



Michelle Cann, Piano Erinys Quartet

Curtis on Tour

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2025 | 2 PM AND 7:30 PM
VANDERHOEF STUDIO THEATRE | UC DAVIS

THIS SEASON IS PRESENTED BY
THE NANCY AND HANK FISHER FAMILY FUND

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The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.

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Discovering What's Next

The artists we select for each Mondavi Center season generally fall into one of two categories: returning favorites that Mondavi Center audiences are telling us they'd like to see again; and artists that we believe belong on our stages but haven't yet made an appearance.

We adore our relationships with artists making return engagements. Part of the magic of these returns comes from watching artists evolve their craft and explore new repertoire, but with the warmth and comfort of seeing an old friend.

An exemplar of the power of long-term relationships is Joshua Bell, who returns in recital on April 4. Bell first performed at the Mondavi Center in November 2002, during our inaugural season. He appeared as a guest soloist with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, an ensemble he now leads. He was 34 and it had been just two years since he was deemed one of *People* magazine's 50 most beautiful people in the world. Bell is still a beautiful person, and in ways that run far deeper than a glossy magazine article.

Over these last 20+ seasons, we've watched a young star become an absolute legend. At this stage in his career, Bell's extraordinary tone and mastery of the repertoire are so remarkable that he sometimes seems superhuman. It has been an incredible journey so far.

All season long I've been communicating about the idea of discovery, encouraging you, our wonderful patrons, to embrace the familiar and the beloved while trying something new. Supporting those artists making their Mondavi Center debuts is critical to the long-term health of the performing arts.

The collaborative process of discovery, between audiences and arts organizations, is part of the fuel that feeds the birth of stars. The Joshua Bells of the world, while in possession of innate and extraordinary talent, have their careers because arts institutions and arts audiences believed in them, supported them, and showed up to see them perform.

As the end of my first full season as Executive Director approaches, I'm grateful that so many of you heeded the call of discovery, supporting our efforts to ensure a vibrant and interesting future for the arts. I'm sure that the more than 20 artists that made their Mondavi Center debuts this season are grateful too.

Thank You!

Jeremy Ganter
Executive Director

Curtis on Tour
Michelle Cann, Piano
Erinys Quartet

Elizabeth Stewart, violin
Joosep Reimaa, violin
Marija Räsänen, viola
Stergios Theodoridis, cello

PROGRAM

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6
Allegro con brio
Adagio ma non troppo
Scherzo: Allegro
La Malinconia: Adagio - Allegretto quasi Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Fantasie nègre No. 1

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81
Allegro, ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto
Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Curtis on Tour is the Nina von Maltzahn Global Touring Initiative of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Program Notes

String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6 (1798-1800)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born in Bonn, Germany, Baptized December 17, 1770; died in Vienna, Austria, March 26, 1827

Beethoven was known for his stormy, individual style that broke with convention. He composed many of his masterpieces after he lost his hearing. His deafness rendered him a legendary and tragic figure and contributed to the romantic ideal of the heroic artist struggling to produce art through great personal difficulties. This string quartet dates from earlier in his career when he was still heavily influenced by the Viennese classical style of Haydn and Mozart.

Beethoven moved to Vienna, the musical capital of Europe as a young man to further his career. He took lessons in counterpoint from Haydn, but his relationship with the older composer was uneasy. Beethoven chafed under authority and Haydn did not have much time for his pupil among his other duties. Although both were disappointed by their teacher-student relationship, they remained respectful of each other's talents.

This string quartet was dedicated to Joseph Franz von Lobkowitz and published as a set of six. Lobkowitz was an important patron of the arts who supported Beethoven throughout his life. He was also a patron of Haydn and in 1799, Lobkowitz commissioned six string quartets from Haydn. However, the elderly Haydn could only complete two of them before he died, which were published as opus 77. Both Mozart and Haydn had published quartets in sets of six, and in writing a set of six Beethoven was clearly seeking to join this tradition. Thus, in this quartet, Beethoven set himself the task of connecting the past with the future.

The first movement emulates the style of Haydn and Mozart with balance and clarity. In the slow second movement, the balance of the first movement evolves

into refinement. Beethoven adheres to traditional form in making the third movement a dance, but he substitutes a minuet for a scherzo. He is also more adventurous in his choices, as this scherzo is full of surprising accents and features a difficult violin solo. The last movement is a study in contrast. The introduction, labeled "malincolia" (melancholy), is followed by a spirited dance, which is interrupted by the gloomy first theme several times before joy claims victory.

