



# HARLEM QUARTET

## MICHAEL BROWN PIANO

**ILMAR GAVILÁN**, violin  
**MELISSA WHITE**, violin

**JAIME AMADO**, viola  
**FELIX UMANSKY**, cello

**DELPHINE VON  
SCHAUROTH**  
(1814-1887)

*Three Songs without Words from Op. 18, Vol. 1*  
No. 3, in A-flat Major  
No. 4, In E Minor  
No. 1, in E Major

**FELIX  
MENDELSSOHN**  
(1809-1847)

**Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 14**

**FANNY MENDELSSOHN  
HENSEL**  
(1805-1847)

**String Quartet in E-flat Major**  
Adagio ma non troppo  
Allegretto  
Romanze  
Allegro molto vivace

**JESSIE MONTGOMERY**  
(b. 1981)

*Strum for string quartet*

### INTERMISSION

**ROBERT SCHUMANN**  
(1810-1856)

**Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44**  
Allegro brillante  
In modo d'una marcia. Un poco largamente  
Scherzo. Molto vivace  
Allegro ma non troppo



## HARLEM QUARTET

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#### **ILMAR GAVILÁN**

*violin*

#### **MELISSA WHITE**

*violin*

#### **JAIME AMADO**

*viola*

#### **FELIX UMANSKY**

*cello*

Harlem Quartet has been praised for its “panache” in *The New York Times* and hailed in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* for “bringing a new attitude to classical music, one that is fresh, bracing and intelligent.” It has won plaudits from such veteran musicians as Jazz at Lincoln Center woodwind virtuoso Ted Nash, who declared in a 2018 *Playbill* article, “Harlem Quartet is one of the greatest string quartets I have ever heard. They can play anything.” Since its debut at Carnegie Hall in 2006, the ensemble has thrilled audiences and students throughout the U.S. as well as in the U.K., France, Belgium, Brazil, Panama, Canada, Venezuela, Japan, Ethiopia, and South Africa.

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 composers of color and women. Passion for this work has made the quartet a leading ensemble in both educational and community engagement activities. It began a multi-year residency with London’s Royal College of Music in 2018. From 2015 to 2020 it led an annual workshop at Music Mountain in Falls Village, Connecticut. In 2021 it began two other institutional affiliations: as the inaugural Grissom Artist in Residence at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, and as Quartet in Residence at Montclair State University in northeastern New Jersey.

Highlights of Harlem Quartet’s 2021-22 season include a concert at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, with pianist Joseph Kalichstein; a collaboration with the Catalyst Quartet at the Chamber Music Society of Detroit; engagements with Carnegie Hall Citywide and the Morgan Library in New York City, as well as chamber music societies in Little Rock, Raleigh, Lewes (Delaware) and Syracuse; and a partnership with Cuban pianist-composer Aldo López-Gavilán in concerts at the Phoenix Chamber Music Society, the Ensemble Music Society of Indianapolis, Nebraska’s Lincoln Friends of Chamber Music, and Virginia’s Shenandoah Conservatory.

In 2012, Harlem Quartet and the Chicago Sinfonietta, led by Music Director Mei-Ann Chen, premiered Randall Craig Fleischer's arrangement for string quartet and orchestra of music from *West Side Story*, and together they recorded that arrangement for Cedille Records along with works for string quartet and orchestra by Michael Abels and Benjamin Lees. The quartet collaborated with jazz pianist Chick Corea in a Grammy-winning *Hot House* album that included Corea's *Mozart Goes Dancing*, which won a separate Grammy as Best Instrumental Composition. Harlem Quartet's latest album, the July 2020 release *Cross Pollination*, features works by Debussy, William Bolcom, Dizzy Gillespie, and Guido López-Gavilán.

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

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## MICHAEL BROWN

Michael Brown has been hailed by *The New York Times* as “one of the leading figures in the current renaissance of performer-composers.” His artistry is shaped by his creative voice as a pianist and composer, and praised for his “fearless performances” (*The New York Times*) and “exceptionally beautiful” compositions (*The Washington Post*).

Winner of a 2018 Emerging Artist Award from Lincoln Center and a 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Brown has recently performed as soloist with the Seattle Symphony, the National Philharmonic, and the Grand Rapids, North Carolina, New Haven, and Albany symphonies; and in recitals at Carnegie Hall, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and Caramoor. He is an artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, performing frequently at Alice Tully Hall and on tour. Brown was selected by Sir András Schiff



**MICHAEL BROWN**  
*Piano*

to perform on an international tour, making solo debuts in Berlin, Milan, Florence, Zurich's Tonhalle, and New York's 92nd Street Y. He regularly performs recitals with his longtime duo partner, cellist Nicholas Canellakis, and has appeared at numerous festivals, including Tanglewood, Marlboro, Music@Menlo, Gilmore, Ravinia, Saratoga, Bridgehampton, Bard, Sedona, Moab, and Tippet Rise.

