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FRY STREET QUARTET

William Fedkenheuer, violin

Rebecca McFaul, violin

Bradley Ottesen, viola

Anne Francis, cello

2:30 PM, November 7, 2010

Faye Spanos Concert Hall

In cooperation with Pacific's

Conservatory of Music

Program

Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, No. 1

Allegro con brio

Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato

Scherzo: Allegro molto & Trio

Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770–1827)

Quartet No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 7/Sz. 40

Lento

Allegretto

Allegro vivace

Bela Bartók

(1881–1945)

—intermission—

Quartet in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 131, No. 14

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

Beethoven

Concert Co-Sponsors: Carole & Dr. Henry Zeiter and Sara & Dwane Milnes

Discography: *IsoMike*

Exclusive Management: ARTS MANAGEMENT GROUP, INC.

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ARTISTS

Founded in Chicago in 1997, Fry Street received rave reviews as prizewinners at the Yellow Springs Competition and Banff International String Quartet Competition.

The quartet traveled to Israel to participate in the International Encounters Chamber Music Seminar in 2000, where they studied with Isaac Stern. He invited the quartet to his Chamber Music Workshop in New York City and subsequently arranged for the quartet's Carnegie Hall debut in 2001.

Fry Street Quartet began its international career in 2002 as cultural ambassadors to the Balkan States, sponsored by Carnegie Hall and the U.S. Department of State. Subsequent international appearances have included the ProQuartet Academy at Pont-Royal, France, the Prague Chamber Festival, and Trutnov Autumn Festival in the Czech Republic, Kulturvereinigung Oberschützen in Austria, and the Oficina de Musica de Curitiba festival in Brazil.

Fry Street Quartet has held the position of faculty quartet-in-residence at the Caine School of the Arts at Utah State University in Logan, Utah since 2002. The quartet enjoys frequent visits to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as Market Square's "Summertime" artists-in-residence, as well as the Mozart Gemeinde chamber music series in Austria. "Fry Street" was the location of the quartet's first rehearsal space in the Chicago neighborhood once ruled by Al Capone.

William Fedkenheuer began his studies at age four at the Conservatory of Music at Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Making his solo violin debut with the Calgary Philharmonic in 1994, William went on to receive a Bachelor of Music from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and continued his graduate studies at Indiana University. Previously a member of the Borromeo String Quartet and on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, William currently teaches in the faculty of the Caine School of the Arts at Utah State University.

Rebecca McFaul received a Bachelor of Music in violin performance from the Oberlin Conservatory and continued her studies earning a Master of Music in violin performance Northwestern University. Currently on the string and chamber music faculty at the Caine School of the Arts, Utah State University, Rebecca is a founding member of Fry Street Quartet

and has toured North and South America, the Balkan States and Europe, including Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, and Israel as soloist and chamber musician. She was a member of Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues and founding member and first violinist of the Gabriel Piano Quintet.

Bradley Ottesen has premiered pieces by John Adams, Joan Tower, and Bright Sheng. Bradley was also a part of the new music festival "Hear and Now" featuring living Canadian composers, as well making frequent appearances in the Calgary Stampede. Bradley currently teaches on the string and chamber music faculty of the Caine School of the Arts at Utah State University and has previously taught at The University of Calgary, Mount Royal College, and Brookline Music School. Bradley holds a Master's degree from the New England Conservatory and a Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University.

Anne Francis can be heard frequently in the eclectic recordings of The NPR Cellos. Anne has strived to connect with composers of our time since her days as a conservatory student, commissioning a piece for solo cello from composer Ryan Beard and working with leading composers Donald Erb, Bernard Rands, and Ned Rorem. Anne began playing the cello when she was four years old and later became one of the youngest members of the Kalamazoo Symphony, performing in the cello section while still in high school. Anne received her Bachelor of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music and her Master of Music from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Anne currently teaches on the faculty of the Caine School of the Arts at Utah State University.

