

# *Concerts at the Point*

18TH SEASON 2014-2015



*presents ...*

## THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

SEPTEMBER 21, 2014, 3:00 PM

1912 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT POINT, MASSACHUSETTS

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# *Concerts at the Point*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2014

## THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

Peter Zazofsky, violin

Lucia Lin, violin

Steven Ansell, viola

Michael Reynolds, cello

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## ITALIAN SERENADE IN G MAJOR

**WOLF**

*Molto vivo*

## QUARTET NO. 2, "INTIMATE LETTERS"

**JANACEK**

*Andante (First impression)*

*Adagio (Love Song)*

*Moderato (Sweetest longings)*

*Allegro (Fear for her welfare)*

**INTERMISSION . . .**

## QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 61

**DVORAK**

*Allegro*

*Poco Adagio e molto cantabile*

*Scherzo: Allegro vivo*

*Finale: Vivace*

## THE PERFORMERS

### THE MUIR STRING QUARTET



In its 36th season in 2014-2015, the Muir String Quartet has long been acknowledged as one of the world's most powerful and insightful ensembles, distinguishing itself among audiences and critics with its "exhilarating involvement" (Boston Globe), "impeccable voicing and intonation" (San Francisco Examiner) and "unbridled musicality" (American Record Guide).

**MICHAEL REYNOLDS** has been the cellist for the Muir since its inception in 1979. As a member of the Muir and as soloist and chamber musician, Mr. Reynolds has performed nearly 2,000 concerts throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East, and has performed with such diverse artists as Leon Fleisher, Manachem Pressler, Gil Shaham, Richard Stoltzman, Phyllis Curtin and Benny Goodman.

Proceeds from his many recordings for ECOClassics support programs with the Classics for Kids Foundation, of which he is Executive/Artistic Director. This Foundation offers matching grants for excellent student instruments for strings programs nationwide. He is also the Artistic Director of the Rockport Fall Foliage and the Fredericksburg Festival of the Arts in Virginia, and he directs the Muir's Emerging Quartets and Composers program at the Deer Valley Festival in Utah every summer. In his spare time, he is an avid flyfisherman and outdoorsman. He plays a cello by Giuseppe Grancino, circa 1690.



**LUCIA LIN**, violinist, made her debut with the Chicago Symphony at age eleven. Since then, she has been a prize winner at numerous competitions and has performed solo recitals throughout the US. A frequent collaborator in chamber music, Ms. Lin has performed at music festivals worldwide. She served as Concert Master of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and the London Symphony, and is currently a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, having served as its Assistant Concert Master from 1988-91, and 1996-98.

**PETER ZAZOFSKY**, violinist, has performed in twenty three countries on five continents. He has appeared as soloist with the Boston Symphony (at Symphony Hall and Tanglewood), the Berlin Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony, which featured him on tour in Hong Kong and Taiwan. He has played and recorded with many other orchestras world wide, bringing acclaim for his distinctive interpretations of classical, romantic and early 20th century music. Mr. Zazofsky is Professor of Violin and Coordinator of String Chamber Music at the Boston University School of Music. He also serves as the Director of the String Quartet Workshop at the BU Tanglewood Institute.

**STEVEN ANSELL**, violist, began his studies at age ten, and upon graduation from the Curtis Institute, he was appointed Professor of Viola at the University of Houston and became Assistant Principal Violist of the Pittsburgh Symphony under Andre Prevein. In 1979 he left that orchestra to become one of the founding members of the Muir String Quartet. Mr. Ansell joined the Boston Symphony in 1996 as Principal Violist and has appeared many times as its soloist.



**HUGO WOLF** (1860–1903)  
ITALIAN SERENADE  
IN G MAJOR

*Molto Vivo*

Hugo Wolf was an elusive figure remembered primarily for his masterful lieder, his trenchant criticism of Brahms and his eventual decay into dissolution and madness. He was a fierce disciple of Wagner and the “new” German school and can be regarded as a late Viennese Romantic before the turning of the tide with Schoenberg after Wolf’s death. Leaving only a few works for small ensemble, his lone and rarely performed string quartet in D minor is the closest thing we have to Wagnerian or even Mahlerian chamber music.

Wolf also penned two single movement works for string quartet, a substantial Intermezzo and his one “outlier”, the celebrated Italian Serenade. The predominantly buoyant music, tuneful, colorful and rhythmically animated, seems to naturally support free associations with things Italian if not in some way enhanced by association with Mendelssohn’s Italian Symphony and Tchaikovsky’s Souvenir de Florence written only a few years after Wolf’s musical postcard. A lithely ornamented melody warbles to the evocation of strumming guitars with a strong penchant for dance if not even a suggestion of operatic comedy.