Brown was Composer and Artist-in-Residence at the New Haven Symphony Orchestra for the 2017-19 seasons, and is a recent recipient of a Copland House Residency Award. His Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Strings, composed at Copland House in 2020 and co-commissioned by the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival and Poland's NFM Leopoldinum Orchestra, was premiered by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra under Julian Kuerti in April 2021, with Brown as soloist. He has also received commissions from the New Haven and Maryland symphony orchestras, Concert Artists Guild, and Shriver Hall; Osmo Vänskä and Erin Keefe; pianists Jerome Lowenthal, Ursula Oppens, Orion Weiss, Adam Golka, and Roman Rabinovich; and a consortium of gardens.

He is a prolific recording artist whose latest solo album is *Noctuelles*, a First Hand Records release featuring Ravel's *Miroirs* and Nikolai Medtner's *Second Improvisation*, the latter work including two movements newly discovered by Brown and previously unrecorded. His discography with orchestra includes appearances as soloist with the Seattle Symphony and Ludovic Morlot, and with the Brandenburg State Symphony in Samuel Adler's First Piano Concerto. Other albums include music of Mendelssohn and Beethoven on First Hand Records; an all-George Perle CD; and collaborative albums with pianist Jerome Lowenthal, cellist Nicholas Canellakis, and violinist Elena Urioste. He has plans to embark on a multi-year project to record the complete piano music of Felix Mendelssohn.

A Steinway Artist, Brown was First Prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition, a winner of the Bowers Residency (formerly known as CMS Two) at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and a recipient of the Juilliard Petschek Award. He earned dual bachelor's and master's degrees in piano and composition

from The Juilliard School, where he studied with pianists Jerome Lowenthal and Robert McDonald and composers Samuel Adler and Robert Beaser. Additional mentors have included Sir András Schiff and Richard Goode as well as his early teachers, Herbert Rothgarber and Adam Kent. A native New Yorker, he lives there with his two 19th-century Steinway D pianos, Octavia and Daria. Brown is represented worldwide by New York-based Sciolino Artist Management.

## NOTES

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### IN BRIEF

**BORN:** March 13, 1814, Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt

**DIED:** 1887, Munich, Germany

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

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

**DELPHINE VON  
SCHAUROTH:  
THREE SONGS  
WITHOUT WORDS  
FROM OPUS 18,  
VOL. I**

Delphine von Schauroth was a Bavarian pianist and composer. Her parents, Eduard Friedrich von Schauroth and his second wife, Louise Teltz, were a prominent and respected Munich couple. Delphine demonstrated exceptional musical talent as a child, and was sent to Paris to study with the French virtuoso pianist Frédéric Kalkbrenner. She made her debut in 1822 in Frankfurt, launching what proved to be a remarkable career. She is known to have played Kalkbrenner's music in London in 1824 – at age ten.

Von Schauroth likely first encountered Felix Mendelssohn in Paris in 1825. Their paths crossed again in Munich in 1831, and their relationship blossomed into a flirtatious friendship. Felix briefly considered proposing to her. Though his romantic interest in von Schauroth proved to be a passing fancy, Mendelssohn continued to hold her musicianship in high regard. He dedicated his Rondo Capriccioso to her, and also composed his G minor Piano Concerto, Op.25, with her in mind. (In a letter to his sister Fanny, Mendelssohn confided that von Schauroth had composed a striking passage in the concerto. We do not know which passage it was, but it was a startling admission.)

Two years after her fleeting romance with Mendelssohn, von Schauroth married Edwin Hill-Handley, an English clergyman. The couple lived in London for five years, though Delphine continued to perform in public. They separated in 1837 and she returned to Munich. Von Schauroth continued to enjoy success as a performer on the European stage, and her compositions – primarily for solo piano – achieved modest renown.

Her *Six Songs Without Words* were published in Leipzig and Weimar in 1870. The title – pioneered by Mendelssohn decades earlier – was likely an affectionate tribute to Felix, who had died of a stroke in 1847. Von Schauroth's pieces are representative of their era, rich in textural ideas, and sometimes placing the melodies in inner voices. The A-flat major song (No. 3), marked “heartfelt and soulful,” features flowing lines with broken chords in both hands, requiring control to bring out a lyrical melody amid rippling accompaniment. Von Schauroth is more adventurous in her chromaticism than Mendelssohn, reflecting a later, mid-19th-century vocabulary.

