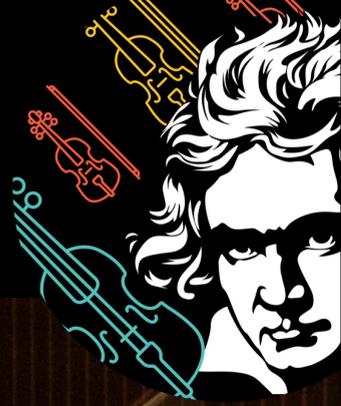


The Beethoven Experience

Part IV: A Sacred Song of Thanks
Beethoven's Spirituality, Explored & Expressed



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THE PROGRAM

STRING QUARTET NO. 15 IN A MAJOR, OP. 132

- I. *Assai sostenuto - Allegro*
- II. *Allegro ma non tanto*
- III. *"Heiliger Dankgesang eines genesenen an die Gottheit, in der Lydischen Tonart." Molto Adagio - Andante*
- IV. *Alla marcia, assai vivace*
- V. *Allegro appassionato*

**Recorded at the Mt. Desert Festival of Chamber Music
Northeast Harbor, ME | July 21, 2015*

THE BORROMEO STRING QUARTET

NICHOLAS KITCHEN, VIOLIN

KRISTOPHER TONG, VIOLIN

MAI MOTOBUCHI, VIOLA

YEESUN KIM, CELLO

PROGRAM NOTES

by Benjamin K Roe

A Sacred Song of Thanks

Beethoven's Spirituality, Explored & Expressed

"O momentary grace of mortal men, Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!"

– Shakespeare, Richard III

*"Only art and science," later wrote Beethoven, "can raise men to the level of gods." As biographer Jan Swafford writes, "He [Beethoven] never claimed that God imbued him with his gifts. He believed his talent came from nature – God's nature. At the same time...his idea of God evolved along with his life and art. The older he got, the more he turned toward faith in a God who was present and all-seeing...and who listened to prayers." In the five-movement **String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132**, it was a God whom Beethoven evidently must have felt had answered his prayers that spurred one of his most explicitly devotional creations: The third-movement *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der Lydischen Tonart* – "Sacred Song of Thanks to the Divinity on the Part of a Convalescent, in the Lydian Mode."*

Beethoven is said to have shed a tear on to the pages of this manuscript, and much ink has been spilled about this otherworldly movement, unique in all sixteen of his quartets. Our pre-concert Symposium will delve more thoroughly into the origins and meanings of this music, but suffice to recall here an entry from Beethoven's Tagebuch: *"In order to write true church music, go through all the ecclesiastical chant of the monks."* Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that what gives this music its particular flavor is that its melodies are based on ancient Gregorian Chant – in the Lydian mode (the forerunner to what we understand as musical scales), no less, which purportedly is associated with healing.

We'll leave the last word on spirituality to Beethoven, who despite his rough manners was known during his lifetime as being moralistic to the point of prudishness. *"Man, help yourself! When men fulfill their duties to men, they fulfill thereby God's commandments, that they are consequently always in the service of God, as long as their actions are moral...It is utterly impossible to serve God otherwise."*

THE PERFORMERS



Yeesun Kim

Heifetz 2020 Cello Faculty; Ensemble in Residence (Borromeo Quartet)

Hailed by the New York Times for her "focused intensity" and "remarkable" performances, cellist **Yeesun Kim** enjoys worldwide acclaim as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher. A founding member of the Borromeo String Quartet, Ms. Kim has performed in over 20 countries, and in many of the world's most illustrious concert halls and Festivals. Ms. Kim is a graduate of the Curtis Institute for Music, as well as the New England Conservatory. Ms. Kim currently serves on the cello and chamber music faculties at the New England Conservatory. She has collaborated with various artists including violinist Joshua Bell, cellists Lawrence Lesser, pianist Christoph Eschenbach, Leon Fleisher, Rudolph Serkin. She also has had opportunities to perform with the esteemed members of the Guarneri and Julliard String Quartets. She is a recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award, Lincoln Center's Martin Segal Award, and the Evian International String Quartet Competition as a member of the Borromeo Quartet. Individually she was the winner of the Ewha and Junggung National Competitions in Korea, and the Seoul Young Artists Award for achievement in music and academics. Ms. Kim currently performs on a Peregrino Zanetto cello, circa 1576, one of the oldest in the world.



