



FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC
in Cooperation with Pacific's Conservatory of Music presents

DOVER QUARTET

JOEL LINK, violin

BRYAN LEE, violin

MILENA PAJARO-VAN DE STADT, viola

CAMDEN SHAW, cello

2:30 PM, Sunday, October 20, 2013
 Faye Spanos Concert Hall
 University of the Pacific

SAMUEL BARBER **STRING QUARTET, OP. 11 (1936)**
 (1910-1981) Molto allegro e appassionato
 Molto adagio—Molto allegro—Presto

ERIC SESSLER **STRING QUARTET (2012-13)**
 (b. 1969) **(Commissioned by the Dover Quartet)**
 I. Dramatically
 II. Sustained and lyrical
 III. Broadly expansive
 IV. With relentless driving energy

INTERMISSION

FRANZ SCHUBERT **QUARTET IN A MINOR, OP. 29, NO. 1,**
 (1797-1828) **D. 804, "ROSAMUNDE" (1824)**
 Allegro ma non troppo
 Andante
 Menuetto: Allegretto—Trio
 Allegro moderato

The DOVER QUARTET is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.
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 (802) 658-2592
www.doverquartet.com ♦ www.melkap.com

ARTIST PROFILE



Considered one of the most remarkably talented string quartets ever to emerge at such a young age, the Dover Quartet swept the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, winning the Grand Prize as well as all three Special Prizes: the R.S. Williams & Sons Haydn Prize for the best performance of Haydn, the Székely Prize for the best performance of Schubert, and the Canadian Commission Prize for the best performance of a newly commissioned work. In addition, the Quartet has been named the first Quartet-in-Residence at the venerated Curtis Institute of Music and the Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-In-Residence at the Caramoor Festival for the 2013-14 season. The Grand Prize-winner of the 2010 Fischhoff Competition, the Dover formed at Curtis in 2008, when its members were just 19 years old. The Quartet draws from the musical lineage of both the Vermeer and Guarneri Quartets, but brings a youthful enthusiasm and musical conviction to the repertoire that is truly its own. The *Strad* recently raved that the Quartet is "already pulling away from their peers with their exceptional interpretative maturity, tonal refinement and taut ensemble."

The Dover Quartet won prizes at the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, and has taken part in festivals such as Chamber Music Northwest, Artosphere, La Jolla SummerFest, and the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival. Recent performances include those for such influential series as the Washington Performing Arts Society, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Peoples' Symphony, Schneider Concerts, Kneisel Hall, and the Houston Friends of Chamber Music. The Quartet continued their close collaboration with violist Roberto Diaz on an extensive European tour in spring 2013, which included performances throughout Germany, Austria, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The summer of 2013 featured performances at the Bard Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, and Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival. Highlights of the 2013-14 season include a number of performances at the Curtis Institute of Music and Caramoor Festival, as well as a debut at the Heidelberg Festival in Germany.

The ensemble has studied with such renowned chamber musicians as Shmuel Ashkenasi, Arnold Steinhardt, Joseph Silverstein, and Peter Wiley, and was the Quartet-in-Residence at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music until May 2013. In addition, the Quartet is an active member of Music for Food, an initiative by musicians to help fight hunger in their home communities.

Barber: String Quartet

Samuel Barber, born in Pennsylvania, was an unashamed conservative. Despite his contemporary Schoenberg-esque composers labeling him an antiquated relic, Barber remained faithful to his vision and produced works across all genres that rang true with and were valued by the public. One work in particular reached this repute when he was only 28: the transcendent *Adagio for Strings*.

The *Adagio* is familiar to most people even if they cannot place its name. The work embodies feelings of profound loss and grief.¹ Its power is its simplicity and depth of feeling, and few works have such direct access to our emotions.

However, most people who could actually name Barber's *Adagio* from hearing it probably are not aware that the piece is an arrangement from the second movement of his only completed string quartet. Barber himself originally intended for the *Adagio* to be part of an intimate chamber experience, planning for there to be music before and after it. So how did this progenitor of one of the most famous pieces of music in the American repertoire come about?

The Quartet in B minor in its ultimate form is a succinct, firm structure that is the product of Barber's lengthy labor to give it integrity and strength. The *Molto allegro's* energetic statement of its primary theme in unison initially should remind you of Beethoven's spirit. Listen for a second, chorale-style theme that is followed by a more romantic segment. The development process is continuous throughout the movement.

