

# EMERSON STRING QUARTET



Friday, April 21, 2023 7:30 pm

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# EMERSON STRING QUARTET

EUGENE DRUCKER, violin LAWRENCE DUTTON, viola

PHILIP SETZER, violin PAUL WATKINS, cello

Friday, April 21, 2023, at 7:30 pm Hancher Auditorium, the University of Iowa

### **PROGRAM**

Felix MENDELSSOHN String Quartet No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 12

Adagio non troppo – Allegro non tardante Canzonetta: Allegretto

Andante espressivo Molto allegro e vivace

Johannes BRAHMS String Quartet No. 3 in B-flat Major, Op. 67

Vivace Andante

Agitato (Allegretto non troppo)

Poco allegretto con variazioni — Doppio movimento

INTERMISSION

Antonín DVOŘÁK String Quartet No. 14 in A-flat Major, Op. 105

Adagio ma non troppo Molto vivace Lento e molto cantabile

Allegro non tanto

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### **EMERSON STRING QUARTET**

The Emerson String Quartet will have its final season of concerts in 2022–23, disbanding after more than four decades as one of the world's premier chamber music ensembles. "With musicians like this," wrote a reviewer for *The Times* (London), "there must be some hope for humanity." The Quartet has made more than 30 acclaimed recordings, and has been honored with nine Grammys (including two for Best Classical Album), three Gramophone Awards, the Avery Fisher Prize, and *Musical America*'s "Ensemble of the Year" award. As part of their larger mission to keep the string quartet form alive and relevant, they have commissioned and premiered works from some of today's most esteemed composers, and have partnered in performance with leading soloists such as Renée Fleming, Barbara Hannigan, Evgeny Kissin, Emanuel Ax, Mstislav Rostropovich, Yefim Bronfman, James Galway, Edgar Meyer, Menahem Pressler, Leon Fleisher, André Previn, and Isaac Stern. to name a few.

In its final season, the Quartet will give farewell performances across North America and Europe, including San Francisco's Herbst Theater, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, Vienna's Musikverein, Prague's Rudolfinum, London's Southbank Centre for the completion of its acclaimed cycle of Shostakovich quartets, and more, before coming home to New York City for its final series there with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, in a trio of programs entitled *Emerson Dimensions* where the Quartet will perform some of its most storied repertoire. They will give several performances of André Previn's *Penelope* with Renée Fleming and Uma Thurman, including at the Los Angeles Opera, and they will appear at Carnegie Hall with Evgeny Kissin to perform the Dvořák Quintet as part of a benefit concert for the Andrei Sakharov Foundation. The final performance as the Emerson String Quartet will take place in October 2023 in New York City, and will be filmed for a planned documentary by filmmaker Tristan Cook.

The Quartet's extensive discography includes the complete string quartets of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bartók, Webern, and Shostakovich, as well as multi-CD sets of the major works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Dvořák. In its final season, the Quartet will record Schoenberg's Second Quartet with Barbara Hannigan for release in 2023, with the sessions video documented by Mathieu Amalric for a short film. In January 2023, Deutsche Grammophon reissued its box set of the Emerson Complete Recordings on the label, with two new additions. In October 2020, the group released a recording of Schumann's three string quartets for the Pentatone label. In the preceding year, the Quartet joined forces with Grammy-winning pianist Evgeny Kissin to release a collaborative album for Deutsche Grammophon, recorded live at a sold-out Carnegie Hall concert in 2018.

Formed in 1976 and based in New York City, the Emerson String Quartet was one of the first quartets whose violinists alternate in the first violin position. The Quartet, which takes its name from the American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, balances busy performing careers with a commitment to teaching, and serves as Quartet-in-Residence at Stony Brook University. In 2013, cellist Paul Watkins—a distinguished soloist, award-wining conductor, and devoted chamber musician—joined the original members of the Quartet to form today's group.



