



**MOSS  
ARTS  
CENTER**

Friday, November 4, 2022, 7:30 PM

## **Danish String Quartet**

Moss Arts Center  
Street and Davis Performance Hall  
Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre

**VT VIRGINIA  
TECH**

# SEASON

*at a glance*—2022-2023

Tues., Nov. 8, 7:30 PM

*Broadway in Blacksburg*  
*Anastasia*

Sat., Nov. 12, 7:30 PM

*Ahuti*  
Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Thurs., Nov. 17, 7:30 PM

**Soweto Gospel Choir**  
*Hope: It's Been a Long Time Coming*

Sat., Dec. 3, 4 PM

**Roanoke Symphony Orchestra**  
*Holiday Pops Spectacular*

Thurs., Jan. 19, 7:30 PM

**Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra**  
András Keller, chief conductor  
Zoltan Fejérvári, piano

Tues., Jan. 24, 7:30 PM

*An Evening with*  
*Kevin Young*

Fri., Jan. 27, 7:30 PM

**Machine de Cirque**  
*La Galerie*

Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 PM

**PUBLIQuartet**

Tues., Feb. 14, 7:30 PM

*Broadway in Blacksburg*  
*Hairspray*

Fri., Feb. 17, 7:30 PM

Sat., Feb. 18, 2 and 7:30 PM

*Akutagawa*  
Co-created by Koryū Nishikawa V  
and Tom Lee

Tues., Feb. 28-Wed., March 1, 7:30 PM

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

Thurs., March 16, 7:30 PM

*An Evening with*  
*Viet Thanh Nguyen*

Tickets are available now at the box office and online. See the complete schedule of performances, exhibitions, and engagement activities at [artscenter.vt.edu](http://artscenter.vt.edu).

## Danish String Quartet

Frederik Øland, *violin*  
Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, *violin*  
Asbjørn Nørgaard, *viola*  
Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin, *cello*

String Quartet no. 16 in E-flat Major, K. 428      Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

*I. Allegro non troppo*  
*II. Andante con moto*  
*III. Menuetto and Trio*  
*IV. Allegro vivace*

String Quartet in A minor, D. 804, *Rosamunde*      Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

*I. Allegro ma non troppo*  
*II. Andante*  
*III. Menuetto. Allegretto—Trio*  
*IV. Allegro moderato*

### INTERMISSION

A selection of traditional folk music      Danish String Quartet (arr.)

This performance is supported in part by gifts from Ms. Deborah L. Brown and Joseph A. Hopkins and Linda W. Hopkins

# Program Notes

## STRING QUARTET NO. 16 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, K. 428

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Mozart's arrival in Vienna opened up glistening new vistas for him, and one of the most important of these was the example of Haydn's string quartets. Though Mozart had already written 13 string quartets when he left Salzburg, all of these had been completed by the early 1770s (when he was 17) and still showed resemblances to the *divertimento* form from which the quartet had evolved. The effect of Haydn's most recent quartets on Mozart was stunning, and he quickly set out to write a cycle of six new quartets of his own.

Under Haydn's hands, the quartet had evolved from its early role as genteel entertainment music (background music for court functions) into a great musical form. From Haydn, Mozart learned to democratize the voices, giving all four players individual roles in what had become a complex and expressive music drama. Usually the fastest of workers, Mozart labored long and hard over these six quartets. It took him well over two years to complete the cycle, and he went back and revised each of them carefully, which suggests that he took this music quite seriously—in his dedication of the six quartets to Haydn, Mozart confessed that they were “the fruit of long and laborious toil.”

Mozart composed the quartet in E-flat major in June and July of 1783, just after the birth of his first child. Externally, the four movements seem normal enough, though the glory of this music (as with all Mozart's music) lies in the transformation of just those very normal forms. The *allegro non troppo* opens with a calm unison theme-shape that will recur in a variety of forms. The second subject—full of dots, turns, and triplets—feels unusually busy after the subdued opening, and Mozart then treats both themes in a concise development that features the smooth interplay of all four voices. The *andante con moto*, nominally in the key of A-flat major, proceeds solemnly over the constant pulse of its 6/8 meter. As it continues, this movement wanders so far from the tonality suggested by its key signature that some have been tempted to make out prefigurations here of Tristan, still 76 years in the future. It is a movement like this that makes us understand how one early (1787) reviewer could complain that this music was “too highly spiced.”

