

# *Concerts at the Point*

16TH SEASON 2012-2013



*presents ...* STRATA

NOVEMBER 18, 2012, 3:00 PM

THIS CONCERT SEASON IS SUPPORTED  
IN PART BY GRANTS FROM THE



Massachusetts Cultural Council

THE GRIMSHAW GUDEWICZ FOUNDATION,  
THE HELEN ELLIS CHARITABLE TRUST,  
AND BY GIFTS FROM OUR GENEROUS  
AUDIENCE MEMBERS AND BUSINESS SUPPORTERS.

# *Concerts at the Point*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2012

## STRATA

James Stern, violin & viola

Nathan Williams, clarinet

Audrey Andrist, piano

## SELECTIONS FROM "AFTERNOON CAKEWALK"

### **BOLCOM**

*I Easy Winner (Joplin)*

*IV Frogs Legs Rag (Scott)*

*V Graceful Ghost (Bolcom)*

*VI Finale: Incineratorag (Bolcom)*

## SELECTIONS FROM EIGHT PIECES, OP 83 FOR CLARINET, VIOLA, & PIANO

### **BRUCH**

*No. 1 Andante*

*No. 2 Allegro con moto*

*No. 3 Andante con moto*

*No. 7 Allegro vivace, ma non troppo*

## INTERMISSION . . .

## TRIO IN E FLAT, K498, "KEGESTATT"

### **MOZART**

*Andante*

*Menuetto*

*Rondeau (Allegretto)*

## CONTRASTS

### **BARTOK**

*Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)*

*Pihenö (Relaxation)*

*Sebes (Fast Dance)*



## THE PERFORMERS

**STRATA** is a coming together of three extraordinary musical talents: Audrey Andrist, piano; Nathan Williams, clarinet; and James Stern, violin and viola. Their combined credits encompass numerous international prizes and performances across four continents including such places as Carnegie Hall, the Marlboro Festival and the Kennedy Center. STRATA brings “deft ensemble playing” and a “talent... that’s worth getting worked up about” (*Washington Post*) to a repertoire that combines the great trio and duo repertoire of the past with an ever-growing body of new works written especially for them over the twenty years they have been playing together.

All holders of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Juilliard School, the members of STRATA are dedicated to every level of music education, from the mentoring of graduate students and young professionals, to the initial sparking of musical passion in very young children, to the guiding of audiences in what to listen for. Spoken commentary is an integral part of all their concerts.

STRATA received grants from the Rauch Foundation to pursue their Metaclassical Music Project. To quote James Stern, “we are interested in what composers will create when they start out with the intention to instruct. Recognizing that some of the most successful concert music has its roots in settings far removed from the concert hall—rural countrysides, private salons, military recruiting shows, rituals both solemn and celebratory—the Metaclassical Music Project asks composers to envision the educational outreach presentation as the setting of origin and the concert hall as the setting of destination.” [www.stratamusic.org](http://www.stratamusic.org)

**JAMES STERN** is a multi-faceted musician whose violin playing has been heard worldwide and cited by the *Washington Post* for “virtuosity and penetrating intelligence.” In addition he enjoys an ever-growing reputation as a violist and conductor.

Mr. Stern has served on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music and is now Associate Professor and Chair of the String Division at the University of Maryland School of Music. He has taught master classes throughout North America and in China, Norway and Italy, and has published numerous articles on violin pedagogy for such journals as *American String Teacher*.

In his frequent appearances at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, he has brought innovative programming that includes performing in multiple capacities, composing and arranging, reciting poetry and distributing pre-concert essays via the Center's website.

**NATHAN WILLIAMS** joined the faculty of the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin in August, 2008. In October, 2008, he was appointed principal clarinetist of the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston. Mr. Williams has been hailed by critics as "a highly effective soloist" (*The New York Times*). Mr. Williams earned the Artist Diploma with highest honors from the Academy of Music and Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria, as well as graduate degrees from the Eastman and Juilliard schools, where he studied with Stanley Hasty.

**AUDREY ANDRIST** currently lives in the Washington, DC area, where she serves on the faculties of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County and the Washington Conservatory, and where she has performed at the Library of Congress, Wolf Trap, and the Smithsonian Institutions.

An avid performer of new music with many world premieres to her credit, Ms. Andrist can be heard on over a dozen recordings of both standard and modern repertoire on the Albany, Centredisques, and New Focus labels, among others. Her CD of major solo works by Robert Schumann has just been released on Centaur Records.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **WILLIAM BOLCOM** (1937 – )

#### SELECTIONS FROM “AFTERNOON CAKEWALK”

...

