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JÖRG WIDMANN, CLARINET

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Coolidge Auditorium
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PACIFICA QUARTET

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JÖRG WIDMANN, CLARINET



Program

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

String Quartet in G major, op. 76, no. 1, Hob. III: 75 (1796-1797)

Allegro con spirito

Adagio sostenuto

Menuetto—Trio. Presto

Allegro ma non troppo

JÖRG WIDMANN (b. 1973)

Jagdquartett [String Quartet no. 3] (2003)

INTERMISSION

CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826)

Clarinet Quintet in B-flat major, op. 34 (1811-1815)

Allegro

Fantasia. Adagio

Menuetto. Capriccio presto—Trio

Rondo. Allegro giocoso

Jörg Widmann, *clarinet*

About the Program

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN, String Quartet in G major, op. 76, no. 1, Hob. III: 75

“Altogether there is a boldness in Haydn’s quartet style which no doubt reflects his new position in musical life: for in 1796 and 1797 he realized that the entire civilized Western world considered him the greatest living composer.” –H.C. Robbins Landon¹

In 1795 Haydn returned to Austria from his second trip to the United Kingdom. His admiration of British culture, the success he experienced there, and a new dynamic in the Esterházy court all contributed to the creative impetus behind the six quartets in the op. 76 series. Under the patronage of Nikolaus II, Prince Esterházy (1765-1833), Haydn enjoyed a newfound sense of musical freedom. Contrary to his predecessors, Nikolaus II spent most of his time in Vienna and Eisenstadt, as opposed to the family’s seat at Esterházy.² Haydn was no longer bound by a flurry of court-related assignments and his only major duty was to compose a major mass setting each year in honor of the prince’s wife Maria Hermenegild Esterházy (1768-1845).³ He therefore pursued external commission opportunities at a faster pace than when he had extensive court assignments.

At the turn of the nineteenth century Haydn’s compositional attention was divided between string quartets and large scale choral-orchestral works, such as the oratorio *Die Schöpfung*, Hob. XXI: 2 (1796-1798). Of his 68 total string quartets, the op. 76 series was the final complete quartet cycle, followed only by two quartets under op. 77 and an unfinished op. 103 quartet. The op. 76 quartets were commissioned by the Hungarian Count Joseph Erdödy (1756-1824). Haydn taught music lessons to several members of the Erdödy family, which H.C. Robbins Landon believes paved the way for the commission.⁴ Haydn received 100 ducats in exchange for composing the series. He composed the quartets in 1796-1797, but they were not published until 1799 due to an embargo on public release in the commissioning agreement.⁵

The first quartet in the op. 76 series is set in G major, and is described by Robbins Landon as “an extraordinary mixture of the gay, the serious, the flip and the highly original.”⁶ The *Allegro con spirito* opens with three quick chords in the full ensemble that represent the upbeat rhythmic pace of the movement.⁷ The cello introduces the

1 H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works, Haydn: The Years of ‘The Creation’ 1796-1800*.

London: Thames and Hudson, 1977, 285. [The Library of Congress Music Division holds the H.C. Robbins Landon Collection. For more information, visit <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016570584>.]

2 Reginald Barrett-Ayres, *Joseph Haydn and the String Quartet*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974, 297.

3 James Webster, “Haydn, Joseph, Vienna, 1795-1809,” in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. <http://oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/44593p5>.

4 Robbins Landon, 286-287.

5 Floyd Grave and Margaret Grave, *The String Quartets of Joseph Haydn*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 301.