Mai Motobuchi

Heifetz 2020 Viola Faculty; Ensemble in Residence (Borromeo Quartet)

Mai Motobuchi has earned distinction as a soloist, chamber musician, and teacher in her native Japan and the United States. Currently Motobuchi is on viola faculty at the New England Conservatory and Tenrikyo Institute of Music in Japan. She has collaborated with many esteemed musicians including, Yo-Yo-Ma, Seiji Ozawa, Leon Fleischer, Kim Kashkashian, and many others. She joined the Borromeo String Quartet in 2000 and since then has toured extensively with them. She has won numerous awards throughout her career including the All Japan MBS Youth Music Competition in 1989, the Henri Kohn Memorial Awards from the Tanglewood Music Center, and while she was a student at Rice University received the John and Sally Cox Award, the E. Dell Butcher Awards, and the Willie Muery Award, in addition to being named an Alice Pratt Brown Scholar. Motobuchi began playing violin and studied at the Tenrikyo Institute of Music in Japan during her formative years. She eventually went on to study viola at Michigan State University and Rice University in Houston where she earned her Master of Music. She followed with an advanced performance diploma from the Internationale Meisterkurze Koblenz in Koblenz, Germany. She currently performs on a Moes and Moes viola dated from 1988.



Nicholas Kitchen

Heifetz Institute Artistic Director; Violin Faculty & Chamber Music Coach; Ensemble in Residence (Borromeo Quartet)

Nicholas Kitchen's musicianship has been hailed by the New York Times as "thrilling, vibrant and captivating." He is one of the most active and innovative performers in the music world today, as a solo violinist, chamber musician, teacher, video artist, technology innovator and arts administrator. At sixteen, Nicholas began studying at the Curtis Institute where he worked with Heifetz Institute faculty member David Cerone and coached with such musicians as Felix Galimir and Mieczslaw Horszowski, and importantly spent five years working intensively with the great violinist and conductor Szymon Goldberg, as well as being included in the conducting courses of Otto Werner Mueller. Kitchen co-founded the Borromeo String Quartet that went on to study at the New England Conservatory of Music and won prizes at the Evian International Quartet Competition and the Young Concert Artists Auditions. The Quartet also received the Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America, the Martin S. Segal Award from Lincoln Center, and the Avery Fisher Career Grant. Nicholas has been extremely energetic in combining teaching activities with his concerts. Nicholas has taught at the New England Conservatory of Music since 1992, when at the conclusion of their studies the Borromeo Quartet became Quartet-in-Residence.



Kristopher Tong

Heifetz 2020 Violin Faculty; Ensemble in Residence (Borromeo Quartet)

Considered on the most exciting musicians emerging today, **Kristopher Tong** has been praised for his depth of insight, virtuosity, and creative flair. Tong has appeared under the baton of some of the world's most premiere conductors including Christoph von Dohnanyi, Kurt Masur, Paavo Jarvi, Charles Dutoit, Mstislav Rostropovich, and James Levine. He served on faculty in 2005 at the Yellow Barn Festival and from 2002-2004 was the Principal Second Violin of the Verbier Festival Orchestra. Tong began studying violin when he was 11 in a public elementary program and when he moved to Utah became a student of Leonard Braus. He received his Bachelors degree at Indiana University Bloomington, where he studied with the late Franco Gulli, Miriam Fried, and Yuval Yaron. He completed his Masters Degree at the New England Conservatory of Music under Ms. Fried.