

PACIFICA QUARTET



PHOTO BY SAVERIO TRUGLIA

Artist Partner Program presents

PACIFICA QUARTET

Friday, October 9, 2015 . 8PM

Joseph & Alma Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Simin Ganatra, violin

Sibbi Bernhardsson, violin

Masumi Per Rostad, viola

Brandon Vamos, cello

PACIFICA QUARTET: PROGRAM

GYÖRGY LIGETI

Quartet No. 1, "Métamorphoses Nocturnes"

Allegro grazioso

Vivace, capriccioso

Adagio, mesto

Presto

Prestissimo

Andante tranquillo

Tempo di Valse, moderato, con eleganza, un poco capriccioso

Subito prestissimo

Allegretto, un poco gioviale

Prestissimo

Ad libitum, senza misura

Lento

OSVALDO GOLIJOV

*Last Round for Strings**

Last Round: Movido, urgente

Death of the Angels: Lentissimo

INTERMISSION

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Quartet in E Minor, Op. 44, No. 2

Allegro assai appassionato

Scherzo: Allegro di molto

Andante

Presto agitato

*UMD School of Music students will join the Pacifica on stage for Golijov's *Last Round*.

Jesse Munoz, violin

Andrew Juola, violin

Dana Rokosny, viola

Molly Jones, cello

Paul Hunt, d. bass

This performance will last approximately **1 hour and 30 minutes with one intermission**.
Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

Funded in part by a generous gift from Dick and Sarah Bourne in honor of Edward Lewis.

PROGRAM NOTES

Quartet No. 1, "Métamorphoses Nocturnes"
György Ligeti (1923–2006)
Composed in 1953–1954
Premiered on May 8, 1958 in Vienna by the
Ramor Quartet

György Ligeti, one of music's greatest modern masters, was born on May 28, 1923 to a Jewish family in the then Hungarian province of Transylvania. He studied composition at the conservatory in his boyhood home of Kolozsvár during the early years of World War II, when he also managed to take some private lessons in Budapest with the noted Hungarian pianist and composer Pál Kadosa. In 1944, however, Ligeti, with many other Jews, was pressed by the Nazis into forced labor in dangerous situations, including working in a munitions dump just in front of the Russian advance. After the war, Ligeti continued his studies at the Budapest Academy of Music. He pursued field research in Romanian folk music for a short time following his graduation in 1949, but returned to the Budapest Academy a year later, when he was appointed professor of harmony, counterpoint and analysis. He fled Hungary in the wake of the Russian occupation of 1956, and settled in Vienna, where he met several important figures of the musical avant-garde, most notably Karlheinz Stockhausen, and became a naturalized Austrian citizen in 1967. In 1957, he was invited to work at the West German Radio in Cologne, where he again took up several modernistic compositions in daring idioms that he had had to put aside because of the repressive political situation in Hungary. He achieved his first wide recognition when his *Apparitions* was performed at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Cologne in 1960. Ligeti continued to compose prolifically while teaching at the Darmstadt Contemporary Music Summer Courses, Stockholm Academy of Music, Stanford University, Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood and Hamburg Musikhochschule. He was elected to membership in the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, West Berlin Academy of Arts

and Hamburg Free Academy of Arts, and received the Bach Prize of the City of Hamburg and the German decoration *Pour le mérite*. He died in Vienna on June 12, 2006.

Ligeti's works include compositions for orchestra, voices, chamber ensembles, organ, piano, theatre, electronics (though his music after 1958 was written only for live performance) and one experimental piece for 100 metronomes. He achieved his widest audience when Stanley Kubrick used excerpts from his *Lux aeterna*, *Requiem* and *Atmosphères* to stunning effect in his 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Ligeti's music ranges in style from his early flirtations with folk music, Bartók and post-Webern serialism, through the meterless, blurred chromatic "clouds" of soft, densely packed chords of *Lux aeterna* and *Atmosphères* and the minimalistic repetitions of several ostinato-based works of the 1960s and 1970s, to the more traditional pieces of his later years, which incorporate the influence of non-European music while re-embracing his Hungarian heritage.

