



55TH SEASON

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CALDER QUARTET

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

2:30 PM, March 27, 2011
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
In cooperation with Pacific's
Conservatory of Music

Program

Quartet No. 19 in C Major, K. 465 "Dissonance" (1785) **Wolfgang A. Mozart**
(1756–1791)
Adagio—Allegro
Andante cantabile
Menuetto: Allegro
Allegro molto

Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95 "Serioso" (1810) **Ludwig van Beethoven**
(1770–1827)
Allegro con brio
Allegretto ma non troppo
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso—Più allegro
Larghetto espressivo—Allegretto agitato—Allegro

—intermission—

Quartet No. 2 "Intimate Letters" (1928) **Leoš Janáček**
(1854–1928)
Andante—Con moto—Allegro
Adagio—Vivace—Andante—Presto—Grave—Allegro—Vivo—Adagio
Moderato—Allegro—Adagio—Largamente—Presto—Allegro—Andante—Allegro
Allegro—Andante—Con moto—Maestoso—Allegro—Andante—Adagio—Tempo I

The Calder Quartet is represented by Alliance Artist Management
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ARTISTS

Deemed 'Superb' by The New York Times, the Calder Quartet continues to expand its unique array of projects by performing traditional quartet repertoire as well as partnering with innovative modern composers, emerging musicians, and performers across genres. Inspired by innovative American artist Alexander Calder, the group was awarded the 2009 ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award in recognition of its exciting programming and collaborations. The quartet has worked with and performed with pivotal modern composers such as Terry Riley, Christopher Rouse and Thomas Adès to indie rock bands including The Airborne Toxic Event, Vampire Weekend, and party rocker Andrew WK.

Recent highlights for the Calder Quartet include performances at the Big Ears Festival in Knoxville; New Haven's International Festival of Arts and Ideas; Walt Disney Concert Hall as part of the Green Umbrella Series, in concert with Grammy-winning pianist Gloria Cheng at the Orange County Performing Arts Center. Performance highlights in the 2010-2011 season include the group's Carnegie Hall debut, the Washington Performing Arts Society, the 2010 Melbourne Festival with Thomas Adès as pianist and the world premiere of a new work by composer Andrew Norman for the University of Southern California Presidential Inauguration. The Calder Quartet toured across North America with Andrew W.K. and The Airborne Toxic Event this past year and was featured on KCRW's Morning Becomes Eclectic, the Late Show with David Letterman, the Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Late Night with Jimmy Kimmel, and the Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson.

The Calder Quartet continues its relationship with the Carlsbad Music Festival, an alternative classical music festival, which the group co-founded with composer Matt McBane in 2004. The festival presents concerts in both San Diego and Los Angeles as well as outreach programs and a composers commissioning competition.

The Calder Quartet studied together at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music and the Colburn Conservatory of Music with Ronald Leonard, and at the Juilliard School,

where it received the Artist Diploma in Chamber Music Studies as the Juilliard Graduate Resident String Quartet. They have also studied with Professor Eberhard Feltz at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin, and collaborated with such notable performers as Menahem Pressler and Joseph Kalichstein. The quartet regularly conducts master classes and is the quartet-in-residence at the Colburn Conservatory.

PROGRAM

The age of elegance that emerged from the late Baroque and flowered into classicism, is one of the most marvelous and refreshing periods in European art. Exquisite proportion and delicate balance were the hallmarks of the day emphasizing the artists' dedication to the handsome, the ideal, the perfect. While great masters emerged in all areas of the arts, music blessed the world with Haydn and Mozart, producing a new musical form destined to become the backbone of the chamber music repertoire—the string quartet—the epitome of music-making, with each of the four parts blending into an organized expression of a singular musical thought.

Chamber music exploded at the end of the 18th century and had a significant impact on music history. In contrast to larger-scale works, the string quartet represented a peak of private music making. Beethoven expanded on the examples set by Haydn and Mozart, finding new textures and solutions in the formal and instrumental parameters of the genre. The string quartet dominated his final years of creativity and set a remarkable benchmark for subsequent generations of composers.

At the same time, another layer of lyrical and purely entertaining works appeared. Echoing the songs of the day, these pieces represented the popular face of chamber music. For example, Smetana (*Quartet No. 1*), Berg (*Lyric Suite*), and Janáček (*Quartet No. 2*) composed musical postcards that concealed more surreptitious, private, and introspective declarations of love.

