

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson, violin
Andrew Bulbrook, violin
Jonathan Moerschel, viola
Eric Byers, cello

2:30 PM, September 26, 2004

Faye Spanos Concert Hall

In cooperation with the Conservatory of Music
University of Pacific
Stockton, California



Program

String Quartet in G Major, Op. 76, No. 1 (Erdödy)

Allegro con spirito
Adagio sostenuto
Menuetto: Presto
Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Quartet No. 4 for Strings (c. 1928)

Allegro
Prestissimo, con sordino
Non troppo lento
Allegretto pizzicato
Allegro molto

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

—Intermission—

String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat Major, Op. 130

Adagio ma non troppo
Presto
Andante con moto, ma non troppo
Allegro assai
Cavatina
Große fuge

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)



The Calder Quartet appears by arrangement with MCM Artists, Nancy J. Christensen, Managing Director

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Calder Quartet

The Calder Quartet is establishing itself as one of the most dynamic young ensembles today. Formed at USC's Thornton School of Music in 1998, the Quartet has been featured at festivals in Sedona, Lake Tahoe, Ojai, Aspen, Laguna Beach, and Salida. Possessing a keen interest in the future relevance of classical music, the Calder has commissioned new works from young composers, conducted educational and outreach throughout the southwest US, and occupied the position of Associate Artists in Residence at the Colburn School for the Performing Arts for the 2003-04 season. The Quartet was a winner in the 2002 Coleman Competition. After a series of concerts in France, the Calder returned to Aspen's Advanced Quartet Studies Program, where they were featured on NPR's Performance Today and appeared in recital with renowned guitarist Sharon Isbin. The Calder Quartet takes its name from the American sculptor and mobile artist Alexander Calder, whose work prompted Sartre to write "his one aim is to create chords and cadences of unknown movements..."

Program Notes

Haydn—Quartet in G, Op. 76/1

Haydn composed fifteen quartets during the last period of his life, with the six quartets of Opus 76 written in 1797, a culmination and integration of his stylistic development. The nickname "Erdödy" was a result from their dedication to Count Erdödy. Geringer suggests the word "Excelsior" as a proper motto for these quartets for in them everything is condensed and intensified, the expression more direct and personal.

The quartet played an important role in Haydn's evolution as a composer. He composed possibly 83 quartets, the first when he was in his twenties and the last when he had passed his seventieth birthday. All are interesting and some are unquestioned masterpieces. No other genre occupied the composer for an equal length of time.

After a "Romantic" period in which his work showed north German influence, a dramatic sense, solidity and concentration, and the use of Austrian folk material, a period of intensification and deepening of

experience followed. 1771-82 was a period of Baroque techniques involving counterpoint and fugal style.

Haydn's Opus 20, the six *Sun* quartets published in 1772, was widely circulated and well known. Haydn therefore announced the next set, Opus 33, published in 1782, were written "in an entirely new and special style," a revolution in style which involved the creation of what could be termed classical counterpoint. This involved the relation between the principal melody or voice and the homophonic accompaniment which had characterized the rococo or 'gallant' style. To conceive the accompaniment as both thematic and subordinate enriched the texture but the themes became short. Bridges between themes are not needed because Haydn felt one theme implied the next, generating it. His new more systematic phrasing gave each element more power of expression.

With the publication of Haydn's Opus 33, a consensus of opinion developed among European composers that the string quartet from now on implied a definite type of composition. Composers of different nationalities had written for a quartet consisting of two violins, viola and cello with titles such as *sonata*, *sinfonia*, *concertino*, *divertimento*, and *cassati*, but composed without a unified style in mind. Haydn had determined a new trend in the string quartet genre.

