

# FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

## The American String Quartet

Peter Winograd, violin  
Laurie Carney, violin  
Daniel Avahalomov, viola  
David Geber, cello

3:00 PM, April 7, 2002  
Faye Spanos Concert Hall  
University of the Pacific  
Stockton, California



### Quartet in E-flat Major, K. 428

Allegro non troppo  
Andante con moto  
Menuetto: Allegro  
Allegro vivace

### Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)

### String Quartet No. 4 "Apparitions" (2001)

Rudolph's Dream  
Katrina and the Children  
Swan Song  
Last Tango at Teatro Colon  
Johnnie Brown

### Richard Danielpour

(b. 1956)

*—Intermission—*

### Quartet in c-sharp Minor, Op. 131

Adagio, ma non troppo e molto espressivo  
Allegro molto vivace  
Allegro moderato  
Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile  
Presto  
Adagio quasi un poco andante  
Allegro

### Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)



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## The American String Quartet

The American String Quartet has achieved a position of rare esteem in the world of chamber music. On annual tours to virtually every important concert hall in eight European countries and across North America, the Quartet has won critical acclaim for its presentations of the complete quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, Schoenberg, Bartok and Mozart, and for collaborations with a host of distinguished artists. In the 1998-1999 season, the American celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a tour that included concerts in all 50 states, a performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and two European tours.

Resident quartet at the Aspen Music Festival since 1974, the American also has ongoing series at Princeton University and the Orange County Performing Arts Center in California. The Quartet is credited with broadening public awareness and enjoyment of chamber music across North America through educational programs, seminars, broadcast performances, and published articles. It was one of the first ensembles to receive a National Arts Endowment grant for its activities on college campuses. The American's commitment to contemporary music has resulted in numerous commissions and awards, including three prize-winners at the Kennedy Center's Friedheim Awards, and, most recently, Richard Danielpour's Quartet No. 4.

The American has been Quartet-in-Residence at the Manhattan School of Music in New York since 1984, served as Resident Quartet at the Taos School of Music from 1979 to 1997, and was previously on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory. They have recently completed a 3-year visiting residency at the University of Michigan and have served as resident ensemble for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 1999, the American was invited to judge the first Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition.

The four musicians studied at the Juilliard School, where the Quartet was formed in 1974, winning the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award that same year.

## Program Notes

### *Mozart—Quartet in E-flat, K. 428*

Quartet parties were the favorite form of entertainment among the groups of intellectual families of bourgeois stock in Vienna. In 1783, at one of these, a party long planned by Mozart and in the presence of his visiting father, the last three of the Haydn quartets (Quartet in E-flat was the fourth) were played with Haydn on the first violin and Mozart on the viola. It was at these meetings with Haydn the deep friendship between them blossomed. Mozart dedicated the six quartets of the set to Haydn for as he said he had learned the art from Haydn. He wanted Haydn to admire him, as he did his older friend, and in his dedication, he stated that he had labored long and hard over the quartets, as corrections in the manuscripts reveal. Haydn responded by greatly pleasing Leopold Mozart in stating: "I declare to you before God as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer I know either personally or by hearsay; he has taste and moreover complete mastery of the art of composition."

The main theme of the first movement is presented in unison in the four instruments, begun with an octave leap. It then surprises with a sudden burst into dissonant harmony. A long trill on the first violin announces the arrival of the second theme, more soothingly melodic. The development reiterates the opening unison theme in the dominant key and then entertains with a soaring passage of triplets and scampering scales. One of the exposition's linking phrases is used for a little canon in the recapitulation.

The melodies of the *Andante con moto* are harmonized in a rich advanced chromatic harmony. In the second section, a coincidental anticipation of the love potion theme from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* haunts the music. A yearning quality combined with a certain sense of urgency is suggested by the use of suspensions—one instrument holding on to a note while the others change to a new harmony.

The minuet begins with a strident little motive suggestive of some of the Hungarian folk dance motives appearing in some of Haydn's works. The trio is smoother, rather melancholy, bringing

back the work's opening somber character.

The impish opening motif of the *Finale* introduces a movement Haydnesque in style, robust and vigorous. The form is a combination of rondo and sonata; variations of the themes in the rondo recapitulations taking the place of a development section. The attractive tunes, the alternation of loud and soft passages, the witty treatment, and the overall sturdiness show the influence of Haydn. But the forward-looking Mozart is evident in the surprising chromaticism amidst the buoyant, delicately strong playing.

### *Danielpour—String Quartet No. 4*

Danielpour has been termed "one of the most refreshing new old-timers" in music today. In the dialectic of musical tastes, he turns from the atonal and the minimalist schools, following in the line of American composers such as Copland, Stravinsky, Barber, Britten, and Bernstein. He represents a neo-romantic movement that uses the inherited traits of European music. Danielpour has been given commissions by major symphony orchestras and composers, including Yo-Yo Ma, who interpreted his Cello Concerto. Danielpour is not concerned with musical fashions, and believes originality springs from the individual's style. He is allied to those composers who wish to reunite concert music with its audience, with an emphasis on tonality, and on subjectivity. Danielpour's music includes what he calls "public" and "private" music; the former is loud, busy, declarative, and extroverted while the latter includes lush strings, chorales, and shimmering lyrical lines. A New Age spirituality can be found in his music. He claims inspiration from *A Course in Miracle*, a popular self-help book written by the psychiatrist Helen Schucman in the 1970's, which she claims was dictated by Jesus.

