

The Clarion Quartet



“ The thrill of discovery fills the new recording called *Breaking the Silence* by the Clarion Quartet, an American ensemble formed specifically to perform “Entartete Musik” that was suppressed by the Nazis. The musicians’ commitment, imagination, and high technical standards make an irresistible case for the greatness of the music they’re performing. ”

— Mark Kanny, *Classical Voice North America*

Bio

The Clarion Quartet restores to life music by composers whose works were once banned. The force of political oppression denied these compositions their rightful place in the chamber music repertoire, but now their rediscovery serves as a clarion call, giving voice to works of genius.

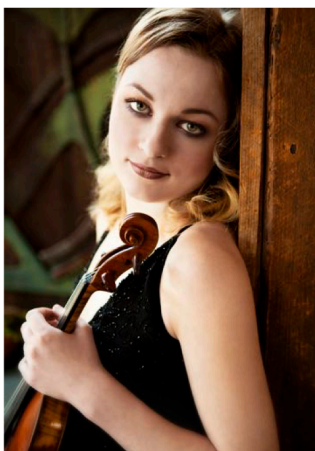
The Clarion Quartet binds artistic virtuosity with humanitarian purpose in presenting great works that are gradually entering the standard repertoire. The Clarion mission embraces three principles: offering performances for all audiences to hear and appreciate this music; providing educational presentations and master classes for emerging artists in conservatories; and advocating among professional musicians for suppressed works to be included in the canon of chamber music performed today.



The members of the Clarion Quartet, colleagues in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, have joined together to share their passion for chamber music and their particular interest in exploring Entartete Musik, works that were termed “degenerate” by the Nazis and banned during the years leading up to the Holocaust through the immediate aftermath of the World War II. The highlight of the Quartet’s 2016 debut season was a unique performance during an international tour with the Pittsburgh Symphony. The Clarion Quartet traveled to the former Theresienstadt (Terezín) concentration camp in the present-day Czech Republic, and they performed a program on this site to honor those composers whose creativity was stifled, who suffered abuses ranging from exile to execution. The Quartet seeks to immortalize the victims and their art through empathetic performances of relevant mid-twentieth century masterpieces.

With thanks to an Alumni Entrepreneur Grant from the Curtis Institute of Music as well as a grant from the Fine Foundation, the ensemble is turning its sights to the future with plans for many more performances and an ever-expanding repertoire. Through a yearning to bring justice to creative voices that have been silenced, the Clarion Quartet is dedicated to providing renewal, hope, and healing through its music and work.

INDIVIDUAL BIOS



Ukrainian violinist **MARTA KRECHKOVSKY** joined the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at the beginning of the 2014-2015 season. An experienced performer of orchestral and chamber music, she has been a substitute player with the New York Philharmonic and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and was invited to perform with World Orchestra for Peace as a tribute to Sir Georg Solti on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Krechkovsky has participated in numerous music festivals such as National Arts Center's Young Artists Programme led by Pinchas Zukerman and ChamberFest at the Juilliard School. She has served as concertmaster with Verbier Festival Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra in Switzerland and Pacific Music Festival in Japan. Krechkovsky was personally invited by conductor Valery Gergiev to participate in his Russian Easter Festival in Moscow, where she was a concertmaster. She was also invited by conductor Charles Dutoit to take part in the Miyazaki International Music Festival, held in Japan.

She became a prizewinner at Kocian International Violin Competition in Czech Republic at the age of 10 and was a top-prize winner at Canadian Music Competition in Montreal. As a soloist, Krechkovsky has appeared with numerous orchestras in her native Ukraine, including the Lviv State Symphony Orchestra. In Canada, she has performed with Canadian Chamber Academy, Toronto Sinfonietta, Oshawa-Durham Symphony and Canada Pops Orchestra as a top winner of the Toronto Music Competition. In 2013, she performed Bach's Double concerto with Joshua Bell and Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra during their Asia tour.

An active chamber musician, Krechkovsky has appeared in New York concert halls such as Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Bargemusic in Brooklyn, as well as Kitara Chamber Music Hall in Sapporo, Japan, and was featured on RAI Live Radio in Milan, Italy. A recent chamber music highlight was in August 2017, when she performed Mozart's Clarinet Quintet with Yo-Yo Ma at the Grand Teton Music Festival's Gala concert.