The E minor song (No. 4) is a virtuoso miniature, marked “fast and fiery.” Arpeggios rise and fall in both hands, with surging dynamic changes contributing to the drama. Von Schauroth's brilliant coda attests to her formidable technique.

Her E major song (No. 1), “moderate and full of tenderness,” is framed by a prelude and postlude worthy of Schumann, who wrote exquisite, poetic preludes and postludes for many of his *Lieder*. The texture is different from the previous two, with most of the interest in the right hand, while the left anchors the harmonic foundation. Here again, her melody is lovely, lyrical, and skillfully harmonized.

## IN BRIEF

**BORN:** February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany

**DIED:** November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

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

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

**DURATION:** 7 minutes

## FELIX MENDELSSOHN: RONDO CAPRICCIOSO IN E MAJOR, OP. 14

We don't hear much Mendelssohn on professional piano recitals. Many pianists consider his *Lieder ohne Worte* [Songs without Words] the domain of students and accomplished amateurs. Mendelssohn's four piano sonatas and various other small pieces are sadly neglected. There are two exceptions to this oversight: the splendid *Variations sérieuses*, Op. 54 (1841) and the Rondo Capriccioso.

This piece has a history that unfolded in two episodes. Mendelssohn sketched an étude in E Minor in January 1828, adding the A Major Andante two and a half years later. His impetus for expanding the piece was the composer of the first work on today's program, Delphine von Schauroth, who, in addition to her skills as a composer, was also a gifted pianist and star pupil of the virtuoso Friedrich Kalkbrenner.

Felix and Delphine first met in Paris in 1825; she was 12, he 16. Five years later, their paths crossed again when he journeyed to Munich, the first stop on a trip that would take him to Vienna and on to several Italian cities. Both young people had grown up, and Felix was smitten. In a letter to his sister Fanny on June 11, 1830, he confided that he was considering proposing to Delphine.

In the event, he did not do so, but his ardor prompted him to dust off the E Minor étude. He added an introduction in E Major with a transition to the étude, now relabeled *Presto leggero*, and presented the manuscript to Delphine. She was the work's first interpreter, but Mendelssohn himself played it a great deal. It became a signature piece that helped to establish him as both composer and performer.

Considering the time that elapsed between the composition of its two parts, the unity of musical content between the sections is impressive, with subtle thematic links between its slow and fast sections. The sequence of a slow section in major mode followed by a fast movement in the parallel minor similarly recurs in subsequent piano pieces. (Mendelssohn's model may have been Beethoven's "Kreutzer" Sonata for violin and piano, which opens with an *Adagio sostenuto* in A Major preceding a Presto in A Minor.)

The Rondo capriccioso is a superb example of Mendelssohn's keyboard style: elegant, balanced in form, with direct and appealing melodies. His incomparable grasp for writing *leggero* ("with a light touch") recalls the elfin world of his Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rapid oscillating parallel thirds, chromatic scales, ascending and descending arpeggios, and double octaves are all intended to dazzle. With good reason, the Rondo Capriccioso remains a popular virtuoso showpiece.

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FANNY  
MENDELSSOHN  
HENSEL: STRING  
QUARTET IN E-FLAT  
MAJOR

IN BRIEF

**BORN:** November 14, 1805, Hamburg, Germany

**DIED:** May 14, 1847, Berlin, Germany

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

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

**DURATION:** 20 minutes

The eldest of Abraham and Leah Mendelssohn's four children, Fanny Mendelssohn was three and a half years older than her brother Felix. She was equally gifted as a pianist and composer, but was discouraged by her father from pursuing a professional career in music. Felix supported her composition efforts, but disapproved of her publishing any of her pieces. (Ironically, several of her songs were published under Felix's name in the 1820s.) Fanny married the artist Wilhelm Hensel in 1829. Hensel was court painter to the Prussian king. He had a more



progressive view with respect to his wife's talents, and encouraged her to continue composing. Their Berlin home became a favored spot for house concerts; she was the salon hostess *par excellence*. The majority of Fanny's more than 300 compositions were songs and piano miniatures, but she did produce some larger dramatic pieces in the 1830s. In the 1840s, ignoring her father's and brother's wishes, she began to publish her music. Her works were starting to garner critical acclaim when she died of a massive stroke in May 1847. She was 41.

Her Piano Trio Op. 11 (from 1846, one of her few works to be published in her lifetime) and String Quartet are regarded today as her finest chamber compositions. The Quartet dates from 1834, but remained unpublished until 1988, a delay emblematic of the belated recognition her music is receiving.

