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the dante quartet
brian thorsett, tenor

Thursday, March 6, 2025, 7:30 PM

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the dante quartet

brian thorsett, tenor

Ludwig van Beethoven String Quartet in F Major, op. 135
Allegretto
Vivace
Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo
Der schwer gefasste Entschluss;
Grave, ma non troppo
tratto — Allegro

Ian Venables *The Wreaths of Time*
(world premiere)

INTERMISSION

Edward Elgar String Quartet in E minor, op. 83
Allegro moderato
Piacevole (poco andante)
Allegro molto

*The performance will last approximately
90 minutes with one 15-minute intermission.*

**This performance is supported in part by gifts from
Mr. Bruce Prichard and Mrs. Nancy Beville Prichard
and Intimate Voices.**

program notes

ludwig van beethoven

string quartet in f major, op. 135

In 1826, as the end of Beethoven's life drew near, his general health and state of mind worsened. In addition to battling physical ailments, bouts of depression, and financial problems, Beethoven was also drawn to looking after his teenage nephew, Karl. In the fall of that year, Beethoven and Karl traveled to rural Austria for an extended vacation to recuperate. During this time (August to September 1826), Beethoven carried a sketchbook and it is here where we find references to the op. 135 string quartet. During his return to Vienna, Beethoven fell ill with a case of pneumonia, an ailment which would eventually take his life. His final string quartet and last complete piece was finished on October 30, 1826. Beethoven died on March 26, 1827.

Beethoven had extensively explored the medium of the string quartet, but his final work in this field is not what we might expect and differs from his previous 15 quartets. He had shocked in the op. 18 quartets of his early period, influenced and even dictated form in his middle period, and discovered a deep scope of expression in his late quartets. Therefore, we might expect Beethoven's final work to be a continuation of his former processes. Instead of writing an even bigger, broader musical landscape, he retreats in op. 135, presenting a distillation of his journey as a composer. The music of op. 135 is deep and introspective, but it manages to achieve a clarity and transparency that perhaps recalls the work of his former teacher, Joseph Haydn. Having said this, one cannot imagine a better closing chapter to the life of Beethoven, truly a spirit and voice for all ages.

In the first 15 measures of the work, Beethoven presents the four basic musical elements that comprise the transparent texture of the sonata form first movement. The piece opens with an eerie utterance from the viola and quivering response from the first violin. This initial brooding character and blurry tonal center is followed by an almost ebullient first theme statement in F Major that is shared by the upper three instruments of the quartet and accompanied by the cello. Then, the instruments

present a *cantus firmus* (fixed melody) in unison, a melody that Beethoven will vary and use both as a bass line and primary thematic element. Having now presented all the material he needs to work with, Beethoven begins splintering and combining the various elements to create contrast, variety, and even a sense of conversation between the instruments.

The scherzo second movement is enigmatic where an ambiguity hides the placement of the down beat from view. Beethoven's use of musical ingredients is very confined in this movement, but his compositional prowess as a master of variety and unexpected organization is on display throughout. The syncopated melody in the first violin at the opening is the backbone of the movement and is shared throughout as the instruments of the quartet toss the material around the group. The finite order of the scherzo is obliterated by the tumultuous trio, a moment where we see Beethoven's fearlessness as a composer. With the first violin playing a brilliantly virtuosic leaping melody, Beethoven writes the lower three instruments to play a ferociously unrelenting measure of accompanying music 47 times. This seemingly chaotic section is diffused with a clever chromatic segue that brings the bouncing theme from the opening of the music back into view. Beethoven is always full of surprises.

There follows an elegiac third movement, the calm after the storm, built on the form of theme and variations. The movement is the height of tranquility from the outset as each voice enters to slowly unveil the richness of the D-flat Major home key. The theme of the movement, a recitative-like melody played by the first violin, is accompanied by rich chords in the lower three instruments. Beethoven's ingenious use of variation evolves slowly and discreetly throughout the movement, serving only to heighten its serenity.

