friends of chamber music

2026/2027

79th SEASON

Friends of Chamber Music present the Terra String Quartet in concert at the Vancouver Playhouse, Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 7:30 pm

Harriet Langley – violin

Laurel Gagnon (substitute) – violin

Chih-ta Chen – viola

Audrey Chen – cello





Winners of the 2025 Naumburg Chamber Music Competition and prizewinners at the 2025 Bordeaux and Wigmore Hall International Quartet Competitions, the Terra String Quartet is a vibrant young international ensemble based in New York City. Graduates of The Juilliard School, The New England Conservatory, Harvard University, and the Curtis Institute of Music, they are known for their sincere storytelling, commitment to artistic excellence, and versatile approach to repertoire, TSQ strives to foster conversation and genuine human connection through their performances and pedagogy.

Currently, the TSQ's regular second violinist, Amelia Heinrich, is on leave and being substituted for on this tour by violinist Laurel Gagnon. Ms. Gagnon studied at Yale University with renowned violinist and teacher, Augustin Hadelich. She has been awarded prizes at recent competitions in Dallas, Singapore, and Montreal. She spends her summers as a junior artist at the Marlboro Music Festival. As a chamber musician, she is a 2025-2027 fellow of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, and she is the founder of the Vinola Trio (clarinet, violin, piano).

The Terra String Quartet's upcoming engagements in the 2026-27 season include residencies at the Kaufman Music Center in NYC and the University of South Carolina. They will make their Carnegie Hall, NYC, debut in February 2027. From 2024 to 2026, the quartet was the Fellowship Ensemble-in-Residence at the Yale School of Music, where they coached undergraduate chamber ensembles. They also held the 2024–25 Ernst Stiefel String Quartet Residency at Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, curating imaginative programs centered on the string quartets of

Benjamin Britten, including a new commission by composer Juri Seo. Recently, the quartet was named a recipient of the 2026 Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant.

Deeply committed to education and community engagement, TSQ served as the 2023-24 Project Music Heals Us Arts Leadership Ensemble. Additional honors include top prizes at the 2023 Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, the 2023 Osaka International Chamber Music Competition, and the 2022 Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition. Their mentors and coaches include the members of the Brentano Quartet, Ara Gregorian, and Marcy Rosen.

In their spare time, they enjoy playing Mahjong together and learning about instruments and bows.

The Terra String Quartet appears by arrangement with Christina Daysog Concert Artists.

PROGRAMME

4 Madrigals from *Madrigals Book 2* **Maddelena Casulana (c.1544 – c.1590)**

No. 20: Gran miracol d'amore
No. 05: O Notte o cielo o mare
No. 15: Vaghi amorosi Augelli
No. 19: Il vostro dipartir

Maddelena Casulana was an Italian composer, lutenist, and singer. When her first book of madrigals, *Il Primo Libro di Madrigali a 4 voci*, was published in Venice in 1568, it was the first printed and published music by a woman composer in the history of the European music tradition. She dedicated that First Book to her patron, Isabella de' Medici, writing in the dedication:

"(I) want to show the world, as much as I can in this profession of music, the vain error of men that they alone possess the gifts of intellect and artistry, and that such gifts are never given to women".

The madrigals by Casulana on this programme are instrumental arrangements of four songs from her Second Book, published in 1570, and they explore themes of love and loss. The Italian texts and English translations of the lyrics follow:

No. 20 Gran miracol d'amore (Great miracle of Love)
Gran miracol d'amore, quel che uccide,
Dà vit'e in un si sface,
L'alma s'aviv'e more Che,
mentr'essere più in vita li dispiace,
Tal di mort' ha desio
Che di lui viv'e in lui mor'ell'et io

Great miracle of love, that which kills,
It gives life and in one can destroy,
The soul revives and dies

When she (the soul) regrets living
She has such a wish to die
That she lives of him (Love)
And in him she dies, and I with her.
(Citation for translation: https://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7228/1/heerebeyerse_etd2009.pdf)