The Quartet shows a secure command of harmony and counterpoint, and an original approach to form. She opens with a reverent slow movement that reveals itself so seamlessly one hardly notices the imitative exchanges that tie it together. Her second movement, an Allegretto in C minor, functions as a scherzo, and sounds remarkably like her brother's music: a great compliment, as Felix was a master of the scherzo idiom. The contrasting trio section has lively imitative writing and an unusually difficult cello part – in fact, the writing for all four players is demanding.

Hensel's *Romanze* has the character of a “song without words,” with its emphasis on melody and restrained beauty. An extended passage in the middle injects some romantic *angst*, with powerful, emotionally charged intensity. Calm eventually prevails, and Hensel's coda drifts upward into the ether.

The gloves come off in the finale, a brilliant *Allegro molto vivace* requiring extraordinarily precise ensemble playing and intonation from the musicians. A profusion of melodies and attractive accompaniment figures show Fanny to have been as gifted a melodist as her brother. This music is not only pleasing to the ear; it sounds as if it is *fun* to play.

**JESSIE  
MONTGOMERY:  
STRUM FOR STRING  
QUARTET (2006,  
REV. 2012)**

**IN BRIEF**

**BORN:** December 8, 1981, New York City

**MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC**

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

**DURATION:** 7 minutes

*Music is my connection to the world. It guides me to understand my place in relation to others and challenges me to make clear the things I do not understand. I imagine that music is a meeting place at which all people can converse about their unique differences and common stories.*

– Jessie Montgomery

So reads the home page on Jessie Montgomery's web site. A violinist and educator as well as a composer, she grew up in a musical household on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Her parents worked in music and theater and were active in neighborhood arts initiatives. Montgomery earned her undergraduate degree from the Juilliard School in violin performance and subsequently completed a masters in Film Composition and Multimedia at NYU. She is currently a Graduate Fellow in Music Composition at Princeton.

As its title suggests, *Strum* alludes to plucked strings, specifically those of the guitar family. Montgomery describes this piece as a celebration of American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement. In her seven-minute score she evokes multiple styles, freely migrating between traditional techniques and popular elements.

The movement opens with upper strings playing pizzicato. The cello introduces a mournful theme, presently joined by the first violin. The mood shifts to a more upbeat tempo, introducing jazzy syncopations and flights of fancy. In some passages all four players use their bows, including in chorale-like rhythmic unison;

however, Montgomery's layered, pulsating rhythms are never far off. Diverse in textures and rhythmically complex, *Strum* is a joyous paean to the colors of the string quartet.

## IN BRIEF

**BORN:** June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Germany

**DIED:** July 29, 1856, Endenich, Bonn, Germany

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

**PERFORMANCE:** November 11, 2009, Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio with members of the Miami String Quartet

**DURATION:** 30 minutes

ROBERT  
SCHUMANN:  
PIANO QUINTET IN  
E-FLAT MAJOR, OP.  
44

Robert and Clara Schumann were married in September 1840, the day before Clara's 21st birthday. The ceremony took place after almost four years of prolonged hostility and opposition from Clara's father, the prominent piano pedagogue Friedrich Wieck, and against his will. Still, Schumann was elated about his marriage. His ebullience gave rise to a stream of compositional energy, as if there were no end to the music within him.

Today, Schumann's bipolar nature is well known. His manic/depressive disease manifested itself in composition as an obsessive focus on one particular type of writing for a prolonged period. In the late 1830s, he had composed almost exclusively for solo piano. The year 1840 brought forth an outpouring of lieder, including the important song cycles *Dichterliebe* and *Frauenliebe und Leben*. The year 1841 was one of orchestral works.

In 1842 Schumann turned his attention to chamber music, producing three string quartets, Op. 41, the Piano Quintet Op. 44, and the Piano Quartet Op. 47, also in E-flat. Schumann was treading a new path for himself with these works. This was the composer of brilliant vignettes inspired by literary masterpieces and the writings of Jean-Paul Richter; the composer of *Carnaval* and *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, of *Kreisleriana* and the *Davidsbundlertänze*. Schumann, the miniaturist extraordinaire, turned from the extra-musical associations which had dominated the music of his youth, and

instead immersed himself in the study of counterpoint, particularly fugue, and the composition of absolute music. The three string quartets were the result of his new absorption. They proved to be his only essay in the genre, but he profited from his fresh experience with them to combine the quartet ensemble with piano in his next chamber work, the Piano Quintet.