The last movement of op. 135 has become famous due to the headings at the beginning of the movement: *Der schwer Gefaßte Entschluß* (*The Difficult Decision*). Just below this statement, Beethoven wrote the question "*Muß es sein?*" ("Must it be?") and the response "*Es muß sein!*" ("It must be!"). The movement, marked *Grave*, opens with a slow and ominous exchange built on the "*Muss es sein?*" motive. This stark mood is almost operatic in nature and lays the foundation for dramatic

program notes, cont.

exploration. The emphatic chords that the instruments share, both as a group and in pairs, are orchestral in character and perhaps recall the Ninth Symphony. When the “*Es muß sein!*” motive enters in the two violin parts, it throws the door open with emphatic enthusiasm. The first violin leads the bright texture, with reassuring lines in the other instruments bolstering the mood. The second theme is a charming folk tune that offers a lovely contrast to the earthy first theme. Beethoven presents a second, more extended *Grave* section, which introduces the recapitulation of the movement and sets up a restatement of the first *allegro* section. The coda is made up of an innocent-sounding plucked version of the folk tune second theme from earlier in the movement that clears the texture for the final *fortissimo* unison statement of the “*Es muß sein!*” theme. The quartet ends triumphantly and heroically.

— Richard Jenkinson, cellist, Dante Quartet

ian vemales *the wreaths of time*

The image of the wreath symbolises both celebration and remembrance and the associated feelings of joy and pathos; the wreath also represents the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth. In this way, *The Wreaths of Time* seeks to commemorate important moments in American political and social history and honour those individuals who found themselves caught up in the vicissitudes of their times — the embattled farmer fighting for his country’s freedom, a child caught up in the tragedy of war, one woman’s struggle for equal rights, an old Black man, a victim of social injustice, a poet celebrating the joy of life, and one man’s courageous fight for gay rights and our hopes for a better world.

All artists — but particularly poets — are observers and commentators of their age. Through their eyes they teach us about ourselves and the world; they are a bridge between the past and the present. In *The Wreaths of Time*, I have chosen to set poems that either comment upon an event or describe the circumstances in which a person finds themselves. The cycle’s opening song, *Concord Hymn*, commemorates the American War

of Independence that began on April 17, 1775, when the first battles took place in Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. At the North Bridge in Concord, 400 colonial militia fought 100 British soldiers in a battle that resulted in casualties on both sides. In 1837 the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) composed a dedicatory poem for the unveiling of a monument in Concord, commemorating the confrontation that ignited the Revolutionary War. Emerson's poem is a moving tribute to those who died on both sides and captures both the spirit of freedom and the noble sentiments that gave birth to a nation. The poem also contains the famous line "and fired the shot heard round the world." Yet, within a generation, Emerson's noble words would be shattered by a divisive conflict that would wreak destruction upon his fledgling country.

While Herman Melville (1819-1891) is principally known as a writer of fiction, he was also a poet and in 1866, a year after the end of the American Civil War, he published a volume of poems, *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War*. Melville dedicated the work "To the Memory of the Three Hundred Thousand Who in the War For the Maintenance of the Union Fell Devotedly Under the Flag of Their Fathers." The first poem in the collection, *Misgivings*, was written in 1859, a year before the war began. It is a dramatic and bleak narrative, full of apprehension and foreboding as the poet reflects upon the terrible consequences of war:

*I muse upon my country's ills
The tempest bursting from the waste of Time
On the world's fairest hope linked with man's foulest crime*

In this Scherzo burlesque, I have tried to capture the poem's underlying sense of uneasiness and turbulence.

Inez Milholland (1886-1916) was one of America's early suffragettes. As one of the leaders in the National Woman's Party, she addressed statewide meetings calling for equal voting rights for women. During a cross country campaign in 1916, she collapsed while delivering a speech in Los Angeles and died a few days later. In 1923, on the 75th anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement, a ceremony was held in the Capitol to unveil a marble sculpture to three suffragettes, but Milholland was

program notes, cont.

not one of them. For the occasion, Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) composed a sonnet, *The Pioneer*, which called for women to continue the fight for equality. It is not known whether the poem was a tribute to the three suffragettes or Milholland herself, but in 1928 Millay retitled the poem *To Inez Milholland*.