The word serenade historically implies music of honor, tribute or amorous entreaty, music that is calm, “light” and suitable for relaxed social evenings. Music that entertains and possibly dazzles with delight. Wolf’s bright serenade largely conforms to this character. But there is more than just this in the music. The rhythmic and occasionally contrapuntal writing is skillful and meticulous with a rich variety of textures weaving throughout. The music develops into a sharply articulated adventure with a bit more intrigue one might expect of a little “night music.” Wolf’s late Viennese Romantic sensibilities emerge in the middle as the texture dramatically falls apart into dissonant recitative, a kind of expressionistic call and response accompanied by disorienting swirls, mocking echoes, parody and a brief touch of the macabre. But it seems entirely consonant with an Italian evening, particularly the wild intrigue of a psychedelic Venetian carnival. And just like a group of masked figures that approach, pass and disappear into the night, the intrigue evaporates and the music resumes its giddy serenade. *Source: Earsense*

**LEOS JANACEK (1854–1928)**

**QUARTET NO. 2, “INTIMATE LETTERS”**

*Andante - Con Moto - Allegro (First impression)*

*Adagio - Vivace (Love Song)*

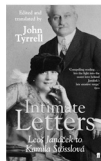
*Moderato - Andante - Adagio (Sweetest longings)*

*Allegro (Fear for her welfare)*

Leos Janacek was a Czech composer, musical theorist, folklorist, publicist and teacher. He was inspired by Moravian and other Slavic folk music to create an original and modern musical style. His distinctly Czech style shows connections with the inflections of his native speech, and uses scales and melodic characteristics of Moravian folk music.

Janacek had an extraordinary life, marked by tragedies in his family, inspired in his late work by his love for a much younger, married





woman (Kamila) and encouraged by success which did not come his way until his sixties.

The viola assumes a prominent role throughout “Intimate Letters,” as this instrument is interpreted to personify Kamila. The composition is intended to reflect the character of their relationship as revealed in more than 700 letters they exchanged with each other. The letters are intimate, and self-revealing confidences of a man only latterly recognized as one of the greatest operatic composers of the 20th century.

Commentator Rob Kapilow noted that, as obsessed as Janáček was with Kamila, “he was obsessed with short musical ideas that could convey maximum emotional impact in the fewest possible notes. Janáček’s portrait begins with simple sounding repeated notes; and then the music speeds up, but not in the usual way. It is not just a note speeding up. It’s actually the blood quickening at the thought of Kamila. Janáček tells us all he feels for Kamila in a compact, rhythmically clear set of notes: short-short, long-long, and a repeated note. The same pattern is heard over and over, but every time it is a little different, more complicated, with anguish at every step.”

*Sources: Wikipedia, NPR Music*





**ANTONIN DVORÁK** (1841–1904)

QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 61

*Allegro*

*Poco Adagio e molto cantabile*

*Scherzo; Allegro vivo*

*Finale: Vivace*

Dvořák's sudden burst to fame in his late thirties was the result of help from powerful friends, primarily Brahms, who recognized the Czech composer's talents and did much to get him launched. Dvořák was not entirely comfortable in the new world that he seemed to be conquering, for his new German friends wanted him to move from Prague to Vienna, to give up his Czech identity, and to use his talents to write music in the mainstream German tradition. Dvořák was grateful for their help, but he refused to surrender his past or his identity.

Widely regarded now as the most distinguished of Czech composers, Dvořák produced attractive and vigorous music possessed of clear formal outlines, melodies that are both memorable and spontaneous sounding, and a colorful, effective instrumental sense. Dvořák is considered one of the major figures of Czech nationalism, both proselytizing for and making actual use of folk influences, which he expertly combined with Classical forms in works of all genres. His symphonies are among his most widely appreciated works; the Symphony No. 9 (from the New World - 1893) takes a place among the finest and most popular examples of the symphonic literature. Similarly, his Cello Concerto (1894-95) is one of the cornerstones of the repertory, providing the soloist an opportunity for virtuosic flair and soaring expressivity.

Dvorák displayed special skill in writing for chamber ensembles, producing dozens of such works; among these, his 14 string quartets (1862-95), the American Quintet (1893) and the “Dumky” Trio (1890-91) are outstanding examples of their respective genres, overflowing with attractive folklike melodies set like jewels into the solid fixtures of Brahmsian absolute forms. The Quartet in C Major was composed under a commission from the Hellmesberger String Quartet, the most illustrious chamber ensemble in Vienna in the mid-19th century,

The first movement sets out stately yet singing themes in traditional sonata-form fashion. The slow movement’s tempo marking might almost have been taken directly from Beethoven, who so often used the word *cantabile* to indicate the singing style that Dvorák’s two violins display in a lyrical duet-without-words supported by the lower-voiced instruments. The main theme of the scherzo recalls motifs from the first movement, contrasted with a gently melodic trio portion. In the headlong-paced finale, Dvorák gives us a lively rondo full of that melodic inventiveness. Special prominence goes to the first violin in a gorgeously lyrical cadenza.

*Sources: AllMusic, Rovi Staff, Andrea Lamoreaux, Eric Bromberger*

# *Concerts at the Point*

2014-2015 SEASON, SUNDAYS, 3PM

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SEPTEMBER 21, 2014

MUIR STRING QUARTET

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