6 Robbins Landon, 287.

7 The opening three chords have a similar effect as the opening chords of Beethoven’s Symphony no. 3 in E-flat major, op. 55, which was composed just a few years later in 1803-1804.

principal theme alone, passing it off to the viola to complete. A subsequent imitative iteration of the theme is shared between the violins (with the second violin taking the baton from the viola). The texture of the music fills out as all four instruments play together during a transition phrase. Haydn focuses on developing the principal theme throughout the exposition section, which contains great internal rhythmic contrast. A short chromatic phrase segues into the closing phrase group of the exposition, which is an extended affirmation of the D-major dominant key. The exposition is marked with a repeat, as is the combined development/recapitulation section. In the development the viola states the theme while the violins, led by the second, launch into a short duet. The cello reenters with a harmonic outline of the section as the tension builds. Throughout the section there is an interplay between the first violin, which adds rhythmic intensity, and the lower three voices that explore the harmonic potential of the music. In the transition to the recapitulation, Haydn offers a drawn out cadence back to G major. The cello revisits the opening theme, this time with the first violin as a duet partner. Familiar motives from the exposition return in new configurations as the movement draws to a close in a joyous manner.

The sheer beauty of the *Adagio sostenuto* embodies the very best of Haydn's skill. Using a slow tempo and dampening the volume of the musicians by marking their parts *a mezza voce* (at half voice), he creates an intimate scene with long flowing phrases that seem like they are being sung on one long breath. The harmony is rooted in C major, but Haydn roves around related keys as he offers sumptuous melodic material that is passed between the instruments. Sometimes the cello is in dialogue with the first violins while the inner voices recede to a subsidiary layer. In other moments the ensemble is equalized, with only the first violin emerging with virtuosic fragments. The main thematic material returns and is even more meditative as the harmony cycles away from the C-major tonic. In the subsequent episode the violins have a moment that evokes a Baroque style, only to give way to a third statement of the meditative theme. After the faster rhythmic motives return the first violin and cello are heard briefly in dialogue. A short hesitating phrase leads to the final thematic statement which transitions back to C major via G major. In the closing moments the first violin part climbs high into the air (figuratively) and the movement concludes with a gentle ending prepared by a floating arpeggiation in the cello.

The rambunctious *Menuetto—Trio* finds Haydn exploring the *scherzo* style most associated with Beethoven. The key rhythmic hallmark in a *scherzo* is the sense of one large beat per bar, rather than the slower minuet style that really emphasizes three beats per bar.⁸ The tempo is marked *Presto* and the music passes by like a car speeding on the highway. Haydn's opening thematic subject moves along calmly with a quarter-note subdivision until you hear a short burst of repeated eighth-note chords that ramp up the dynamic from the previous *piano* to *fortissimo* with no warning. While this may be disconcerting, it is best to hold on for the ride and enjoy Haydn's attempt at having a joke on the listener. The character seamlessly shifts from

8 Roger Parker, "Haydn: Quartet op. 76, no. 1" [Lecture], Gresham College, UK, January 28, 2010. <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lecture/transcript/print/joseph-haydn-op-76-no-1-in-g-major>.

carefree and bubbly to dark and menacing (but only for short bouts). Though the two sections of the *Menuetto* are repeated before launching into the *Trio*, by the time you have a sense of the thematic material Haydn provides a change of pace. The *Trio* is much more genteel and is effectively a first violin solo with backup support from the other three instruments whose parts are marked *pizzicato* and offer only quarter-note downbeats in each bar. Haydn repeats the *Menuetto* (without internal repeats) to bring the music back to where it began. The movement is brash and hyper, while slick and crafty, offering a clear contrast from the contemplative second movement.

The closing *Allegro non troppo* is action-packed, harmonically the most adventurous movement of the quartet, and a whirlwind of intermingling simple and crazed rhythmic figures. Robbins Landon describes it as “turbulent,”⁹ which is certainly apparent as the thematic material evokes a sense of being unsettled and the rhythmic texture is agitated. The opening unison phrase creates a rich texture and is based on an eighth-note triplet figure that leads into an arpeggiation of what would form a first inversion G minor chord. Trills, accents, and countersubjects create a sense of angst, while occasional unison (or *tutti*) sections are interspersed to either reign in the momentum of the movement or build more tension. Harmonically, Haydn kicks off in G minor and passes through B-flat major, B-flat minor, D-flat major, and B-flat minor, before ultimately settling into G major (via D major). Each section of the movement will have you at the edge of your seat waiting to hear where Haydn goes next. In what sounds like a closing phrase group Haydn plays a trick and almost resolves the music harmonically, but after an unexpected four-beat moment of silence, a playful *pizzicato* figure emerges out of nowhere. It builds through a crescendo to the point where the musicians cannot help themselves but give up on the plucked technique and use their bows (or so it would seem, though Haydn did mark this instruction). The sequence of *pizzicato* and *arco* (bowed) playing repeats and all of a sudden the movement concludes with rich chords outlining an cadence from a D major chord to a G major chord, hearkening back to the three opening strokes of the first movement.