The poet Georgia Douglas Johnson (1880-1966) has until recently languished in the margins of literary history, but in the early decades of the 20th century, she was the most widely known Black woman poet in the U.S. She wrote over 200 poems, 28 plays, and 31 short stories. The poem *Old Black Men* comes from her second volume of published poetry, *Bronze: A Book of Verse* (1922). The poet's poignant narrative, combined with a simple rhyming scheme, adds greatly to the poem's emotional power. But it is the bleak and fatalistic final couplet that moves one deeply:

*And they have learned to live it down
As though they did not care.*

Odgen Nash (1902-1971) is known for his satirical wit and comic verse, as well as his ability to write poetry that conceals a deep understanding of the human condition. In *No Doctors Today, Thank You*, Nash conveys brilliantly the wonder and beauty of life and those fleeting moments of euphoria that make us feel good to be alive. The poet's plea is clear — that despite life's difficulties, we must endeavour to celebrate the joy of existence

*This is my euphorian day
I will ring welkins
and before anybody answers I will run away.*

Nash even suggests by comparison, that heaven (welkins) itself will not be as exhilarating. For this whimsical song, I decided to set only a small section of his lengthy prose poem. Here, the poet suggests that when retirement looms, one must seize the opportunity to try something new, even if it happens to be taming a caribou!

On my first visit to San Francisco in 1995, I was taken to the Castro District, where the assassination of the gay rights campaigner Harvey Milk was still in the forefront of people's minds. On November 27, 1978, Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone were shot and killed by Milk's fellow city supervisor, Dan White, a board member who had campaigned on a platform of law and order and family values. The poet Todd S. J. Lawson witnessed the distress and outrage from a shocked community and in the days that followed, wrote *In Memoriam*, a poignant eulogy to both Milk and Moscone. The poem's narrative conveys the image of a solemn procession moving "From Castro down Market" as it slowly makes its way to City Hall. The palpable silence is only broken by the sobbing of the inconsolable mourners. In my setting, I have tried to evoke this moving scene by underpinning the vocal narrative with a slow march-like figure, heard in the lower strings. The music's relentless tread is only interrupted when the singer intones the desolate lines:

*As if drums were begging to be muffled
As if tears were asking to be heard.*

When the procession reaches City Hall, the crowd watches as "a child / places a lighted candle on the steps." At this point the music reaches a dramatic climax on the words "The drums had stopped." This is followed by an impassioned reprise of the music heard earlier on the word "tears" in the line "as if tears were asking to be heard." However, this time the word "tears" is repeated three times, a musical gesture that underscores the poet's inconsolable words, "tears could not." Today, some 47 years on, one feels that Milk would be proud of what he achieved and that his hope for a more tolerant society has now been realised. In one of the last speeches he delivered on the steps of San Francisco City Hall, he said, "The only thing they have to look forward to is hope ... Hope for a better world, hope for a better tomorrow, hope for a better place to come to if the pressures at home are too great. Hope that all will be all right. Without hope, not only gays, but the Blacks, the seniors, the handicapped, the 'us'es will give up."

program notes, cont.

It is in this spirit of hope that I chose to end the cycle with a setting of Langston Hughes' life-affirming poem, *Dreams*. Hughes (1901-1967) was one of the most influential and widely admired Black poets of America, becoming a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance after his first poem was published in 1921. *Dreams* was published in 1923 in *The World Tomorrow* magazine; in its two short stanzas, it explores the enduring power of dreams and the warning to never to let dreams die. It has been suggested that Martin Luther King Jr. drew inspiration from this poem for his famous line, "I have a dream."

While the subject matter of *The Wreaths of Time* is selective and is an English composer's personal response to those defining moments in U.S. history, it is nevertheless a sincere tribute to a great nation; one I have come to know and admire over the last 30 years. This is why I was so delighted to receive this commission from Brian Thorsett, with whom I have had the immense privilege of collaborating over many years. Tonight's premiere with the Dante Quartet is the outcome of his singular vision and deep commitment to forging closer ties between our two countries.