The *menuetto* offers another reminiscence of Haydn: its opening gesture seems to recall the minuet of Haydn's op. 33, no. 2, also in E-flat major. The most distinctive feature of this movement is its trio, which turns unexpectedly dark: Mozart moves to G minor here, and the music is haunted by the chromatic winding of its themes before leaping back brightly to the minuet section. The concluding *allegro vivace* is aptly named—it is a blistering

rondo built on the bobbing, murmuring idea that opens the movement. Mozart may have learned from Haydn the importance of liberating all four voices in a string quartet, but this movement makes unusual demands on the first violinist—the writing here demands a virtuoso player, who is sent hurtling across the range of that instrument.

—Eric Bromberger © 2022

## STRING QUARTET IN A MINOR, D. 804, ROSAMUNDE

Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert's engagement with chamber music originated within his family circle, where he played string quartets and other music with his brother, father, and friends. He received his first violin lessons from his father when he was eight years old, and according to his brother, Ferdinand, began shortly thereafter to write pieces for quartet. He also studied piano, organ, and singing, and as a chorister with the Imperial Court Chapel he had the opportunity to play with a student orchestra that studied works by Haydn and Mozart. Those two masters would be Schubert's earliest important influences, providing the young composer with models, inspiration, and even solace; after listening to a Mozart quintet, Schubert wrote, “O Mozart, immortal Mozart, how endlessly many comforting perceptions of a brighter and better life hast thou brought to our souls!” Such solace would prove particularly valuable during later periods of tribulation. A promising career and growing reputation, especially as a composer of songs, was severely compromised in late 1822 when Schubert fell ill and was diagnosed with syphilis. Two of his most famous quartets, in A minor and D minor, date from the early spring of 1824, when Schubert decided to devote himself, for the first time in three years, to writing chamber music. At this time he was in poor health, having grown increasingly debilitated; he suffered from pain in his bones, and had lost the ability to sing or even to play the piano. Writing in his diary, he reflected, “Pain sharpens the understanding and strengthens the mind; whereas joy seldom troubles about the former and softens the latter or makes it frivolous.”

On March 14, 1824, the Schuppanzigh Quartet played a concert for Vienna's Musikverein, including a quartet by Schubert that had been completed only days earlier. Among the audience was Schubert's friend, the painter Moritz von Schwind, who wrote, “Schubert's quartet was performed, rather slowly in his opinion, but very purely and responsively. It is altogether a very delicate piece, but of such a nature that the melody remains with one, as it does after hearing songs, wholly feeling and wholly expressed.” The quartet in question was that in A minor, op. 29 (D. 804); it emerged in the same months as the

# Program Notes, continued

*Death and the Maiden* quartet in D minor, and similarly based its second movement on an earlier theme. But unlike the agitated D-minor quartet, this work is delicate and soothing. All four movements open pianissimo and sustain a mild atmosphere featuring beautiful melodies and a balance between major and minor tonalities. The work opens with gentle yet urgent accompaniment that supports a haunting melody in the first violin; in the *allegro's* development section, the theme gathers intensity in the key of D minor with an emphasis on dissonant diminished-seventh chords. Schubert drew the artless, innocent-sounding melody of the C-major *andante* from his incidental music for Wilhelmina von Chézy's drama, *Rosamunde, Fürstin von Zypern* (*Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus*), produced the previous December. The cello launches the *menuetto* with an incisive rhythmic motive that binds it with the A-major *trio*. The work also closes in A major, in a movement with remarkably lucid textures and a gentle *dénouement*.

—Kathryn L. Libin © 2022

## A SELECTION OF TRADITIONAL FOLK MUSIC Danish String Quartet, arr.

This selection of music features pieces from two Danish String Quartet recordings: *Wood Works* (2014), a collection of the group's favorite melodies from Nordic folk music, and *Last Leaf*, which took its initial inspiration from an unusual Christmas hymn, *Now Found Is the Fairest of Roses*, first published in 1732 by Danish theologian and poet H.A. Brorson.

Of *Wood Works* the quartet writes, "In the forests of southern Sweden we find Lasse. He is a traveling fiddler and he provides the music for festive occasions. Lasse is poor, so he will play you some music if you give him a meal. As he can't afford new strings for his violin, he tunes the ones he has down to make them last slightly longer. His claim to fame is a waltz he is always playing; a little melody that people enjoy dancing to. Sometimes Lasse plays it to himself while sitting alone in his wooden shed.