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In the spring of 2016, the State University of New York awarded full-time Stony Brook faculty members Philip Setzer and Lawrence Dutton the status of Distinguished Professor, and conferred the title of Honorary Distinguished Professor on part-time faculty members Eugene Drucker and Paul Watkins. The Quartet's members also hold honorary doctorates from Middlebury College, the College of Wooster, Bard College, and the University of Hartford. In January of 2015, the Quartet received the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award, Chamber Music America's highest honor, in recognition of its significant and lasting contribution to the chamber music field.

### PAUL WATKINS, cello

Acclaimed for his inspirational performances and eloquent musicianship, Paul Watkins enjoys a distinguished career as concerto soloist, chamber musician, and conductor. Born in 1970, he studied with William Pleeth, Melissa Phelps, and Johannes Goritzki, and at the age of 20 was appointed Principal Cellist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. During his solo career he has collaborated with world-renowned conductors including Sakari Oramo, Gianandrea Noseda, Sir Mark Elder, Andris Nelsons, Sir Andrew Davis, and Sir Charles Mackerras. He performs regularly with all the major British orchestras and others further afield, including with the Norwegian Radio, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony, and Queensland



Photo: Jürgen Frank

orchestras. He has also made eight concerto appearances at the BBC Proms, most recently with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in the world premiere of the cello concerto composed for him by his brother, Huw Watkins, and premiered (and was the dedicatee of) Mark-Anthony Turnage's cello concerto. Highlights of recent seasons include concerto appearances with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, and the BBC Symphony under Semyon Bychkov, a tour with the European Union Youth Orchestra under the baton of Bernard Haitink, and his U.S. concerto debut with the Colorado Symphony. A dedicated chamber musician. Watkins was a member of the Nash Ensemble from 1997 to 2013, and joined the Emerson String Quartet in May 2013. He is a regular guest artist at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York and Music@Menlo, and in 2014 he was appointed Artistic Director of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival in Detroit. Watkins also maintains a busy career as a conductor and, since winning the 2002 Leeds Conducting Competition, has conducted all the major British orchestras. Further afield he has conducted the Royal Flemish Philharmonic, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Praque Symphony, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Tampere Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic, and the Melbourne Symphony, Queensland and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony orchestras. Paul Watkins is an exclusive recording artist with Chandos Records and his recent releases include Britten's Cello Symphony, the Delius, Elgar, Lutoslawski and Walton cello concertos, and discs of British and American music for cello and

piano with Huw Watkins. His first recording as a conductor, of the Berg and Britten violin concertos with Daniel Hope, received a Grammy nomination.

Cello: Domenico Montagnana and Matteo Goffriller in Venice, c.1730.

### **EUGENE DRUCKER, violin**

Violinist Eugene Drucker, a founding member of the Emerson String Quartet in 1976, is also an active soloist. He has appeared with the orchestras of Montreal, Brussels, Antwerp, Liege, Hartford, Richmond, Omaha, Jerusalem, and the Rhineland-Palatinate, as well as with the American Symphony Orchestra, the Aspen Chamber Symphony, and the Las Vegas Philharmonic. A graduate of Columbia University and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Oscar Shumsky, Mr. Drucker was concertmaster of the Juilliard Orchestra, with which he appeared as soloist several times. He made his New York debut as a Concert Artists Guild winner in the fall of 1976, after having won prizes at the Montreal Competition and the



Photo: Jürgen Frank

Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. Mr. Drucker has recorded the complete unaccompanied works of Bach for Parnassus Records and the complete sonatas and duos of Bartók for Biddulph Recordings.

Since 2017, Eugene Drucker has been the Music Director of Berkshire Bach Society's "Bach at New Year's" concerts.

With the Emerson String Quartet, Eugene Drucker plays about 70 concerts per year in North America, Europe, and Asia. The Quartet's discography features a repertoire embracing the entire history of the string quartet from Haydn to contemporary works and has been rewarded with nine Grammys and three *Gramophone Magazine* Awards.

His first novel, *The Savior*, was published by Simon & Schuster in 2007 and appeared in a German translation called *Wintersonate*. A second novel, *Yearning*, was published in the fall of 2021.