Fantasia nègre No. 1 (1929)

FLORENCE PRICE

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, April 9, 1887; died in Chicago, Illinois, June 3, 1953

Florence Price was the first Black female composer to have one of her symphonies played by a major orchestra when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed her Symphony in E minor in 1933. Although the quality of her compositions was recognized during her lifetime, her works were not widely heard. Writing to Serge Koussevitzky, the conductor of the Boston Symphony, she plainly addressed the prejudice that stunted her career, "I have two handicaps - those of sex and race. I am a woman; and I have some Negro blood in my veins." Now, 70 years later, the labor of activists, scholars, and performers has changed the musical landscape of the United States, and Price's music is frequently heard in orchestra halls across the nation.

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, Price studied organ and piano at the New England Conservatory of Music, one of the only music institutions of the time that admitted Black students. After graduating, she returned to the South and taught music at Black-serving institutions. She married, moved to Little Rock, and spent the next decade raising her family and teaching piano. However, her hometown was not safe, and threats of racial violence compelled the family to flee to Chicago in 1927, joining many other Black Americans whose movement north between 1910-1970 is known as the Great Migration. Inspired by the culturally rich Black community in Chicago, Price renewed her study of music at the American

Conservatory and the Chicago Musical College. Price's compositions combine a romantic vocabulary with African and African American musical traditions such as call and response and Juba dance rhythm patterns. Spirituals were an important source of inspiration for Price and her arrangement of "My Soul's been Anchored in de Lord" was adopted by Marian Anderson as a personal signature.

The *Fantasia Nègre No.1* is one of four pieces with that title. Number one was published in 1932, but the remaining three were lost for decades before being discovered among papers in Price's abandoned summer house in Chicago in 2009. Price dedicated the work to her student, the Black pianist and composer Margaret Bonds, who premiered the work and also performed a two-piano version with the composer to accompany a ballet in 1932. The piece consists of variations on the spiritual "Please Don't Let This Harvest Pass." A brooding introduction develops into a melancholy first statement of the melody. Full of technical challenges for the pianist, the piece explores a variety of moods, from dreamy to grand.

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major Op. 81 (1887)

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born in Nelahozeves, near Kralupy, Czech Republic, Sept 8, 1841; died in Prague, Czech Republic, May 1, 1904

Dvořák was among the first Czech composers to receive recognition outside his homeland. A prominent Romantic-era nationalist, he gave his music a national character by inserting folk songs into symphonic works, concertos, operas and chamber music.

Although Dvořák showed musical talent at a young age, he was unsuccessful as a composer until he was over 30. Nor did he start as a nationalist. He began his career playing violin in a theater orchestra and giving piano lessons. However, his early attempts at composition were not encouraging. He burned his first symphonic sketches, and his Czech-language opera *King and Charcoal Burner* was deemed unplayable and pulled from the performance schedule of the Prague

Provisional Theater after rehearsals had already begun. At this point Dvořák adjusted his composition style, rejecting Germanic influences and instead drawing inspiration from Slavic folk music.

In 1874, Dvořák won an Austrian State composition contest. Despite rejecting German influences, Dvořák favorably impressed the judges, including composer Johannes Brahms and music critic Eduard Hanslick. Brahms recommended Dvořák to his own publisher, Fritz Simrock, who published Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* in 1878, launching Dvořák's international career.

We have this piano quintet because Dvořák greatly disliked the first one he had written. He had destroyed his own score and had to ask a friend for a copy when he wanted to revise the work. After beginning his edits, he decided that the best course of action was to simply start over, thus creating the Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major. The work begins with the cello playing a folk-like melody. This lyrical melody is interrupted by the entrance of the rest of the instruments, who play a doubled-dotted figure with energy and vigor. A tug-of-war between these two contrasting themes consumes the rest of the movement. The second movement takes the form of a *dumka*, a minor key lament with more vigorous contrasting sections. As is typical, the third movement is a dance. The movement is labeled as a German *scherzo* with flavor from the *furiant*, a Slavic dance that alternates between duple and triple meter. The lively final movement features a variety of melodies and approaches. After the energetic opening, Dvořák builds tension through a fugato section. The movement's frenetic energy is interrupted by a placid chorale which, offers a moment of introspection before the action picks up again and the piece rushes to a finish.