Krechkovsky began studying violin at the age of six with her father, Orest Krechkovsky. She received her earlier training at Young Artists Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, where she studied with Atis Bankas. She holds a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School where she studied with Glenn Dicterow and a professional studies degree in orchestral performance from Manhattan School of Music with Glenn Dicterow and Lisa Kim.

“I can’t remember a time when I was not playing the violin,” says PSO violinist **JENNIFER ORCHARD**. The statement reflects on her earliest memories of music, but it speaks to a larger truth about this gifted artist: Life and music have always been joined as she lives out her life passion every day. Orchard’s biography spans all of the rites of passage that come with attaining the status of a world-class musician- the childhood successes the rigors of conservatory training, and the progress of a professional career. Yet the conventional narrative does not capture the more complete picture of Orchard, who has a heartfelt love for the beauty of music and a sense of purpose as she brings it to life.



Orchard came to the violin as a young child and grew rapidly. Her early success led to admission into the Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School, where she honed the skills that would lead to a professional career. She speaks with reverence of her teachers, including famed violinists Szymon Goldberg, Robert Mann and Lorand Fenyves, who helped her achieve both virtuosity and artistry.

From her conservatory studies, Orchard entered her first professional position as a member of the Lark Quartet. She played with Lark for eight years, from 1993-2001 and while there began a recording career that continues to this day.

Now a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony first violin section, Orchard channels her artistic endeavors through many avenues. In 2015, she and three other PSO musicians formed the Clarion Quartet, which commits itself to performance and awareness of composers whose lives and careers were destroyed through the atrocities of WWII. These composers, deemed “degenerate” by the Nazi party have been neglected and largely forgotten since the war. The Clarion Quartet’s mission is to break the silence and restore this music to its rightful place on the stages of today. Their recording of three such composers came out in 2018 and is available on Naxos.

Orchard’s recording work also includes partnering with pianist Igor Kraevsky on the music of Paul Juon, a Russian composer whose works were also, though not through war, neglected and largely unknown. Orchard and Kraevsky’s work together has spanned fifteen plus years, performing the world premiere of Paul Juon’s Triple concerto in Moscow Conservatory Hall and producing many recordings including two world premieres entitled *Weisse Nächte* and *Bagatellen*.

Orchard expresses a sincere and humble gratitude for having had the opportunity in her life to play with great musicians and for appreciative audiences, which is the fulfillment of a life mission.

As for how she articulates that personal mission, she says without hesitation: “To always have passion about the music, and to never stop playing.”



TATJANA MEAD CHAMIS, Associate Principal Viola of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, joined the orchestra in 1993 under the direction of Lorin Maazel. She has appeared as soloist with the Porto Alegre and Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestras of Brazil, the Utah Symphony, the Curtis Institute Symphony Orchestra, and numerous times with the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Pittsburgh Symphony Chamber Orchestra. Nominated in 2017 for a Latin Grammy for her performance of the Sonata for Viola and Piano, dedicated to her by the Brazilian composer/pianist, André Mehmari, Ms. Chamis is finishing a project of recording music for Viola by Brazilian composers. Her performances as a recitalist and chamber musician have been broadcast on NPR and WQED in Pittsburgh.

Ms. Chamis began her studies in Frankfurt, Germany, on the violin, at the age of seven. At 15, she switched to the viola while studying with violist Mikhail Boguslavsky, in Salt Lake City, Utah. A 1994 graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, she studied with Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Violist, Joseph dePasquale.

In 2016, Ms. Chamis founded the Clarion Quartet with three other members of the Pittsburgh Symphony. The virtuoso ensemble is dedicated to bringing to light the works of composers silenced by oppression. She is a former member of the Caramoor Virtuosi and Rising Stars at the Caramoor International Music Festival in New York, and has performed at the Bravo Festival in Vail, Colorado, the Halcyon Festival, the Green Bay Music Festival with members of the Amelia Piano Trio, and the Tanglewood Music Festival.

A frequent guest lecturer, Ms. Chamis joined the Carnegie Mellon School of Music faculty in 2016.