Mr. Drucker's compositional debut, a setting of four sonnets by Shakespeare, was premiered by baritone Andrew Nolen and the Escher String Quartet at Stony Brook in 2008; the songs have appeared as part of a two-CD release called Stony Brook Soundings, issued by Bridge Recordings in the spring of 2010. Subsequent works include Series of Twelve (a suite for string quartet, scheduled for several performances by the Escher Quartet this season); Madness and the Death of Ophelia, a musical adaptation of four scenes from Hamlet; and two song cycles based on the poetry of Denise Levertov, for high voice and strings.

Violins: Antonius Stradivarius (Cremona, 1686), Ryan Soltis (Idaho, 2015).

### PHILIP SETZER, violin

Violinist Philip Setzer, a founding member of the Emerson String Quartet, was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and began studying violin at the age of five with his parents, both former violinists in the Cleveland Orchestra. He continued his studies with Josef Gingold and Rafael Druian, and later at the Juilliard School with Oscar Shumsky. In 1967, Mr. Setzer won second prize at the Marjorie Merriweather Post Competition in Washington, DC, and in 1976 received a Bronze Medal at the Queen Elisabeth International Competition in Brussels. He has appeared with the National Symphony, Aspen Chamber Symphony (David Robertson, conductor), Memphis Symphony (Michael Stern), New Mexico and Puerto Rico symphonies (Guillermo



Photo: Jürgen Frank

Figueroa), Omaha and Anchorage symphonies (David Loebel) and on several occasions with the Cleveland Orchestra (Louis Lane). He has also participated in the Marlboro Music Festival. In April of 1989, Mr. Setzer premiered Paul Epstein's *Matinee Concerto*. This piece, dedicated to and written for Mr. Setzer, has since been performed by him in Hartford, New York, Cleveland, Boston, and Aspen.

Currently serving as the Distinguished Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at SUNY Stony Brook and Visiting Faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Mr. Setzer has given master classes at schools around the world, including The Curtis Institute, London's Royal Academy of Music, The San Francisco Conservatory, UCLA, and The Mannes School. Mr. Setzer is also the Director of the Shouse Institute, the teaching division of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival in Detroit. Mr. Setzer has also been a regular faculty member of the Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshops at Carnegie Hall and the Jerusalem Music Center, and his article about those workshops appeared in *The New York Times* on the occasion of Isaac Stern's 80th birthday celebration.

A versatile musician with innovative vision and dedication to keep the art form of the string quartet alive and relevant, Mr. Setzer is the mastermind behind the Emerson's two highly praised collaborative theater productions: *The Noise of Time*, premiered at Lincoln Center in 2001 and directed by Simon McBurney, is a multi-media production about the life of Shostakovich and has given about 60 performances throughout the world; in 2016, Mr. Setzer teamed up with writer-director James Glossman and co-created the Emerson's latest music/theater project, *Shostakovich and the Black Monk: A Russian Fantasy.* Premiered at the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, *Black Monk* has been performed at the Tanglewood Music Festival, Princeton University, Wolf Trap, Ravinia Festival, and Lotte Concert Hall in Seoul Korea. Mr. Setzer has also been touring and recording the piano trio repertoire with David Finckel and Wu Han.

Philip Setzer exclusively uses Thomastik Dominant and Vision strings.

Violin: Samuel Zygmuntowicz (Brooklyn, NY, 2011).