The well-known *Molto adagio* second movement, the heart of the Quartet, builds on a single melodic idea in the first violin, which is picked up and treated canonically by the other instruments. A prime example of his lyrical neo-romantic style so criticized

by his contemporaries, it arcs its way slowly, step-wise and inescapably from the restrained, virtually liturgical beginning to a climax of immense expressive passion. To reach this culmination, Barber employs a 17-note, mono-rhythmic theme that is repeated eight times. Pushing the strings to highest ranges, he creates an anguished timelessness only to have it vanish into one of the paramount moments of silence in all musical history. The silence is gently stirred by a return to the style of its beginning: soft, calm and soothing.

Barber tinkered with the finale for several years, ultimately scrapping the version he created for the premier. His brief final movement, coming on the heels of the *Adagio* without pause, is a reprise of the fierce statement of the first movement. It is in fact constructed from the last 52 bars of the first movement with a brief *Presto* coda. Since the final movement is played *attaca* after the *Adagio*, the quartet can be viewed as a two-movement work that is an abridged palindrome.

True to Barber's lifelong commitment to classical form, melody, and the tonality of the late Romantic European idiom, this music displays pronounced emotion, tangible form, and lucid expression and has found a new audience with the contemporary taste for neo-romanticism.

Sessler: String Quartet

Eric Sessler was born in Dover, New Jersey in 1969 and grew up outside of Philadelphia. His works have been premiered throughout the United States and he has received numerous awards, including the ASCAP Foundation Award, the Charles E. Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, the Theodore Presser Music Foundation Award and grants from American Composers Forum, Meet the Composer and the Philadelphia Music Project. He has received many commissions, including the one we hear today by the Dover, and his compositions have been played by

leading virtuoso performers. Dr. Sessler is a graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School. He teaches at both these institutions.

The composer has the following to say regarding his string quartet: "I had the distinct privilege to work with the members of The Dover String Quartet while they were students at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. It was clear back then that each member of the group was immensely talented and destined for future success. Indeed, at the present, they are establishing themselves as one of the leading young string quartets in the country. For myself, I am extremely proud of what they have already been able to accomplish in their young careers and I am thrilled...to collaborate with them on this new string quartet.

"The first movement is a dramatic introduction that foreshadows some of the music that will be heard in the later movements. It does this by juxtaposing "flash-forwards" with ideas that bind the whole together. Among these "glue" devices are ensemble chords built with double-stops and numerous versions of the concept of prolongation of sound or, in other words, held sounds. These include long notes (often tied over the bar lines), trills, pulsing chords, and repeated notes of various speeds. The movement ends in a flurry of activity that is intentionally cut-off as the ensemble is in the midst of a triplet pizzicato version of the opening chord. This abrupt ending creates a dramatic suspension that is released with the start of the second movement.

"The second movement is a continuously evolving meditation on lyricism. Melodic modules (or fragments) are passed from instrument to instrument at the start. As the music progresses, new and old melodies are combined and juxtaposed, at times in a way similar

¹ Described as the nation's "unofficial anthem of mourning", it was played at the funerals of Franklin Roosevelt and Albert Einstein; it was broadcast to the nation when John F. Kennedy was assassinated; and it was played by orchestras around the globe in the wake of the 9/11 tragedies.

to cinematic “jump cuts”. At the end, the melodies are layered in beautiful counterpoint and the music gradually slows to a luminous conclusion.

“The third movement is full of contrasts of musical textures and speeds. In fact, there are three different tempi throughout, as well as numerous sections that are slightly faster or slower than previous material. The changing pulse rates become a developing feature as music gets reinterpreted either faster or slower than previously heard. In terms of textures, there are broad expansive chords that are inspired by guitar tunings. They shift like a kaleidoscope on themselves and—later on in the movement—“dissolve” as player by player notes change creating new combinations of chords.

Alternating with these block sounds are textures that range from fast with rhythmical accents all the way to tranquil quietude. At the end of the movement, the quartet reaches a climax by first ascending to a high E major chord and then descending through a series of breathtaking “dissolves” to reach the final chord with the second violinist playing the bass note on the low open G string.

