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As a business major at the University of Cincinnati, I am overwhelmed by the talent of the College-Conservatory of Music performers and the vast array of performances that are offered by the college. As a University Honors student, I believe that embracing the offerings of CCM have helped me develop and become more open to the diversity of our school. I entered the Corbett Auditorium on March 1, 2016 in preparation for the performance of The Ariel Quartet. I noticed subtle interactions as many CCM concert-goers chatted with friends and colleagues before the show. A local celebrity was present – Wendy Yip, the first lady of the University of Cincinnati attended this concert! I chose to sit in the balcony, as I had never sat there before, and I felt like it would give me a better scope of the entire performance. There were over 250 audience members anxiously awaiting the start. As the clock struck 8:00 PM, four confident performers entered the stage – two males and two females comprise the integral parts of The Ariel Quartet. Alexandra Kazovsky and Gershon Gerchikov played the violin, Jan Gruning played the viola, and Amit Even-Tov was on the cello.

As they took their seats, the Quartet began with Joseph Haydn’s 30-minute “String Quartet in F Major, Op. 77, No.2.” Haydn, known as the "Father of the Symphony," wrote this piece in 1799 in Vienna, Austria. This piece has four parts – the *Allegro moderato*, *Menuetto: Presto, ma non troppo – Trio*, *Andante*, and *Finale: Vivace assai*. The violin was the first to play the carried-thru melody. As a patron, I felt the music go back and forth between each performer, and I was captivated as I each individual showed very sharp body movements, as if they were trying to keep up with the vivacious pace. In the second movement, the tempo began to slow, and it became more dance-like. During the softer portions, the audience could physically watch the musicians crouch closers to their instruments. The third movement was played very slowly, the slowest tempo that the audience has felt throughout this piece. But, the tempo of the finale picks back up the pace with a lively and vibrant conclusion. The enthusiastic crowd applauded heartily at the finale, and the Quartet returned to the stage for a second ovation.

For the next piece, the Quartet chose Béla Bartók’s “String Quartet No. 1, Op. 7.” Béla Bartók was a Hungarian composer who was influenced by Strauss, Debussy, and Brahms. This orchestral piece brought a contrast to the first offering of this performance. While it was a brilliantly performed piece, it gave the audience a darker and more desperate sensation. It began with the *Lento*, which was very sullen and gloomy. The work eventually increased the tempo and speed during the second and third movements, but the darkness remained. One of the most interesting parts of the piece was the cellist's various playing styles. At times, she would seemingly slap and pluck the cello strings, producing a dark, drum-like effect. Overall, it enhanced the work and brought originality to the piece. The audience was in awe of this work, and the patrons seemed to want more of the piece when the Quartet left the stage.

After a 20-minute intermission, the Quartet returned to the stage for their final piece of the evening – the “String Quartet, Op. 51, No. 2” written by Johannes Brahms. Brahms was raised in a poor family, but was exposed to the piano and Hungarian dance music at an early age. These early experiences with music influenced his compositions, as did the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. This musical piece was divided into four movements – *Allegro non troppo*, *Andante moderato*, *Quasi Minuetto, moderato*, and *Finale: Allegro non assai*. This was a very dramatic piece, as could be seen on the determined faces of the Quartet. Their passion and intensity could be seen as they moved with the rhythm and concentrated on their music sheets. After the performance, the Quartet received three rounds of applause and a standing ovation. The audience loved the work that The Ariel Quartet brought that evening! Overall, their performance was immaculate and flawless.