PROGRAM

Conflict and resolution, variety and consistency, multiplicity and unity: these are the crucial opposite poles of any truly classical style in music. What each of the masters gives us is a creative tension between the polar elements, and consequently a fresh and individual equilibrium. Beginning with Opus 18 and culminating in the final string quartets including Opus 131, as well as in Bartók's set of six quartets, the opposites are taken further apart than ever before, and yet the equilibrium forged out of their interplay is both profound and all persuasive.

For no other composers than Beethoven and Bartók does the string quartet occupy such a central position among their works, showing a clear line of the growth and development of each composer. Each seems to express his most essential thoughts through the medium of the string quartet. The style of both is particularly concentrated and intense, their ideas most convincing and expressed with the utmost clarity and economy.

Beethoven—Quartet No. 1 in F

Beethoven's string quartets of Op. 18, written between 1797 and 1800, are a bridge between the 18th and 19th centuries. While these quartets look back to the age of Mozart and Haydn, in many aspects they are pure Beethoven, looking forward to the great innovations in both technique and content that characterized the quartets to follow.

The first movement opens with an abrupt figuration in unison that rapidly grows into the main theme. Beethoven manipulates and deftly remakes this ornamental motif so that it dominates, creating an uneven, disconnected, and abrupt character. Listen to the cold, dispassionate atmosphere, done to brilliant effect.

The long and extensively worked-out *adagio* is sentimental, overdramatic, and full of majestic gestures. See if this reminds you of the burial vault scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, which Beethoven said he had in mind when he wrote it.

The third movement is a true scherzo, the first so called in the literature of string quartets. This is a tiny, neat, successful work. Listen for the symmetry in the first ten bars of the opening theme and the climb to some passionate climaxes.

The fourth movement is a rondo that is scaled large for this period in Beethoven's career and full of innovations. You may hear the contrast of triplets against duple meter before the demonstrative coda brings the piece to its upbeat end.

Bartók—Quartet No. 1

Bartók's string quartets are probably his most representative works and form the backbone of his entire output. Clearly, Beethoven's late string quartets, which had been ignored as possible models by generations of composers before Bartók, were the inspiration for his compositions in this format.

Bartók's immediate inheritance from late Beethoven was his ability to permeate all his movements with related themes. What is novel in Bartók's work is its complicated structure of motifs, its asymmetry, and the dominance of polyphony. The construction of individual parts is not subordinate to harmonic considerations and follows its own linear laws. As a listener, it is the strict and logical independent linear construction of individual parts that allows us to accept the dissonances, which are built up together, and to feel that they are "correct." Bartók achieves this by bold, free constructions. In this respect, he proves himself to be the creative heir of late Beethoven (recall the dissonance present in the Great Fugue in B-flat minor).

Bartók's first string quartet shows us the forceful personality of the young composer: remember when you listen to this work today that it was written over 100 years ago, in 1908, when he was 27. It still retains the audacity and originality which must have been quite astounding a century ago and which makes it a most stimulating and vital composition today.

The first quartet begins with an *adagio*, a slow fugue of truly Beethoven-like spirit and dignity, which Bartók himself called a "funeral dirge." But don't expect a Bach fugue; Bartók was a rule-breaker even while seeking contrapuntal perfection. The sequence is unpredictable, so it is alright to feel perplexed. But we can compare it with the character of the opening of the C-sharp minor quartet coming up. Listen within the dense construction of the fugue for the syncopated rhythm, which grows to an important role throughout the work. The middle section of the opening movement is an expressive, slow melody floating above the excited viola-figure, later answered by the cello. There is a condensed and fragmentary reprise, in which the play of themes is freely developed, and leads back to the quiet recapitulation of the slow fugue, but now an octave higher, and then dies away.

Continuing in the spirit of Beethoven's Opus 131, the three movements are linked to one another by bridge passages, the second movement continuing exactly where the first left off and the new *allegretto* tempo is quickly reached after 20 bars of a kind of recitative in which the two low instruments speak, followed by

the soprano instruments. This movement is many-layered in its changes of mood. The solo violin states a motive, detectable to the careful listener, and it is subjected to remarkable and capricious treatment. Here, rhythmic unpredictability rules: playfulness alternates with peaceful passages, cantabile with terse rhythmical figures. In the development section of this movement Bartók elaborates, combines, and builds up the contrast between fading lyricism and aggressive action. So much happens in this movement, and so much of it unexpected, that it is very much a roller coaster ride.

