

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



# MIDTOWN CONCERTS

Thursday June 16, 2022 1:15 pm  
The Church of the Transfiguration in New York City  
Live Streamed to [midtownconcerts.org](http://midtownconcerts.org) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/)

## Quartet Salonnieres *1772: Diversion and Divergence*

*Aniela Eddy, Natalie Rose Kress & Rebecca Nelson ~ violin, viola  
Cullen O'Neil ~ violoncello*

**Divertimento in D Major, K. 136**

W.A. Mozart (1756–1791)

Allegro ~ Andante ~ Presto

**Quartet, Op. 5, No. 5b in G minor**

F.X. Richter (1709–1789)

Larghetto ~ Allegro Spiritoso ~ Andantino Grazioso ~ Tempo di Menuetto

**Quartet, Op. 20, No. 1**

F.J. Haydn (1732–1809)

Allegro moderato ~ Menuetto un poco allegretto ~ Affetuso è sostenuto ~ Presto

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## About the Program

What was *en vogue* in 1772 Europe? Hoop skirts of unspeakable proportions, elaborate hairstyles that sometimes depicted current events, three-cornered hats, Revolutionary ideas...and in music, a form that had recently won over Austria and was now sweeping through the rest of Europe: the string quartet.

## About the Artists

Acclaimed for their spirited, engaging, and highly original performances, New York City-based **Quartet Salonnières** is devoted to performance practices of the Baroque through contemporary time periods. Founding members Majka Demcak, Aniela Eddy, Natalie Kress and Cullen O'Neil met during their studies in the Historical Performance program at The Juilliard School. They have toured nationally and internationally, performing together on stages across New Zealand, Europe, the United States and Canada.

Swiss-American **Aniela Eddy**, violin and viola, has performed throughout the United States and Europe. Her broad and varied interest in music of all eras has led her to perform concerts spanning the Baroque through contemporary time periods. Recent collaborations include performances at the Göttingen International Handel Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, Lucerne Festival and with Apollo's Fire, The Knights, TENET, and the Handel and Haydn Society. She is a founding member of the historically informed string quartet, Quartet Salonnières, and a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Cleveland Institute of Music and The Juilliard School.

Praised by the New York Times for her "splendid playing," **Natalie Rose Kress**, violin and viola, enjoys a varied career as a Baroque musician in Washington, D.C. Following three summers as a Tanglewood Fellow, she was awarded the Jules C. Reiner Violin Prize and performed with Yo Yo Ma and Pamela Frank at the Kennedy Center. She performs with the Handel and Haydn Society, Shanghai Camerata, La Grande Bande, Les Arts Florissants, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Juilliard415. She is a founding member of today's ensemble, the Quartet Salonnières. Natalie is co-founder of Musicivic Inc., a non-profit supporting local chamber music series nationwide.

**Rebecca Nelson**, violin and viola, was the first United States citizen born in former East Germany. At fourteen she left home to pursue a musical career in America. She has played with different period ensembles all over the East Coast – including Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, and has performed works on gut strings ranging from Monteverdi operas to music by Saint-Saëns. She is also a member of the Shanghai Camerata, China's very first period ensemble. Since graduating from The Juilliard School, Rebecca has started composing songs inspired by her love of the Baroque, bluegrass, and folk and is eager to lead her own projects combining early music with visual art and film. Her debut album *Do Not Lament* is a tribute to the people and musical styles that have shaped her life as a musician.

**Cullen O'Neil**, violoncello, originally from Kalamazoo, Michigan, is the winner of the Louis Potter Cello Competition, the Mary Alice Cox Cello Competition and the MASTA Solo Competition and a founding member of the Quartet Salonnières. She is also a member of Nuova Pratica, an ensemble of historically inspired performer/composers. In 2021, Cullen was inducted as a fellow of the English Concert in America and in 2022 became a member of Boston Baroque. She has performed at the Kennedy and Lincoln Centers, and internationally at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky II, Royal Albert Hall in London, and the Philharmonie de Paris. Cullen recently received her Master's degree in historical performance from The Juilliard School and previously graduated *summa cum laude* with degrees in modern violoncello and music theory from the University of Michigan. Cullen has freelanced as both a Baroque and modern violoncellist across Michigan and since 2014 has regularly taught at Kids in Tune, an El Sistema-based program in Kalamazoo.

**NEXT WEEK: Concordian Dawn**  
*Medieval Song from Aristotle to Opera*

# Quartet Salonières

## *1772: Diversion and Divergence*

June 16, 2022

### Program Notes

The string quartet was born in large part from the Austrian tradition of the divertimento, a genre that encompassed a variety of instrumentations but excluded continuo. Divertimenti were generally lighthearted and harmonically straightforward and could be performed either as orchestra or chamber music depending simply on the number of instrumentalists involved. In the mid-1700s, chamber performances of four-part divertimenti constituted the very first public appearances of what would soon become known as the “string quartet.”

Our 1772 program highlights an extraordinary year in string quartet history, when the form still had strong ties to the divertimento but was also blossoming into its own deeply complex and wildly popular genre.

The program opens with 16-year-old Mozart’s ever-beloved *Divertimento in D Major*, K. 136, a piece that highlights the surviving intersection between divertimento and string quartet performance. Later in 1772, with this and the other two “Salzburg” Divertimenti fresh in his memory, Mozart would begin composing his first full set of string quartets.

Mozart met Moravian church composer Franz Xaver Richter several times throughout the 1770s and would joke in a 1778 letter to his father that the composer “has now restricted himself very much; instead of forty bottles of wine a day, he only drinks twenty!” Despite Mozart’s gibe, other letters reveal that he greatly respected Richter’s music and was no doubt familiar with the older man’s string quartets.

A true pioneer, Richter wrote his Six Quartets, Op. 5 in the tender year of 1757, making them one of the earliest sets of string quartets ever composed. The set was finally published in 1768 and experienced enough popularity to be reprinted in 1772 in Paris, evidence of the genre’s increasing demand outside of Austria. The *G minor Quartet* on our program, dubbed “No. 5b,” is of somewhat mysterious origins, having suddenly replaced one of the original 1757 quartets in the 1772 publication. Likely written sometime between 1768 and 1772, it is the only one of Richter’s seven total quartets to include four movements (like Haydn’s) instead of three movements, the case with most divertimenti. Throughout this work there appears ample evidence of divertimento-style writing, such as the unison presentation of the second movement theme, but also examples of the unconventional craftsmanship that was beginning to define string quartet music, such as the violoncello or viola taking a rare moment in the melodic spotlight.

At the forefront of such innovation was Franz Joseph Haydn, whose 1772 Op. 20 string quartets secured him a reigning position in the history of the form. The harmonic and instrumental creativity of these quartets would pave the way for Haydn’s later groundbreaking opuses, not to mention the great quartets of Mozart and Beethoven. Opus 20 was the most exciting example to date of the string quartet diverging from other genres and becoming something truly its own. The *Eb Major Quartet* on this program, crowned by its breathtakingly beautiful slow movement, must have floored its first audience in 1772. Exactly 250 years later, we celebrate not only the momentousness of this work, but also the rich tradition surrounding its inception.