

The Curtis Institute of Music

Roberto Díaz, President

2007–08 Season

The Beethoven Op. 95 Project

A schoolwide study of Beethoven and his
String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95 (“Quartetto serio”)

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Lecture and Demonstration

A Musical Diagnosis: Tourette’s Syndrome and Beethoven’s
Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95
Tuesday, December 11 at 8 p.m.
Field Concert Hall

Twenty-Fourth Student Recital

All-Beethoven Program
Wednesday, December 12 at 8 p.m.
Field Concert Hall

Twenty-Sixth Student Recital

Beethoven String Quartets
Sunday, December 16 at 8 p.m.
Field Concert Hall

Next Semester

The Curtis Symphony Orchestra conducted by
Alan Gilbert in Mahler’s transcription of Op. 95
Monday, February 11 at 8 p.m.
Verizon Hall
Tuesday, February 12 at 8 p.m.
Carnegie Hall

Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95 (“Quartetto serio”)

Allegro con brio
Allegretto, ma non troppo
Allegro assai vivace, ma serio
Larghetto espressivo—Allegretto agitato

Sylvia Kim, violin
Shanshan Yao, violin
Philip Kramp, viola
Abraham Feder, cello

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Photographic and recording equipment may not be used in Field Concert Hall.
Recitals are professionally recorded for educational use and possible broadcast.

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Performers

Abraham Feder from Chicago is a student of David Soyer and Peter Wiley and entered Curtis in 2004.

Sylvia Kim from Boca Raton, Fla., is a student of Pamela Frank and Ida Kavafian and entered Curtis in 2005.

Philip Kramp from Bloomington, Ill., is a student of Joseph de Pasquale and Michael Tree and entered Curtis in 2005.

Shanshan Yao from Anhui, China, is a student of Aaron Rosand and entered Curtis in 2003.

If students study with more than one faculty member, their teachers are listed alphabetically.

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A Quartet for 160

Adapted from *Overtures*, Fall 2007

One of Curtis's special qualities has always been its intimacy. Social encounters are easy among our 160 students, who share a common focus on music and constantly cross paths. And yet the demands of rehearsals, lessons, and classes can take them in diverse directions, each student following a highly tailored course of study. Meeting the demands immediate to one's own instrument and repertoire can make it difficult to step back and approach the art form in a holistic way.

As we approached the new school year, we wondered how we might unite the student body around a single musical endeavor, prompting new and meaningful conversations among our young instrumentalists, singers, composers, and conductors. What if we could take all our students on a common journey with relevance to all, culminating in performance?

Of course there is no one work in which all our students could perform; we could accommodate a symphony orchestra and twenty-five singers—but the fifteen or so pianists, four organists, six composers, and four conductors might pose a problem of proportion, not to mention staging! Instead we posed the question more broadly. Might we study a work not just through performance, but also in the classroom? Might our Musical Studies and Liberal Arts courses approach the chosen score and related works through analysis and through their cultural context?

Choosing a composer was surprisingly easy. Beethoven came immediately to mind: a creator of significance in all musical forms; a great thinker, whose eloquent letters and conversation books testified to his complex inner life; and a tireless worker, who left behind laborious musical sketches that provide enlightening clues to his creative process. Beethoven, of course. But what work?

We settled—paradoxically, perhaps—on a string quartet. Beethoven's quartets are a world in themselves, fruitful for chamber music study but also for analysis. And his forward-looking,

experimental String Quartet, Op. 95 ("Quartetto serioso"), offers special opportunities. Op. 95 inspired a transcription for large string orchestra by Gustav Mahler, born a century later into a very different age and interpretive tradition. Mahler saw symphonic scale in this quartet, and his homage transforms the piece.

This core idea has taken shape as our Beethoven Op. 95 project. Each string chamber group has rehearsed Op. 95 this semester. This fall all of our string students are gaining an understanding of Op. 95 from the inside out—as chamber music. Next it will be time for a fresh look, as orchestra rehearsals begin for the February concert, which includes the Mahler transcription.

Meanwhile, Op. 95 features as a subject for analysis in a Musical Studies course dedicated to Beethoven. Several Liberal Arts electives honed in on Beethoven's letters. A guest lecture by the composer Bruce Adolphe will shed light on the questing mind behind this magnificent work.

As our students probe deeply into one of the most expansive minds in music, they'll have a platform for both formal classroom discussions and informal, lively dialogues of their own. These will be a highlight of our fall and winter months. This week—leading up to the composer's birthday, December 16—the circle widens as our friends and our student recital audiences hear student quartets playing Op. 95 and other students performing music by Beethoven.

Then, in February, larger audiences will join us in Verizon and Carnegie halls as the Curtis Symphony Orchestra performs the "Quartetto serioso" as re-imagined by Mahler, under the direction of Alan Gilbert ('92). Those performances will contain the efforts not only of the string players we see on stage, but of all our students who have contributed to an animated and rich discussion.



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