The music of Béla Bartók was a powerful influence on Ligeti in the years before he left Hungary in 1956. "I was very much impressed by Bartók," he said in a 1983 interview with Paul Griffiths. "He was the great Hungarian composer, and I knew very little other contemporary music then: a little bit of Stravinsky — *Petrushka* but not yet *The Rite of Spring* — no Schoenberg. Bartók was the big genius: I think he still is, for me." Ligeti went on to note that his String Quartet No. 1, composed in 1953–1954, "is still Bartók. The style isn't totally Bartók, however: you know, when you are young, you oscillate a bit, so there are also some little Stravinsky influences." The First Quartet seemingly arose solely from some irresistible creative urge, since Ligeti had no hope of getting such a daring work performed in the repressive artistic climate of Hungary in the mid-1950s. He submitted the score to the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium Competition in 1955 but without any success, and he still had not heard a note of the work performed when he brought it with him to Vienna in 1956. The premiere was given there on May 8, 1958 by the Ram

PACIFICA QUARTET: PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

or Quartet, an ensemble of fellow Hungarian expatriates that specialized in such leading modernists as Bartók, Schoenberg and Berg.

Ligeti subtitled the Quartet No. 1 “Métamorphoses Nocturnes,” an indication of the dream-like quality of much of the music as well as its derivation from the motto of two interlocking whole-steps given at the outset by the first violin. Though the influence of Bartók is much in evidence — in the chromatic, harmonically ambiguous thematic material, the continuous and rigorous working-out of the motto to unify the entire work, the acerbic harmony, the exploitation of such unusual string techniques as bowing above the fingerboard, glissandos, harmonics, quarter tones and pizzicatos in which the string is snapped against the fingerboard — Ligeti’s use of these idioms is distinctive and original. The Quartet comprises a continuous series of character pieces (the “metamorphoses” of the title) that range from eerie, flickering “night music” reminiscent of several of Bartók’s most atmospheric movements to the sustained grief of a lament, from pounding folk dance to lurid waltz, from spectral scherzo to swaggering march, with the motto — sometimes expanded into larger, more clearly tonal intervals, sometimes straightened out into a chromatic-scale fragment — rarely absent.

Last Round for Strings

Oswaldo Golijov (born in 1960)

Composed in 1992 and 1996

Premiered on October 25, 1996 in Birmingham, England, conducted by Stefan Asbury

In our increasingly interconnected world, the multi-cultural music of Oswaldo Golijov speaks in a voice that is powerful yet touching, contemporary yet timeless. Golijov’s parents, a piano teacher mother and a physician father, emigrated from Russia to Argentina, where Oswaldo was born on December 5, 1960 in La Playa, 30 miles from Buenos Aires, into a rich artistic environment in which he was exposed from infancy to such varied musical experiences as classical chamber music, Jewish liturgical and klezmer music, and the *tango nuevo* of Astor Piazzolla. He studied piano and composition at the local conservatory before moving in 1983 to Jerusalem, where he entered the Rubín Academy as a composition student of Mark Kopytman and immersed himself in the colliding musical traditions of that city.

Golijov came to the United States in 1986 to do his doctoral work with George Crumb at the University of Pennsylvania, and spent summers at Tanglewood on fellowship studying with Lukas Foss and Oliver Knussen. In 1990, he won Tanglewood’s Fromm Commission, which resulted in *Yiddishbuk*, premiered by the St. Lawrence String Quartet at Tanglewood’s Festival of Contemporary Music in July 1992 and winner the following year of the prestigious Kennedy Center Friedheim Award. Golijov’s works, with their syntheses of European, American and Latin secular cultures and their deep spirituality drawn from both Judaism and Christianity, have brought him international notoriety and, in 2003, a coveted MacArthur Foundation “Genius Award.” He was named *Musical America’s* “2005 Composer of the Year,” and in January and February 2006, Lincoln Center in New York presented a festival called “The Passion of Oswaldo Golijov.” He is currently working on a commission for the Metropolitan Opera. Golijov has been on the faculty of

the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts since 1991; he also teaches at the Boston Conservatory and the Tanglewood Music Center.