— Ian Venables, composer, *The Wreaths of Time*

edward elgar

string quartet in e minor, op. 83

Elgar composed two part-quartets in 1878 and a complete one in 1887, but these were set aside and/or destroyed. Years later, the violinist Adolf Brodsky had been urging Elgar to compose a string quartet since 1900, when, as leader of the Hallé Orchestra, he performed several of Elgar's works. Consequently, Elgar first set about composing a string quartet in 1907 after enjoying a concert in Malvern by the Brodsky Quartet. However, he put it aside when he embarked with determination on his long-delayed First Symphony. It appears that the composer subsequently used themes intended for this earlier quartet in other works, including the symphony. When he eventually returned to the genre, it was to compose an entirely fresh work. It was after enjoying an evening of chamber music in London with Billy Reed's quartet, just before entering the hospital for

a tonsillitis operation, that Elgar decided on writing the quartet, and he began it whilst convalescing, completing the first movement by the end of March 1918. He composed that first movement at his home, Severn House, in Hampstead, depressed by the war news and debilitated from his operation. By May, he could move to the peaceful surroundings of Brinkwells, the country cottage that Lady Elgar had found for them in the depth of the Sussex countryside. The string quartet was thus the first of three chamber works that he tackled in 1918, inspired by his Sussex surroundings. Following the delivery of a piano to Brinkwells in mid-August of that year, however, Elgar tempted fate a second time by putting aside the quartet, firstly to compose the Violin Sonata in E minor, op. 82, and then to make a start on the Piano Quintet in A minor, op. 84. Fortunately, he resumed work on the quartet in October 1918, beginning the second movement on his wife's birthday and producing a work she likened to "captured sunshine" and subsequently requested that it be played at her funeral. (After her death on April 7, 1920, this movement was indeed played by Albert Sammons, Billy Reed, Felix Salmond, and Lionel Tertis at the service in Malvern.) Elgar began the third movement on December 8, 1918 and finished it on Christmas Eve.

Elgar was himself an accomplished violinist, having played in various chamber ensembles in his youth; according to Billy Reed, "his ambition was to become a famous violinist." In this he did not succeed, subsequently earning his living as player and teacher until he could become a full-time composer. The quartet combines the skills thus acquired from those days with a high level of compositional inspiration. But this supreme choral and orchestral composer was not naturally a chamber music composer, and it has been argued that only the *piacevole* (peaceful) movement of his string quartet has the natural flow of chamber music, whilst the other movements strive for a broader orchestral effect. That, of course, is up to each listener to decide.

Three of the four great works from this period (including the Cello Concerto, op. 85) are nominally in E minor, although Elgar included the key on the title page of neither the sonata nor this quartet, and their moods and indeed themes all have resemblances. In the opening movement, two ideas make up the first subject: one is a probing, questioning figure rising in stepwise movement over a two-bar phrase;

program notes, cont.

the other is an answer of descending fourths, always in pairs. These two motifs determine the musical character: the rising semitones suggest tension, conflict; the open intervals, usually descending, suggest emotional resolution. The central section displays ever more jagged chromaticism up to the moment of climax, after which Elgar ends the movement with the question he asked at the beginning, but closing on the reassuring security of E Major.

The slow movement, *piacevole*, was begun in October, when the end of the war was in sight. It was finished on November 26, after the Armistice. As in the first movement, two motifs dominate the song-like *andante*, with a gently moving triple meter. The long sequential *cantabile* theme occurs, in full, three times, separated by subsidiary episodes, which are consistent with the principal theme — and derived from it — using chromatic development.

After the probing of the first movement and the peace of the second, the impassioned ecstasy of the third movement completes the artistic wholeness of Elgar's vision. Lady Elgar likened this movement to the "galloping of stallions." This should not be read to imply a deeper program for the work, simply that Elgar had captured the atmosphere and spirit of the woodlands around Brinkwells that were his inspiration. Elgar honoured his commitment to the now aging Brodsky Quartet by dedicating the piece to them. However, after a private performance at the composer's Hampstead home on January 7, 1919, all three works were given by Billy Reed's ensemble, led by Albert Sammons and with Raymond Jeremy (viola) and Felix Salmond (cello), at a Wigmore Hall concert on May 21, 1919, constituting the official premieres of the quintet and quartet together with an early performance of the Violin Sonata. In *The Times*, four days after these performances, H.C. Colles wrote, "An immediate effect of listening to Sir Edward Elgar's op. 82, 83, and 84 in succession is to give one a new sympathy with the modern revolt against beauty of line and colour. A stab of crude ugliness would be a relief from that overwhelming sense of beauty." Nearly a century farther on, we take perhaps a more balanced view of these late flowerings of Elgar's genius.

