

*The String Orchestra of the Rockies presents  
String Orchestra Re-imagined!  
September 12 & 13, 2020*

*Program*

“Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” K525 (1787).....W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro  
Romanza (Andante)  
Menuetto (Allegretto)  
Rondo (Allegro)

Margaret Baldrige, violin  
Maria Larionoff, violin  
Jennifer Smith, viola  
Adam Collins, violoncello

Octet in E flat major, Op. 20 (1825).....Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco  
Andante  
Scherzo: Allegro leggerissimo  
Presto

Maria Larionoff, violin  
Carrie Krause, violin  
Margaret Baldrige, violin  
Loy Koch, violin  
Jennifer Smith, viola  
Lisa Shull, viola  
Fern Glass Boyd, cello  
Adam Collins, cello

For everyone’s listening pleasure, please be sure to silence all cell phones  
and other devices. Please be aware that some hearing aids may emit  
noises that interfere with the performance.

*Thank you.*

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**Eine Kleine Nachtmusik K525.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Arguably the most well-known and most loved of all of Mozart's works, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* is one of the most mysterious. Mozart wrote this piece in 1787, when little is known about his life. No one is quite sure why Mozart suddenly wrote a charming and intimate piece of music during this time. Mozart occupied himself for most of 1787 with composing *Don Giovanni*. In May, his father died in Salzburg. Mozart may have met and given lessons to sixteen-year-old Ludwig van Beethoven, visiting from Bonn. The only conclusive thing we really know about this time in his life is that Mozart stopped work on the second act of *Don Giovanni* to write this lovely serenade. Serenades are typically intended for a social occasion, but there is no record of an event for this piece. Mozart had not written string serenades since he lived in Salzburg.

*Nachtmusik* translates literally to "night music," but the understood meaning of *Nachtmusik* was serenade, which indicates a melodic, instrumental piece. Mozart would have translated the title as "A Little Serenade." Originally scored for string quintet, including double bass, this piece can be performed successfully by string quartet or string orchestra. Originally, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* had five movements. The second movement was tragically torn out of the manuscript by anonymous hands and has never been recovered.

Music that delights and captivates so completely requires little comment. Movement one, *Allegro*, is a sonata form movement built on the opening theme we all recognize and hold closely to our hearts. After a short development section, Mozart recapitulates his ideas and brings the movement back to its opening theme. A movement that shines and dances effortlessly like this is rare, even in Mozart's music. The second movement, *Romanze*, contains expressive and softer music. This andante begins with a dignified rondo and moves through two contrasting sections. The third movement is a minuet-and-trio, with a strong minuet and a flowing trio section filled with colorful chromatics. The finale is another rondo, though this is an *Allegro* with an effervescent theme. Similar to the minuet-and-trio, Mozart's chromatics bring darker and complex moments hidden like gems in the midst of all the high energy.

## Octet in E flat major, Op.20.....Felix Mendelssohn

Felix Mendelssohn was only sixteen when he composed this extraordinary piece. He wrote it as a birthday gift for his friend and violin teacher, Eduard Rietz. The ambitious first violin part stands as a complement to Rietz's musical capabilities and virtuosity on the instrument. Rietz was the concertmaster of the Berlin Court Orchestra in 1819. While Rietz held that position, Mendelssohn wrote his rarely played D minor Violin Concerto, not to be confused with his famous E minor Concerto.

The string octet was not a classic chamber music genre at the time. Mendelssohn was inspired by Louis Spohr, who had produced the first of his four double quartets in 1823. Even though their instrumentation was identical, each composer's ensemble acted fundamentally different as a whole. Spohr's two string quartets operate as independent entities while Mendelssohn uses his eight instruments as a single ensemble, where each instrument is free to interact with the other. With this perspective, Mendelssohn's Octet is related to the many string symphonies he composed during his years prior. This connection is ensured by the composer's instruction on the published score: "This Octet must be played by all the instruments in symphonic orchestral style. *Pianos* and *fortes* must be strictly observed and more strongly emphasized than is usual in pieces of this character."

In the first two movements, Mendelssohn writes a brilliant first violin part. The Allegro moderato ma con fuoco exudes blazing energy which rolls forward. The second movement expresses deeply emotional undercurrents beneath a beautifully scored musical meandering. The Scherzo, which became a stand-alone piece in Mendelssohn's lifetime, is related to a section of the composer's famous *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Scherzo movement was also inspired by the *Walpurgisnacht* scene from Goethe's *Faust*. Fanny Mendelssohn, Felix's sister, wrote, "One feels so near the world of spirits, carried away in the air, half inclined to snatch up a broomstick and follow the aerial procession. At the end the first violin takes a flight with feather-like lightness, and—all has vanished" in reference to this movement. Memories of the Scherzo appear in the finale, which is overwhelmingly developed and explored in a complex and stimulating fugue. It is absolutely astonishing and would seem almost impossible that a sixteen-year-old composer should have mastered such complicated techniques and wielded them with such ease and brilliance, but his music is all there as evidence of his young genius in the score.