Nicholas Alexander Brown
Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division

9 Robbins Landon, 288.

JÖRG WIDMANN, *Jagdquartett* [String Quartet no. 3]

The *Jagdquartett* (Hunt Quartet), which Jörg Widmann wrote as his third string quartet in 2003 following the *Choralquartett*, also begins with a visible gesture. After a short signal cry from the performers, the piece starts by quoting Robert Schumann's *Papillons*, op. 2, and for its full duration retains this gesture, these starting sounds. The degrees of recognizability do change continuously, to be sure, in the furious, racing organism of the score. The contours change into forms on another level, yet now and then the beginning material returns clearly to the fore, initiated anew by a cry from the performers, and is then digested or mutated as a rhythmic study into a field of harmonic experimentation. On rare occasions, there are moments of pause, as though the musicians are testing the atmosphere, as though they are sensing the weather, so as ultimately to continue playing the quartet across the fields and forests of notes. A hunt after a joyful performance, a chase, the whip cracking, after the thing to be shot, the sound, its performer, perhaps the composer himself? A last shout, *morendo, dal niente...* —The victim is not the audience, at any rate.

When comparing the output of string quartets from the eighteenth century to the time of Schumann, it appears to have dropped considerably. Schumann composed only three complete quartets, all of them in the so-called "chamber music year" of 1842. Jörg Widmann, who counts Robert Schumann among his greatest inspirations, finished a series of five string quartets in 2005, at the same age as Schumann. The quartets in the cycle form in themselves the characters of the movements of the classical quartet. *Jagdquartett* represents the fast middle movement, the *scherzo*. Widmann's work appears rough and wild in the style of Schumann's alter ego Florestan. His hunt begins in the tempo of *allegro vivace assai* with the final theme of Schumann's *Papillons*, which often appears in many of Schumann's compositions. Widmann eventually dismantles the thematic material of his fierce quartet, thus skeletonizing his prey.

—Program note courtesy of Jörg Widmann and MKI Artists

Video from the Concerts from the Library of Congress Archives

Conversation with composers Pierre Jalbert & Jörg Widmann

Filmed April 10, 2014, Whittall Pavilion, Library of Congress

<http://go.usa.gov/x9mE9>



CARL MARIA VON WEBER, Clarinet Quintet in B-flat major, op. 34

Carl Maria von Weber was a major figure in German musical life during the nineteenth century, though he is often omitted from the current traditional music history narrative about the period. He was groomed to be a musician from a young age by his father, Franz Anton Weber, with whom he initially began studying music. Weber was connected with the Haydn family in two ways: he took composition lessons with Michael Haydn (Joseph's brother) for a short period during his youth, and he became acquainted professionally with Joseph Haydn during his adult years. Weber ultimately studied piano, music theory and composition, and spent several years bouncing around concert appearances and jobs in tandem with his father. At one point, while working in Stuttgart, the pair was arrested and imprisoned for embezzling funds from their employer to pay off some personal debts. They were eventually released and Weber recovered financially over time.

Weber's somewhat tumultuous career is best described as that of a musical impresario, as his work encompassed composition, conducting, performing as a pianist, and working as a music critic. Additionally, he attempted on several occasions to build or expand opera companies through his conducting/music director appointments. He had a relatively short life and passed away just shy of his fortieth birthday. Today Weber is remembered most widely for *Der Freischütz* (1817-1821), his greatest success as an opera composer. His output includes nine operas, including *Euryanthe* (1822-1823) and *Oberon* (1825-1826), incidental music for over two dozen dramatic works, a handful of major choral works, a long list of solo *Lieder*, two symphonies and other short orchestral works, a variety of concertos, solo piano works, and a small number of wind ensemble and chamber works. His compositional style is described by Michael Tusa as conservative and representative of the early German Romantic style.¹⁰