The composer wrote of *Last Round*, “Astor Piazzolla, the last great tango composer, was at the peak of his creativity when a stroke killed him in 1992. Piazzolla’s bandoneón was able to condense all the symbols of tango. The eroticism of legs and torsos in the dance was reduced to the intricate patterns of his virtuoso fingers. The melancholy of the singer’s voice was transposed to the breathing of the bandoneón’s continuous opening and closing. The macho attitude of the *tangueros* was reflected in his pose on stage: standing upright, chest forward, right leg on a stool, the bandoneón on top of it, being by turns raised, battered, caressed.

“I composed *Last Round* in 1992 and 1996. The title of both the work and the opening movement — *Last Round* — is borrowed from a short story on boxing by Julio Cortázar, a metaphor for an imaginary chance for Piazzolla’s spirit to fight one more time (he got into fistfights throughout his life). The piece is conceived to evoke the sound of an idealized bandoneón. The first movement represents the act of a violent compression of the instrument and the second a final, seemingly endless opening sigh (it is actually a fantasy on the refrain of the song *My Beloved Buenos Aires*, composed by the legendary Carlos Gardel in the 1930s). But *Last Round* is also a sublimated tango dance. The bows fly in the air as inverted legs in crisscrossed choreography, always attracting and repelling each other, always in danger of clashing, always avoiding it with the immutability that can only be acquired by transforming hot passion into pure pattern.”

Quartet in E Minor, Op. 44, No. 2

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Composed in 1837

Premiered on November 19, 1837 in Leipzig by
the Ferdinand David Quartet

Mendelssohn was among the most professionally successful musicians of the 19th century. His career showed none of the reverses, disappointments and delays that were the rule for the other great Romantic composers; indeed, it was precisely the overwork and exhaustion to meet the demands for his presence and his performances that led to his untimely death at the age of 38. The most intensely busy time of his life was ushered in by his appointment in 1835 as the administrator, music director and conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts. In very short order, he raised the quality of musical life in Leipzig to equal that of any city in Europe, and in 1842 he founded the local conservatory to maintain his standards of excellence. He toured, guest conducted and composed incessantly, and on March 28, 1837 took on the additional responsibilities of family life when he married Cécile Jeanrenaud. “A conscientious chronicle of Mendelssohn’s next few years [after 1835] would merely weary the reader,” noted the late George Marek in his biography of the composer. “It would link work with more work, string success after success, place tribute next to tribute, and enumerate an ever-larger register of acquaintances and friends.”

Despite the pressure of his many duties, Mendelssohn continued to find time for creative work, and in June 1837, while on his belated honeymoon with Cécile, he wrote the first of the three quartets (Op. 44, No. 2 in E minor) that he was to compose during the following year. The main theme of the Quartet’s opening movement is an arching melody initiated by the first violin; the second subject is a gentle variant of the main theme in a brighter key. The movement’s central section develops both themes through imitation, fragmentation, modulation and other techniques. The tension is relaxed as the recapitulation approaches, and its arrival is marked by a half-dozen pizzicato notes in the cello,

PACIFICA QUARTET: PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

the only ones in the entire movement. The main theme returns in the first violin and the second theme reappears, adjusted into the movement's home key. A lengthy coda that encompasses all of the principal thematic material leads the music back to its stern opening tonality.

The *Scherzo*, one of those gossamer creations of which Mendelssohn was the unrivaled master, uses a featherstitched strain in the outer sections of its three-part form (A–B–A) and a brief, mildly contrasting passage at its center. The sonata-form *Andante* is one of Mendelssohn's most ingratiating “songs without words.” The finale, also in sonata form, takes an agitated motive as its main theme and a gliding phrase as its subsidiary subject, both employed intricately throughout the movement and supplemented with complementary material. The close of the Quartet confirms the work's stormy mood.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Recognized for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style and often-daring repertory choices, over the past two decades the Pacifica Quartet has gained international stature as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. The Pacifica tours extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia, performing regularly in the world's major concert halls. Named the quartet-in-residence at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music in March 2012, the Pacifica was also the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009–2012) — a position that has otherwise been held only by the Guarneri String Quartet — and received the 2009 GRAMMY Award for Best Chamber Music Performance.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002 the ensemble was honored with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and the appointment to Lincoln Center's CMS Two, and in 2006 was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, becoming only the second chamber ensemble so honored in the grant's long history. Also in 2006 the Quartet was featured on the cover of *Gramophone* and heralded as one of “five new quartets you should know about,” the only American quartet to make the list. And in 2009, the Quartet was named “Ensemble of the Year” by *Musical America*.

