



# CLASSICAL UP CLOSE

Quartet performs concert in total darkness, trio performs works from new album

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

**T**he Liberty Theatre in Astoria is going dark Friday night, but for a good reason.

The Portland-based Pyxis Quartet uses the absolute lack of light as a blank canvas for its bold, spellbinding performance of George Friedrich Hass's "String Quartet No. 3 „In iij. Noct.”

“The darkness is the easel, if you will, for the piece,” violinist Ron Blessinger said. “When your ears are dilated by total darkness, you just listen in a different way.”

The concert by the Pyxis Quartet – a member ensemble of the 45th Parallel Universe ensemble – is one of three performing at the Liberty Friday-Sunday.

On Saturday evening, the Hermitage Piano Trio will perform a concert to celebrate and preview its debut

album, which was released in May. The following afternoon, Russian pianist Ilya Kazantsev, from the Hermitage Piano Trio, performs works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff in recital.

## ‘Total Lack of Light’

Hass’ 3rd String Quartet, published in 2001, is subtitled “In iij. Noct.” in reference to the Roman Catholic Tenebrae service conducted during Holy Week. Darkness, for both that religious ritual and the musical performance, becomes a key theme, evoking an allusion to the night before Jesus Christ’s Resurrection and complete disconnection from God – hence the piece’s categorization as spectral music.

“There are specters in the air, there are ghosts, there are dialogues in sound and color and noise,” Blessinger said. “It’s a different kind of music-making.”

## IF YOU GO

### PYXIS QUARTET

**When:** 7:30 p.m., Friday, June 21

**Where:** Liberty Theatre, 1203 Commercial St., Astoria

**Details:** \$35. Purchase tickets at: [libertyastoria.showare.com/](http://libertyastoria.showare.com/)

### HERMITAGE PIANO TRIO

**When:** 7:30 p.m., Saturday, June 22

**Where:** Liberty Theatre, 1203 Commercial St., Astoria

**Details:** \$35. Purchase tickets at: [libertyastoria.showare.com/](http://libertyastoria.showare.com/)

### ILYA KAZANTSEV PIANO RECITAL

**When:** 4 p.m., Sunday, June 23

**Where:** Liberty Theatre, 1203 Commercial St., Astoria

**Details:** \$35. Purchase tickets at: [libertyastoria.showare.com/](http://libertyastoria.showare.com/)