

Sunday, March 15, 2026

BORROMEO STRING QUARTET

NICHOLAS KITCHEN & KRISTOPHER TONG, VIOLINS

MELISSA REARDON, VIOLA

YEESUN KIM, CELLO

**Prelude and Fugue in C-sharp minor from
*The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I (1722)***

J.S. Bach (1685–1750),
arr. Nicholas Kitchen

**Prelude and Fugue in B-flat major from 24 Preludes and
Fugues, Op. 87 (1950–1951)**

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906–1975), arr. Kitchen

Three Pieces for String Quartet (1914, rev. 1918)

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

- I. Danse
- II. Excentrique
- III. Cantique

Entr'acte (2011)

Caroline Shaw

Dig the Say (2012)

Vijay Iyer

1. carry the ball
- 2a. this thing together
- 2b. up from the ground
3. to live tomorrow

INTERMISSION

**String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810,
"Death and the Maiden"**

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo. Allegro molto
- IV. Presto—Prestissimo

ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

Boston's beloved Borromeo String Quartet pays a visit to the Gardner with a program built around Schubert's monumental "Death and the Maiden" quartet, one of his supreme late masterpieces and a paragon of the Romantic spirit. The Borromeos also bring a quartet by jazz pianist and composer Vijay Iyer, who is Harvard's Franklin D. Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts and a MacArthur Fellow. Nicholas Kitchen has arranged a pair of preludes and fugues from Bach and Shostakovich. The *Entr'acte* of Museum-favorite Caroline Shaw rounds out the program.

—George Steel, *Abrams Curator of Music*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Each performance of the award-winning **Borromeo String Quartet** strengthens its reputation as one of the most important ensembles of our time. Admired and sought after for both its fresh interpretations of the classical music canon and its championing of works by 20th- and 21st-century composers, the ensemble has been hailed for its "edge-of-the-seat performances" by the *Boston Globe*, which called it "simply the best."

Inspiring audiences for 35 years, the Borromeo has been the ensemble-in-residence at New England Conservatory for over three decades and at the Taos School of Music since 2005. The Borromeo also serves as quartet-in-residence at the Heifetz International Music Institute, where first violinist Nicholas Kitchen is artistic director. The quartet has performed on major

concert stages across the globe, including appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Berliner Philharmonie, Wigmore Hall, Suntory Hall, the Concertgebouw, Seoul Arts Center, and the Shanghai Oriental Art Center, and performed for many years with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Highlights of the Borromeo's 2024–25 season include performances at Korea's Changwon International Chamber Music Festival; Auburn University's Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center; Clemson University's Lillian and Robert Utsey Chamber Music Series; Palm Beach's Henry Morrison Flagler Museum; UCLA's William Andrews Clark Memorial Library; Music at Kohl Mansion; Eureka Chamber Music Series; Dumbarton Concerts; Summit Chamber Music Series; Chamber Music Raleigh; Celebrity Series of Boston's Neighborhood Arts; and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, where it has enjoyed a long-term relationship since 1991. Beyond the quartet's standalone performances, they toured with violist Paul Neubauer, pianist Henry Kramer, and in a new octet program with the Verona Quartet. 2025–26 highlights include residencies at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, as well as a special late-Beethoven project in Chicago's Guarneri Hall and engagements in multiple venues all around the United States.

The Borromeo regularly engages in residencies with universities, conservatories, and educational institutions all over the world. In addition to serving as the 2024–25 Visiting Quartet in Residence at Arizona State University, the quartet has served in recent seasons as the Hittman Ensemble in Residence at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore and engaged in residencies at the Curtis Institute of Music, San Francisco Conservatory, UCLA, Amherst College,

Colorado State University, University of Kansas, University of Georgia, University of Winnipeg, and Musik-Akademie Basel. The quartet has worked extensively as both performers and educators with the Library of Congress, highlighting both its manuscripts and instrument collections. In addition to its extensive performance and academic engagements throughout Asia, the quartet has also conducted an extensive series of workshops with NPO Triton Arts Network in Japan.

