

FRIENDS OF
CHAMBER MUSIC
50th Anniversary

Juilliard String Quartet

Joel Smirnoff, violin
Ronald Copes, violin
Samuel Rhodes, viola
Joel Krosnick, cello

7:30 PM, October 8, 2005
Faye Spanos Concert Hall

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

Program

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3

Allegro
Andante con moto
Allegro
Presto

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

String Quartet No. 5 (c 1934)

Allegro
Adagio molto
Scherzo: Alla bulgarese
Andante—Finale: Allegro vivace

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

—Intermission—

String Quartet No. 16 in F Major, Op. 135

Allegretto
Vivace
Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo
Der schwer gefasste Entschluss “Muss es sein? Es muss sein!”
Grave, ma non troppo tratto—Allegro

Beethoven

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The Juilliard String Quartet records exclusively for Sony Classical

Juilliard String Quartet

For the initial concert of its heralded 50th Anniversary Season, The Friends of Chamber Music of Stockton is proud to present the JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET, the preeminent String Quartet in the world. For more than 50 years this Quartet has been an international presence and an American institution. It performs with emotional intensity, technical precision, and intellectual rigor in concerts given across the globe while in the United States its members have been educators, mentors and champions of new music. The JSQ has premiered over sixty new works by American composers.

Since 1962 the Juilliard Quartet has been quartet-in-residence at the Library of Congress, where in 1997 it inaugurated the renovated Coolidge auditorium built in 1924 in partnership between the Library of Congress and music philanthropist Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.

The Quartet is also quartet-in-residence at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, where all members are on the faculty. The ensemble was formed in 1946 partly at the instigation of William Schuman, then president of the school.

Joel Smirnoff, 1st violin, joined the Quartet in 1986. Its newest member, Ronald Copes, 2nd violin, became a member of the Quartet in 1997. Violist, Samuel Rhodes, has been with the ensemble for more than three decades and Joel Krosnick has been the cellist since 1974.

The Juilliard String Quartet gave the first performances of the Bartók Quartets in the United States.

Program Notes

Beethoven—Op. 18, No. 3

Beethoven's Opus 18 is a collection of six string quartets composed between 1798 and 1801. His sketchbooks give substantial indication that he worked on several of the six quartets simultaneously. Interestingly,

there is strong evidence in the sketchbooks to support that Op. 18, No. 3 was actually completed before Nos. 1 and 2. All six Quartets are dedicated to the Bohemian aristocrat Prince Josef Max Lobkowitz. It is said that the Prince "was a music enthusiast who often played music from dusk to dawn with professional musicians whom he treated regally."

Generally the 3rd Quartet, composed by a young Beethoven in his late twenties, appears to reflect upon the formulae established by Haydn and Mozart. At the same time Beethoven makes bold creative strokes anticipating the individuality and innovative style for which Beethoven is so famous and respected.

Today's concert provides the listener a rare opportunity to hear and compare Beethoven's first string quartet (Op. 18, No.3) and his last string quartet (Op. 135).

Bartók—Quartet No. 5

Bela Bartók was born and grew up in Hungary. At an early age, his exceptional talent in piano performance won him admission to study at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. In 1907, at the age of 26, he was appointed professor of piano performance and literature at the same Academy. It is interesting to note that throughout his lifetime Bartók did not teach musical composition. It is said he felt that teaching composition would exhaust his own creative efforts. The outbreak of World War II influenced Bartók and his wife Ditta to flee Europe and resettle in the United States. Following a lengthy illness Bartók succumbed to the ravages of leukemia in New York City on September 26, 1945.

During the early 1900's Bartók became intensely interested in researching and studying European folk music and gypsy music traditions. This influence may be recognized in the 5th String Quartet. All five movements of this Quartet are

identified simply by tempo indications. Only the third movement is marked with a performance description; "Alla bulgarese." (Translation: *In the manner of Bulgarian style.*) Further reference to the Bulgarian folk music in this movement is noted in the time signature, i.e. nine beats to the measure divided into asymmetrical units (4 + 2 + 3).

The String Quartet #5 is not considered to be a stridently dissonant work. Bartók's individual compositional language deals with a) *melody* in terms of artificial scales and folk music influences, b) compound *rhythm* patterns involving folk music iterations, c) *harmonic language* expressing tonal relationships and functions in a non-traditional manner, d) extended concepts and treatment of *contrapuntal techniques*, and e) architectural organization of structural *form and design*.

Overall, Bartók is a composer who is extremely economical with his musical materials. That is to say Bartók uses a minimum of musical ideas that are imaginatively exploited and developed to a maximum level.

For the most part pre-twentieth century string quartets are organized in four movements. The Bartók String Quartet No. 5, composed in 1934, is in five movements. The structural design is known as ARCH FORM. Faster tempi and similar musical materials are shared between the 1st and 5th movements. Contrasting slower tempi and musical materials are shared between the 2nd and 4th movements. Only the 3rd movement stands independently at the apex of the arch.

