

**Brooklyn Rider
BIG ARTS
February 12, 2026**

Brooklyn Rider
Johnny Gandelsman, violin
Colin Jacobsen, violin
Nicholas Cords, viola
Michael Nicolas, cello

String Quartet in F minor, Op. 20, No. 5..... Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
Allegro moderato
Menuetto
Adagio
Finale: Fuga a due Soggetti
Duration: 24 minutes

String Quartet No. 3..... Don Byron (b. 1958)
I.
II. Russian March
III.
Duration: 10 minutes

Our Children Speak English and Spanish Angélica Negrón (b. 1981)
Duration: 8 minutes

The Times They Are a-Changin'..... Bob Dylan (b. 1941)
Arr. Colin Jacobsen
Duration: 3 minutes

~~~~~intermission~~~~~

String Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3, "Razumovsky" Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)  
Andante con moto – Allegro vivace  
Andante con moto quasi Allegretto  
Menuetto: Grazioso –  
Allegro molto  
Duration: 32 minutes

## Notes on the Program by Dr. Richard E. Rodda

### String Quartet in F minor, Op. 20, No. 5 Joseph Haydn

Born March 31, 1732 in Rohrau, Lower Austria.

Died May 31, 1809 in Vienna.

*Composed in 1772.*

The six works of Op. 20, composed in 1772, were known to Haydn's contemporaries as the "Sun" Quartets because the cover of their first published edition (1774) was emblazoned with a drawing of the rising sun. The sobriquet was just as appropriate for musical reasons, since these were really the earliest quartets in which Haydn's full genius in the form dawned. The Op. 20 Quartets are remarkable for the manner in which all four of the instrumental voices participate fully in the musical conversation, a distinct stylistic advance over the Rococo *divertimento*, in which the violins largely played their melodies above the discrete background of the lower strings. Haydn's new musical democracy is confirmed by the contrapuntal nature of all the movements in Op. 20, especially the finales, four of which use fugal procedures.

Rosemary Hughes wrote that the F minor Quartet (Op. 20, No. 5) "shows clearly how Haydn's newly found grasp of both texture and structure are placed at the service of emotion." The emotion at the outset, established by the first violin's anxious flourishes above a pulsing accompaniment, is troubled and intense. The music brightens, and the main theme is heard again in a new key. A more cheerful subject is mooted, but it is quickly drawn into the movement's pervading apprehensive mood. The principal theme is worked out in the development and further elaborated in the recapitulation. The remainder of the thematic material is recast in the dark home tonality before the movement closes with a passionate coda.

The restless emotion of the *Menuetto* creates an expressive tension with the simple structure and buoyant rhythms of the old dance form; a sweet-natured central trio provides an expressive foil. The *Adagio*, with its tender lyricism and gently rocking *siciliano* rhythms, offers a respite from the Quartet's turbulence. It is decorous in nature and sonatina in form (sonata without a development section), but with enough accumulating filigree in the first violin to mimic a set of free variations. The finale, often cited as one of Haydn's most masterful fugues, is based on two subjects: a slow-moving one with large-interval jumps reminiscent of *And With His Stripes* from Handel's *Messiah*; and a quicker theme with much scalar motion. These motives are treated with such techniques as canon, inversion and retrograde, but these learned devices are never allowed to dilute the movement's powerful, unsettled emotions, which remain undiminished through the forceful closing chords.

### String Quartet No. 3 Don Byron

Born November 8, 1958 in New York City.

*Composed in 2025.*

*Premiered on September 14, 2025 at the Tippet Rise Art Center in Fishtail, Montana by Brooklyn Rider.*

Composer, clarinetist and saxophonist Don Byron has one of the most wide-ranging careers in American music today, having established credits in jazz, classical, hip-hop, funk, Latin, pop, Caribbean and even klezmer. Byron was immersed in music from childhood in New York City – his mother was a pianist and his father played bass in calypso bands and recordings of Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and other jazz greats at home; he learned about klezmer from his many Jewish neighbors in the South Bronx; he was exposed to the city's ballet, symphony and other live performances through school trips and his own curiosity; and he took up clarinet when his doctor suggested that playing a wind instrument might