The finale is preceded by a longer, 33-bar *introduzione* full of rhythmic impulses and rhapsodic monologues, mainly in the cello, which foreshadow the later main subject. The pithy beginning is followed by a short *adagio* passage of hymn-like expressivity. In the movement proper, the tempo is *allegro-vivace* interrupted by slow episodes. Bartók unleashes a masterful declaration of artistic maturity and autonomy. Listen for sudden shifts in meter or tempo and passionate outbursts of heartbeats, cries, and hammer blows; you may sense that this is a hero's quest.

The whole quartet proceeds from a slow beginning to a swift, high-spirited, and capricious climax. The final chords, which include eleven different notes, throw down a challenge to the music of the 19th century and have Bartók saying, in effect, "Who says I have to arrive at the end with a great big tonic chord?"

Beethoven—Quartet No. 14 in c#

If Beethoven's Op. 18 was an apprentice work, in which he came to terms with the influence of his predecessors Haydn and Mozart, the last five¹ quartets display the revolutionary innovation that had grown so natural for him that he achieved it without any of the strain present in earlier works. The central thrust of Beethoven's entire life-work had been to take the sonata style he inherited from Haydn and Mozart and to diversify and enrich it with elements of fugue and variation. Op. 131 was the fourth in Beethoven's last set of quartets, which were his final works. He considered it his finest work, and we think of it, with the last two quartets, as his

crowning achievement, unmatched in spiritual depth, beauty, and power: the most spiritual, tranquil, and unearthly of his quartets.

Opus 131 is a series of seven interconnected movements played without pause, creating a completely organic, well-integrated whole. Listen for the performers to create the underlying unity by maintaining proper relationships of tempo and mood giving the work a smooth flow. One aspect of the network of relationships that holds the seven movements together is a large-scale rhythmic continuity. You will hear a glimpsed series of musical possibilities anticipated and quoted throughout which are reviewed and rediscovered in the finale.

No quartet in history had ever begun with anything remotely like the slow fugue that opens this quartet. Yet at the same time, the movement brings a sense of complete familiarity. The opening fugue briefly presents in its grave tonal explorations and sublime melancholy the principal keys of all the succeeding movements. The juxtaposition of C# against D creates a dissonance that contributes to the bleak atmosphere of the opening and to the expressive tension throughout. The extreme conflict of the keys is echoed by the motion from *molto espressivo* to *allegro molto vivace* in the scherzo-like second movement. Listen for the opening serenity to be dispelled by an outburst of life. Subsequent movements resolve the blending of contrasting principles and traditions: the third movement is a prototype of a free cadence leading to the fourth (the center of the work in every respect), a set of six innovative variations. The fifth movement intensifies the combination technique of the first two movements in which variations of the rondo theme approach step-by-step the fugue theme of the first movement. The both gentle and sorrowful sixth movement combines the function of introducing the finale with tangible references to the first movement. The finale concludes with open reversion to the fugue theme of the first movement and, with fusion of the motif combination, scherzo, and final cadences, as well as hints at all the preceding movements, frames and sums up the entire work.

Notes© Dr. Michael Spencer

¹ ...well, 5½ if we assign autonomous status to the Great Fugue, Op. 133, originally intended as the finale to Op. 130

FIFTY-FIFTH SEASON

2010-2011

*Presented in Cooperation with
Pacific's Conservatory of Music;
Giulio Ongaro, Dean*

Minneapolis Guitar Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, October 3, 2010

Faye Spanos Concert Hall

RECEPTION FOLLOWING

Fry Street Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, November 7, 2010

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RECEPTION FOLLOWING

Orlando Consort

2:30 PM Sunday, February 20, 2011

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Calder Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, March 27, 2011

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Foothills Brass Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, April 17, 2011

Faye Spanos Concert Hall

RECEPTION FOLLOWING

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- Students are admitted free on a space-available basis.
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- Seating is unreserved for the current Season.
- Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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