

Visiting Artist Series presents

ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET (Canada)



Thursday, March 1, 2018 . 8PM
GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL
@ The Clarice

ARTIST PARTNER PROGRAM

VAS

VISITING ARTIST SERIES

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center's
Visiting Artist Series presents

ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

Geoff Nuttall, *violin*

Owen Dalby, *violin*

Lesley Robertson, *viola*

Christopher Costanza, *cello*

This performance will last approximately 1 hour 40 minutes.

String Quartet in C Major Franz Joseph Haydn
Op. 33, No.3, "The Bird" (1732-1809)

Allegro moderato
Scherzando allegretto
Adagio ma non troppo
Finale: Rondo. Presto

String Quartet in D minor Jean Sibelius
Op. 56, "Voces intimae" (1865-1957)

Andante - Allegro molto moderato
Vivace
Adagio di molto
Allegretto (ma pesante)
Allegro

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 3 in E-flat minor Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Op. 30 (1840-1893)

Andante sostenuto
Allegretto vivo e scherzando
Andante funebre e doloroso, ma con moto
Finale: Allegro non troppo e risoluto

“Modern...dramatic...superb...wickedly attentive...with a hint of rock 'n roll energy...” are just a few ways critics describe the musical phenomenon that is the St Lawrence String Quartet. The SLSQ is renowned for the intensity of its performances, its breadth of repertoire, and its commitment to concert experiences that are at once intellectually exciting and emotionally alive. Highlights in 2016–17 include performances of John Adams’s *Absolute Jest* for string quartet and orchestra with Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic and with Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony, as well as the European premieres of Adams’s Second Quartet.

Fiercely committed to collaboration with living composers, the SLSQ’s fruitful partnership with John Adams, Jonathan Berger, Osvaldo Golijov, and many others has yielded some of the finest additions to the quartet literature in recent years. The Quartet is also especially dedicated to the music of Haydn, and recording his groundbreaking set of six Op. 20 quartets in high-definition video for a free, universal release online in 2017. According to *The New Yorker*, “...no other North American quartet plays the music of Haydn with more intelligence, expressivity, and force...”

Established in Toronto in 1989, the SLSQ quickly earned acclaim at top international chamber music competitions and was soon playing hundreds of concerts per year worldwide. They established an ongoing residency at Spoleto Festival USA, made prize-winning recordings for EMI of music by Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Golijov, earning two Grammy nominations and a host of other prizes before being appointed ensemble-in-residence at Stanford University in 1999.

At Stanford, the SLSQ is at the forefront of intellectual life on campus. The SLSQ directs the music department’s chamber music program and frequently collaborates with other departments including the Schools of Law, Medicine, Business and Education. The Quartet performs regularly at Stanford Live, hosts an annual chamber music seminar, and runs the Emerging String Quartet Program through which they mentor the next generation of young quartets. In the words of Alex Ross of *The New Yorker*: “The St. Lawrence are remarkable not simply for the quality of their music making, exalted as it is, but for the joy they take in the act of connection.”

**This performance is presented with special
thanks to Richard and Sarah Bourne.**

The St. Lawrence String Quartet appears by arrangement with
David Rowe Artists | www.davidroweartists.com

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The St. Lawrence String Quartet is
Ensemble-in-Residence at Stanford University.

www.slsq.com

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1723-1809)

Quartet in C, Op. 33 No. 3 (Hob.III.39) ('The Bird') (1781)

When Haydn published his six Op. 33 quartets in April 1782, they immediately created a buzz amongst a music-loving public hungry for new music. He hadn't written a string quartet for almost a decade. He wrote to potential subscribers saying that the quartets were composed "in a completely new and special way." Mozart, just launching a career as a freelance composer in Vienna when the quartets were first published in 1782, admired their compactness, their perfect balance of character, form and technique, and the way in which Haydn gives all four instruments equal importance. He painstakingly composed a set of six in emulation of Haydn's Op. 33, with several of Haydn's movements clearly used as direct models. The popularity of Haydn's six quartets, through their winning combination of approachability and high art, is reflected in the various nicknames that have become attached to the music. An early German publication included the picture of an attractive young woman on the frontispiece; the name *Jungfernquartette* or *Maiden Quartets* has stuck ever since. In English-speaking countries, however, the name *Russian Quartets* tends to be used. That's because the quartets were performed at the Vienna Hofburg on Christmas Day 1781 in honor of Grand Duke Paul, the future Russian Tsar.