Mozart—Quartet No. 19

Mozart composed 13 string quartets as a teenager, but not one for ten years after 1773. During this period he became familiar with the quartets of Haydn,

especially those written in the late 1770s and early 1780s. After studying these, Mozart used them as models for his following ten quartets.

The C major Quartet was the last to be composed of the series of six dedicated to Haydn. Completed on January 14, 1785, its appellation "Dissonance" refers to the introductory adagio's opening passage.¹ And, if you're expecting to be treated to ear-crushing dissonance of the sort that would make Charles Ives rise and shout approval, you can forget it. This dissonance occurs in the opening passage; a progression of chords over a pedal point by the cello. While it is a rather chromatic passage, it violates no rules of 18th century harmony.

So while it may have reportedly caused a tantrum by a displeased member of the Hungarian aristocracy² with "sissy ears," as Ives would say, inducing him to tear up the parts, none other than the dedicatee Haydn would remark; "Well, if Mozart wrote it, he must have meant it."

Nevertheless, the opening *Adagio* is disturbing even to modern ears, not for its dissonance but because of the ominous nature of the repeated notes of the cello and the pervading dark tonality that, without warning, thrusts us into tragedy. Twenty-two bars later, the fog lifts and Mozart bursts into the brightest sunshine of merriment astounding us.

The second movement, *Andante cantabile*, is the heart of the work and one of Mozart's most lush, rapturous but simultaneously profound songs. A four-note theme is passed among the instruments, followed by a curious duet between the highest and lowest sonorities of the quartet: the first violin and cello.

Contrast marks the third movement in what could be best described as vertical versus horizontal music. The gentle *Menuetto* flows along in canon-style to the Trio section, in which we hear the upward and downward leaps in the melodic line.

All thoughts of darkness are dispelled in the good natured rondo-sonata romp of the final movement, *Allegro*, exuding all of Mozart's glorious wit, charm and good humor as well as his great compositional skills.

¹ As is usually the case, the composer had nothing to do with this nickname.

² Prince Grassalokovics

Beethoven Quartet No. 11

With a moniker like “serioso,”³ we anticipate grim musicians chopping away at endless music, as an equally dour audience cringes and writhes, a few glancing nervously at their watches, and others praying for something akin to a coda. Beethoven, however, used Op. 95 as a foundation for a completely new, terse language to distinguish his final quartets. The “seriousness” he refers to actually translates as “Pay attention players and audience: this is not what you think of as a Beethoven quartet!”

Opus 95, Beethoven’s briefest and most studied string quartet, is so distinctive it is almost eccentric in its isolation. It is the last of the middle quartets, anticipating his late period quartets that reside in a profound world of their own. Op. 95 represents a singular contraction of the string quartet into a dense, intense effort where everything is stripped to a drastic, but essential minimum. Much of the force of this quartet resides in its far-reaching treatment of individual harmonic and melodic ideas; listen for them to recur in various guises.

The compression of form and expression is most apparent in the first movement, the shortest in all Beethoven’s quartets. It sets off with a unison snarl, immediately broken off in silence, to be followed by a sharply contrasting dotted-note figure, then another silence, then the cello offers to continue the opening phrase, but the others lyrically decline the tactic. The sequence of distinctive ideas alternating with silence characterizes this movement. The brevity of the movement is heightened by not repeating the exposition, but moving instead to a middle section and an abridged recapitulation, which appears to be a dramatic launch into a new section of great length only to rapidly fade into a fairly abrupt close.

The second movement is the gentle heart of the quartet, the closest thing to restfulness we get to hear. Beginning as a lyrical slow movement, it promises compassionate relief from the first movement. With the lyricism, Beethoven introduces a fugue with a chromatic subject that develops into a sustained expression of great intensity and compresses into an emphatic climax built

from its first two-note interval. The warmth returns in final beauty, but is unable to conclude: suddenly troubled by a new, unresolved chord, the movement stops, then bounds impetuously into the third movement scherzo restoring all the unconcealed tension of the first movement.