Many of the concertos and chamber works that have featured soloists, such as the Clarinet Quintet in B-flat major, op. 34 (1811-1815) were conceived as vehicles for close colleagues of Weber or himself (when it came to the piano concertos). Op. 34 was composed for a German clarinetist named Heinrich Joseph Bärmann (1784-1847), who served at one point as the principal clarinet player of the Munich Court Opera. Described as "a truly great artist and admirable man," Bärmann and Weber met in Munich via the court's director of public works, a gentleman named Carl Friedrich von Wiebeking (1762-1842).¹¹ The two musicians became friends for life and Bärmann was the dedicatee and recipient of several works from the composer. The Clarinet Quintet was ultimately composed slowly over the course of four years while Weber was more focused on larger works, such as the cantata *Kampf und Sieg*, op. 44 (1815), which commemorated the Battle of Waterloo. Op. 34 was completed on August 24, 1815, just one day in advance of its premiere.

10 Michael C. Tusa, "Weber: (9) Carl Maria von Weber," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/40313pg9>.

11 William Saunders, *Weber*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970, 62.

Weber biographer John Hamilton Warrack describes the Clarinet Quintet as "a pocket concerto, written purely for delight in virtuoso effect."¹² While the work has not had a profound effect on chamber music repertoire, it is frequently used to showcase the talents of leading clarinetists, such as Jörg Widmann who performs it this evening with the Pacifica Quartet. The first movement is an *Allegro* that opens with an introductory phrase in the string quartet that is soon joined by the clarinetist, who plays a soaring thematic line. Weber soon shifts to a transition phrase that is characterized by extreme dynamic shifts, and a back-and-forth between the first violin and clarinet. The different melodic fragments developed by the clarinet are very imaginative and showcase technical mastery of the instrument. Weber indicates a repeat of the exposition section in the score. The development kicks off with a clear change in the mood, going from the florid exposition to a driving section that features shifting harmonies. The soaring gentle melody eventually returns as Weber recapitulates the principal thematic material.

Weber sets the *Fantasia* in an *Adagio ma non troppo* tempo. The music begins with a ruminating figure in the cello that is passed off to the first violin and transformed in the middle string voices. In the clarinet you hear a theme that is supple and sounds completely organic and almost improvised. The strings revisit the haunting opening phrase and the clarinet gives a transformed thematic statement that leads eventually to a brief solo moment featuring extreme chromatic runs spanning much of the instrument's range. Weber continues to support the virtuosic solo writing of the clarinet with a stable and compelling accompaniment in the strings. The strings create a vivid scene that focuses on a protagonist, represented by the clarinet.

The third movement, *Menuetto—Trio* is marked *Capriccio presto*, set in E-flat major, and is lighthearted compared to the first movement. A dainty oscillation motive, like a bird chirping, appears occasionally in the clarinet and is echoed by the cello. In those moments the violins and viola provide a bouncy quarter-note ostinato to keep things moving forward. The *Menuetto* section is followed by a two bar pause that signals its repetition and then the beginning of the *Trio*, which is sentimental and juxtaposes the clarinet with the ensemble in concerto fashion. Weber employs large dynamic swells (marked as crescendos) to spice things up. The finale is structured as a *Rondo* and marked *Allegro giocoso* (with *giocoso* meaning lively or playful). All in all, the thematic material has a tinge of folksiness and the mood conveyed is that of a comic operetta from the nineteenth century or early twentieth century (think Gilbert and Sullivan or Offenbach). This does not in any way diminish the virtuosity of the clarinet part, which is very ebullient and jaunty. Weber sheds a small spotlight on the strings by giving them short ensemble sections that are comical in their attempts at being super serious, perhaps poking fun at the Classical style. The clarinet brings the quintet home with a series of exciting and elaborate scalar runs.

Nicholas Alexander Brown
Music Specialist
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12 John Hamilton Warrack, *Carl Maria von Weber*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968, 160.