- I *Easy Winner* (Scott Joplin, 1867 – 1917)
- IV *Frogs Legs Rag* (James Scott, 1885 – 1938)
- V *Graceful Ghost* (William Bolcom)
- VI *Finale: Incineratorag* (William Bolcom)

William Bolcom is a prolific American composer of chamber, operatic, vocal, choral, cabaret, ragtime, and symphonic music and an accomplished pianist. Bolcom won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1988 for *12 New Etudes for Piano*, and his setting of William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* on the Naxos label won four Grammy Awards in 2005. Bolcom arranged the Joplin and Scott rags, originally composed for piano solo, for trio and piano & clarinet, respectively.

Bolcom studied with Darius Milhaud, Leland Smith and with Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire, where he received the *2ème Prix de Composition*. He joined the faculty of the University of Michigan’s School of Music in 1973 and retired in 2008 after 35 years.

As a pianist, Bolcom has performed and recorded his own work, frequently in collaboration with his wife and musical partner, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris. Their primary specialties in both concerts and recordings are cabaret songs, show tunes, and popular songs from the early 20th century.

#### **Ragtime Musical Form**

Ragtime originated in African American music in the late 19th century, descending from jigs and march music, and the cakewalk. The cakewalk dance was developed from a “Prize Walk” done in the days of slavery, generally at get-togethers on plantations in the Southern United States. One theory holds that the cakewalk originated as a parody of the formal ballroom dancing preferred by white slave owners, including satirical exaggerations of European dance moves.

A distinctly American musical style, ragtime may be considered a synthesis of African syncopation and European classical music. The rag was usually written in 2/4 or 4/4 time with a predominant left hand pattern of bass notes on strong beats (beats 1 and 3) and chords on weak beats (beat 2 and 4) accompanying a syncopated melody in the right hand.

Ragtime is not a “time” (meter) in the same sense that march time is 2/4 meter and waltz time is 3/4 meter; it is rather a musical genre that uses an effect that can be applied to any meter. The defining characteristic of ragtime music is a specific type of syncopation in which melodic accents occur between metrical beats. This results in a melody that seems to be avoiding some metrical beats of the accompaniment by emphasizing notes that either anticipate or follow the beat. The ultimate (and intended) effect on the listener is actually to accentuate the beat, thereby inducing the listener to move to the music. Scott Joplin, the composer/pianist known as the “King of Ragtime”, called the effect “weird and intoxicating.” He also used the term “swing” in describing how to play ragtime music: “Play slowly until you catch the swing.” *Compiled from Wikipedia*

**MAX BRUCH** (1838 – 1920 )

SELECTIONS FROM EIGHT PIECES, OP 83 FOR CLARINET, VIOLA, & PIANO  
...

*No. 1 Andante*

*No. 2 Allegro con moto*

*No. 3 Andante con moto*

*No. 7 Allegro vivace, ma non troppo*

Bruch was born in Cologne, where he received his early musical training under the composer and pianist Ferdinand Hiller, to whom Robert Schumann dedicated his piano concerto. He had a long career as a teacher, conductor and composer, moving among musical posts in Germany and spending three years at the height of his reputation as conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society.

His complex and well-structured works, in the German Romantic musical tradition, placed him in the camp of Romantic classicism exemplified by Johannes Brahms, rather than the opposing “New Music” of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. His Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26 (1866) is one of the most popular Romantic violin concertos. Other pieces which are well-known and widely played include the Scottish Fantasy for violin and orchestra and Kol Nidrei, Op. 47, for cello and orchestra.

Bruch was over 70 when he wrote Eight Pieces; their autumnal nature isn’t surprising, given the composer’s age and the fact that his form of Romanticism was being displaced by more innovative techniques. Each of these items is a character piece, although they carry no titles more descriptive than tempo indications.

No. 1 is an A minor Andante, with its tentative main theme introduced by the piano, which then recedes to an accompanimental role while the Schumannesque melody is played in turn by the viola and clarinet. Although the piano retains a constant presence, the clarinet and viola rarely play together. More often they’re like an old married couple, completing each other’s thoughts.

No. 2 in B minor is a brief Allegro con moto with a quietly roiling piano undercurrent; this dark, restless piece would have been at home in any of Brahms’ chamber or piano works from the 1890s.

No. 3 in C minor, Andante con moto, is the suite’s most extended movement. It’s a study in contrast between the rhapsodic, recitative-like material for viola and the introverted lyricism of the clarinet.

No. 7 is the suite’s sole major-mode piece, an Allegro vivace ma non troppo in B major. It’s a charming rondo full of Mendelssohnian verve and the barest hint of an Italian folk dance in the section that binds the piece together. *Source: AllMusic by Rovi*



**W. A. MOZART** (1756 – 1791)

TRIO IN E FLAT, K498, “KEGESTATT”

...

*Andante*

*Menuetto; trio*

*Rondeau (Allegretto)*

In Mozart’s time, the clarinet was a relatively new instrument, and the Kegelstatt Trio (along with his Clarinet Quintet and Clarinet Concerto) helped increase the instrument’s popularity. No composer before Mozart had written for this combination of instruments. The trio was published in 1788, arranged—probably with Mozart’s consent—for violin, viola and piano, and the original clarinet part was described as “alternative part.”