“The fourth movement has a type of perpetual motion fever with constant interruptions. This driving and energetic finale is built with an ever-present four-note motive, which is inspired by guitar like hammer-ons and pull-offs. Immediately this motive is contrasted by heavily accented notes performed ‘at the frog’ for an almost aggressive sound. As the music progresses, long held note lines get transferred to every instrument in the quartet while the other members of the ensemble continue the relentless motive with tremendous dynamic swells and crescendos. At the end, the music goes even faster and the wild train ride is driven home by the quartet at a frenetically joyous pace.”

The piece was commissioned by The Dover String Quartet to whom it is

dedicated and composed in 2012-2013. The World Premier was on October 5, 2013, at the Horowitz Center in Columbia, MD.

Schubert: Quartet in A Minor

Schubert grew up playing chamber music with his family and composed 12 youthful string quartets for these home activities. Although well-written for his age, they were immature works to be played in the family, not for presentation on a concert stage. It was years before he returned to this form.

The 27-year-old composer decided to turn his efforts away from the theater, and back to his instrumental music when Wilhelmine von Chezy’s play *Rosamunde*, for which he had composed extensive incidental music, was booed off the stage at its premiere in Vienna on December 20, 1823. It was the following year when he resumed writing for quartet and completed the wonderful A Minor quartet we hear today. Schubert was profoundly depressed during this period as evidenced by his letters and contemporary reports. As his syphilis advanced, his sense of mortality deepened and was expressed in his music.

Schubert wrote the quartet between February and March 1824, when he was 27 (and four years from his death). Eclipsed by the two more dramatic quartets that follow it, the 13th quartet is noteworthy for its sophisticated yet somber reserve, daintiness of ambience, feel, and lyricism. It dates roughly to the same time as his monumental *Death and the Maiden* Quartet emerging around three years after his previous attempt to write for the string quartet genre, the “Quartetsatz” that remained unfinished. The “*Rosamunde*” quartet’s premier performance took place on March 14, 1824, and was the only one of Schubert’s string quartets performed and published during his lifetime.

Many scholars have commented that the opening of the first movement in sonata form is evocative of song, with a

restive accompaniment preceding the elegiac and attractive first theme. Listen in the first movement for the ease with which Schubert alternates between major and minor modes.

The slow, second movement reuses a theme from the incidental music that he had written for *Rosamunde* and by which the piece obtains its moniker. As listeners, we can accept his mournful mood; and in a restless passage near the end, he reminds us of his turmoil.

Wistfulness and melancholy shadow the third movement, a minuet and trio, quoting from his song *Die Götter Griechenlands* (The Greek Gods). Schiller’s text conveys a yearning for a lost world: “Beautiful world, where are you...Ah, only in the magic land of song lives still your richly fabled trace.” The questioning, tentative motive sets the tone: this is hesitant, probing, private music.

This melancholy minuet differs from the finale, a more cheerful and dancelike sonata-rondo in A major. Only in the finale does Schubert emerge from the gloomy atmosphere. The closing *Allegro moderato* has the joviality of the “Trout Quintet” finale. However, the higher spirits of the finale are softened somewhat by passages in the minor mode and an indecisive final cadence. It is almost as if Schubert is trying to make amends for a quartet cloaked in pain and distress.

More than a few elements of Hungarian style exist: drones, emphasis on second beats, quasi-improvisatory passages, dotted rhythms, and violinistic flourishes reminiscent of Gypsy fiddling. Schubert’s supple rhythms, changes from major to minor mode and back again, and sporadic transitory stops remind us that the quartet is, at its core, the mirror of a tormented soul.

—notes by Dr. Michael Spencer

58TH SEASON 2013-2014

*Presented in Cooperation with
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of Music; Giulio Ongaro, Dean*

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2:30 PM Sunday, October 6, 2013
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Dover Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, October 20, 2013
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Atlantic Brass Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, November 24, 2013
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Peabody Trio

2:30 PM Sunday, February 9, 2014
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Ying Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, April 6, 2014
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TO OUR AUDIENCE

- The use of cameras and recording devices of any kind is forbidden.
- There is no smoking in the building.
- Please turn off cellular telephones and disengage audible alarms on pagers and watches during concert.
- Concert programs are subject to change without notice.
- Seating is unreserved for the 2013-14 Season.
- Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Adult: Single \$25, Season \$100
Children 12 and younger & students: Free
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