— Courtesy of and used with permission by the Elgar Society, U.K.

the wreaths of time texts

A song cycle of American poetry for tenor and string quartet

Concord Hymn (1837)

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

Misgivings (1860)

Herman Melville (1819-1891)

When ocean-clouds over inland hills
Sweep storming in late autumn brown,
And horror the sodden valley fills,
And the spire falls crashing in the town,
I muse upon my country's ills—
The tempest bursting from the waste of Time
On the world's fairest hope linked with man's foulest crime.

texts, cont.

Nature's dark side is heeded now—
(Ah! Optimist-cheer disheartened frown) —
A child may read the moody brow
Of yon black mountain lone.
With shouts the torrents down the gorges go,
And storms are formed behind the storm we feel:
The hemlock shakes in the rafter, the oak in the driving keel.

To Inez Milholland (1923)

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

Upon this marble bust that is not I
Lay the round, formal wreath that is not fame;
But in the forum of my silenced cry
Root ye the living tree whose sap is flame.

I, that was proud and valiant, am no more; —
Save as a wind that rattles the stout door,
Troubling the ashes in the sheltered grate.
The stone will perish; I shall be twice dust.

Only my standard on a taken hill
Can cheat the mildew and the red-brown rust
And make immortal my adventurous will.

Even now the silk is tugging at the staff:
Take up the song; forget the epitaph.

Old Black Men (1922)

Georgina Douglas Johnson (1880-1966)

They have dreamed as young men dream
Of glory, love and power;
They have hoped as youth will hope
Of life's sun-minted hour.

They have seen as other saw
Their bubbles burst in air,
And they have learned to live it down
As though they did not care.

No Doctors Today, Thank You (1942) excerpt

Ogden Nash (1902-1971)

This is my euphorian day,
I will ring welkins
and before anybody answers I will run away.
I will tame me a caribou
And bedeck it with marabou.
I will pen me my memoirs.

In Memoriam (For George Moscone and Harvey Milk) (1979)

Todd S.J. Lawson (1958-1986)

Concrete faces in Solemn procession
fused to drum sounds and flickering lights,
mixed with baleful footsteps, flags unwaving.

From Castro down Market, the footsteps
more sure, the intense crowd swollen.

As if drums were begging to be muffled
As if tears were asking to be heard.

texts, cont.

An inevitable pivot towards City Hall
For an anguished procession which became San Francisco itself.

Protracted, forlorned movements to Civic Center,
a young man wept, and old woman comforted him,
then, his candle proudly relighted.

As if drums were begging to be muffled
As if tears were asking to be heard.

Past the statue of Lincoln, now bowed,
the quiet assembly watched a child
place a lighted candle on the steps.

The drums had stopped, tears could not

Dreams (1923)

Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.



biographies

the dante quartet

The Dante Quartet was founded in 1995 and chose its name to reflect the idea of an epic journey. The quartet has been honored with the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music and has also received international awards for its recordings. Frequently heard on Radio 3, the quartet has appeared many times at London's Wigmore Hall and Kings Place, as well as at some of the U.K.'s foremost festivals and music societies. Abroad, the ensemble has played in France, Germany, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Finland, the Czech Republic, and Poland, and has twice toured Japan.

The Dante Quartet has made a series of acclaimed recordings for Hyperion, winning the *BBC Music Magazine* Award and the French Diapason d'Or. The quartet has also recorded for Signum and Toccata Records, and its recording of the string quartets by Herbert Howells was released on the Naxos label in 2019. The Dante Quartet has recently recorded the eight string quartets and two quintets of C.V. Stanford on the SOMM label.

biographies, cont.

The ensemble has performed cycles of the complete Beethoven and Shostakovich string quartets in single marathon weekends and has collaborated with playwright Clare Norburn (author of concert drama *Breaking the Rules*) on a dramatized version of Beethoven's quartet cycle, featuring actor David Timson as the composer. This innovative format has proved popular and has been performed many times.

brian thorsett, tenor



Hailed as "a strikingly gifted tenor, with a deeply moving, unblemished voice" (sfmusicjournal.com), Brian Thorsett is excelling in opera, oratorio, and recital across the world. Since taking to the operatic stage, he has been seen and heard in over 100 diverse operatic roles, ranging from Monteverdi to Britten, back to Rameau and ahead again to works composed specifically for his talents.