The true innovations of Opus 76 lay in the rhythmic technique that had come from his experience of writing comic operas which gave the music a tight continuity, dramatic clarity, and a sense that it was impelled from within. The quartets illustrate "thematic elaboration" a manner of dissecting the subjects in the exposition of the movement, developing and reassembling the fragments in an unexpected manner. As a result, all instruments are given an equal share in the melodic material, a development of the sonata form enriched by Haydn and used in his future quartets.

Opus 76, No. 1 includes an emphatic introduction, using only three strong chords. After the three attention-getting introductory chords of the *Allegro con spirito*, a jaunty theme is introduced by the cello with fugal entries by the viola, the second violin and the first violin. A counter

theme, ascending rather than descending, is offered by the cello at the entrance of the viola. A light pizzicato section leads into a tutti of figurations and a sweep downwards to a cadence. In the second section the cello begins with a variant of the theme but the texture changes to accompanied fluid music from the violin. After a pizzicato section the active full texture with melodic material by the violin finally leads to a swoop downward and final chord.

In the *Allegro sostenuto*, a lyrical theme is treated polyphonically but excitement begins over pizzicato accompaniment and a beat-off-beat section. Three times a lyrical portion alternates with "busy" work, beat-off-beat and pizzicato sections.

The *Menuetto*, to be played presto, is an example of Haydn's transformation of the Minuet to a Scherzo, pre-Beethoven. The staccato texture includes leaps that are characteristic of Austrian folk music. The Trio is all violins over accompaniment on the first beats.

The *Allegro non troppo* begins not in G Major, but in g minor. At this time, Haydn was working on *The Creation* with its remarkable treatment of the text, "Let there be light," with a smooth shift from minor to major. Two thirds of the way through the Allegro, the music shifts just as smoothly to G Major with some rising music from the violin.

Bartók—Quartet No. 4

Bartók's fourth quartet is part of a set of six as was the tradition, but during the 19th century composing a number of works as a set fell out of practice, and by the post-Beethoven era each work could stand on its own, a quartet with the weight of a symphony. Bartók's quartets hold a central position in his oeuvre through their internal weight and concentration; they are both typical and representative of the whole output of the composer. Bartók's music was significant as the most typical musical advances of the 20th century, and so the quartets are representative of these advances, in condensed form.

The quartet was presented in 1928, at a time when Bartók was a leader in developing the musical life of Hungarian

society. He judged rightly that true Hungarian music was to be found not in the imported music of Germany, nor in the romanticized folk music that Liszt and others worked with, but in the music of the peasants. He and Zoltan Kodály made numerous forays into the outlying areas of their country recording and classifying authentic music of the people, and as Bartók stated, assimilating the idiom so that it became his musical mother tongue. He was also aware of currents towards Schoenberg's atonal music, but he stated he knew his music was not to be like that, but to have original and personal character of his own creation.

The six quartets graphically illustrate Bartók's attitude towards tonality. He did consider certain works as being in major or minor keys but the tonalities are handled so freely that one is justified in saying only that a composition is "ON" a certain note, rather than in its key. Thus the first and second quartet are on A, the third on C#, the fourth on C, the fifth on B flat and the sixth on D. The music is organized around these keys modally as orientation points. The keynote is a point of departure and repose, affecting modulation away and back.

In the *Allegro* a chromatic descending theme opens the music to some strongly rhythmical polyphony but the lyrical sections alternate throughout with percussive sections, in which the patterns start typically on the weak beat followed by a succession of beats often syncopated.

The *Prestissimo con sordino* is a breath-taking scherzo. In the first 30 measures the violins mount an octave and descend again, with short running notes till the music settles into reiterated sixteenths. In the central portion, a curious little motif is alternated in the violins. The ensemble builds up to a passage where all descend using glissandos. The music ends with a glissando starting in the cellos and mounting to the top of the violin.

The central movement gives a break in the impetuous music of the first and second *Non troppo lento* but the contrast makes for repose. A dissonant chord in the top strings opens the music and the cello plays a sinuous melody with "pedals" in the upper strings. In a short passage marked *tranquilo*, the cello and violin present one of

Bartók's most anguished melodies. After a melodic element given to the violin over lower "pedal" harmonic support, the second violin is accompanied by chordal tremolo.