relieve his asthma. As a teenager, Byron studied clarinet and saxophone with Juilliard faculty member Joe Allard, preparing him to major in clarinet and composition at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he also performed in the school's klezmer band and other ensembles, and made contacts with jazz students at the nearby Berklee College of Music. After graduating from NEC in 1984, Byron returned to New York and began playing with several of the city's jazz avant-gardists, quickly establishing himself as a talented and versatile musician. He made his first recordings in 1987, starting a discography that now includes more than seventy widely varied releases as leader, sideman and composer. Byron has also taught composition, improvisation, music history, clarinet and saxophone at Metropolitan State University of Denver, State University of New York at Albany, and MIT, and fulfilled commissions for concert compositions from the Kronos Quartet, Library of Congress, Carnegie Hall, Monterey Jazz Festival, Bang on a Can All Stars, ETHEL Quartet and others. Byron's honors include a Rome Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome, Guggenheim Fellowship, USA Prudential Fellowship, and Grammy Award nomination; in 2009, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Musical Composition for his *Seven Etudes for Piano*.

Byron's String Quartet No. 3 was commissioned for Brooklyn Rider's 20th anniversary by Carnegie Hall, the San Diego performance group Art of Elan, and Tippet Rise Art Center in Fishtail, Montana, where it was premiered on September 14, 2025.

*Our Children Speak English and Spanish*  
Angélica Negrón

Born in 1981 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

*Composed in 2025.*

*Premiered on September 14, 2025 at the Tippet Rise Music Festival in Fishtail, Montana by Brooklyn Rider.*

Angélica Negrón is gifted not just as a composer, but also as a singer, multi-instrumentalist, impresario, educator and scholar. Negrón, born in 1981 in Puerto Rico and now based in Brooklyn, composes, according to her web site, "for accordions, robotic instruments, toys and electronics as well as for chamber ensembles, orchestras, choir and film." She is also founder, singer and accordionist of the "tropical electro-acoustic dream-pop indie band" Balún and helped produce the group's dozen recordings, a Teaching Artist with the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers Program, and Lincoln Center Education, and co-author (with Noraliz Ruiz) of *Acopladitos* ("being together in complete harmony"), an illustrated Spanish-language immersion music album for young children. Negrón studied piano, violin and composition at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico before moving to New York, where she earned a master's degree in composition at New York University and a doctorate at CUNY as a student of Pulitzer Prize-winning Cuban-American composer, conductor and educator Tania León; her dissertation was on Meredith Monk, composer, performer, filmmaker, choreographer and National Medal of Arts winner. In 2024, Negrón became a Collider Fellow at Lincoln Center, a residency exploring how technology can enhance and deepen in-person performing arts experiences, and in 2025-2026 is a Guest Curator for the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella series, devoted to presenting "the leading edge of music."

Negrón's commissions include those for Yo-Yo Ma, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Kronos Quartet, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Sō Percussion, Dallas Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, New York Botanical Garden, Seattle Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Louisville Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic's "Project 19," which commissioned new works from nineteen female composers in honor of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920 granting women the right to vote. In addition to compositions for orchestra, large and small ensembles, soloists, vocalists and a dozen films, Negrón created operatic works for lip-sync drag-queen performers and chamber ensemble for National Sawdust (*Chimera*, 2019) and Philadelphia Opera (*The Island We Made*, 2021), which explore ideas of fantasy, illusion and the intricacies of identity.