BRONWYN BANERDT joined the cello section of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2014. She made her solo debut with Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2002 and has since appeared in concert throughout the United States, Europe, Russia, and southern Africa. Notable solo appearances include performances with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Houston Symphony, Albany Symphony, and the world premiere of *Poem for Cello & Orchestra* by Michael Kamen. At age 15 Ms. Banerdt was personally invited by the world-renowned composer John Rutter to perform the solo from his *Requiem* in Carnegie Hall. Ms. Banerdt was awarded Grand Prize at the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Bronislaw Kaper Awards, and she has also captured top prizes at the Houston Symphony Ima Hogg Competition and Kingsville Music Competition.



Equally passionate about chamber music and orchestral performance, Ms. Banerdt has co-founded two uniquely focused chamber music ensembles with other members of the Pittsburgh Symphony. The **Clarion Quartet** specializes in *Entartete Musik* — music written by oppressed composers — and seeks to bring light to artists whose legacies would be silenced. The **Pittsburgh Cello Quartet** offers an eclectic mix from classical to pop and rock in unique arrangements for four cellos. Ms. Banerdt has collaborated with renowned artists such as Kim Kashkashian and Mitsuko Uchida, and members of the Emerson, Guarneri, Juilliard, Borodin, and Orion string quartets. She has performed at numerous chamber music festivals including Marlboro Music and Music from Angel Fire. Before joining the PSO, Ms. Banerdt was a member of the prize-winning Trio Terzetto and performed as a substitute with many of the great orchestras of the world, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ms. Banerdt serves as Artist Lecturer in Chamber Music at Carnegie Mellon University.

A native of Los Angeles, Ms. Banerdt earned her Bachelor's Degree at age 19 from the USC Thornton School of Music, where she studied with Ronald Leonard. She subsequently studied at The Curtis Institute of Music with David Soyer and received her Master's Degree from The Juilliard School with Richard Aaron.

Ms. Banerdt plays a Montagnana model cello made by Mario Miralles in 1998.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CLARION QUARTET RELEASES ALBUM OF MUSIC BY SUPPRESSED COMPOSERS

Pittsburgh, PA, February 23, 2018 — The Clarion Quartet, comprised of members of the Pittsburgh Symphony, is excited to announce release of their debut album, *Breaking the Silence*.

Dedicated to championing the music of suppressed composers, the quartet was formed by violinists Jennifer Orchard and Marta Krechkovsky, violist Tatjana Mead Chamis, and cellist Bronwyn Banerdt with a mission to bring once-unknown works of music to their deserved place of prominence in the repertoire and give voice to unjustly silenced composers.

In May of 2016, the newly formed quartet took a short detour from the Pittsburgh Symphony's European tour to travel to Terezín, the site of the former Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt in the modern-day Czech Republic, where numerous artists such as Viktor Ullmann created works of unparalleled beauty while suffering unfathomable injustices. The quartet was joined by a large group of PSO musicians, staff, and board members, as well as Music Director Manfred Honeck. After touring the grounds of the camp, the quartet played an emotional concert on the original barrack's stage that included Viktor Ullmann's Third Quartet.

A crew of German videographers had been filming the symphony's tour and were present to document the Terezín concert. Recording engineer Nick Prokop, who headed the crew, was himself deeply touched by the event, and told the quartet of his personal interest to record the same program for his record label, TYE (Trust your Ears). Months later, the call came from Germany that he had secured a grant from BSCW to fund the recording project, and in the summer of 2017, Nick and his brother Clemens Prokop traveled to Pittsburgh to record the Clarion Quartet at Duquesne University. The result is this album.