-ELIZABETH CAMPBELL was recently awarded a Ph.D. in musicology from the University of California, Davis. She graduated from Indiana University in 2017 with master's degrees in musicology and library science after completing a bachelor's degree in music at Luther College in 2014. Her dissertation work was on Lillian Evanti (1890-1967), an African American opera singer who performed in Europe, the United States, and Latin America.

About the Artists



MICHELLE CANN, PIANO

Lauded as “exquisite” by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and “a pianist of sterling artistry” by *Gramophone*, Grammy Award winning pianist Michelle Cann is one of the most sought-after artists of her generation. Recent engagements include appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Her honors include the Sphinx Medal of Excellence and the Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award. In 2024, she was named the inaugural Christel DeHaan Artistic Partner of the American Piano Awards, responsible for artistic oversight of the competition.

Highlights of Cann’s 2024-25 season include appearances with the San Francisco Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, and London’s Philharmonia Orchestra. She performs solo and collaborative recitals on prominent series such as the 92nd Street Y, New York; Duke University; the Royal Conservatory of Music; and Shriver Hall Concert Series. She also performs a recital as the headline artist at the National Conference of the Music Teachers National Association.

Recognized as a leading interpreter of the piano music of Florence Price, Cann performed the New York City premiere of Price’s *Piano Concerto in One Movement* with The Dream Unfinished Orchestra in 2016. Her recording of the concerto with the New York Youth Symphony won a Grammy Award in 2023 for Best Orchestral Performance. She won a Grammy Award in 2025 for *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price*, recorded with soprano Karen Slack, which features 19 unpublished songs composed by Price. Her acclaimed debut solo album *Revival*, featuring music by Price and Margaret Bonds, was released in 2023.

Cann holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in piano performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music and an Artist’s Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music. She joined the Curtis piano faculty in 2020 as the inaugural Eleanor Sokoloff Chair in Piano Studies. She is also on the piano faculty of the Manhattan School of Music.



Erinys Quartet

ELIZABETH STEWART, VIOLIN

JOOSEP REIMAA, VIOLIN

MARIJA RÄISÄNEN, VIOLA

STERGIOS THEODORIDIS, CELLO

Named for the Erinyes (a.k.a. the Furies) from the Greek tragedy *Oresteia* by Aeschylus, and with roots in Estonia, Lithuania, Greece, the United States, and Finland, the Erinys Quartet was founded in 2018 at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, where they worked closely with cellist Marko Ylönen. Since the autumn of 2023, they have been the Nina von Maltzahn String Quartet-in-Residence at the Curtis Institute of Music.

In the 2024-25 season, the Erinys Quartet performs throughout Europe and the United States, with concerts in Greece, Hungary, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, Florida, Minnesota, Colorado, New Mexico, and California. They have also been featured in festivals and concert series such as the Mimir Chamber Music Festival in Fort Worth, Texas, Festival Groba in Pontareas, Spain, the inaugural Dover Quartet Workshop at the Curtis Institute, as well as the Professional String Quartet Seminar with the Pacifica Quartet and Atar Arad (Cleveland Quartet) at Indiana University.

Since 2021, the Erinys Quartet has been supported by Le Dimore del Quartetto, where they are also a part of the European Union-sponsored MERITA platform. In addition to their studies at the Curtis Institute, the members of the Erinys Quartet are pursuing a diploma in chamber music at Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid, Spain, under the tutelage of Günter Pichler (Alban Berg Quartett).

In 2023, the Erinys Quartet was awarded the Audience Prize Award of the City of Bad Tölz during the Bad Tölz International String Quartet Competition, the Esterházy Foundation Special Prize for best interpretation of a Haydn string quartet and were awarded the Bronze Medal Prize in the 2024 Fischhoff Competition.

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Annual donations to the Mondavi Center directly support our operating budget and are an essential source of revenue. Please join us in thanking our loyal donors whose philanthropic support ensures our future ability to bring great artists and speakers to our region and to provide nationally recognized arts education programs for students and teachers.

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Note: We apologize if we listed your name incorrectly. Please contact us at 530.752.0563, to inform us of corrections.

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