### LAWRENCE DUTTON, viola

Lawrence Dutton, violist of the nine-time Grammy winning Emerson String Quartet, has collaborated with many of the world's great performing artists, including Isaac Stern, Mstislav Rostropovich, Oscar Shumsky, Leon Fleisher, Sir Paul McCartney, Renée Fleming, Sir James Galway, André Previn, Menahem Pressler, Walter Trampler, Rudolf Firkušný, Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Lynn Harrell, Joseph Kalichstein, Misha Dichter, Jan DeGaetani, Edgar Meyer, Joshua Bell, and Elmar Oliveira, among others. He has also performed as guest artist with numerous chamber music ensembles such as the Juilliard and Guarneri quartets, the Beaux Arts Trio, and the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio. Since 2001, Mr. Dutton has been the Artistic Advisor of



Photo: Jürgen Frank

the Hoch Chamber Music Series, presenting three concerts at Concordia College in Bronxville, NY. He has been featured on three albums with the Grammy-winning iazz bassist John Patitucci on the Concord Jazz label and with the Beaux Arts Trio recorded the Shostakovich Piano Quintet, Op. 57, and the Fauré G-minor Piano Quartet, Op. 45, on the Philips label. His Aspen Music Festival recording with Jan DeGaetani for Bridge Records was nominated for a Grammy Award. Mr. Dutton has appeared as soloist with many American and European orchestras including those of Germany, Belgium, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Colorado, and Virginia, among others. He has also appeared as guest artist at the music festivals of Aspen, Santa Fe, Ravinia, La Jolla, the Heifetz Institute, the Great Mountains Festival in Korea, Chamber Music Northwest, the Rome Chamber Music Festival. and the Great Lakes Festival. With the late Isaac Stern he had collaborated in the International Chamber Music Encounters both at Carnegie Hall and in Jerusalem. Currently Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at Stony Brook University and at the Robert McDuffie School for Strings at Mercer University in Georgia, Mr. Dutton began violin studies with Margaret Pardee and on viola with Francis Tursi at the Eastman School. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at the Juilliard School, where he studied with Lillian Fuchs and has received honorary doctorates from Middlebury College in Vermont, The College of Wooster in Ohio, Bard College in New York, and The Hartt School of Music in Connecticut. Most recently, Mr. Dutton and the other members of the Emerson Quartet were presented the 2015 Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award from Chamber Music America and were recipients of the Avery Fisher Award in 2004. They were also inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame in 2010 and were Musical America's Ensemble of the year for 2000. Mr. Dutton resides in Bronxville, NY, with his wife, violinist Elizabeth Lim-Dutton, and their three sons Luke, Jesse, and Samuel.

Mr. Dutton exclusively uses Thomastik Spirocore strings.

Viola: Samuel Zygmuntowicz (Brooklyn, NY, 2003).

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# PROGRAM NOTES

### FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Born February 3, 1809; Hamburg, Germany Died November 4, 1847; Leipzig, Germany

### String Quartet No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 12, MWV R25

COMPOSED 1829

Felix Mendelssohn wrote the string quartet we now know as No. 1 during the first of many visits to Britain, dating it "September 14, 1829, London." The tour included a summertime visit to Scotland and Wales, the former providing the inspiration for his Hebrides overture and the Scottish symphony. Yet, even as Mendelssohn began work on the quartet, the romanticism of the setting was not reflected in its music. The 20-year-old composer turned away from the more extravagant ideals of romanticism and continued his deep reflection upon the string quartets of Beethoven and the solid virtues of the German classical school. As the quartet opens, there is a passing nod to Beethoven's Harp Quartet, Op. 74, almost as a valedictory tribute to the older composer



1829 portrait of Mendelssohn by J.W. Childe

who had only died a little over a year earlier. The hymn-like theme and the yearning and gentle melancholy of the subsequent *Allegro non tardante*, together with the whimsical, rather wispy folk-tune of the *Canzonetta*, belong in polite society, where emotion is contained, and passion restrained. Still, while the traditional framework of the opening movement is clearly drawn, subtle harmonic shifts find Mendelssohn quietly rethinking the tonal stability of the overall structure.