The final two movements sustain a nearly uninterrupted sweep of intensity from start to finish. The scherzo offers short reprieve in its contrasting trio and the finale begins with a slow, somber introduction. But the bulk of the scherzo, marked *serioso*, and the majority of the finale, marked *agitato*, joins with the first movement to make this the most unrelentingly intense of all the Beethoven quartets. Yet Beethoven was the master manipulator and after entrancing the listener in the rapture of despair, he shatters the mood by turning on a dime and almost instantaneously shifts into a light gambol, bright and capricious as spring, unmindful of everything but unremitting bliss. The vast, unsettled heaviness of the entire quartet dissolves in the last thirty seconds.

Janáček Quartet No. 2

In the summer of 1917, 25-year-old, married Kamila Stösslová was the spark that ignited the white-hot blaze of compositional activity in the last 11 years of 63-year-old Janáček’s life. Their passionate but platonic and one-sided affair—expressed in 700 letters—inspired four operas, two string quartets, a mass, tremendous orchestral works, and numerous choral and chamber pieces. In particular, Janáček immortalized his young muse in the second string quartet, which he described as having been “written in fire.”⁴

The music is intensely autobiographical. The first movement, he told Kamila, represents “the impression when I saw you for the first time...Mine alone the speaking; yours—just surprised silence.” In the second movement, “you are giving birth. Just like you, falling from tears into laughter, that’s how it sounds.” The third movement “is bright and carefree, but dissolves into an apparition which resembles you.” “Let it be jolly,” he said of the last movement, “and then dissolve into a vision resembling your image, translucent

as mist.....It is the sound of my fear for you, not exactly fear, but yearning, yearning which is fulfilled by you.”

The viola, which portrays Kamila in many works, has a dominant role in the quartet. After a fortissimo trill in the cello and an opening theme in the violins, the viola presents an eerie theme *sul ponticello* (bowing close to the bridge). The cello shares the viola theme, and the violin articulates a rapid figure (also on the bridge) serving a dual role: partially accompaniment, but also a melody that is strong and plaintive by turns. The movement closes with the opening theme escorted by high-pitched violin trills.

In the second movement the composer portrays Kamila giving birth to her son and considers his future life. Janáček was quite attached to Kamila’s real-life son. He went on holiday with Kamila, her husband, and son shortly after completing the quartet.⁵ Thematic material is based on the viola theme from the first movement.

Clear contrasts of mood typify the third movement. Two themes are surveyed through tempos and textures that change constantly.

A vigorous folk-like melody opens the fourth movement, but it is hastily broken up by a four-note pattern in a differing meter. This model steadily worms itself into the texture, as does a strummed tune that gradually grows more forceful. The movement is a rich blend of sounds: a cello accompaniment with *pizzicato* and *arco* on successive beats; an accelerating *allegro* theme; intrusions of the opening motif into the ongoing material. Near the end, all four instruments play (*ponticello*) on a striking dissonance. The solo second violin trills a four-note theme leading to a recall of the three motifs presented thus far. The movement closes on Janáček’s favorite chord of D-flat Major, with the added dissonance of E flat.

The 74-year-old Janáček was very pleased with this music. To Kamila, he wrote that it was “like a piece of living flesh. I don’t think I ever shall be able to write anything deeper or more truthful.” Six months later, the creator of this passionate music was dead from pneumonia.

Notes by Dr. Michael Spencer

³ Unusually, the composer chose this nickname.

⁴ Apparently other works were only “written in hot ashes.”

⁵ Kamila was lucky to have had an understanding husband—Janáček had a furiously jealous wife.

FIFTY-FIFTH SEASON

2010-2011

*Presented in Cooperation with
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Giulio Ongaro, Dean*

Minneapolis Guitar Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, October 3, 2010

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Fry Street Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, November 7, 2010

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Orlando Consort

2:30 PM Sunday, February 20, 2011

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Calder Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, March 27, 2011

Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Foothills Brass Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, April 17, 2011

Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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- The use of cameras and recording devices of any kind is forbidden.
- There is no smoking in the lobby or auditorium.
- Please turn off cellular phones and disengage audible alarms on pagers and watches.
- Students are admitted free on a space-available basis.
- Concert programs are subject to change without notice.
- Seating is unreserved for the current Season.
- Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Pacific/Delta Faculty & Staff: \$10

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