About the Artists

Recognized for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices, over the past two decades the **Pacifica Quartet** has gained international stature as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. The Pacifica tours extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia, performing regularly in the world's major concert halls. Named the quartet-in-residence at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music in March 2012, the Pacifica was also the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009-2012)—a position that has otherwise been held only by the Guarneri String Quartet—and received the 2009 GRAMMY Award for Best Chamber Music Performance.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002 the ensemble was honored with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and the appointment to Lincoln Center's CMS (Chamber Music Society) Two program, and in 2006 was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, becoming only the second chamber ensemble so honored in the grant's long history. Also in 2006 the quartet was featured on the cover of *Gramophone* and heralded as one of "five new quartets you should know about," the only American quartet to make the list. And in 2009, the quartet was named "Ensemble of the Year" by *Musical America*. Highlights of the 2016-2017 season include a return performance at New York's famed 92nd Street Y; the culmination of a two-season residency at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston; tours with Johannes Moser, Jörg Widmann, and Marc-André Hamelin; the debut of a new cello quintet by the acclaimed composer Julia Wolfe; and return visits to major series in Pittsburgh, Detroit, St. Paul and Portland.

The Pacifica Quartet has carved a niche for itself as the preeminent interpreter of string quartet cycles, harnessing the group's singular focus and incredible stamina to portray each composer's evolution, often over the course of just a few days. Having given highly acclaimed performances of the complete Carter cycle in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Houston; the Mendelssohn cycle in Napa, Australia, New York, and Pittsburgh; and the Beethoven cycle in New York, Denver, St. Paul, Chicago, Napa, and Tokyo (in an unprecedented presentation of five concerts in three days at Suntory Hall), the quartet presented the monumental Shostakovich cycle in Chicago and New York during the 2010-2011 season and in Montreal and at London's Wigmore Hall in the 2011-2012 season.

An ardent advocate of contemporary music, the Pacifica Quartet commissions and performs many new works, including those by Keeril Makan during the 2012-2013 season and Shulamit Ran, in partnership with the Music Accord consortium, London's Wigmore Hall, and Tokyo's Suntory Hall, during the 2014-2015 season. The work—entitled *Glitter, Doom, Shards, Memory*—had its New York debut as part of the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center series. In 2008 the quartet released its GRAMMY Award-winning recording of Carter's quartets nos. 1 and 5 on the

Naxos label; the 2009 release of quartets nos. 2, 3, and 4 completed the two-CD set. Cedille Records recently released the third of four volumes comprising the entire Shostakovich cycle, along with other contemporary Soviet works, to rave reviews: “The playing is nothing short of phenomenal.” (*The Daily Telegraph*) Recent projects include recording Leo Ornstein’s rarely-heard piano quintet with Marc-André Hamelin with an accompanying tour, the Brahms piano quintet with the legendary pianist Menahem Pressler, and the Brahms and Mozart clarinet quintets with the New York Philharmonic’s principal clarinetist, Anthony McGill.