"Up in Norway a young man has just returned from his Grand Tour of Europe. While passing through the Rhineland, he picked up a very popular dance that everyone danced in the elegant salons. He doesn't know the name of the dance, so he simply calls it a 'Reinlender.' Wanting to introduce it to his friends, he writes a couple of tunes to accompany the new dance.

"Folk music is the music of all the small places. It is the local music, but as such it is also the music of everywhere and everyone. Like rivers, the melodies and dances have flowed slowly from region to region: Whenever a

fiddler stumbled on a melody, he would play it and make it his own before passing it on. You don't own a folk tune, you simply borrow it for a while.

"We have borrowed and arranged a selection of tunes that are all very close to our hearts. We perform them as a string quartet, one of the most powerful musical vehicles we know of. The string quartet is a pure construct: Four simple instruments made of wood. But in all its simplicity the string quartet is capable of expressing a myriad of colours, nuances, and emotions—just like folk music. Our idea is to marry these two simple but powerful things, the folk music and the string quartet. Normally the string quartet has been reserved for the classical masters. Now we want to see what happens when we let the Nordic folk music flow through the wooden instruments of the string quartet.

"Does it work? We hope so. And remember: We simply borrowed these tunes. They have already been returned."

Of *Last Leaf*, the quartet writes, *Now Found Is the Fairest of Roses* is "set to a mysterious, dark melody: Brorson had chosen an old Lutheran funeral choral to accompany his Christmas hymn, elegantly showing how life and death are always connected. From here we embark on a travel through the rich fauna of Nordic folk melodies until returning to Brorson in the end. It is a journey that could have been made in many different ways, but we believe that we returned with some nice souvenirs. In these old melodies, we find immense beauty and depth, and we can't help but sing them through the medium of our string quartet. Brorson found the fairest of roses, we found a bunch of amazing tunes—and we hope you will enjoy what we did to them."

# Biography



## DANISH STRING QUARTET

**Frederik Øland**, violin  
**Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen**, violin  
**Asbjørn Nørgaard**, viola  
**Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin**, cello

The Danish String Quartet celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022-2023, and the Grammy-nominated quartet continuously asserts its preeminence among the world's finest string quartets. Formed when the musicians were in their teens, the quartet is renowned for impeccable musicianship, sophisticated artistry,

exquisite clarity of ensemble, and, above all, an unmatched ability to play as one. Performances are characterized by a rare musical spontaneity, giving audiences the sense of hearing even treasured canon repertoire as if for the first time. The quartet exudes a palpable joy in music-making that has made it one of today's most highly acclaimed and in-demand classical quartets, performing sold out concert halls around the world. The musicians' inventive and intriguing programming and repertoire choices have produced critically acclaimed original projects and commissions, as well as popular arrangements of Scandinavian folk music.

This season the Danish String Quartet continues its *Doppelgänger* series, an ambitious four-year international commissioning project. *Doppelgänger* pairs world premieres from four renowned composers—Bent Sørensen, Lotta Wennäkoski, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, and Thomas Adès—with late major chamber works by Schubert. Each season, the quartet performs a world premiere on a program with its doppelgänger—the Schubert quartet or quintet that inspired it—culminating in 2024 in the premiere of a quintet by Adès, after the String Quintet in C Major. This season's new work by Thorvaldsdottir premieres in April 2023 and is paired with Schubert's String Quartet in A minor, *Rosamunde*. The *Doppelgänger* pieces are commissioned by the Danish String Quartet with the support of Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances, UC Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures, Vancouver Recital Society, Flagey in Brussels, and Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam. The quartet performs 28 concerts in North America this season over the course of three separate tours. Additionally, the quartet is the artist-in-residence at London's Wigmore Hall.

The Danish String Quartet's most recent recording project is *Prism*, a series of five discs on ECM New Series that explores the symbiotic musical and contextual relationships between Bach fugues, Beethoven string quartets, and works by Shostakovich, Schnittke, Bartók, Mendelssohn, and Webern. Four of the five recordings have been released on ECM, and the fifth, *Prism V*, is slated for 2023. The most recently released is *Prism IV* (2022), which was an "Editor's Choice" in *Limelight* magazine. The quartet's discography reflects the ensemble's special affinity for Scandinavian composers, with the complete quartets of Carl Nielsen (DaCapo, 2007 and 2008) and Adès, Nørgård, & Abrahamsen, its debut on ECM in 2016. The group also released two discs of traditional Scandinavian folk music, *Wood Works* (Dacapo, 2014) and *Last Leaf* (ECM, 2017), which was one of the top classical albums of the year as chosen by NPR, Spotify, and the *New York Times*, among others. A third folk recording is planned for release in 2023 on ECM.