In his string quartets, Mendelssohn was an individualist intent on seeking his own solutions to the challenges of the medium. His A-minor quartet, written two years earlier (but misleadingly published as Op. 13), drew on the technique of cyclical form, where the various movements of a quartet are linked to one another. The coda of today's E-flat quartet also brings back themes from its opening movement and reworks them into a radiant conclusion. Furthermore, the individual character of each of the movements seems moderated to blend into an overall view of the quartet. For this reason, the slow movement takes on the role of an extended introduction to the finale. And what was traditionally the minuet or scherzo movement is, with Mendelssohn, a personal "character-piece"—in this case the lovely, understated *Canzonetta*. It remains Mendelssohn's most popular string quartet movement. So, although the spirit of his E-flat quartet is in many ways traditional, by adopting a creative approach to its structure, Mendelssohn arrived at a distinctly personal solution in which he avoids any feeling of fitting the music into a well-worn mold.



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## PROGRAM NOTES

### JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born May 7, 1833; Hamburg, Germany Died April 3, 1897; Vienna, Austria

### String Quartet No. 3 in B-flat Major, Op. 67

COMPOSED 1875

Brahms dedicated his three string quartets to medical men, saying that he felt a need for their presence because each quartet went through a difficult birth. His two earliest quartets, his Op. 51, had to wait till he was 40. He worked on them for some years and had already destroyed the sketches for some 20 earlier quartets that never saw the light of day. The B-flat quartet followed shortly after the two published quartets. He had just spent a stress-free summer in Ziegelhausen near Heidelberg, his retreat during the summer of 1875. "Life is only too happy," he wrote. The B-flat quartet reflects something of the rustic mood and is the only one in a major key. Paradoxically, however, it may reveal more substance and depth beneath its good-humored surface than the two earlier minor-key quartets.



1876 portrait of Brahms

With the fanfare-like hunting calls that open the first movement, Brahms echoes Mozart of the B-flat *Hunt* quartet and his own early String Sextet, Op. 18. But, almost immediately, a rhythmically driven play of twos against threes, a favorite device of the composer, comes to the fore and continues to underline the rest of the quartet. The folk-like spirit continues with a second theme, now nodding in the direction of Dvořák, while the full significance of the rhythmic interplay of these two themes becomes clear in the coda, when they are combined.

The slow movement opens with a gloriously romantic, soaring theme that has something of an improvisatory feel as it unfolds. The central section continues the free feeling and even includes two measures in five beats, rather than the prevailing four. The D-minor *Agitato* is elusive in character, having dark undertones to its passionate viola melodic writing. The viola remains unmuted, while the three muted strings add a shadowy, fleeting quality to the texture. The movement can leave a question mark and a feeling of uncertainty. The weight of the quartet falls on the finale, a series of eight variations, based on a theme of disarming simplicity and beauty. The way Brahms develops and intricately unfolds his variations is complex. And it seems appropriate that the music of the late Beethoven underlines the subtleties of Brahms's treatment of these variations. This, after all, is the last utterance Brahms permitted himself in the medium of the string quartet.

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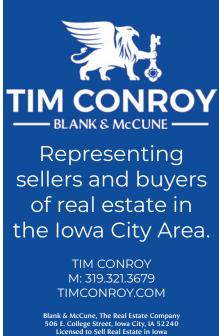
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## PROGRAM NOTES

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born September 8, 1841; Nelahozeves, Bohemia Died May 1, 1904; Prague, Bohemia

### Quartet No. 14, in A-flat Major, Op. 105, B. 193

COMPOSED 1895

Chamber music has an important place in Antonín Dvořák's catalog. He wrote some 30-plus chamber works, spanning 34 years, crowned by his fourteenth string quartet, in A-flat. Although many of the early quartets remained unpublished until long after his death, they developed a secure grounding in the medium. As a skilled viola player, Dvořák brings an insider's understanding to the potential of the medium. Indeed, Dvořák is one of the few late 19th century composers to write truly idiomatic quartets that don't endeavor to burst the seams of the medium. Two of his finest quartets, his last two, including Op. 105, were composed in less than two months. But the ease and pleasure with which he created them only came after a difficult period.