The quartet has a long history performing at top festivals worldwide, including performances at Spoleto Festival USA and Festival of the Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy; Busan Maru International Music Festival; Beare's Premiere Music Festival in Hong Kong; Incontri in Terra di Siena Chamber Music Festival; Kammermusik Basel; Eisenstadt's Haydn Festival; Prague Spring International Music Festival; International Chamber Music Festival Stavanger; Ravinia Festival; Tippet Rise Art Center; and a special feature by Tanglewood in 2020 celebrating Beethoven's 250th anniversary through performance and a focus on the composer's manuscripts. The Borromeo has collaborated with many of the most recognized names in classical music, including Joshua Bell, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Jeremy Denk, Jonathan Biss, Leon Fleisher, Menahem Pressler, Christoph Eschenbach, Anne-Marie McDermott, Gary Graffman, Josef Suk, Peter Serkin, Kim Kashkashian, Richard Stoltzman, Larry Lesser, Paul Katz, Michael Tree, Midori, Shmuel Ashkenasi, and even major figures beyond the classical sphere including Branford Marsalis, Christian McBride, and Audra McDonald.

The quartet has also collaborated with some of this generation's most important composers, including Gunther Schuller,

John Cage, György Ligeti, Steve Reich, Aaron Jay Kernis, Osvaldo Golijov, Jennifer Higdon, Steve Mackey, John Harbison, Sebastian Currier, Pierre Jalbert, and Leon Kirchner, among many others. In addition to regularly premiering new works—including a new quartet by composer Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, which was commissioned by the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art for the 2024–25 season—the ensemble regularly performs violinist Nicholas Kitchen's transcriptions of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and the *Well-Tempered Clavier* Books I and II, the former of which is part of the quartet's extensive discography.

The Borromeo continues to be a pioneer in its use of technology and has the trailblazing distinction of being the first string quartet to utilize laptop computers on the concert stage, leading the way for the widespread use of iPads to perform from four-part scores. Among its wide range of approaches with mixed media, the Borromeo also paved the way for artist-led media by becoming the first classical ensemble to make its own live concert recordings and videos. The quartet often leads discussions enhanced by projections of handwritten manuscripts, investigating with the audience the creative process of the composer as highlighted in an April 2024 feature in *The Atlantic*.

"Nothing less than masterful" (Cleveland.com), the Borromeo Quartet has received numerous awards throughout its illustrious career, beginning with top prizes at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France, the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, and subsequently Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Career Grant and Martin E. Segal Award.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:

CASTLE OF OUR SKINS WITH DANIEL BERNARD ROUMAIN, ELECTRIC VIOLIN, AND VAL-INC, SOUND CHEMIST

Sunday, March 29

PAUL GALBRAITH, GUITAR

Sunday, April 5

RANDALL GOOSBY, VIOLIN, WITH ZHU WANG, PIANO

Sunday, April 12

BOSTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Saturday, April 18, at 2 pm

IMANI WINDS

Sunday, April 19

BUTTER QUARTET

Sunday, April 26

ISATA KANNEH-MASON, PIANO

Sunday, May 10

RENAISSANCE STRING QUARTET

Sunday, May 17

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum resides on the homelands of the Massachusetts Tribe, who belong to this place and continue to regard these lands and waters as sacred.

Music at the Gardner is supported by Manitou Fund. The Museum thanks its generous concert donors: The Coogan Concert in memory of Peter Weston Coogan; Fitzpatrick Family Concert; James Lawrence Memorial Concert; Alford P. Rudnick Memorial Concert; David Scudder in memory of his wife, Marie Louise Scudder; Wendy Shattuck Young Artist Concert; and Willona Sinclair Memorial Concert. The piano is dedicated as the Alex d'Arbeloff Steinway. The harpsichord was generously donated by Dr. Robert Barstow in memory of Marion Huse, and its care is endowed in memory of Dr. Barstow by The Barstow Fund. Music at the Gardner is also supported in part by Barbara and Amos Hostetter, Joseph Mari, Sallie and Jim McGregor, Nicie and Jay Panetta, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc., and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which is supported by the state of Massachusetts and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Kindly turn off all electronic devices during the concert and refrain from any photography or filming in the hall. Also, please note the location of the emergency exit doors: across the hall from the doors through which you entered.