The CD features three works by composers in different periods of oppression by the Third Reich:

Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942) *Five Pieces for String Quartet*

Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944) *String Quartet No. 3, op. 46*

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957) *String Quartet No. 3, op. 34*

Erwin Schulhoff wrote his Five Pieces for String Quartet in Vienna, where his career flourished until his work was labeled "degenerate" by the Nazis. He was arrested and eventually perished in the Wülzburg concentration camp. Viktor Ullmann wrote his Third String Quartet in the midst of the Holocaust, while he was imprisoned in Theresienstadt. He was executed in Auschwitz. Erich Korngold narrowly survived the war, having fled to the United States, where he became known for his film music. He vowed during exile not to write a single note of classical music while Hitler was in power, and his Third String Quartet was his first such composition since before the war. To this day, his impact on the world of film has eclipsed his contributions to the world of art music. The last short work on the album is piece by David Zehavi arranged by a living composer, Boris Pigovat, based on the Israeli poem *A Walk to Cesarea* by Holocaust victim Hannah Senesh.

The mission of the Clarion Quartet is restoring to life music by composers whose works were once banned. The forces of political oppression denied these compositions their rightful place in the chamber music repertoire, but now, their rediscovery serves as a clarion call, giving voice to works of genius.

Breaking the Silence is available for purchase from Naxos Direct and for direct streaming on iTunes and Amazon Music.

A Quartet Restores Banned Repertoire To Rightful Place

DATE POSTED: APRIL 27, 2018



The Clarion Quartet – from left, Marta Krechkovsky, violin; Jennifer Orchard, violin; Bronwyn Banerdt, cello; Tatjana Mead Chamis, viola – performed at the Terezyn concentration camp May 22, 2016. (Photo: Joyce DeFrancesco)

Breaking the Silence, Clarion Quartet, Music of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Erwin Schulhoff, Viktor Ullman, and others, [Klanglogo KL1415](#). Total time: 56:00

By Mark Kanny

DIGITAL REVIEW — The thrill of discovery fills the new recording called *Breaking the Silence* by the [Clarion Quartet](#), an American ensemble formed specifically to perform “[Entartete Musik](#)” that was suppressed by the Nazis. The musicians’ commitment, imagination, and high technical standards make an irresistible case for the greatness of the music they’re performing.

Classical Voice North America: A Quartet Restores Banned Repertoire To Rightful Place

The players, all members of the [Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra](#), formed their ensemble intending to play a single benefit concert. But they were so inspired by the music they were learning and the joy they found in making music together that they decided to remain together to explore and promote “Entartete,” or so-called “degenerate,” music. The recording resulted from the quartet’s performance on [May 22, 2016](#), at [Terezhn](#), the Czech concentration camp where one of the pieces was written. The quartet members believe that adding their voices to the work of scholars, other performers, and music lovers will contribute to bringing this repertoire to its rightful place in musical life.



The Clarion Quartet was formed in September 2015 to present a March 2016 benefit concert for [Pittsburgh’s Young Israel congregation](#) honoring 50 years of service by its rabbi and his wife. [Tatjana Mead Chamis](#), the Pittsburgh Symphony’s associate principal viola, was contacted by a prominent physician who belongs to the congregation; he provided her with books and CDs about Entartete music. Excited by the quality of the compositions, Chamis invited her colleagues [Jennifer Orchard](#) and [Marta Krechkovsky](#), violins, and [Bronwyn Banerdt](#), cello, to join her. Orchard was a member of the [Lark Quartet](#) for eight years in the 1990s before joining the Pittsburgh Symphony, and alternates on first violin with Krechkovsky.



*Viktor Ullmann’s
String Quartet No.
3 was written at
Terezhn. (OREL)*

When Chamis saw that the schedule for the Pittsburgh Symphony’s May 2016 European tour included a concert in Dresden, she realized it was a short distance from Terezhn (Theresienstadt in German). Knowing that performing there would increase their understanding of Entartete music, Chamis approached music director [Manfred Honeck](#), who enthusiastically backed the plan to perform at Terezhn. He shares the quartet’s dedication and commitment to this repertoire. In Pittsburgh and elsewhere, Honeck has championed the music of [Walter Braunfels](#), who converted from Judaism to Catholicism but was sacked from a major teaching post by the Nazis in 1933. Honeck also has made an [inspired recording](#) in Stuttgart of Braunfel’s Grand Mass for Decca.

Classical Voice North America: A Quartet Restores Banned Repertoire To Rightful Place

During World War II, prisoners were sent from Terezín to death camps. But because so many of those rounded up were musicians and other artists, a surprisingly rich cultural life grew up amid the squalor. Later in the war, the Nazis used Terezín as a propaganda tool, [fooling a Red Cross inspection team](#) in 1944. They even made a film that includes children prisoners performing Hans Krása's opera *Brundibar*. An excerpt with sound can be found [here](#).

