

Concerts at the Point

16TH SEASON 2012-2013



presents ...

THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

SEPTEMBER 30, 2012, 3:00 PM

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Concerts at the Point

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

Peter Zazofsky, violin

Lucia Lin, violin

Steven Ansell, viola

Michael Reynolds, cello

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QUARTET IN D MAJOR, K. 575

MOZART

Allegretto

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegretto

...

QUARTETO IN F MINOR, OP. 95 "SERIOSO"

BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivae ma serioso

Larghetto espressivo – Allegretto agitato

...

INTERMISSION

QUARTET NO. 1 IN D MAJOR, OP. 11

TCHAIKOVSKY

Moderato e semplice

Andante catabile

Scherzo: Allegro non tanto

Finale: Allegro giusto

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THE PERFORMERS: THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

In its 34th season, 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). They are perennial favorites at Concerts at the Point, starting with their first performance in 1999 and now making their seventh visit.

The Muir Quartet has been in residence at Boston University's College of Fine Arts since 1983, and gives annual summer workshops at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI). The Muir Quartet has also given master classes at schools nationwide, including the Eastman School of Music, the Curtis Institute, Oberlin Conservatory, and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Since 1989, the quartet has presented the Emerging Quartets and Composers Program in Utah with eminent composer Joan Tower. This program is now part of the Muir's role as resident chamber ensemble with the Deer Valley Festival, in partnership with the Utah Symphony/Opera.

The Muir has recently recorded Berg's Quartet op.3, Schulhof's Five Pieces, and the Kreisler Quartet, due out soon. They are represented by AMG, Inc.



PETER ZAZOFSKY, violinist, was born and raised in Boston, MA. He has performed in twenty-three countries on five continents. He has appeared as soloist with the Boston Symphony, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony, which featured him on tour in Hong Kong and Taiwan. He has toured the U.S., as guest soloist of the Danish Radio Orchestra; Germany, with the Bamberg Symphony; and Israel, with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. Further appearances, with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony, and the orchestras of Baltimore, Minnesota, Brussels, Warsaw, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Sao Paulo, Seoul (KBS), Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal brought acclaim for his distinctive interpretations of classical, romantic and early twentieth century concerti. Two such live performances, the Dvorak Concerto with Klaus Tennstedt and the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Bartok 2nd Concerto with Georges Octors and the Brussels National Orchestra, have been released on the Testament and Deutsche Gramophone labels.

In addition to standard repertoire, Mr. Zazofsky is an advocate for late 20th and early 21st Century compositions. He has premiered works written for him by composers in Holland, Belgium and Denmark, and recorded American concertos for the MMC label. Another premiere, Joan Guinjoan's Concerto with the Liege Orchestra in Madrid, is now available on the Columna Musica label.

Mr. Zazofsky is Professor of Violin and Coordinator of String Chamber Music at the Boston University School of Music. He also serves as Director of the String Quartet Workshop at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute.

LUCIA LIN, violinist, is a native of Champaign, Illinois and made her debut performing the Mendelssohn Concerto with the Chicago Symphony at age eleven. Since then, she has been a prizewinner in numerous competitions, including the 1990 International Tschaikovsky Competition in Moscow. She has performed in solo recitals throughout the U.S., making her New York debut at Weill Recital Hall in March 1991, and has appeared with the Boston Pops Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Oklahoma Symphony, the Festivalorchester in Graz, Austria, and the Moscow State Orchestra.

Ms. Lin served as Concertmaster of both the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra from 1991-92 and the London Symphony Orchestra from 1994-96, and is currently a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, having served as Assistant Concertmaster there from 1988-91 and 1996-98. She has recorded for Nonesuch Records as a guest of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, for New World Records on a disc featuring the works of Bright Sheng, and for Parjomusic as a member of the Boston Trio, of which she was a founding member.

