Juilliard Quartet  
Sunday, January 14 – 3:00 PM  
Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

Program
Quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5  
Joseph Haydn  
*Born: March 31, 1732*  
* Died: May 31, 1809*  
*Composed: 1797*  
*Last PCMS performance: Ying Quartet, May 2011*  
*Duration: 20 minutes*

By the time he wrote his Opus 76 Quartets, Joseph Haydn was over sixty, widely traveled, and probably the most renowned living composer in Europe. After thirty years of a cloistered existence as the court composer at Esterhazy, he “went public” upon the death of his patron, Count Nicholas, in 1790. This shift had a palpable effect on his compositional style. In his last four sets of string quartets, the gestures and the sound-sense are more robust and self-assured as the composer plays to the public concert-hall; while the composer sacrifices none of his capacity for innovation and surprise, we feel that we have left the arena of experimentation and discovery. No. 5 follows on the heels of giant quartets: the “Emperor” and “Sunrise” are both relatively traditional works. No. 5, then, is more of a maverick quartet. The first movement is cast not in the usual “sonata allegro” form, with its emphasis on momentum and drama, but rather in a kind of variation form that uses alternation between major and minor, with a fleeter, more buoyant coda. The movement as a whole gives an impression of lightness and grace.

Quartet No. 2 “Why is This Night Different?”  
Sir James Loy MacMillan  
*Born: July 16, 1959*  
*Composed: 1998*  
*Philadelphia Premiere*  
*Duration: 22 minutes*

Known for compositions which are infused with emotional power and spiritual mediation, MacMillan is “...a composer so confident of his own musical language that he makes it instantly communicative to his listeners” (The Guardian). MacMillan’s second string quartet is inspired by the Passover Seder telling the story of the Israelites’ flight from Egypt. Critic Victor Carr, Jr. says, “MacMillan employs a highly pictorial musical language as the instruments behave more like characters than quartet members, particularly evident in the opening, where the first violin assumes the role of the singing storyteller.” With soaring narrative scope, MacMillan’s work exercises music as a vessel of immense imagination. Celebration in the midst of danger, the mingling of joy and fear, and the centrality of ritual and childhood permeate this commemorative work.

Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 127  
Ludwig van Beethoven  
*Born: December 17, 1770*  
* Died: March 26, 1827*  
*Composed: 1825*  
*Duration: 38 minutes*

Originally envisioned with an ambitious six movements, this non-traditional work was christened with only four. Herbert Glass observes that, “the late string quartets (1824-1826), the last music Beethoven was to write, are creations of the profoundest originality and introspection, expressions of a man by this time living very much within himself. The image of Beethoven’s deafness and the isolation he demanded of himself are inescapable in this context.” Traditionally known for his assertive opening movements, this piece’s first Allegro displays a lyrical quality more often found in Beethoven’s late work. The second movement presents light-hearted theme and variations, while the third builds on the theme while introducing colorful pizzicato strings. The fourth movement, Allegro commodo, recalls the flowing liveliness of the first two movements in a confident, folkish finale.