The group takes an active role in reaching new audiences through special projects. In 2007 it established the DSQ Festival, which takes place in an intimate and informal setting in Copenhagen. In 2016 it inaugurated a concert series, *Series of Four*, in which the quartet both performs and invites colleagues to appear.

The quartet is the recipient of many awards and prestigious appointments, including *Musical America's* 2020 Ensemble of the Year and the Borletti-Buitoni Trust. It was named in 2013 as BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists and appointed to the Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two). The quartet was awarded the 2010 NORDMETALL-Ensemble Prize at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival in Germany, and in 2011 it received the Carl Nielsen Prize, the highest cultural honor in Denmark.

Violinists Frederik Øland and Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen and violist Asbjørn Nørgaard met as children at a music summer camp where they played soccer and made music together. As teenagers, they began the study of classical chamber music and were mentored by Tim Frederiksen of Copenhagen's Royal Danish Academy of Music. In 2008 the three Danes were joined by Norwegian cellist Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin. For more information, please visit [danishquartet.com](http://danishquartet.com).

The Danish String Quartet performed as part of the Moss Arts Center's fall 2020 *HomeStage* series. This is the quartet's first in-person performance at the Moss.

# Tell Us What You Think!

We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra on Thursday, January 19, 2023.



[bit.ly/dsq22-feedback](https://bit.ly/dsq22-feedback)

# Engagement Events

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2022

## REHEARSAL OBSERVATION: DANISH STRING QUARTET

The Danish String Quartet invited Virginia Tech string students to observe the ensemble's rehearsal in advance of their evening performance.

## POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A

Engage with the Danish String Quartet in this open discussion.

*Special thanks to John Irrera, Alan Weinstein, and Molly Wilkens-Reed*

# Go Deeper

According to *Broadway World*, the Danish String Quartet's most recent album *Prism III: Beethoven/Bartók/Bach* "shows how the radiance of Bach's fugues is refracted through Beethoven's quartets to illuminate the work of later composers." Do you hear a similar thread of influence in tonight's program among the pieces composed by Haydn and Schubert, and arranged by members of the ensemble? If not, what unifies the Danish String Quartet's program for you?

# Did You Know?

The Moss Arts Center's portable and collapsible orchestra shell installs in a matter of hours. Featuring a curved, hard surface, the shell primarily acts as a monitor so that musicians can hear each other, but also provides modest amplification to the house, reflecting sound to the audience.

# In the Galleries

## Fall Exhibitions

Through Saturday, December 17

### Craig Drennen: *First Acts, Scene 2*

#### Ruth C. Horton Gallery

Atlanta-based artist Craig Drennen is best known for his ongoing *Timon of Athens* series—inspired by the Shakespeare play of the same name—for which he has produced paintings, drawings, prints, videos, performances, and sculptures.

### Steve Locke: *the daily practice of painting*

#### Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery

Throughout his artistic career, Steve Locke's work has questioned how we ascribe meaning to portraiture.

## K-12 Programs at the Moss



At the Moss Arts Center, we believe that arts experiences are a crucial part of a child's education. We've been dedicated to providing opportunities for children at no cost since we opened in 2013. A wide array of Moss programming and experiences to inspire, engage, and empower students of all ages and backgrounds. This season, we're offering five school-day matinee programs, in-school workshops and performances, and gallery tours with professional artists for learners of all ages. Learn more at [bit.ly/moss-k12](https://bit.ly/moss-k12).

## Land Acknowledgement and Labor Recognition

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People's homeland and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western territories.

We understand that honoring Native Peoples without explicit material commitments falls short of our institutional responsibilities. Through sustained, transparent, and meaningful engagement with the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples and other Native Nations, we commit to changing the trajectory of Virginia Tech's history by increasing Indigenous student, staff, and faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying course offerings, and meeting the growing needs of all Virginia tribes and supporting their sovereignty.