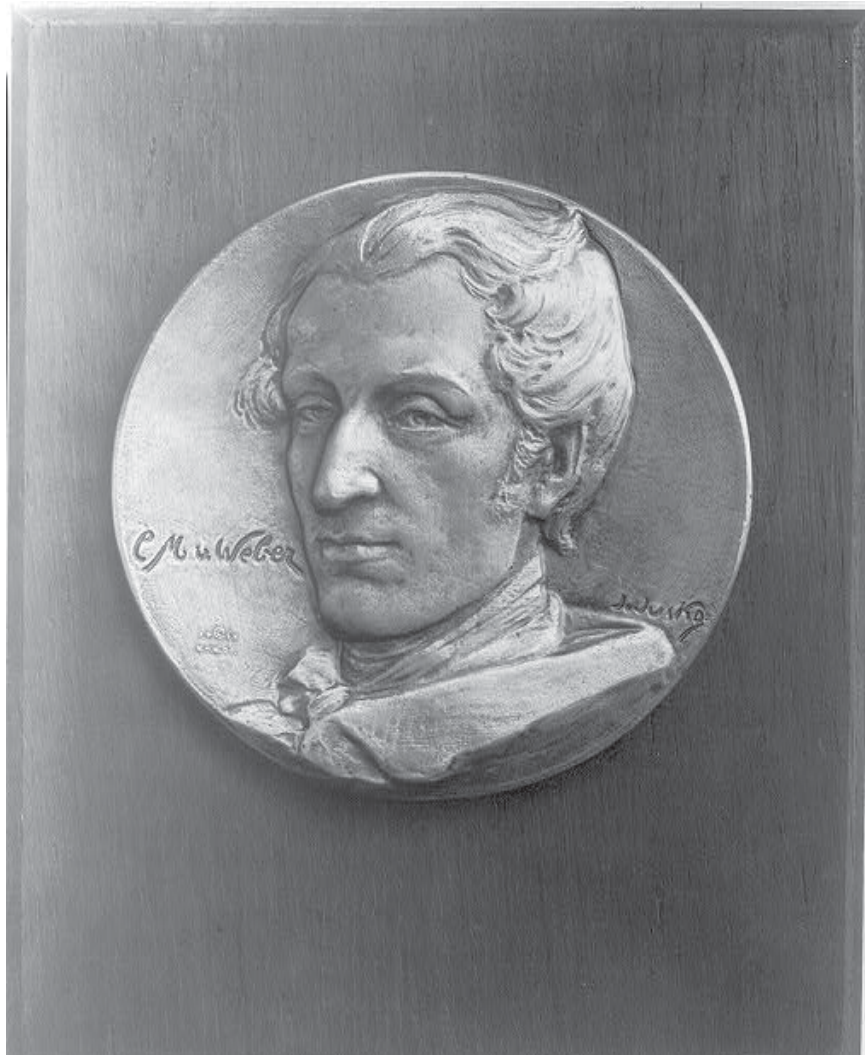
The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Bloomington, Indiana, where they serve as quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members at the Jacobs School of Music. Prior to their appointment, the quartet members were on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana from 2003 to 2012. For more information on the Quartet, please visit www.pacificaquartet.com.



Clarinetist, composer and conductor **Jörg Widmann** is one of the most versatile and intriguing artists of his generation. The 2016-2017 season will see him appear as soloist with orchestras such as Mariinsky Orchestra, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Bamberger Symphoniker and London Chamber Orchestra. In July 2017 he will be a featured soloist on tour with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Kent Nagano. On January 13, 2017 Hamburg’s new Elbphilharmonie opened with the premiere of a new oratorio (*Arche*) by Widmann, who is being featured with an artist portrait during the hall’s first season. He will perform a solo recital, a duo recital with Mitsuko Uchida, and a concert with the ensemble Resonanz.

Additional residencies include Brussel’s BOZAR where Widmann will be featured as soloist with the Orchestre National Belgique under Xian Zhang, the Mariinsky Orchestra under Valery Gergiev and in a play-direct programme with the Irish Chamber Orchestra. He also gives two recitals during this residency. As a composer he is featured in two concerts with Ensemble Modern and the Orchestre National Belgique. As the Munich Chamber Orchestra’s artist in focus he will perform a play-direct program, and his compositions will be performed in a portrait concerto. Chamber music performances in the 2016-2017 season include duo recitals with Mitsuko Uchida—including the premiere of a new work for Uchida at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall and Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie, a U.S. recital tour with the Pacifica Quartet and recitals with the Hagen Quartet that feature the premiere of his new clarinet quintet at Madrid’s Auditorio Nacional.

Widmann’s regular chamber music partners include renowned soloists and ensembles such as Sir Andrés Schiff, Daniel Barenboim, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Mitsuko Uchida, and the Hagen and Arcanto quartets. Continuing his intense activities as conductor, Widmann performs this season with the Kammerphilharmonie Potsdam and the Irish Chamber Orchestra, for which he serves as principal conductor.



Carl Maria von Weber, head portrait, facing left

c.1913, Photo of medallion by J. Juska

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