Highlights of the 2015–2016 season include a performance at New York's famed 92nd Street Y, the beginning of a two-season residency at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, a ten-day residency for the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music in Tucson and return visits to the major series in New Orleans, San Francisco and Portland. In addition, the Quartet will tour Europe and Japan.

The Pacifica Quartet has carved a niche for itself as the preeminent interpreter of string quartet cycles, harnessing the group's singular focus and incredible stamina to portray each composer's evolution, often over the course of just a few days. Having given highly acclaimed performances of the complete Carter cycle in San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Houston; the Mendelssohn cycle in Napa, Australia, New York and Pittsburgh; and the Beethoven cycle in New York, Denver, St. Paul, Chicago, Napa and Tokyo (in an unprecedented presentation of five concerts in three days at Suntory Hall), the Quartet presented the monumental Shostakovich cycle in Chicago and New York during the 2010–2011 season and in Montreal and at London's Wigmore Hall in the 2011–2012 season. The Quartet has been widely praised for these cycles, with critics calling the concerts “brilliant,” “astonishing,” “gripping” and “breathtaking.”

An ardent advocate of contemporary music, the Pacifica Quartet commissions and performs many new works, including those by Keeril Makan, in partnership with the Celebrity Series of Boston and the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, during the 2012–2013 season, and Shulamit Ran, in partnership with the Music Accord consortium, London’s Wigmore Hall and Tokyo’s Suntory Hall, during the 2014–2015 season. The work — entitled *Glitter, Doom, Shards, Memory* — had its New York debut as part of the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center series.

In 2008 the Quartet released its GRAMMY Award-winning recording of Carter’s quartets Nos. 1 and 5 on the Naxos label; the 2009 release of quartets Nos. 2, 3 and 4 completed the two-CD set. Cedille Records recently released the third of four volumes comprising the entire Shostakovich cycle, along with other contemporary Soviet works, to rave reviews: “The playing is nothing short of phenomenal.” (*Daily Telegraph*, London). Recent projects include recording Leo Ornstein’s rarely heard piano quintet with Marc-André Hamelin with an accompanying tour, the Brahms piano quintet with the legendary pianist Menahem Pressler, and the Brahms and Mozart clarinet quintets with the Metropolitan Opera’s principal clarinetist Anthony McGill.

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Bloomington, Indiana, where they serve as quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members at the Jacobs School of Music. Prior to their appointment, the Quartet was on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana from 2003 to 2012. The Pacifica Quartet also serves as resident performing artist at the University of Chicago.

The Pacifica Quartet is endorsed by D’Addario and proudly uses their strings.

For more information on the Quartet, please visit www.pacificaquartet.com.

THE CLARICE AND THE COMMUNITY

The Clarice is building the future of the arts by training, mentoring and presenting the next generation of artists and creative innovators. As artists develop their craft as performers, they must become instigators of meaningful dialogue, creative research and audience connection. These skills are developed through engagement activities both on and off campus. Engagement at The Clarice is characterized by facilitated audience interactions with artists, scholars and community leaders that are focused on process and research rather than product and performance. The Clarice supports artists in their quest for a connection with audiences through its engagement work.

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- The Pacifica Quartet performed for and answered questions from Prof. David Salness’ chamber music class.
- The Quartet rehearsed with students from the String Division of the School of Music several times before this evening’s shared performance of Golijov’s *Last Round*, including a dress rehearsal that was observed by prospective School of Music students.