We must also recognize that enslaved Black people generated revenue and resources used to establish Virginia Tech and were prohibited from attending until 1953. Through InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, we commit to advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

## Health and Wellness

The Moss Arts Center adheres to the guidelines of the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Tech in its operations, including protocols for distancing, face coverings, and cleaning and sanitation. Our status may change according to changes in university operating procedures. Find the most up to date information at [artscenter.vt.edu/visit](https://artscenter.vt.edu/visit).

We ask patrons to do their part in keeping our community healthy. If you feel unwell, please stay home.

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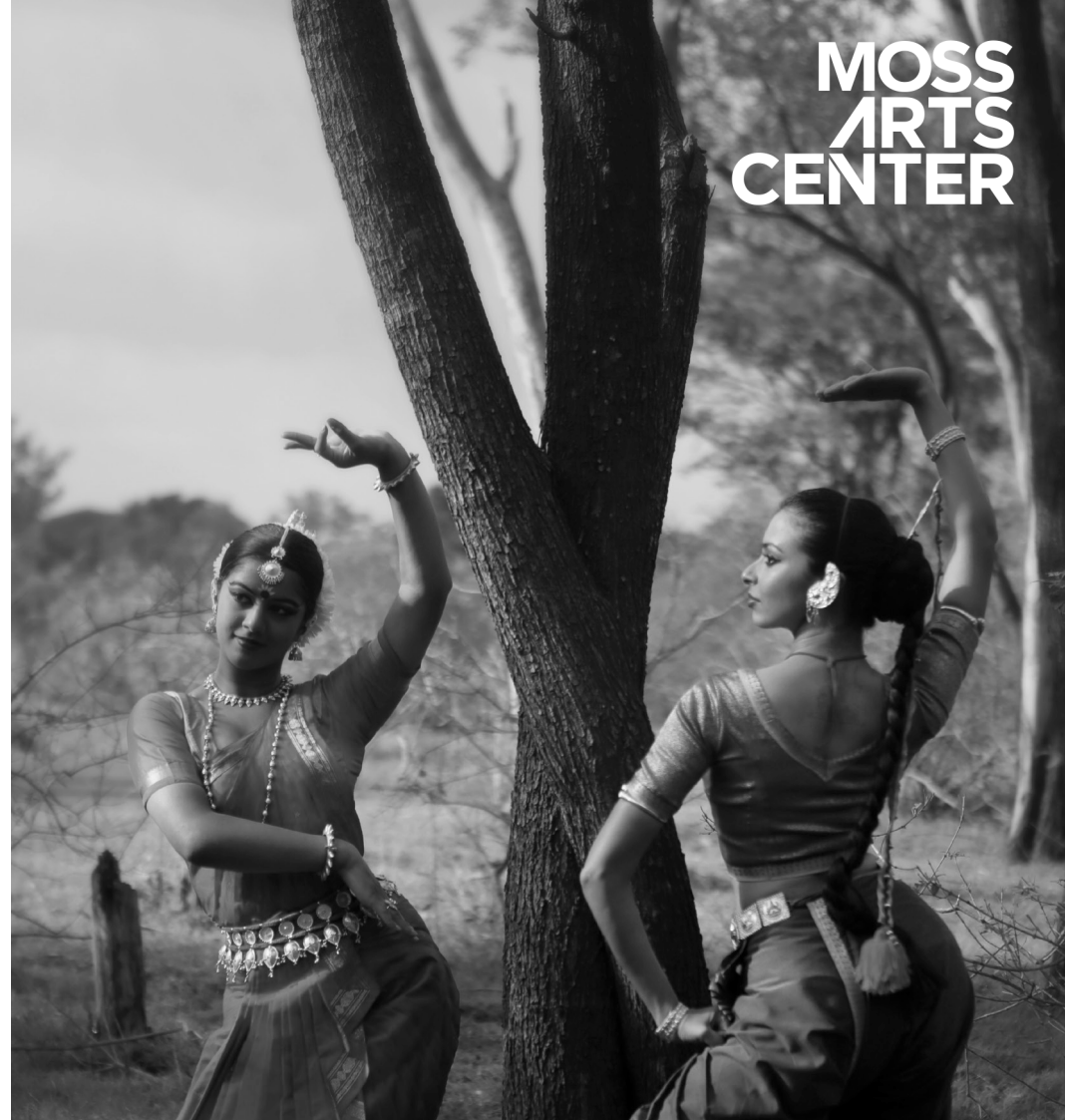
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