

Spektral Quartet

SUNDAY | JULY 10 | 8 PM
THE BREAKERS



Clara Lyon, violin | **Maeve Feinberg**, violin
Doyle Armbrust, viola | **Russell Rolén**, cello

FANNY MENDELSSOHN HENSEL String Quartet in E-flat Major

I. Adagio ma non troppo

II. Allegretto

III. Romanze

IV. Allegro molto vivace

(Approximate duration 20 minutes)

MIGUEL ZENÓN *Esquinas*

(Approximate duration 10 minutes)

TOMEKA REID *Prospective Dwellers*

(Approximate duration 6 minutes)

INTERMISSION

PHILIP GLASS String Quartet No. 2, "Company"

I. Quarter Note = 96

II. Quarter Note = 160

III. Quarter Note = 96

IV. Quarter Note = 160

(Approximate duration 8 minutes)

DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10

I. Animé e très décidé

II. Assez vif et bien rythmé

III. Andantino, doucement expressif

IV. Très modéré

(Approximate duration 26 minutes)

As Spektral Quartet approaches the culmination of its 12-year history together, the multi-Grammy-nominated ensemble presents a strikingly wide-ranging program celebrating some of their most memorable moments on stage together. The old is refreshed and the new becomes familiar as five divergent composers are swept into captivating orbit with one another.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847): String Quartet in E-flat Major

Fanny Hensel nee Mendelssohn was a German pianist and composer of the early Romantic era, whose work for the most part has been overlooked, overshadowed by the work of her younger brother Felix Mendelssohn. Considered to be an exceptional pianist, she rarely performed in public, seeming to lack confidence in both her musicianship and strength as a composer.

The String Quartet in E-flat Major is an extraordinary work and her only mature string quartet, composed in 1834 but based on an unfinished piano sonata she wrote five years before. It is considered to be one of the first surviving string quartets written by a woman. The work was performed only once, in private and she never wrote another, both likely a result of her brother's disapproval. Fanny Mendelssohn's music possesses a distancing and impassioned sound that resonates throughout her nearly 400 compositions, most of which went unpublished in her lifetime.

Miguel Zenón (b. 1976): Esquinas

Our relationship with Miguel Zenón began with a hail-mary of a phone call, when we learned the internationally renowned saxophonist was playing the Jazz Showcase the same week that we were recording our album *From This Point Forward*. Along with our collaborator and composer, bandoneonist Julien Labro, we invited him to guest on a couple tunes during which he struck us dumb with solo after blistering solo. That little blip of kismet eventually developed into a deep, collaborative friendship that resulted in the Hyde Park Jazz Festival commission, and eventual Grammy-nominated recording of *Yo Soy La Tradición* for saxophone and string quartet. Fans Robert and Laura Watson were so taken by these past collaborations that they generously commissioned this new work, *Esquinas*.

Like the MacArthur Fellow himself, this piece isn't easily categorized. The harmonic language is labyrinthine, and it features improvisation, but it isn't simply "Jazz." The works of Béla Bartók and György Ligeti were studied extensively in its creation, and it is written for the historic ensemble known as the string quartet, but "Classical" is also too tight a belt for these trousers. What you will experience is something entirely Miguel's own – music that can't help but be infused by both the traditions of his native Puerto Rico and his home city of New York, to say nothing of the hundreds of other influences and inspirations he's absorbed on the road during his incandescent career.

What you will encounter are shape-shifting harmonies, perilous rhythms, and melodies that whip by like stars during the jump to warp speed...but what you will hear is a truly original voice carving out its rightful place within the string quartet literature.

Tomeka Reid (b. 1977): Prospective Dwellers

Originally a movement from a suite of five compositions composed string sextet and percussion for the 2015 Hyde Park Jazz Festival, this Spektral Quartet commission is dedicated to a neighborhood on Chicago's South Side called Grand Crossing and more specifically, Dorchester Projects. Each section of the piece was inspired interviews with local residents who expressed their individual histories in relation to the Dorchester Street past and present. The following section is the 3rd movement of the work.

Described as a "New Jazz Power Source" by the *New York Times*, Chicago cellist and composer Tomeka Reid has emerged as one of the most original, versatile, and curious musicians in Chicago's bustling jazz and improvised music community over the last decade.

Philip Glass (b. 1937): String Quartet No. 2, "Company"

Company is the name of a short novel by Samuel Beckett which was adapted for the stage and performed as a monologue by Frederick Neuman. Mr. Neuman had asked and received Beckett's permission to use an original musical score which I was commissioned to compose.

I liked the idea of using the medium of the String Quartet that would allow for both an introspective and passionate quality well suited to the text. Beckett picked four places in the work which he referred to as the "intercices as it were". Not surprisingly these four short movements have turned out to be a thematically cohesive work which now, as my String Quartet No.2, has taken on a life of its own. © Philip Glass

Claude Debussy (1862-1918): String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10

One of the most influential composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and considered to be the first Impressionist composer, Claude Debussy's work was a significant departure from the previous Romantic Period and influenced many of the great composers to follow.

Debussy composed his only string quartet during his middle period, notably the only work to which he assigned an opus number and dedicated it to composer Ernest Chausson. Through this work he rejects the idea that "string instruments should be predominantly lyrical" and instead opts for a more percussive approach, employing pizzicato and cross-rhythms, for a remarkable result, which would influence the works of Ravel and Messiaen.

Spektral Quartet

The three-time Grammy nominated Spektral Quartet creates vivid conversations between exhilarating works of the past and the extraordinary works of today. With the *New York Times* writing that, "they have everything: a supreme technical command that seems to come easily, a capacity to make complicated music clear, and, most notably...an ability to cast a magic spell", Spektral is regarded as one of the most forward-thinking ensembles working today.

Actively touring some of the country's most notable concert venues such as the Kennedy Center, American Academy in Rome, Miller Theater, Library of Congress, and NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts, the quartet also takes great pride in its home city of Chicago: championing the work of local composers, bridging social and aesthetic partitions, and collaborating with artists from a dizzying variety of disciplines.

Named "Chicagoans of the Year" by the *Chicago Tribune* in 2017, Spektral Quartet is most highly regarded for its creative and stylistic versatility: presenting seasons in which, for instance, a thematic program circling Beethoven seamlessly coexists with an improvised sonic meditation at sunrise, a talent show featuring Spektral fans, and the co-release of a jazz album traversing the folk traditions of Puerto Rico. This season, the ensemble released its latest record, *Enigma*: the world premiere recording of Anna Thorvaldsdottir's first string quartet, co-commissioned by Spektral, Carnegie Hall, and Washington

Performing Arts. Committed to not only sustaining, but transforming the string quartet tradition, Spektral Quartet is in-demand for its presentations on inclusion, progressive programming, and entrepreneurship at leading institutions around the country including Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, the New World Symphony, and the National Association of Schools of Music. Exclusive management for Spektral Quartet by Alliance Artist Management.