The Clarion Quartet concert was performed on that same stage seen in the *Brundibar* film. The program comprised [Erwin Schulhoff's](#) Five Pieces for String Quartet, [Viktor Ullmann's](#) String Quartet No. 3, written at Terezín, and *A Walk to Caesarea*, based on [Hannah Szenes'](#) short poem "Eli, Eli," which was set to music by [David Zehavi](#) and arranged for string quartet by Russian-Israeli composer [Boris Pigovat](#). Szenes escaped Europe but went back to fight the Nazis and was captured, tortured, and executed.

"It was one of the most meaningful concerts in my career," said violist Chamis in an interview. "Then when we left to get on a bus and go back to Dresden and to normal life and our careers, I was struck by the thought that they were not able to do so. That was really the moment when I better understood their fates. That feeling has never left me."

The quartet's first CD is on a German label because the videographers recording the Pittsburgh Symphony in Berlin, Dresden, and Frankfurt, [Nick and Clemens Prokop](#), also went to Terezín. The brothers own the [Klanglogo](#) label.

Nick Prokop was so impressed by the music and the musicians that he decided he wanted to make a CD with them. Normally, musicians approach him about putting out a recording and arrange for financing or for pay for it themselves. In this case, he was so moved by what he saw and heard that he told Chamis he would arrange the funding and secured a grant from the [BSCW Foundation](#) in Munich. The recording was made at [Duquesne University](#) in Pittsburgh in July 2017.

Breaking the Silence includes the three works performed at Terezín plus [Erich Wolfgang Korngold's](#) String Quartet No. 3.

Schulhoff's Five Pieces long predate the war, having been first performed in 1924. He died of tuberculosis in an internment camp in Bavaria in 1942. The Clarion performance is sharply characterized, fully expressing Schulhoff's pungent musical personality. The dance-based music is virtuosic and witty.

Classical Voice North America: A Quartet Restores Banned Repertoire To Rightful Place

Ullmann's Third Quartet is the most memorable piece on the disc, a kind of musical testimony from inside a concentration camp. Chamis likes to quote Ullmann's comment: "By no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon. Our endeavor with respect to the arts was commensurate with our will to live."

The Clarion performance is both poised and powerful. The wonderfully harmonized lyricism of the opening Allegro moderato is played with gratifying nuances of feeling that are brutally pushed aside in the second section. This performance presents the despair of the fugal Largo with precise definition. The strength with which the Clarion plays the once gentle music of the first section when Ullmann brings it back in the agitated final section fulfills Ullmann's thought-provoking concept. Throughout the performance, the musicians use *portamento* masterfully.



*Clarion Quartet members are all in the Pittsburgh Symphony.
(Todd Rosenburg)*

Korngold's life was also upended by the Nazis, though not fatally. One of music's most astonishing prodigies, Korngold escaped Europe and [enjoyed the greatest success writing film scores in Hollywood](#). He only resumed writing concert music when it was clear that Hitler would fall. Sadly, a return to his native Vienna after the war did not go well.

Korngold's underestimated Third Quartet, completed in 1945, shows the musical brilliance that led Mahler to call him a genius when he was 11. The Clarion's exquisitely voiced performance does the piece proud, with a winning feeling of moment-to-moment spontaneity and emotionally focused tonal nuance.

The Clarion Quartet has already received several grants to continue its work. Among the repertoire it is preparing are quartets by [Mieczyslaw Weinberg](#), a Polish Jew who escaped to the Soviet Union but lost most of his family to the Holocaust.

"We're trying to get a set of parts for the 17 quartets of Weinberg for Curtis," said Chamis, who, along with Orchard and Banerdt, is an alum of the [Curtis Institute of Music](#). "He was accepted to Curtis but never got to go there. We want his music to be as readily available for students as the music of Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms."

Mark Kanny was classical music critic of the Pittsburgh Tribune Review, 1999-2016, and previously wrote for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, New York Times, and other publications.