Schumann cannot truly be said to have “invented” the piano quintet as Mozart did the piano quartet. The 18th-century Italian Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805), who was active in the Spanish court, wrote a dozen works for the same instrumentation. They are little known today, and were almost certainly unknown to Schumann, whose expansion to the combination of piano plus string quartet was logical in light of his recent completion of the Op. 41 quartets. He was anxious to return to composing for the instrument he knew and loved best – and Clara’s instrument. At the same time, he was filled with ideas for the string quartet. By combining the two, he brought together his own musical imagination with the varied sonorities of five players.

Clara was, of course, the pianist for whom Schumann wrote the work. She played its premiere, and incorporated it into her repertoire immediately, thereby contributing to its popularity. The piano quintet rapidly became one of Schumann’s best-known compositions. Schumann’s friend Mendelssohn played the second performance, and had an early hand in the reworking of the scherzo.

The Piano Quintet is one of Schumann’s happiest inspirations in the realm of formally governed, abstract music. It shows a command of form and a discipline over his musical imagination that recurred infrequently in his remaining 14 years. The opening movement is a fine sonata-form structure, with both strong and lyrical themes. As one would expect, the piano plays a major role, functioning as a partner to the string quartet as a

whole rather than as one of five individual components of the musical texture. Nevertheless the keyboard does not overshadow the string players, whose parts are written effectively and idiomatically. The movement is noble and strong, characterized by aggressive foursquare phrases (symmetrical two- and four-measure units with firm downbeats) and a compelling vitality throughout. Schumann demonstrates his mastery of song-like writing in the lovely slow movement. He casts this march as a rondo, with strongly contrasting episodes interrupting its tentative main idea.

Schumann's scherzo is dazzling. This whirlwind *tour de force* is constructed, remarkably, of ascending and descending scale passages. Both of its trios provide rhythmic contrast; the second contains probably the most challenging technical writing for strings in the work.

The finale is one of the most extraordinary movements in the entire chamber music literature. Schumann teases us with G minor before firmly grounding his musical material in the home tonality of E-flat major. As in the first movement, he shows a gratifying command of form and musical matter throughout; the finale is a convincing sonata-rondo. But in this *Allegro ma non troppo* he saves his finest writing for last. In the splendid coda – another *fugato* – he not only concentrates his most technically secure contrapuntal writing, but incorporates the main theme of the first movement. This coda bears proud testimony to his hard-won mastery of counterpoint. Schumann weaves the melodies expertly, bringing his quintet to a brilliant, unified, and satisfying close.

*Harlem Quartet and Michael Brown appear by arrangement with Sciolino Artist Management.*

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Herb Rothenberg, *in memory of Doris Rothenberg*  
Ginny Swenson & Pat Sablatura  
Cheryl Saborsky  
Edward Sachs  
Mary Scott  
Kathleen Spring  
Paul Stein  
Michael & Michelle Stern  
Shirley V Sullivan  
Steve Susman  
Lincoln Tague  
Jocy Upton  
William Vigor  
Lyn & Warren Wickelgren  
Phillip Wolf  
Dan & Patricia Wright, *in memory of Dr. Kent Kreider, a lighthouse to his family and to his friends, both medical and musical.*

### **A SPECIAL THANK YOU**

to the many FCM patrons who donated the value of their tickets for cancelled concerts in the spring of 2020. Your generosity made such a difference as we navigated the many issues related to the pandemic. We are so grateful for your support!

\* Gifts made to FCM Endowment

\*\* Legacy Donor

# UPCOMING CONCERTS

**Inon Barnatan, piano**  
**Viano String Quartet**  
Wed, Feb 16, 2022

**Benjamin Grosvenor, piano**  
Wed, Mar 16, 2022

**Quatuor Ébène**  
Wed, Apr 6, 2022

**Daniil Trifonov, piano**  
Thu, May 5, 2022

*All concerts begin at 7:30 pm at Gates  
Concert Hall, 2344 E. Iliff Avenue,  
Denver*

## MUSIC IN THE GALLERIES

Clyfford Still Museum  
1250 Bannock Street, Denver

**TBD**  
Sun, Feb 13, 2022  
1:00 & 2:00 PM (identical concerts)

## SPECIAL THANKS

### SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL FACILITIES DISTRICT (TIER III)

for supporting FCM's outreach  
efforts through school residencies  
and master classes

### COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO (KVOD 88.1 FM)

for broadcasting FCM concerts on its  
"Colorado Spotlight" programs

### BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION

for sponsorship of FCM's Piano Series  
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memory of Lewis Story

### ESTATE OF JOSEPH DEHEER ESTATE OF SUE JOSHEL

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