



56TH SEASON

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LINDEN STRING QUARTET

Sarah McElravy, violin
Catherine Cosbey, violin
Eric Wong, viola
Felix Umansky, cello

2:30 PM, September 18, 2011
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
In cooperation with Pacific's
Conservatory of Music

Program

Quartet for Strings in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1

Introduzione: Andante espressivo — Allegro
Scherzo: Presto — Intermezzo
Adagio
Presto

Robert Schumann

(1810–1856)

Quartet for Strings, Op. 3

Langsam
Mäßige viertel

Alban Berg

(1885–1935)

—intermission—

Quartet for Strings No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96/B 179 "American"

Allegro ma non troppo
Lento
Molto vivace
Finale: Vivace ma non troppo

Antonín Dvořák

(1841–1904)

The Linden String Quartet is represented by Concert Artists Guild:

850 Seventh Avenue, PH-A, New York, NY 10019 • <mailto:> Voice: (212) 333-5200 • <mailto:> Fax: (212) 977-7149
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ARTISTS

Linden String Quartet is currently the Graduate String Quartet-in-Residence at the Yale School of Music. The Quartet is the gold medalist and grand prize-winner of the 2009 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, winner of the 2010 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition, and laureates of the 9th Borciani International String Quartet Competition. Other awards include first prize at the 6th Hugo Kauder International Competition and the Coleman-Barstow prize at the 2009 Coleman National Chamber Ensemble Competition. This season Linden is the Steifel Quartet in Residence for the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. The Quartet previously served both as apprentice to the Cavani String Quartet at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM) and as Quartet-in-Residence of the Canton Symphony Orchestra. Dedicated to community outreach and education, the Linden String Quartet regularly performs for elementary through high school audiences around the United States.

Sarah McElravy, violin, received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM). A recipient of the Dorothy Richards Starling Foundation Scholarship from CIM, Sarah is a winner of numerous awards and scholarships including first prize at the Ontario Provincial Finals on numerous occasions. Ms. McElravy has also participated in the Pacific Music Festival, the Banff Music and Sound Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival.

Catherine Cosby, violin, received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Glenn Gould School in Toronto and subsequently earned a Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Ms. Cosby has been a participant in the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Banff Chamber and Summer Music Sessions, the St. Lawrence String Quartet Seminar, the Domaine Forget Chamber Music Program, and the Centre D'Arts Orford. Ms. Cosby plays on a Dalphin violin and a Voirin bow generously on loan by the Banff Centre.

Eric Wong, viola, received both Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music. As a chamber musician, Mr. Wong has played in numerous ensembles around the country. Mr. Wong won first prize in the 48th Annual Lima Symphony Young Artists' Competition, the 2007 Ohio Viola Society competition, and the 2006 Louisiana String Teachers' Association solo competition.

Felix Umansky, cello, began his studies at the age of seven. He received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Prior to forming the Linden String Quartet, he was the cellist of the Vesuvius Quartet.

PROGRAM

Schumann—Op. 41

The first decade of the 19th Century is noteworthy for the birth of the Romantic Movement in music as well as in literature and the visual arts. Romanticism in all the arts was primarily concerned with the expression of emotion, in contrast to the preceding Classical period, which demanded stricter attention to the formal aspects of the artistic work. The Romantic period marked the creation of wonderful music by a number of great composers, and Schumann was one of its most devoted practitioners. Most of his output featured the piano and the human voice, but his chamber music—three piano trios, three string quartets, a piano quartet, and a piano quintet¹—are also excellent representations of the Romantic style.

The "Chamber Music Year" began inauspiciously enough. The early part of the year was spent on tour with his wife Clara, one of the finest pianists of her time, during which he became painfully aware of being thought of as Mr. Clara Schumann. Returning home while she continued the tour, he spent a period of time in deep melancholy, which he tried to drown in beer and champagne, unable to compose. From April to June, he studied the quartets of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, spending, based on entries in his diary, only eight days on

Beethoven, but devoting almost a month each to Haydn and Mozart.

