



Concerts at the Point

22ND SEASON 2018-2019

presents ...

MUIR STRING QUARTET

NOVEMBER 4, 2018, 3:00 PM

1912 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT POINT, MASSACHUSETTS

The image on the cover is a painting by Michael Hubert, titled "Sanctuary." Hubert describes his approach to his art as "explorations of elemental moments of sky and water and the edges between, expressed through abstraction." In addition to being an accomplished painter, Hubert is the Owner/Director of the Dartmouth Early Learning Center for grades K-5.

We chose this painting because the three composers on today's program also explored at the edges. They created rich and complex investigations of melody, harmony, rhythm and sound in an intimate, personal way. While they built from the tradition of classical music, they added their own genius to convey profound musical thought that reflected themselves and their times.



This concert is underwritten in part by a grant from the Helen E Ellis Charitable Trust, administered by the Westport Cultural Council and by gifts from generous audience members.

Helen Ellis - an artist and a dedicated educator - was a Westport resident for over 50 years. Her naturalistic woodcarvings have been displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Following her death in 1978, the proceeds from her estate were used to establish the Helen Ellis Charitable Trust. The Trust supports Ms. Ellis' dream of inspiring others to develop their creative talents.

Administered by Bank of America, the Trust provides funding for the Westport Cultural Council to give awards for projects that benefit Westport residents. Funding from the Helen Ellis Charitable Trust for Westport began in 1992. Since then, the Westport Cultural Council has awarded over \$160,000 for approximately 150 arts and cultural programs that benefit Westport residents.

Concerts at the Point

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2018

MUIR STRING QUARTET

Peter Zazofsky, violin

Lucia Lin, violin

Steven Ansell, viola

Michael Reynolds, cello

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FIVE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET

SCHULLHOFF

Alla Valse

Alla Serenata

Alla Czecha

Alla Tango

Alla Tarantella

STRING QUARTET, IN D MINOR K421

MOZART

Allegro moderato

Andante

Menuetto and Trio

Allegretto ma non troppo

INTERMISSION ...

STRING QUARTET IN F MAJOR

RAVEL

Allegro moderato - Très doux

Assez vif - Très rythmé

Très lent

Vif et agité

THE PERFORMERS



THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

In their 39 years, the Muir String Quartet has been touring the nation and the world, taking the stage at concert halls, grand and modest, and garnering awards from a Grammy to two Grand Prix des Disques. The celebrated ensemble, with each member an accomplished soloist in his or her own right, has performed at the White House, presented works commissioned for them by leading composers, conducted master classes in Shanghai, and been profiled in the *New Yorker*. Their most recent recording is of Berg's Quartet op. 3, Schulhoff's Five Pieces and the Kreisler Quartet.

The Muir 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. Since 1989, they have 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 ensemble with the Deer Valley Festival, in partnership with the Utah Symphony/Opera

PETER ZAZOFSKY, violinist, has performed in over twenty countries on five continents. He has appeared as soloist with the Boston Symphony, (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 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 numerous symphonies across the globe 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.

Born and raised in Boston, he studied violin with Joseph Silverstein before attending the Juilliard Pre-College. He then studied at the Curtis Institute and the Marlboro Music Festival. He 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.

In addition to standard repertoire, Peter 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.

LUCIA LIN, violinist, made her debut performing the Mendelssohn Concerto with the Chicago Symphony at age eleven, was a prize-winner in numerous competitions, and has performed in solo recitals

throughout the U.S. A frequent collaborator in chamber music, Ms. Lin has performed at the Sapporo Music Festival, the Da Camera Society in Houston, the St. Barts Music Festival, and the Barbican Hall Chamber Series in London.

She served as Concertmaster of 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. A native of Champaign, Illinois, Ms. Lin received her bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois and her master's of music at Rice University in Houston, Texas.

STEVEN ANSELL, violist, began his studies at age ten in Seattle, Washington, before going to the Curtis Institute. 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 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 founding member of the Muir String Quartet. As a member of the Muir Quartet and as soloist and chamber musician, Mr. Reynolds has performed well over 2,000

concerts throughout North America, Europe and the Far East. Mr. Reynolds is also co-founder and Executive/Artistic Director of Classics for Kids Foundation. Since its inception in 1998, this foundation has given hundreds of matching grants for excellent student instruments to string programs around America. He is also Artistic Director of ArtsLIVE! (www.artsliveva.org) in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and the Montana Chamber Music Society (www.montanachambermusic.society.org), the first statewide chamber music society in America.

His recording of the complete Bach Suites for Solo Cello on the EcoClassics label received much critical acclaim. Recent and upcoming recordings include the Muir Quartet performing Berg Op. 3, Kreisler Quartet and Schulhoff 5 Pieces on the KidsClassics label, the Beethoven Clarinet Trio (after the Septet) and Zemlinsky Trio with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman and pianist Judith Stillman on KidsClassics, and the Weber Clarinet Quintet and works from the Klezmer tradition with clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein. Profits from these recordings support Classics for Kids Foundation grant programs.