Yet another nickname, *Gli Scherzi*, reflects one of the innovations found in all six quartets. In them, Haydn replaces the traditional, stately minuet movement with the newer, more folk-like scherzo (Italian for 'joke'). Here, in the C major quartet, it is the utter originality and wit of Haydn's Scherzo that immediately strikes the listener. A darkly colored, hushed four-part chordal texture, much of it on the instruments' lowest strings, marked *sotto voce* ('in a whisper'), contrasts with a soaring, airy, two-part dialog between the two violins. Nothing like this has appeared in string quartet writing before. The high-pitched chirpings from the first fiddle as it mates with the second in this Scherzo, are often given as the reason for the quartet's rather too obvious 19th century nickname. They are, in truth, only an echo of what has already taken place earlier.

In the first movement, after a disarmingly simple opening sequence of C major thirds from the two middle instruments, the first violin introduces a high, chirping thematic sequence which is rich in the musical ideas that will drive the movement forward. Haydn immediately repeats the idea, now in D minor, then in G minor, throwing a curve ball at the expected tonality of the movement.

Haydn's musical wit continues throughout the movement which is monothematic but, nevertheless, brims with contrast. The slow movement is elegantly drawn on a somewhat hymn-like theme and is, structurally, a distinctive combination of sonata, rondo, and variation. The main theme of the exuberant finale casts a glance backwards to some of the spirited bird-like violin writing of the opening movement. Almost everything in this delightful movement seems calculated to bring a smile to the face, from the lively banter between instruments and pairs of instruments, to the Turkish flavoring of the refrain, the rustic 'Hungarian' episode, and an almost throwaway ending.

— Program notes © 2018 Keith Horner

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 - 1957)

Quartet in D minor, Op. 56 (Voces intimae) (Inner Voices) (1909)

By the end of his earliest music studies in Helsinki, the 23-year-old Sibelius was a modestly accomplished string player, a violinist whose love for chamber music was first nurtured in the family piano trio he formed with his brother Christian and sister Linda. Playing second violin in a string quartet in his home town of Hämeenlinna led to the earliest of Sibelius' three student quartets. His best-known chamber work, however, the D minor Quartet, comes from much later, falling between his Third and Fourth Symphonies composed when he was in his mid-forties. It's his only mature quartet, although sketches for a subsequent quartet were soon worked into the Fourth Symphony. Plans for two further quartets came to nothing.

The subtitle, *Voces intimae*, best translates as *Inner Voices*, rather than the more usual *Intimate Voices*. It derives from a note Sibelius penciled in the score of bar 20 of the central slow movement. At this point, three, intense, mysterious pianissimo E minor chords encapsulate the mix of pensive lyricism and sense of the ethereal that runs through the entire movement. This slow movement is the emotional center of gravity and structural heart of the quartet and one of Sibelius's finest creations. The mood is at once probing yet comforting, nostalgic yet disciplined, combining the conversational-like quality of chamber music writing with the more rigorous inner thoughts that were beginning to reveal themselves in his symphonic writing. "Believe me," Sibelius wrote in 1909, the year he composed the work, "with this quartet, I have left the training ship and gained my master's certificate."

The central slow movement is framed by two scherzos. Beyond them lie the two outer movements. The symmetry of construction is typical of

the composer. Similarly, the organic growth of the quartet's thematic fragment, first introduced in a dialogue between the first violin and cello, represents Sibelius at his finest. The first two movements are linked ("a movement-and-a-half", Sibelius called them in his diary) with the brief *Vivace* recalling the hushed, *tremolando* melodic writing of the symphonies. The counterpart of the first Scherzo is the robust, dance-like fourth movement, which begins with an earthy melody that is a distant relative of the main theme of the opening movement. The finale grows increasingly exuberant as it propels the work towards a decisive conclusion. Sibelius was happy with his D minor Quartet: "It turned out quite wonderful. It is the sort of thing that will make one smile even on one's deathbed," he wrote to his wife.