1890s portrait of Dvořák by Jan Vilímek

Behind him was a second visit to the United States. Artistically, it had been a success and he could look back with pride at the new Cello Concerto. But Dvořák had felt cut off from friends and relatives. He had been isolated from the Bohemian countryside and from a life that provided inspiration for his creativity. He returned to Bohemia in late April 1895. Once back in familiar surroundings, he fell back into the old routine that he had missed. For the next six months, however, the ink ran dry. Then the creative block began to disappear. Before long, Dvořák was able to write: "I work so easily, and everything goes ahead so well that I could not wish it better." His two late string quartets can be viewed as a summing up of all that he found good in the world. They are an affirmation of life and nature and reveal total mastery of the medium.

Dvořák had sketched the opening of the first movement of the A-flat quartet in his last week in New York, but then laid it aside. After an initial hint of foreboding, the mood is generally positive and full of well-being, though the dark clouds hovering over the opening do not altogether disappear. The scherzo is a *furiant*, a Bohemian folk dance, exuberantly propelled, with a trio section full of lilting, soaring melodies. The melodies draw from Dvořák's nationalist musical language, but somehow transcend time and place in one of the composer's most satisfying chamber music movements. Then comes a heartfelt slow movement, musing dreamily on a folksong-like melody. Its ending introduces a note of unease into an otherwise untroubled musical discourse. The finale starts cautiously and appears at first reluctant to abandon itself to unbridled joy. But Dvořák's happiness at being home seems to win through. The music is rich in musical ideas, sometimes nostalgic, more often upbeat and, ultimately, unambiguous in expression.

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Purchase yours at the Box Office, the Hancher Showcase, or the Stanley Café.

Only beverages purchased from the Stanley Café can be taken into the auditorium. The 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Season Cups can be used. Patrons should not bring beverages from home. Also, alcoholic beverages cannot be taken out of Hancher Auditorium in a Hancher Season Cup as this would violate "open container" restrictions.



CELEBRATING 5 1 YEARS 1972

SCHOOL OF MUSIC / DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS / DEPARTMENT OF DANCE / HANCHER AUDITORIUM / PERFORMING ARTS PRODUCTION UNIT

# PERFORMING ARTS

SELECT UPCOMING EVENTS

#### MUSIC

Contemporary Music from Israel

Concert I: Meitar Ensemble Tuesday, April 18, 7:30 p.m.

Concert II: Tedarim Ensemble Thursday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.

Concert III: Tedarim Ensemble Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.

Concert IV: UI Chamber Ensembles Saturday, April 22, 1:00 p.m.

Concert V: Meitar Ensemble with Electronics
Saturday, April 22, 3:00 p.m.

Concert VI: Meitar Ensemble Saturday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

Concert VII: UI Chamber Ensembles Sunday, April 23, 1:00 p.m.

### **Concert VIII:**

Center for New Music Ensemble Sunday, April 23, 3:00 p.m.

Concert IX: UI Large Ensembles Sunday, April 23, 7:30 p.m.

#### HANCHEE

Emerson String Quartet Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.

### THEATRE ARTS

Ugly Lies the Bone
By Lindsey Ferrentino
Directed by Mary Beth Easley
Friday-Saturday, April 21-22, 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 23, 2:00 p.m.
Wednesday-Saturday, April 26-29, 8:00 p.m.

#### HANCHER

**Dos Santos and Ratboys** Saturday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

#### DANCE

**BFA Concert** Thursday-Saturday, April 27-29, 8:00 p.m.

### **HANCHER**

**Buddy Guy Damn Right Farewell** Friday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.

### THEATRE ARTS

New Play Festival
Monday-Friday, May 1-5

### → LEARN MORE AT ARTS.UIOWA.EDU



Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact the sponsoring department or contact person listed in advance of the event.

# WE KNOW YOUR CANCER DOWN TO EVERY DETAIL.

Providing the best possible outcomes is in the DNA of our cancer center."

Every cancer is unique. That's why care from an NCI-designated cancer center matters for diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Here, your team of pathologists, nurses, surgeons, and more are all specialized in your specific cancer. We tailor a plan to your body, needs, and your exact condition, because every decision matters for your outcome. That's how we change lives at University of Iowa Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center.



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