The first quartet was begun on June 4, and then he began the second on June 11 before the first was complete. The third Quartet was written between the 8th and 22nd of July. First reversals for the set of three quartets began September 8 and were premiered September 13 as a present for Clara on her 23rd birthday.

Quartet No. 1 begins with a polyphonic *Introduzione* reminiscent of Bach rather than the Viennese masters he had studied. It is replete with the canons Schumann was so taken with, as well as his characteristic turns of melody. This is followed by a main section, which has two themes.

The following *Scherzo*, called by Schumann biographer Robert Haven Schaufler "one of the most exciting and successful movements of its kind in the quartet literature", also has two themes—the first a rhythmic dance galloping along like a wild horseman, the second lyrical in nature.

The third movement, the *Adagio*, presents a monothematic rondo with interesting sonorities demonstrating Schumann's gifts as a songwriter.

The final movement, marked *Presto*, has the pattern of a perpetual motion and concludes the quartet with all the vigor one would expect from this most romantic of Romantic composers.

Berg—Op. 3

Credit for developing the modern string quartet to a highly evolved technical and musical level has always gone to Bartók; his third quartet of 1927 is generally regarded as the groundbreaking work in connecting the expansion of string technique to meaningful compositional goals². In fact, Bartók's enhanced clarity was anticipated, most of all by Webern's *Five Movements for String Quartet* (1909), but also by Berg in the Quartet we hear today and in his *Lyric Suite* of 1925-26, his only other work for string quartet. In fact, it predates by over a decade the twelve-tone method later adopted by his teacher Arnold Schoenberg!

Berg was Schoenberg's pupil from 1904 until just after composing this string

¹ All except two of the piano trios composed in 1842

² Although some early 17th century composers had called for harmonics and *col legno* special effects

quartet at age 25. Along with his *Piano Sonata*, it received its premiere on April 24, 1911, at the Vienna Musikverein. It was his last work as Schoenberg's pupil. However, it is remiss to call this brilliant and sensitive piece a student work. Instead, marvel at its assurance and the manner in which it uses advanced intense and romantic tonal language without employing sugary wistfulness.

Like his *Violin Concerto*, this quartet has two movements that are freely atonal, highly contrapuntal in texture, and with a main theme based on the whole-tone scale. In the first (*langsam*=slowly), two contrasted groups of material are presented together with secondary ideas. The development section is based entirely on this subsidiary matter. The main themes are extensively developed in the recapitulation, which is interrupted by part of the coda, which is based on the first theme. The second movement (*mäßige viertel*=moderate quarter note) fits a little more conventionally into the Sonata-Rondo pattern. Listen closely as many of the musical ideas, especially the six-note opening motive, are shared with the first movement. Listen also for many unpredictable mood and tempo changes, ranging from an aggressive, percussive sound to more subdued moments, to sections of longing, and even flashes of playfulness. Berg calls for many idiomatic string techniques throughout the piece to accomplish this, including harmonics, pizzicato, *sul ponticello*³, and *col legno*⁴.

In his limited musical output, Berg has comprehensively explored a subjective realm of feeling which demands a complex process of expression. Regularly disparaged by critics, he has attained a belated, but high regard. This is not music to let sweep over you with closed eyes like some mood-altering narcotic, but pay attention and you will be rewarded with the work of a most creative and innovative composer.

Dvořák—Op. 96

Dvořák's journey to America, though artistically productive and financially rewarding, was not a serene episode in

his life. He was invited to be the Director of the New Conservatory of Music in New York. Although reluctant to leave his native land, the remarkably generous salary offered him and the increasing demands of his large family compelled him to accept the post for two years in September of 1892. Separation from his native land was a source of great unhappiness; stories were rampant that he would sit in Battery Park watching the ships putting out for Europe. His loneliness was eased, however, when the four children he had left behind joined him with his wife for the summer of 1893.