As a concert singer, Thorsett fosters a stylistically diversified repertoire of over 250 works, which has taken him to concert halls across the U.S. and Europe. Closely associated with expanding the vocal-chamber genre, he has been involved in premieres and commissions of a number of acclaimed composers. Thorsett has released the albums *Everyone Sang – The Vocal Music of David Conte*; a collection of American song cycles for orchestra, *Nature, Love and Death*; *Rapture and Regret*, featuring song cycles of Daron Hagen; and *October Skies*, featuring chamber music for tenor.

Thorsett is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola Program; Glimmerglass Opera's Young American Artist program; American Bach Soloists' Academy; the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme at Aldeburgh, England; and he spent two summers at the Music Academy of the West. Thorsett is currently associate professor in the School of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech and previously served on faculty at Santa Clara University and University of California at Berkeley.

ian venables, composer



Ian Venables was born in Liverpool in 1955 and was educated at Liverpool Collegiate Grammar School. Venables studied music with Richard Arnell at the Trinity College of Music, and later with Andrew Downes, John Mayer, and John Joubert at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

His compositions encompass many genres, and, in particular, he has added significantly to the canon of English art song. Described as “one of the finest song composers of his generation,” Venables has written over 80 works in this genre, which include 11 song cycles. His songs have been performed internationally by acclaimed artists such as Brian Thorsett, Roderick Williams, James Gilchrist, Patricia Rozario, Andrew Kennedy, Ian Partridge, and Allan Clayton.

His many chamber works include a piano quintet, described by Roderic Dunnett in *The Independent* as “lending a new late 20th-century dimension to the English pastoral,” and a string quartet, as well as smaller pieces for solo instruments and piano. He has also written works for choir, including *Requiem* (2019), anthems, and a rhapsody for organ. There are two recordings of the requiem.

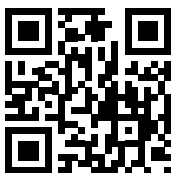
He is an acknowledged expert on the 19th-century poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds, and apart from having set five of Symonds’ poems for voice and piano, he has contributed a significant essay to the book *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire* (Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000).

Venables is president of the Arthur Bliss Society and chairman of the Ivor Gurney Society. His works have been recorded on the Signum, Somm, Regent, Naxos, and Delphian CD labels.

This is the Dante Quartet’s first performance at the Moss Arts Center.



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 Chucho Valdés and Irakere 50 on Saturday, May 10, 2025.

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Please note, survey responses are anonymous. If you would like a response to your feedback, please email mossartscenter@vt.edu.

engagement events

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

MASTER CLASSES: VIRGINIA TECH VIOLIN, VIOLA, AND CELLO STUDIOS

Dante Quartet members helped School of Performing Arts musicians hone their individual artistry in three separate master classes.

MUSIC EXPLORATION WITH VIRGINIA TECH STRING PROJECT

Quartet members visited the award-winning, community music enrichment program VT String Project and engaged with musicians in grades three and up through performance, Q&A, and hands-on instruction.

UNIVERSITY CLASS VISIT: HISTORIES OF MUSIC

Composer Ian Venables, tenor Brian Thorsett, and quartet members spoke to the process and importance of collaboration when commissioning new works.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE

Students in grades eight through 12 from Giles, Montgomery, Patrick, Botetourt, Floyd, Pulaski, Orange, Wythe, Roanoke, Carroll, Craig, Bland, Bedford, and Franklin counties, as well as Roanoke and Radford cities, attended a free performance tailored to young audiences by the quartet.

HEALING ARTS AT CARILION NEW RIVER VALLEY

The Dante Quartet delighted patients, doctors, and staff at the Carilion New River Valley Medical Center with a mini-concert.

engagement events, cont.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

MASTER CLASS: VIRGINIA TECH CHAMBER MUSIC

School of Performing Arts musicians presented multiple chamber music pieces live on the Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre stage and were given insightful artistic feedback from quartet members.

POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A

Hear from members of the Dante Quartet during an open post-performance discussion.

Special thanks to the School of Performing Arts, Virginia Tech String Project, John Irrera, Brian Thorsett, Molly Wilkens-Reed, and Alan Weinstein

go deeper

Tonight's world premiere of Ian Venables' *The Wreaths of Time* features American poetry written between 1837 and 1979 with thematic connections to the Revolutionary War, Civil War, women's suffrage, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights. Read more on page 4. What common theme connects these texts, and what post-1979 poetry and texts might you include within this common theme?

