notable for its use of Afro-Cuban rhythms, new to jazz at the time. The drums often take a leading role in performances, likewise the bass—here, no longer confined to walking along hand-in-hand with the basic beat. The busy, rhythmically and melodically active bass part is taken by the cello. In true bebop fashion, extremely virtuosic solos are traded among the instruments, interspersed with brief passages in unison. Everyone gets a turn in the spotlight.

Dave Glenn is an accomplished jazz trombone player (he spent ten years playing with the Gerry Mulligan

Concert Jazz Band), educator, composer, and arranger who recently retired from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington.

## IN BRIEF

**BORN:** January 25, 1927 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**DIED:** December 8, 1994 in New York City

**WORK COMPOSED:** 1962

**FIRST COMMERCIAL RECORDING:** 1962 by Pery Ribeiro

### **MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series

**ESTIMATED DURATION:** 5 minutes

ANTONIO CARLOS  
JOBIM: "THE GIRL  
FROM IPANEMA"  
(ARR. DAVE GLENN)

In the summer of 1962, "The Girl from Ipanema" swept the United States, introducing bossa nova to millions of people who previously knew little to nothing of Brazil or its musics. The song was inspired by a lovely teenager walking through the Ipanema neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro; the lyrics hardly matter, however, when compared to the undeniable, kinetic allure of the music itself. The bossa nova was a new style in Brazil at the time, dating only to the late 1950's. An outgrowth of the samba, the bossa nova joined melody and rhythm and harmony together. Think of the song: "The girl from Ipanema goes walking." The speech pattern is the rhythm; the verbal mirrors the melodic. Moreover the original song features Stan Getz's breathy saxophone; the sound of the music being made matters to the success of the song. The scrape of the bow in the first violin gives the arrangement a sense of touch, the feel of sand on the feet.

The extended improvisations then play with the variety of sounds string instruments can produce, including extended passages of pizzicato plucking that suggest the bossa nova guitar and lots of bent pitches (like a jazz singer, leaning in to a pitch, sliding into or out of the melody). Trading the melody among instruments draws on the quartet tradition, transforming the solo song into a knowing conversation among friends.

JOHANNES  
BRAHMS: SEXTET  
NO. 1 IN B-FLAT  
MAJOR, OP. 18

**IN BRIEF**

**BORN:** May 7, 1833 in Hamburg, Germany

**DIED:** April 3, 1897 in Vienna, Austria

**WORK COMPOSED:** 1859-60

**FIRST PERFORMED:** 1860

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

**PERFORMANCE:** November 5, 2013, Academy of St. Martin  
in the Fields Chamber Ensemble

**ESTIMATED DURATION:** 40 minutes

In 1853, composer Robert Schumann introduced a promising young talent to readers of his musical journal. “Sooner or later,” Schumann imagined, “someone would and must appear, fated to give us the ideal expression of the times, one who would not gain his mastery by gradual stages, but rather would spring fully armed like Minerva from the head of Jove.” His prophecy proved true: He announced that he had discovered Beethoven’s heir. “His name is Johannes Brahms, from Hamburg,” Schumann declared. “He carries all the marks of one who has received a call” and would soon take up the symphonic mantle from Beethoven.

At the time, Brahms (1833–97) was still a young musician. He was just five years past his solo debut as a pianist, which he made in 1848, playing works by Bach and Beethoven. His earliest extant compositions date from 1851—only two years prior to Schumann’s fateful pronouncement. Likely he had already destroyed his earliest compositions; subjecting himself to intense self-criticism, he mercilessly censored his own music throughout his life. He worked first in the genres of the piano sonata and Lied, saving the most exalted genres of the string quartet and symphony for much later in life.

Beethoven never composed a string sextet, so Brahms felt free to use the genre as a way to hone his symphonic

writing. Himself a pianist, Brahms had to learn how best to write for string instruments. He relied on the advice of his friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim, who played through Brahms's Sextet in 1860 for an audience that included Brahms's beloved friend, Clara Schumann. "It was even more beautiful than I had anticipated," she responded, "and my expectations were already high."

The Sextet reveals Brahms's mastery of the high Classical and early Romantic styles. Yet he never imitates past models but instead applies his knowledge of music by his predecessors to create his own distinctive, individual voice as a composer. The first movement waltz evokes the grace and ease of Schubert's chamber music, although with a decidedly somber seriousness that characterizes so much of Brahms's music. The third movement Scherzo sounds more akin to Haydn's or Beethoven's symphonies in presenting and developing very minimal musical material. The carefree Rondo finale harkens back to the ease and good humor of Mozart, yet the luscious textures and impassioned climaxes belong only to Brahms.

A special thank you to Alix and John Corboy, Imagine 2020: Denver's Cultural Plan, and Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF) for their support of this residency.



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