Negrón wrote that *Our Children Speak English and Spanish*, co-commissioned by the Tippet Rise Music Festival in Fishtail, Montana, where it was premiered in September 2025 by Brooklyn Rider, "explores the complexities of Puerto Rican American citizenship, shaped by colonization, imperialism and racialization. Its title comes from a patriotic song sung by schoolchildren after the Pledge of Allegiance in the early 20th century. Following the U.S. takeover of Puerto Rico in 1898, American authorities sought to assimilate Puerto Ricans by imposing English-language education and American values. The piece also draws inspiration from Jack Delano's 1946 photograph *Pledging Allegiance to the Flag in a School in Puerto Rico*, which captures a young Puerto Rican girl holding the American flag."

*The Times They Are a-Changin'*  
Bob Dylan  
Arranged for string quartet by Colin Jacobsen

Born May 24, 1941 in Duluth, Minnesota

Composed in 1963.

"This was definitely a song with a purpose," Bob Dylan said of *The Times They Are a-Changin'*, written in September and October 1963, a period of profound social and cultural upheaval in America. "It was influenced," Dylan continued, "by the Irish and Scottish ballads *Come All Ye Bold Highway Men* and *Come All Ye Tender Hearted Maidens*. I wanted to write a big song, with short concise verses that piled up on each other in a hypnotic way. The civil rights movement and the folk music movement were pretty close for a while and allied together at that time." British critic Michael Gray, author of *The Bob Dylan Encyclopedia* and four other books on the artist, wrote that *The Times They Are a-Changin'* is "the archetypal protest song. Dylan's aim was to ride upon the unvoiced sentiment of a mass public — to give that inchoate sentiment an anthem and give its clamor an outlet. He succeeded, but the language of the song is nevertheless imprecisely and very generally directed." It is perhaps indicative of the time of its creation that Dylan first recorded *The Times They Are a-Changin'* on October 23-24, 1963 at Columbia Studios in New York. Less than a month later, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

String Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3, "Razumovsky"  
Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770 in Bonn.

Died March 26, 1827 in Vienna.

Composed in 1806.

Premiered in February 1807 in Vienna.

Count Andreas Kyrillovitch Razumovsky was one of the most prominent figures in Viennese society, politics and art at the turn of the 19th century. Born in 1752 to a singer at the Russian court, he ingratiated himself with a number of women of lofty station and entered the diplomatic corps at age 25. He was assigned to several European capitals, in which he made his reputation, according to one contemporary account, "less through his skill at diplomacy than through his lavish expenditure and his love affairs with ladies of the highest standing, not excluding the Queen of Naples." In 1788 in Vienna, Razumovsky married Elizabeth, Countess of Thun and sister of Prince Lichnowsky, one of Beethoven's most devoted patrons. Four years later, he was assigned as Russian ambassador to Vienna, whose sybaritic life style perfectly suited his personality. Razumovsky was also an accomplished violinist who indulged his interest in music by taking lessons from Haydn, playing in chamber concerts, and sponsoring the performance of works in his residence. In the spring of 1806, he took over from Prince Lichnowsky the patronage of the string quartet headed by Ignaz Schuppanzigh and commissioned Beethoven to write three new pieces that would be played in the grand palace he was building on the Danube Canal near the

Prater. In honor of (or, perhaps, at the request of) his Russian patron, Beethoven included in the first two quartets of Op. 59 traditional Russian themes.

The Razumovsky Quartet No. 3, in C major, opens with an almost motionless introduction, influenced, perhaps, in its harmonic acerbity by the beginning of Mozart's "Dissonant" Quartet. The mood brightens with the presentation of the main theme by the unaccompanied first violin, and there ensues a powerful movement in fully developed sonata form. Dark currents of feeling pulse beneath the surface of the *Andante*: "A lament [that] searches many shadowy corners," wrote French composer and pedagogue Vincent d'Indy of this music; J.W.N. Sullivan thought that it presents "some forgotten and alien despair;" a "mystery of the primitive" concluded Joseph Kerman of it. The third movement, nominally a *Minuet*, is of a Romantic sensibility that leaves far behind the elegance and simple grace of its model. The finale is a whirlwind blend of rondo, sonata and fugue that demonstrates Beethoven's mastery of contrapuntal techniques and incomparable ability to drive a composition to its seemingly inevitable end.

©2026 Dr. Richard E. Rodda