*Apparitions* was composed in December 2000, in Palm Beach, Florida. The composer grew up near this site and some of the stories of *Apparitions* are based there.

Rudolpho's Dream stems from Puccini's opera, *La Boheme*. Rudolpho dreams of Mimi returning from beyond the grave to join him. In *Katrina and the Children*, the entire family of Katrina Trask, who had died in the great Diphtheria Epidemic, is reunited in an old mansion. The evening turns into a ghostly ball. *Swan Song* is the story of the last days of Danielpour's grandmother, who began to speak after a long silence, saying her husband was present, waiting for her. She sang Persian songs to her dear departed, and loved ones felt they heard but one side of the love duet. The Teatro Conon was the famous theater in Buenos Aires. After World War II, audiences included both Nazi and Jewish refugees united by love of opera. A common saying in reminiscences of the past days has been, "When the Teatro is dark and closed, then the seething passions of these long-ago audiences continue their own sort of dance—endlessly." Johnnie Brown was the pet monkey, and favorite companion of a Florida architect, Mizner, who designed much of Palm Beach. The monkey has a gravestone reading "Johnnie Brown—The Human Monkey." This movement explores the abstract relationship of man and animal asking, "Who is the master?"

### ***Beethoven—Quartet in c-sharp Minor, Op. 131***

Opus 131 was the fourth in Beethoven's last set of quartets, which were his final works. He had finished his *Missa Solemnis* and the last performance of the *Ninth Symphony* and he was thinking of returning to the medium untouched in ten years. Prince Galizin, a wealthy Russian nobleman and cellist, offered a timely commission for three quartets, which were finished in 1825. Beethoven then started the c# minor quartet, which he considered his greatest work, and it, with the last two quartets, are considered his crowning achievement, compositions unmatched in music, in spiritual depth, power, and beauty. Beethoven began the c# minor quartet in November of 1825 and finished it in July 1826. Finishing opus 131 coincided with a crisis in Beethoven's personal life; his nephew Karl, on whom he had poured out years of attention and concern, but with mistaken parental tactics, attempted suicide. On returning to Vienna with Karl in an open wagon, Beethoven caught pneumonia, complications of which

ended his life the following year. He had, however, succeeded in securing a place for Karl in Baron Joseph von Stuterheim's regiment. The quartet was dedicated to the Baron. The initial public performance did not take place until 1835, long after Beethoven's death.

Sullivan, who wrote a text titled *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, stated that these Quartets contained "the profoundest and most valuable experiences that any artist has yet conveyed," finding in them a vision of life. He explained that at one point, Beethoven had opposed his creative energy to his destiny. Now he saw that his great creative force owed its existence to that destiny. To accept suffering as a gift was almost a mystical solution. Sullivan called the c# minor quartet the most mystical, the most serene, and the most unearthly of the quartets.

Beethoven made hundreds of pages of sketches for the quartet, which became a series of seven interconnected movements played without pause, creating a completely organic, well-integrated whole. The burden for projecting the underlying unity rests with the performers, who must maintain the proper relationships of tempo and mood for the work to flow smoothly. The large-scale rhythmic continuity is one aspect of the integrated network of relationships holding the seven movements together. He uses techniques of anticipation and quotation in which a series of musical possibilities is glimpsed or reviewed, and rediscovered in the finale.

The first movement is a slow fugue of impressive gravity, with a theme expressing a sublime melancholy. The use of dissonance contributes to the bleak atmosphere at the opening and to the expressive tension throughout. The fugue is followed by four episodes and a coda, in a continuing mood, both contemplative and serene. An octave jump on C# leads into the second movement which begins with an octave jump on D. This scherzo-like movement dispels the serenity of the great fugue with an outburst of life.

The third section is a short recitative transition leading to the *Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile* set of variations. The six freely innovative variations are a brilliant chain, with some of the variations undergoing a change of character. At the heart of the variations,

and of the entire quartet, is a hymn-like section, the sixth variation, *Adagio ma non troppo e semplice*. In the course of variations, an intrusive motif on the cello threatens to disrupt the texture, but it is repeated in varied form in the other instruments, followed by an elaborate cadenza for each of the four instruments.

The naively playful scherzo (*Presto*) features at one point a powerful fortissimo with an anapestic rhythm, then makes an allusion to the fugue subject, resolving the movement back to c# minor in double counterpoint.

A short *Adagio*, which is both gentle and sorrowful, leads to the finale, which contains allusions to the fugue with structural reinterpretation and provides a powerful coda. The fugue and the finale act as stern outer columns framing a fantastic range of diverse inner episodes, from the serious to the playful to the tragic.

—Notes by Catherine Roche

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