No. 5 O notte o cielo o mare (O night o sky o sea)
O notte O cielo O mar O piagge O monti
Che si spesso m'udite chiamar morte
O valli O selve O boschi O fiumi O fonti
Che sost'alla mia vita fide scorte
O fere snelle che con liete fronti
Errando andate con gioiosa sorte
O testimon de miei si duri accenti
Dat'audientia insieme a miei lamenti

O night, O sky, O sea, O shores, O mountains,
you that so often hear me call for death:
O valleys, O woods, O forests, O rivers, O springs,
you that have been my life's faithful companions;
O simple beasts who without a care wander happily about;
O witnesses to my words so harsh,
together pay heed to my lamenting.
(Citation: https://www.ncem.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Stile-antico-online.pdf)

No. 15 Vaghi amorosi augelli (Lovely amorous birds)
Vagh' amorosi augelli che,
sovra gli arbuscelli,
rinovate gl'antichi vostri amori,
cantate tra bei fiori,
gl'occhi e le bionde chiome
che fur si dolce nod' a le mie some,
e di mia Clori a l'onde,
in quest' amate sponde,
udite l'armonia
che puo sol' a dolcir la pena mia.

Lovely, amorous birds,
which, above the saplings
renew your former loves,
sing, among the pretty flowers,
of the eyes and blonde locks
which bound me so sweetly,
and by these beloved shores
hear the harmony
of my Chloris in the waves,
which alone can sweeten my torment.
(Citation: https://www.ncem.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Stile-antico-online.pdf)

19. Il vostro dipartir (Your departure)
Il vostro dipartir, donna, mi diede noiosa vita

E con si dubbia spene di voi, caro mio bene
Ch'alti si n'pera di ciò fia cagione
Le vostr'alme virtut' al mondo sole
E rio timor mi spinge ond' i miei lumi
Sembran d'amare lacrime duo fiumi

Your departure, lady, leaves my life insipid
And my hope for you is so unsure, my dearest,
That I aspire to nothing less
Than your soul, the only virtue in the world.
And fear brings tears repeatedly to my eyes
As if they were two streams of bitter tears.
(Translation citation: https://musicformylove.org/works/il-vostro-dipartir/)

The Terra String Quartet will segue directly from the madrigals into Britten's String Quartet No. 3 without pause.

String Quartet No. 3 in G Minor, Opus 94 **Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)**

I. Duets. With moderate movement
II. Ostinato. Very fast
III. Solo. Very calm
IV. Burlesque. Fast – *con fuoco*
V. Recitative and Passacaglia (*La Serenissima*). Slow

Benjamin Britten was born in England in 1913. His mother was an amateur singer, and Britten was most influential as a composer of vocal music. The British scholar and conductor Peter Evans has stated: "[Britten] was the outstanding figure of the British generation that came to prominence just before World War II, at the end of which his *Peter Grimes* laid the foundation for a revival of native opera which his works have continued to dominate." "Britten also helped to revitalize music education in England.

Britten's musical language is tonal, making it accessible to a wide audience, but it is distinctly modern in the richness and density of the musical relationships. In addition, his instrumental works, as well as his vocal music, often have extra-musical connections. Philip Brett has observed: "Above all, [Britten] imbued his works with his own personal concerns, some of them hidden, principally those having to do with his love of men and boys, some more public, like his fiercely held pacifist belief, in ways that allowed people to sense the passion and conviction behind them even if unaware of their full implication. He also performed a fascinating, as well as problematic, assimilation of (of rapprochement with) the artistic spoils of the East, attempting an unusual integration of various non-Western musical traditions with his own increasingly linear style."

Britten composed his String Quartet No. 3 in 1975, and this was to be his last major work. He had not composed music for string quartet since 1945. In 1973, the composer was suffering from heart disease and underwent an operation. During the operation he had a stroke, which permanently affected his right hand. When he complained to his friend, the musicologist Hans Keller, that he could not move his arm well enough to write a full score, Keller, half-jokingly,

suggested that Britten now write the new string quartet that he had promised to write for Keller many years before. The String Quartet No. 3 was dedicated to Keller and written for performance by the Amadeus Quartet.