The Trio largely eschews virtuosity in favor of exploiting the natural lyrical qualities of the clarinet and viola. The result is what has been aptly termed one of his most perfectly integrated compositions, with an interplay among the three instruments full of delightfully subtle touches.

Set in three movements, the Trio opens with an Andante in the tonic key of E flat, featuring complex dialogue between these three unusual instrumental collaborators. The B flat Menuetto, which follows, is also built upon contrasts. The work ends with a dazzling and exhilarating Rondeau. The final movement is remarkable for its two intermezzo-like passages in which the piano comes to the fore. The work ends in sublime fashion, as the clarinet offers commentary on earlier ideas. *Source: Classical Archives*

**BELA BARTOK** (1881 – 1945)

CONTRASTS

...

*Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)*

*Pihenő (Relaxation)*

*Sebes (Fast Dance)*

Béla Bartók, a twentieth-century Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist, was a central figure in introducing Hungarian and Rumanian folk music to the rest of Europe. His compositions often integrated melodic and rhythmic elements of this folk music with twentieth-century compositional techniques. “Contrasts” was the result of “a brainstorm” that occurred to Jozsef Szigeti, a Hungarian violinist and a loyal friend of Bartók. Szigeti persuaded the jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman to commission from Bartók a trio for clarinet, violin, and piano.

Contrasts is Bartók’s only chamber piece to include a wind instrument. The work is indeed a study in contrasts: the tone color of the three different instruments, the different musical idioms, the jazz and classical players, the moods and tempi. Bartók explores the timbral differences between the instruments rather than reconciling and blending them.

The first movement, *Verbunkos* (recruiting dance), begins with a violin pizzicato introduction; then the clarinet presents the calm, modally tinged *verbunkos* theme, which subsequently undergoes variation and development.

The second movement is entitled *Pihenő*, literally meaning “taking a rest.” With its introverted melodies and constantly shifting moods, the movement is meant to evoke an outdoor nocturnal scene. It features sounds of a summer night in the country: the chirpings and flutterings of nocturnal frogs, birds and insects. Bartók was a man who listened most carefully and intently to the sounds of nature.

The third movement, Sebes (fast dance), contains some very interesting features, not the least of which is that the violinist needs two violins to perform the movement. The clarinet part also requires the use of both B-flat and A clarinets, which is done to more easily facilitate technical passages in different key signatures.

The four strings of a violin are normally tuned in perfect fifths, starting from the low G string to D to A to E. Bartók instructs the violinist to raise the low G string to G# and lower the top string to E flat (G#,D,A,E flat). The interval between the D and A String remains a perfect fifth, but because of the raising of the G and lowering of the E, this perfect fifth is sandwiched between two diminished fifths or tritones. And so the violin is tuned so that the player can play these tritones on open strings. This abnormal tuning is called scordatura. Since the violinist cannot retune during performance, he also needs a violin tuned normally.

Bartók, a pioneer ethno-musicologist, found the tritone in use in much of the modal folk music of central Europe, even though in western music, the tritone or diminished fifth was called “the devil in music.” It was supposed to be avoided in voice leading, harmonic progressions and counterpoint.

The third movement begins with a burlesque introduction by the violinist using a scordatura violin, and leads into a lively, dance-like Hungarian theme. The middle (trio) section features a melody that combines stylistic elements of Hungarian peasant songs with an asymmetrical Bulgarian-Rumanian meter in 13/8 (divided 3+2+3, 2+3). The movement also incorporates flamboyant jazzy theatrics, for which Bartók derived his inspiration from jazz trio recordings by Goodman. *Compiled from: Fuguemasters.com, Classical Archives, Aurelius Ensemble notes*

## UPCOMING *Concerts at the Point...*

ZEFIRA

JANUARY 27, 2013, SNOW DATE FEBRUARY 3, 2013

PHOEBUS

FEBRUARY 24, 2013

BOSTON UNIVERSITY OPERA INSTITUTE

MARCH 24, 2013

...

ADASKIN TRIO WITH OBOEIST THOMAS GALLANT

SEPTEMBER 22, 2013

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

OCTOBER 27, 2013

SIMA PIANO TRIO

NOVEMBER 24, 2013

...

TICKET ORDER FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CHURCH ENTRY AND FROM OUR WEBSITE—[WWW.CONCERTSATTHEPOINT.ORG](http://WWW.CONCERTSATTHEPOINT.ORG). YOU MAY ALSO CALL 508-636-0698 TO RESERVE TICKETS. RESERVED TICKETS MAY BE PICKED UP AND PAID FOR ON THE DAY OF THE CONCERT AT OUR TICKET TABLE IN THE CHURCH ENTRY. WE TAKE CHECKS AND CASH, ONLY.