The fourth movement returns to a more lively character, *Allegro pizzicato*, and as indicated in the tempo directive, has a peppery texture capitalizing in off beats and syncopation. After a second section in which the lower strings roll chords on syncopated beats, a series of strident full chords manage to interrupt whatever tune the other strings have managed to "pick" out.

Full strident chords open the last movement, *Allegro molto*, and the impression is of a lively stamping folk dance. Phrases of chromatic melodies appear, all voices joining in near the end, which rightly finishes with a short phrase, *pesante*.

Beethoven—Quartet in G, Op. 130

Opus 130 was a major work of Beethoven's final creative output. String quartets were the genre closest to his heart in chamber music and, like Haydn, had been a life-long preoccupation. By this time, Beethoven had finished his *Missa Solemnis*, the *Diabelli Variations*, and the *Ninth Symphony*. His final works, the quartets Opus 127, 130-133, and 135 are considered his crowning achievements, compositions unmatched in spiritual depth, power and beauty. Ill health and struggles with his nephew seemed to have somewhat ameliorated by 1825 and his friends rejoiced at a new surge of creativity.

Opus 130 was the most enigmatic of these quartets, and originally was made up of six movements having a second, "tearful" slow movement and a giant fugal finale. Beethoven later dropped the second slow movement and detached the *Große Fugue*, later offered as quartet, Opus 134. A fresh finale was composed, an unproblematic rondo. Calder will play the 6-movement piece including the final fugue.

Becker found this quartet a "drive towards dissociation" full of kaleidoscopic changes of mood within the total structure, "a suite, almost a pot-pourri of movements without any psychological connection." It

has been suggested that Beethoven planned them as disparate elements pointing to the giant unifying finale (the *Grosse Fugue*) but of course that finale was detached in the end. Perhaps Beethoven felt that the Fugue was too powerful an experience to properly close the quartet.

The *Adagio ma non troppo* has a gentle inviting opening but a decorated flowing *allegro* soon enters. Twice more the *Adagio* is interrupted by running passages. The first violin and then the second take their turn being a bit florid over sustained harmony, then all contribute to the melodic material, to be concluded with a short *Adagio* whose purpose seems to be to prepare a shot fast *Allegro* surprise, one which seems to anticipate no end of surprises in this work. The music adopts a skipping rhythm, which becomes a race. As the movement develops the violin treats the listener to some notes in its highest registers. The surprise ending has three short alternating *Adagio/Allegro* passages but Beethoven's humor has an *Allegro* flourish the winner.

The *Presto* begins with a jaunty little motif by the violins, but in a 6/4 passage the motif becomes six notes which are ever ascending. A return to the original texture ends the movement.

The *Andante con moto ma non troppo* opens with a soaring violin but all instruments participate in the rich and varied texture. *Alla danza tedesco* is a dance which by the 1800s was a Landler or similar dance in rather quick 6/8 time. The dance is in two parts, the short first section being repeated. The second shows off the violin in running passage supported by rhythmic beats, but all take part.

The plaintive melodies of the *Cavatino* are offered mostly by the violin *solo voce*. The gentle ending prepares for the joyful, jaunty rondo finale, full of *joie de vivre*. The episodes are full of variety but the central episodes smooth out the texture in contrast.

—Notes by Dr. Catherine Roche

49th SEASON

2004-2005

*Presented in Cooperation with
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Calder Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, September 26, 2004
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
RECEPTION FOLLOWING

Cello

2:30 PM Sunday, October 24, 2004
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RECEPTION FOLLOWING

Cavani String Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, November 14, 2004
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Osiris Trio

2:30 PM Sunday, February 20, 2005
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Dorian Wind Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, March 08, 2005
Morris Chapel, UOP
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