Searching out folksongs, work songs, and native music as a source of simple, fresh melody was not a technique new for Dvořák who had pursued this direction in Czechoslovakia. Discovering the music of his native Bohemia, he developed his own individual musical language. From these unspoiled melodies and rhythms, he developed a combination of folkloristic idioms and a more personal style that still reflected a sense of formal structure. Works like the *Slavonic Dances* of 1878, with rhythmic verve, local color, and stylistic polish brought him international fame. He brought this same indigenous character to his chamber music.

Dvořák's first American work was his ninth symphony, *From the New World* (1893). Various influences of American folk idioms have been traced by devotees of the work, true to the advice he gave his pupils. In general, however, it is a European work, signified, as the composer pointed out, by the title emphasizing that the work was "from" the new world, a Bohemian looking back to his native land.

The American quartet was written after a restorative vacation in Spillville, Iowa, a Czech community. Reinstated with people who spoke his native tongue and maintained their folk ways, Dvořák was relatively content and was able to complete a draft of the quartet in only three days. Dvořák reproduced those features he had developed in other genres in his impressions of Bohemia, except that here we have impressions of North America, notably both Native and African American, in which he achieves an explicit "American" language that is

still combined with his own style and European musical tradition, and in which no actual folk themes are used. Thematic links between the movements transcend the wealth of ideas, characters, and structures of the composition.

The opening *Allegro ma non troppo* presents a theme with a rapid folk-like rhythm in the viola, a rising melody that offers material for the other themes of the work, but gives no clue to what is to occur midmovement. The violins provide a carpet of sound, and the cello is used for percussive rhythmic effects. The melody, like others in the work, is pentatonic, using a five-note scale that contains a minor third but no semitones; it is not surprising that this is the scale of the majority of folk songs. Listen as a folk-like melody makes the round of the instruments with the cello especially notable. Intermittent strident passages are heard and, after a pensive presentation of the slow melody, the movement concludes with a strident declaration.

The *Lento* continues the pentatonic melody given to the viola above an underpinning six-beat ostinato and conveys the new-found serenity of his state of mind. The melody ends in the low ranges of the cello and viola, the underlying rhythm changed to two beats bowed followed by a pause and two beats plucked. Do you sense that Dvořák created a special landscape in the way various patterns are interwoven against a binding theme?

The *Scherzo: Molto vivace* uses two thematic figures in alteration in a dance atmosphere suggestive of Smetana's *Polka*. Listen for the striking effect of harmonic colors that are interjected from time to time, giving the movement strong propulsion.

The tempestuous, energetic, and ingratiating *Finale: Vivace ma non troppo* is built on rhythmic passages, the first restated in the lower strings, and suggesting a Copland-like folk ballet. Listen for smooth polyphonic passages with song-like melodies interspersed with rhythmic interludes. The movement ends in a tutti-type dance, lively, fresh, and vigorous. It is flavorful, eminently listenable music.

Notes ©Dr. Michael Spencer

³ Bowing close to the bridge creating a glassy, eerie sound

⁴ Bouncing the wooden part of the bow against the string causing a brittle, pizzicato-like sound

FIFTY-SIXTH SEASON

2011-2012

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

Linden String Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, September 18, 2011
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
RECEPTION FOLLOWING

Imani Wind Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, October 23, 2011
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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2:30 PM Sunday, November 13, 2011
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Los Angeles Piano Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, February 12, 2012
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Cuarteto Latinoamericana

2:30 PM Sunday, April 22, 2012
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
RECEPTION FOLLOWING

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- There is no smoking in the lobby or auditorium.
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- 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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General Admission: \$25

Pacific/Delta Faculty & Staff: \$10

Students with ID Card: Free

FOCM welcomes children to our concerts. However, an adult must accompany children ten years and under (no babes in arms please). At the request of our artists, children should not sit in the first four rows.

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