Keller wrote that with the Third Quartet, Britten took "that decisive step beyond—-into the Mozartean realm of the instrumental purification of opera." In fact, the Quartet has a strong association with Britten's opera *Death in Venice*, based on the novel by Thomas Mann. The novel deals with the infatuation of a middle-aged writer, Aschenbach, with a beautiful young boy.

The Quartet has five movements, the first of which is called "Duets", featuring instrumental pairings within the four-part texture. The second movement is entitled "Ostinato". An "ostinato" is a short musical pattern that is repeated, and this fast, brief, and rhythmically vibrant movement incorporates an ostinato. The third movement is called "Solo". Music critic Michael Kennedy has reported: "Solo, the central slow movement, is a tribute to the special qualities of Norbert Brainin, leader of the Amadeus Quartet. The melodic line, high, calm and ethereal, is carried by the first violin, supported by triad arpeggios from the three other players, until it finds further sublimation in the concentrated rapture of a cadenza for the quartet in the central episode. When the serenity of the opening returns, the solo is accompanied by harmonics of rarified clarity." The fourth movement is a satirical "Burlesque', and as Kennedy has observed, invokes the spirit of Britten's friend, composer Dmitri Shostakovich. The finale (Recitative and Passacaglia "La Serenissima") uses material from Britten's opera, *Death in Venice*.

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 15 in A Minor, Opus 132 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

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 (attacca)
V. Allegro appassionato

Dedicated to Count Nikolai Galizin, Beethoven wrote his String Quartet No. 15 in 1825, and it was premiered in November of that year by the Schuppanzigh Quartet. The composer's 13th quartet in order of composition, it was assigned the number 15 based on order of publication. For this work, the second of his late quartets, Beethoven's sketches indicated that he planned a four-movement design, but his focus was interrupted by a bout of severe illness. After his recovery, he wrote a new movement of "thanksgiving" that became the centrepiece of a re-arranged five-movement quartet.

The ***Assai Sostenuto's*** slow introduction is based on a recurring motif in the composer's late quartets as well as in his ***Große Fuge***: the second tetrachord of the harmonic minor scale. Written in modified sonata form, it involves three full rotations of the expositional primary and secondary thematic material, each with a different tonal plan.

The ***Allegro ma non tanto*** is a minuet with trio. The trio evokes a musette with its melodies heard over sustained tonic tones, and partly reuses his *Allemande.* In the opening, Beethoven exposes the fourth four times in a three-note gesture, with the violins and viola in unison and the cello an octave below. Later, this motif is combined with an inverted variation outlining a descending fifth in mixed rhythm.

The ***Molto Adagio*** is the longest movement in this quartet. Celebrating Beethoven's recovery from a severe intestinal disorder, it is headed with the words, *"Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart"* ("Holy song of thanksgiving of a convalescent to the Deity, in the Lydian mode"). Formally described slow sections alternate with faster sections, with the composer feeling new strength (*"Neue Kraft fühlend"*). In the three instances of the slow section, the overlapping motifs become increasingly complex, while the chorale is pared down and the two elements become increasingly integrated. A characteristic intensification of the lead motif appears near the end of the movement.

The ***Alla marcia*** is a brief march that leads directly into the finale through a recitative-like passage. The ***Allegro appassionato*** is in sonata rondo form. The composer's sketches show that this theme was originally meant as an instrumental conclusion to the Ninth Symphony, but was abandoned for the now-famous choral ending. The movement ends with a triumphant A Major coda.

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Next concerts - both at the Vancouver Playhouse, 600 Hamilton Street, Vancouver, BC

Escher Quartet (USA)
Tuesday, December 1, 2026 – 7:30 pm
"Music of World War II":
Prokofiev: String Quartet No. 2 in F Major, Opus 92 "Kabardinian"
Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 3 in F Major, Opus 73
Britten: String Quartet No. 2, Opus 36

Dudok Quartet (Netherlands)
Sunday, January 31, 2027 - 3:00 PM
"Self-Portrait" (inspired by Dutch painters from 3 epochs)
Dudok Quartet arrangements of polyphonic works by:
Josquin des Prez, Johannes Ockeghem, and Guillaume de Machaut
Joey Roukens: "What Remains" (String Quartet No. 4)
Franz Schubert: String Quartet No. 15 in G Major Opus 161 D887

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