A native of Montana, he received his professional training at the Curtis Institute of Music and Yale University. Mr. Reynolds has taught at Boston University's College of Fine Arts since 1983. His students continue to develop successful careers in music, including members of the Boston Symphony and other orchestras, teachers at universities and other institutions internationally, four winners of the Boston Symphony Competitions and numerous other competition winners. Mr. Reynolds has served on the faculties of New England Conservatory, Rutgers University, the University of Utah, and UC Santa Cruz. He received an honorary doctorate from Rhode Island College in 1995, and is a recent recipient of the Blue and Gold Award from Montana State University. In his spare time he is an avid fly-fisherman and outdoorsman.



PROGRAM NOTES



ERWIN SCHULLHOFF (1894-1942)

FIVE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET

Alla Valse

Alla Serenata

Alla Czecha

Alla Tango

Alla Tarantella

For even the cultivated music lover, Schulhoff is apt to be an unknown composer. He was born in Prague of German-Jewish parents and very early showed an extraordinary talent for music. Upon Dvorák's recommendation, Schulhoff began studies at the Prague Conservatory at the age of ten; he subsequently studied in Vienna and at the Leipzig Conservatory. Early musical influences included Strauss and Scriabin, as well as Reger and Debussy, both of whom Schulhoff briefly studied under. World War I interrupted Schulhoff's budding career sending him to the Western Front with the Austrian Army.

Schulhoff returned from the war with a new political and musical orientation. He turned to the leftist musical avant-garde in Germany and began to incorporate a variety of styles that flourished in a heady

mélange between the two wars including Expressionism, Neoclassicism, Dadaism, American Jazz and South American dance. Schulhoff was a brilliant pianist with a prodigious love for American Ragtime as well as a technical facility sufficient for demanding quarter-tone music. At least one more influence added to this wild mix: the nationalistic and native folk music of Czechoslovakia. All these elements combined into Schulhoff's unique musical language culminating in the peak of his career in the 1920's and early 1930's.

Schulhoff's leftist politics eventually lead him to join the communist party and ultimately to establish Soviet citizenship, though he never left Czechoslovakia. His political views brought trouble: some of his music was banned and he was forced to work under a pseudonym. When the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia in 1939, Schulhoff was arrested and deported to a concentration camp in Wülzburg, Germany where he died of tuberculosis in 1942 at age 48.

Five Pieces for String Quartet was written in 1923 and dedicated to Darius Milhaud. The Five Pieces comprise a dance suite, a neoclassical glance back to the Baroque era with the spiky dissonances, irony and rhythmic drive characteristic of the modern period. The music is skillfully wrought, accessible and compelling. It provides a perfect synopsis of several aspects of Schulhoff's multi-faceted music: a sense of parody occasionally bordering on the grotesque (*Alla Valse and Alla Serenata*), a clear element of Czech folk music (*Alla Czece*), a love of modern, popular dance (*Alla Tango*), and a brilliant facility for rhythmic vitality (*Alla Tarantella*). Together, the pieces vividly express the words Schulhoff wrote in 1919: "Music should first and foremost produce physical pleasures, yes, even ecstasies. Music is never philosophy, it arises from an ecstatic condition, finding its expression through rhythmical movement."

Sources: www.earsense.org; © Kai Christiansen



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 -1791)

STRING QUARTET, IN D MINOR K421

Allegro moderato

Andante

Menuetto and Trio. Allegretto

Allegretto ma non troppo

Born in Salzburg, Mozart showed prodigious ability from his earliest childhood. Already competent on keyboard and violin, he composed from the age of five and performed before European royalty. At 17, Mozart was engaged as a musician at the Salzburg court, but grew restless and traveled in search of a better position. While visiting Vienna in 1781, he was dismissed from his Salzburg position. He chose to stay in the capital, where he achieved fame but little financial security. During his final years in Vienna, he composed many of his best-known symphonies, concertos, and operas, and portions of the Requiem, which was largely unfinished at the time of his early death at the age of 35. The circumstances of his death have been much mythologized.

Mozart composed more than 600 works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic, and choral music. He is among the most enduringly popular of classical composers, and his influence is profound on subsequent Western art music. Ludwig van Beethoven composed his own early works in the shadow of Mozart, and Joseph Haydn wrote: “posterity will not see such a talent again in 100 years.”

This is the second quartet (written in 1783) as part of the famous series of six quartets dedicated to Haydn—and the only mature Mozart string quartet in a minor key. Thanks to Joseph Haydn, the acknowledged father of the string quartet, the quartet became the preferred vehicle through which composers expressed themselves ever since, from Mozart to John Adams. The German poet Goethe described the quartet in terms of a musical conversation, like “listening to four rational people conversing among themselves.”