STEVEN ANSELL, violist, began his studies at age ten with Karla Kantner in Seattle, Washington. He studied with Don McGinnis, Vilem Sokol, and Veda Reynolds before going to the Curtis Institute, where he studied with Michael Tree, Karen Tuttle and Raphael Hillyer. Upon graduation, he was appointed Professor of Viola at the University of Houston and became Assistant Principal Violist of the Pittsburgh Symphony under Andre Previn in 1977. In 1979 he left the orchestra to become one of the founding members of the Muir String Quartet, in residence at Boston University since 1983.

In 1996, Mr. Ansell joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra as Principal Violist, and has appeared many times as soloist, playing Berlioz's Harold in Italy with Emmanuel Krivine and James Levine, the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante with Lowe/Previn, Bruch's double concerto for clarinet and viola, and Don Quixote with Mstislav Rostropovich and Yo-Yo Ma, among many others. He continues to enjoy exploring the quartet literature, recording, teaching and playing with the BSO.

MICHAEL REYNOLDS, cellist, is a Montana native, attended the Curtis Institute of Music and Yale University and began his career as a founding member of the Muir String Quartet. He has appeared as recital and orchestral soloist throughout the United States. He has been a professor of music at Boston University since 1983 and received an honorary doctorate from Rhode Island College in 1995.

Mr. Reynolds is the director of the Montana Chamber Music Festival and the Executive Director of Classics for Kids Foundation, which gives quality student instruments to communities and schools around America. He directs the Muir Quartet's Emerging Quartets and Composers program at the Deer Valley Festival in Utah every summer.

Mr. Reynolds' recording of the complete Bach Suites for Solo Cello on the EcoClassics label has received much critical acclaim. In addition to recording with the Muir, other upcoming recordings include the Beethoven Clarinet Trio (after the Septet) and Zemlinsky Trio with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman and pianist Judith Stillman, and the complete Bach Gamba Sonatas with pianist Michele Levin. Profits from these recordings will support Classics for Kids Foundation's grant programs.

PROGRAM NOTES

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 – 1791)

QUARTET IN D MAJOR, K. 575

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Allegretto

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegretto

Nowhere is it more clear that Mozart was able to separate his troubled physical and emotional condition from the spiritual and musical side of his life than in the melodic, optimistic D major quartet. Even though Mozart was suffering from great adversity at the time, the work achieves a rare buoyancy of spirit. In one regard, though, the quartet bears the imprint of the immediate circumstances. Since it was written at the urging of King Frederick of Prussia, who was an excellent cellist, the cello plays an important role throughout. To balance the prominent cello, Mozart wrote parts of greater consequence for the two inner voices, the second violin and the viola.

The principal theme of the first movement is essentially a rising arpeggio and a descending scale. Both first movement themes—and the main theme of the finale, too—share the same melody, although in completely different rhythms.

The second movement is in ternary form, A-B-A. The contrast between the two sections comes from the melodic contour of A, an earthbound line, and B, a soaring phrase that passes from instrument to instrument. It is also heard in the difference between the thick texture of A, with the violins doubled, and B, which is a single melodic line, well-distanced from the repeated-note accompaniment.

The sprightly Menuetto starts with the four-note turn that came at the finish of the Andante. Perking along in one-beat-to-a-bar pulse, the music glitters with sharp contrast—soft and loud, staccato and legato. The trio is a showcase for the cello, which sings out the cantabile melodies (with that same four-note turn), very high in its range.

The cello introduces the main theme of the serenely happy last movement; it starts with the same rising arpeggio as the themes of the first movement. The contrasting interludes of the movement's rondo form spring from the ascending arpeggios as well, but in different keys, settings, and scorings, so that they truly sound like new material. *Source: Guide to Chamber Music, Melvin Berger*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 – 1827)

QUARTET IN F MINOR, OP. 95 "SERIOSO"

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Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serio

Larghetto espressivo – Allegretto agitato

Beethoven's *String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95* is classified as a work of his "middle" period, but it sits on the brink of Beethoven's "late" period where the final quartets dwell in a rarefied world of their own. Op. 95 contains many passages with the sublime qualities of the late quartets featuring transitions between the profound, difficult and elliptical on one hand and the simple, direct and exquisitely lyrical on the other. From another perspective, Op. 95 represents a singular contraction of the form into a dense, concentrated work where everything is stripped to a drastic, but essential minimum.