Mv't. III

Mv't. II --- Mv't. IV

Mv't. I ----- Mv't. V

In his 5th Quartet, Bartók establishes the *tritone* as the principal melodic and harmonic

element. Generally speaking the tritone interval is the mathematical mid-point of the musical octave giving it a somewhat neutral function. Due to its theoretical as well as practical complexities the tritone was largely avoided for centuries. Numerous theoretical treatises refer to the tritone as the *devil* in music. The tritone is the prevailing melodic and harmonic interval throughout all five movements of Bartók's String Quartet No. 5.

The **1st movement** begins with a vigorous repetitive rhythmic pattern. In the fourth measure Bartók introduces the head motive (theme) which spans the interval of a tritone (B-flat to E-natural). These rhythmic and melodic elements found in the first four measures are developed throughout the entire movement.

In spite of the tritone treatment of the melodic lines, the **2nd movement** harmonic treatment is quite tonal in the A sections of this A-B-A design. A highlight of the B section is an interesting canon (musical round) beginning on the pitch G-sharp, a tritone away from the introductory D-natural tonal center. A curious note is the order of the introduction of the instruments shared between the 2nd and 4th movements, i.e. 1st Violin, Cello, 2nd violin and lastly the Viola.

The **3rd movement**, the apex of the arch form, presents musical characteristics uniquely apart from the other four movements. The movement reveals Bartók's influence and interest in Central European ethnic musics. While time signatures in Movements I, II, IV and V are simple duple or triple meters (4/4, 3/4, 2/4) the 3rd movement time signature is in compound triple meter. Rhythmic and melodic compound groupings of 4+2+3 (//// // //) = 9 translates into a compound triple meter 9/8 time signature. The eight note melodic subject (theme), introduced in the third measure, prevails in virtually every one of the ninety-two measures of this movement. In this movement Bartók asks the performers to play the

pizzicato (plucked) notes in the conventional strumming fashion. However, at specific times players are requested to pluck a string so that it "snaps" against the fingerboard of the instrument causing an interesting percussive effect.

In the **4th movement** the introductory melodic phrases are played by individual instruments presented in the same order as in the 2nd movement. As with the 2nd movement, Movement IV is also in the A-B-A structure. This movement provides the opportunity to hear one of Bartók's favorite instrumental color techniques, the *glissando*. This is recognized by the "sliding" or "gliding" from one pitch to another. The glissando technique is heard in the beginning measures as well as quite prominently in the closing four measures of the movement.

The overall form of the **5th movement** resembles that of a traditional *Rondo*, although Bartók looks upon this movement as being in arch form A-B-C-B-A. As with the Movement I, the 5th movement is in a fast tempo. Both movements begin and end on the pitch B-flat and the thematic material in both movements span the interval of a tritone. The middle sections of each movement present profound contrapuntal expositions; a canon in the 1st movement and a fugue in the 5th movement.

The Quartet was first performed in Washington, D.C. on April 8, 1935, and first published in 1936. The piece was commissioned by and dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Coolidge exerted arduous personal energies as well as considerable financial resources in promoting early 20th century chamber music, which during her lifetime she appropriately referred to as "modern music." Her attitude in this regard is reflected in her statement: "*My plea for modern music is not that we should like it, nor necessarily that we should even understand it, but that we should exhibit it as a significant human*

document." Perhaps it is with this focus that we enjoy and appreciate the artistic creativity, craftsmanship and genius of Béla Bartók.

Beethoven—Op. 135

Beethoven's last String Quartet, Opus 135 in F major, was composed in 1826, the year prior to his death. This work reveals insight into a mature Beethoven, extending and expanding musical concepts and styles to a level that portends future musical directions.

True to the Haydn – Mozart tradition, Opus 135 is in four movements. Other than this, it appears that "tradition" is brushed aside to allow Beethoven to express his individuality, innovation and creative musical expression. The 2nd movement, frequently a slow tempo, is replaced by a fast tempo *Vivace*. Traditionally the 3rd movement is frequently a fast tempo minuet or scherzo. With respect to certain minuet characteristics, Beethoven makes reference to neither minuet nor scherzo. The 3rd movement is one of Beethoven's shortest in duration. The entire movement is only 54 measures in length. Instead of a fast tempo, the tempo marking is *Lento assai*, quite slow. The final movement has been abundantly exploited due to Beethoven's inscription, *Muss es sein? Es muss sein!* "Must it be? It must be!" Numerous non-musical anecdotes abound regarding Beethoven's intent as this inscription. More importantly, are the musical diversions Beethoven explores. The movement suggests a *tempo* organizational structure; Slow, Fast, Slow, Fast Slow. Instead of the expected fast bravura ending so typical of Beethoven, the final movement of Opus 135 concludes as it began, *Grave*, slowly and softly with a sense of resignation and repose.

—Notes by Dr. Carl Nasse

50th SEASON

2005-2006

*Presented in Cooperation with
University of the Pacific Conservatory of
Music; Stephen Anderson, Dean*

Juilliard String Quartet

7:30 PM Saturday, October 8, 2005
Faye Spanos Concert Hall

Adaskin String Trio with Thomas Gallant, Oboe

2:30 PM Sunday, November 13, 2005
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
RECEPTION FOLLOWING

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RECEPTION FOLLOWING

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2:30 PM Sunday, March 26, 2006
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*in Stravinsky's Soldier's Tale
with special added feature:*

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2:30 PM Sunday, March 20, 2005
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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