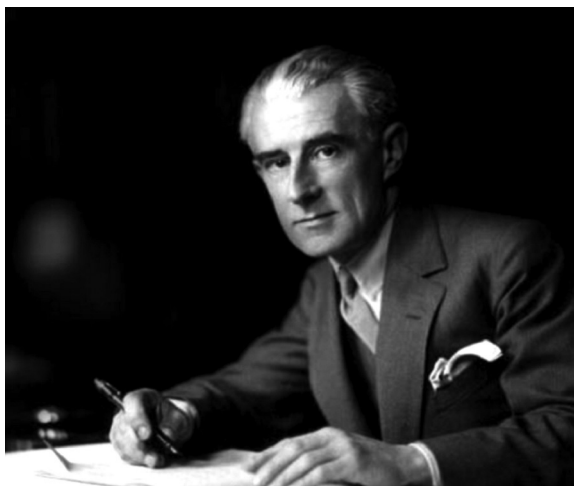
The conversation metaphor nicely captures two defining features of the genre: its intimate, personal nature as well as its capacity to convey profound musical thought through the essential ingredients of four-part harmony and counterpoint. And, the medium of the string quartet can also lend itself to the expression of wit and humor.

This quartet commands our attention at the outset (*Allegro*) with the drop of an octave from the first violin that ushers in its plaintive main subject. The contrasting second subject is a songful melody over a throbbing background. Mozart shows how much he learned from Haydn (and Bach) in the development, which features a good deal of contrapuntal passagework. Throughout this movement, harmonies are stretched out before being resolved, increasing the emotional tension.

The nocturnal slow movement (*Andante*), in ABA song form and triple meter, is remarkable for the recurring rising three-note figure in the accompaniment, particularly from the cello, that expands the lovely main melody. In the middle section, this is transmuted into a series of little dissonant stabs of pain. The stately *Minuetto/Allegretto* is both elegant and deeply, gravely serious; the middle section, with its dancing first violin over a pizzicato accompaniment, provides the greatest possible contrast.

The finale (*Allegro ma non troppo*) is a set of variations on a theme in a 6/8 siciliano rhythm. The prevailing mood is bittersweet, the harmonies rich, the invention consistently fine. A violin figure that appeared at the start of the movement, resembling the call of a cricket, returns to dominate the coda as the music rises in emotional pitch and then sinks into resigned peace.

Sources: wikipedia; <https://muswrite.blogspot.com>; www.allmusic.com, Sol Louis Siegel; <https://online.stanford.edu>



JOSEPH MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

STRING QUARTET IN F MAJOR

Allegro moderato - Très doux

Assez vif - Très rythmé

Très lent

Vif et agité

Joseph Maurice Ravel was a French composer, pianist and conductor. He is often associated with impressionism along with his elder contemporary Claude Debussy, although both composers rejected the term. In the 1920s and 1930s, Ravel was internationally regarded as France's greatest living composer. Ravel was 27 years old when he wrote his first and only string quartet. He was still, at least nominally, a student as he was auditing Gabriel Fauré's composition class at the Paris Conservatoire. But he had been active as composer for years, with numerous public performances behind him. He had failed, however, to win a prize from the Conservatoire, which was a condition for graduation.

Ravel's string quartet is clearly modeled on Debussy's celebrated *Quatuor* from 1893, yet Ravel displays a sense of color and melody that is all his own. To both composers, the string quartet as a

medium suggested, in fact demanded, adherence to classical tradition. Yet nothing was farther from them than academicism of any kind. The defining moment of both works is precisely the tension that exists between the classical forms and a positively non-classical sensitivity that is manifest at every turn.

Melody, harmony and rhythm are usually thought of as the most important ingredients of music. Ravel's string quartet, written at the beginning of the 20th century, was nothing less than prophetic in the way it added a fourth element, sound, as a factor of equal importance. The alternation of playing techniques (*pizzicato*, *con sordino*, *arpeggio*, bow on the fingerboard) is as crucial to the unfolding of the piece as the alternation of themes. Their succession, especially in the second and third movements, creates a musical form of its own, entirely non-traditional this time.

In the first movement, the classical sonata form (a legacy that reached Ravel through the intermediary of Fauré) is realized with great clarity and ingenuity. Note the characteristic *pianissimo rallentando* (extremely soft and slow playing) at the end of the movement. The second movement is based on the contrast between two themes of opposite character: one *pizzicato* (plucked), and one *bien chanté* ("sing out!"), with bow. The middle section, in which all four instruments use mutes, is an expressive, slow movement in miniature, with subtle variations on both scherzo themes.

The unique beauty of the third movement evolves by fits and starts, as it were, through the sometimes abrupt juxtaposition of segments in different tempos, keys, and meters. An expressive melody, whose primary exponent is the viola, is interrupted by memories of the first movement's opening theme. After a more animated middle section, culminating in a passionate outburst, the initial slow tempo returns with its exquisite harmonies.

The last movement is based on an ostinato (“stubbornly” returning pattern) in an asymmetrical 5/8 meter. After a while, this ostinato yields to a more regular 3/4 which, once more, contains echoes of the first movement. A different musical character—the first aggressive, the second more lyrical—corresponds to each of these two meters. Their contrast carries the movement forward, right up to the singularly forceful conclusion.

Sources: www.kennedycenter.org; www.en.wikipedia.com

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