The compression of form and expression is most apparent in the first movement. The sonata includes three rapidly exposed and highly contrasted themes in an exposition without repeat, followed by a brief development and a varied but truncated recapitulation. The conclusion leverages our expectations of Beethoven's previous music by preparing for what appears to be a dramatic launch into a new section of great length only to rapidly fade into a fairly shocking close. The awesome potential energy remains untapped projecting a heavy weight on the movements to follow. Lasting typically between four and five minutes, this is the shortest first movement of all the Beethoven's quartets.

The second movement is the tender heart of the quartet. Beginning as a lyrical slow movement, it promises compassionate relief from the huge kinetic (and potential) energy of the first movement. Here is the true window into Beethoven's late quartets with their liquid ecstasies amidst imponderable complexities. The emphatic climax is built from its first two-note interval alone. The direct and heartfelt nature of the opening returns again in a final glory of song, but is unable to conclude: suddenly perturbed by a new, unresolved chord, the movement halts, then bounds headlong into the third movement scherzo restoring all the unbridled tension of the first movement.

The final two movements sustain a nearly unbroken arc of intensity. The scherzo offers brief respite in its contrasting trio and the finale begins with a slow, mournful introduction. Yet Beethoven was keenly aware of his manipulative powers and knew that just as he transfixed his listener in the rapture of despair, he could shatter the mood by turning on a dime: at the very end of this tense, nearly continuous quartet, the final bars instantaneously shift into a bright romp, fresh and giddy as spring, oblivious to everything but unrelenting joy. The huge, unresolved weight of the entire quartet evaporates in the last thirty seconds in what might be the greatest musical punch line of all time. *Source: Earsense Chamberbase*

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840 – 1893)

QUARTET NO. 1 IN D MAJOR, OP. 11

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Moderato e semplice

Andante cantabile

Scherzo: Allegro non tanto

Finale: Allegro giusto

This quartet is considered the first great Russian string quartet, and the circumstances of its composition were unusual. Though a professor at the Moscow Conservatory and the teacher of a growing number of private students, Tchaikovsky was struggling financially when his friend Nikolay Rubinstein suggested that he prepare a

concert of his own music to raise funds. Since hiring an orchestra was too expensive, Rubinstein suggested that the program consist of solo and chamber music. Lacking a major chamber work, Tchaikovsky composed his first string quartet in the month of February 1871. The work soon achieved international currency owing to the popularity of its second movement.

Structurally this first quartet is more classical than romantic, following the models of Mozart and Schubert, but its musical themes are clearly Slavic. The rising and falling of the opening chords of the first movement have given the quartet the subtitle "The Accordion." Constructed in sonata form, the first movement offers two themes, the first fluid, the second opening with a richly harmonized melody in the viola. The closing theme begins with light, delicate passages played by the first violin. All three themes are addressed in the development section and restated in the recapitulation. The movement ends in a high-spirited coda.

The Andante cantabile is based on the folksong "Sidel Vanya," which Tchaikovsky had heard at his sister and brother-in-law's family estate at Kamenka in Ukraine. The song begins with the unremarkable line, "Vanya sat on a divan and smoked a pipe of tobacco." Between statements of this folk melody, Tchaikovsky introduces a highly expressive original melody, played twice by the first violin over pizzicato accompaniment.

Marked "Not too fast and with fire," the Scherzo exhibits the robust rhythmic character of a Russian peasant dance. The trio consists of the three upper instruments playing complex figurations over a sustained drone in the cello.

The Finale is permeated by folk idioms, its first theme an exuberant dance, its second a song of Slavic soulfulness. After Tchaikovsky works out both themes, a sudden stop interrupts the music. A whirlwind coda brings the string quartet to a close. *Source: John Noell Moore*

UPCOMING *Concerts at the Point...*

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