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Through Sun.,
March 30, 2025



Shaunté Gates *This Is Not a Test*

Ruth C. Horton Gallery

Washington, D.C.-based artist Shaunté Gates' solo exhibition features a survey of mixed-media paintings and densely layered works that combine photography, painting, collage, and found materials, resulting in surreal, dreamlike compositions that merge portraiture, landscape, and architecture.

Charisse Pearlina Weston *I saw the room but darkly dreamed it ...*

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

New York-based artist Charisse Pearlina Weston's solo exhibition engages with themes of surveillance and tactics of Black refusal by transforming materials associated with observation and control through repetition and reuse.

Free Related Event **Beyond the Frame Gallery Tours**

Thurs., March 13, 12 PM

Moss Arts Center Grand Lobby

Charisse Pearlina Weston; pyrolytic envelop I (into the bright and distributed subject side), 2024; text etched on slumped and folded Mirropane surveillance glass and concrete; 51 1/2 x 22 x 14 1/2 inches; © Charisse Pearlina Weston; courtesy of the artist and Dr. Charles Boyd



PK-12 PROGRAMS AT THE MOSS ARTS CENTER

Each year, wildly enthusiastic students — from PK through 12th grade — fill our theatre for free matinee performances by artists from all over the world. They explore our visual arts galleries during school tours and create and learn during hands-on workshops with artists. For many students, visiting the Moss Arts Center is the first time they've ever been to a performing arts facility or gallery. Why do young people need access to the arts? Engaging in artistic activities offers a wide range of skills that they will use throughout their lives.

Learn more at bit.ly/moss-k12.

24/25 season



Check out the great performances coming this spring.

tues., march 18, 7:30 pm
broadway in blacksburg
the book of mormon

sat., march 22, 7:30 pm
a.i.m by kyle abraham

tues., march 25, 7:30 pm
an evening with
charles yu

fri., march 28, 7:30 pm
circa
opus

wed., april 2, 7:30 pm
▲ les arts florissants
vivaldi's four seasons at 300
théotime langlois de swarte, violin

thurs., april 24, and
fri., april 25, 7:30 pm
george emilio sanchez
in the court of the conqueror


sat., may 10, 7:30 pm
chucho valdés and irakere 50

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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 the Morrill Land-Grant College Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands in California and other areas in the West.

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Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local White families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech's predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.





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These internationally renowned early music stars frame Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in a new light and invite questions about the cyclical nature of our existence.



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CONTRA DANCE AT THE Y

Contra Dance is a traditional American dance in which couples dance in two long facing lines or in groups of four. No partner required!

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We are proud to announce that the YMCA at Virginia Tech is opening a brand-new community art gallery in The Y Center at 1000 N. Main St., Blacksburg. We are extremely grateful to eARTh (by Diane Relf) for sponsorship of this new space and for the generous support of Shelter Alternatives and Bell Electric.

Y BOOK FAIR

Among the many volumes of books that will be available in our annual Book Fair there will be a collection of books of local origin, authors and interest. We'll have literally thousands of books, comics, graphic novels, vinyl and vintage collectibles for you to peruse at the very best prices around so get ready!!



YOUR GUIDE TO RECYCLING AT THE Y

WHAT

Textiles (gently used household items to include books, clothing, housewares, blankets, toys, etc.)

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Please deliver to Thrift Shop dock during business hours.*

Electronics (working & non-working TV's (from Mont. County residents only)

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Please deliver to Thrift Shop dock during business hours.*

Batteries (Rechargeable batteries only)

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Bring inside to Recycling Station.
Each item will need to be individually bagged. Bags and tape will be provided.*

CFL's, Ink Jet cartridges, rechargeable batteries

*Thrift Shop (Blacksburg)
Bring inside to Recycling Table. Each item will need to be individually bagged. Bags and tape will be provided.*

We love to hear from you! Feel free to send us an email at ymca@vtymca.org and we will be in contact with you soon.

Y CENTER

Thrift Shop, Pottery Studio,
Event Room, and Conference Room
1000 North Main Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-552-2633

MAIN OFFICE

Lancaster House
403 Washington Street SW
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540-961-9622
ymca@vtymca.org