— Program notes © 2017 Keith Horner

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Quartet No. 3, in E-flat minor, Op. 30 (1876)

Like Tchaikovsky's later Piano Trio, the last of his three string quartets is dedicated to the memory of a leading musician and colleague – in this case, the respected violinist Ferdinand Laub, a fellow professor at the Moscow Conservatoire. The prominent Czech musician, who died at an early age at the peak of his career, had led the premières of Tchaikovsky's two earlier quartets. Tchaikovsky's Third marks the beginning of a long Russian tradition of chamber music memorials, which continues to this day. The mood of the work is predominantly elegiac. Its first and longest movement is framed by a somber *Andante sostenuto* of such grief and dark color (in the home key of E-flat minor) that it initially suggests a funeral lament. The main *Allegro moderato* itself is a closely argued, if somewhat unconventional sonata structure, creating a sense of unity despite its extended length. The music burst through the confessional intimacy of the elegiac opening to an almost orchestral texture, with the first violin taking a leading role and with a triplet figure forming a prominent feature of the musical argument.

A light, airy scherzo relieves the tension between the weighty utterances of the opening movement and the funeral march to come. Its dance-like quality is a reminder that Tchaikovsky wrote the quartet while taking a one-month break from composing the ballet score to *Swan Lake*, on which he had already worked for six months and which was to be completed two months after finishing the quartet. The heart and soul of the quartet lies in its third movement, a funeral march

for his dead friend. This was the movement that moved many in the earliest private and public performances to tears. The movement's impact grew as the work reached a wider audience, culminating, with Tchaikovsky's death almost two decades later, in the quartet being performed in the composer's honor in memorial concerts in Moscow, St. Petersburg and elsewhere. The melancholy third movement is built on the sighing phrases that Tchaikovsky was to associate even more closely with death and mourning in his Sixth symphony. It culminates with a repetitive note strongly evocative of Russian Orthodox chant. As with the brief, sparkling second movement, the finale then immediately takes us away from the reflective sadness of the quartet's two longest movements. Russian folk song is evoked in the exuberance, bustle and joy of its music. The exhilaration is stilled for a moment before the final coda, with a reflective glance backwards to the somber pizzicato accompaniment with which the quartet opened. Tchaikovsky's finest quartet once again honors the musician in whose memory it was created. As Tchaikovsky himself was to write to his patron Galina von Meck a few months later, life must go on: "If you can't find reasons for joy within yourself, look at others. Go among the common people. See how they are able to make merry, to give themselves up entirely to joyous feelings. Joys there are, simple but powerful. Delight in the merriment of others. Life is still possible."

— *Program notes* © 2018 Keith Horner

Comments welcomed: khnotes@sympatico.ca

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The St. Lawrence String Quartet is a welcome group to our School of Music students and faculty. This week the musicians worked with 5 chamber ensembles, each studying different sections of Haydn's Op. 20 string quartets. The students then created an interactive performance/discussion that was presented before tonight's concert, in partnership with the St. Lawrence players. Additionally, the quartet performed and recorded new works by UMD student composers in a public reading last night.

Artists lead complicated lives. They collect material for new work, they often teach and engage with community groups and they are always developing their craft.

In **SIDE NOTES**, we are providing good reads and fun facts to give you a sense of who our visiting artists are and what makes them do what they do. Contributing writers include students, faculty, staff and alumni from the extended Clarice family.



Christopher Costanza, cellist of the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ), shares a few insights about performing with the ensemble:

IT'S BEEN 29 YEARS SINCE SLSQ WAS FOUNDED IN 1989. HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT THE QUARTET HAS GROWN AND EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

I joined the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ) in 2003, and since that time, we've performed hundreds of concerts throughout North America, all over Europe, in South America, in every major city of Australia and New Zealand, and in Japan, China, and South Korea. We've also done a good deal of recording, of both standard quartet repertoire and pieces written specifically for us. Through all these experiences, as well as our Stanford teaching and on-campus collaborative presentations, we have solidified and improved our technical and musical styles. Having a chance to perform frequently allows us to hone our skills and develop strong and (hopefully!) convincing perspectives on each piece we

present. We continually aim to learn and improve, individually and as a group, and we have an unwavering commitment to delving into all of our musical work with full, passionate, and energetic artistry.

YOU'VE WORKED WITH A NUMBER OF LIVING COMPOSERS, IN PARTICULAR JOHN ADAMS. DO YOU FIND ANY DIFFICULTIES PERFORMING SUCH CONTEMPORARY MUSIC?

It's a great privilege to work with living composers, and John Adams is definitely a standout. We learn so much from each and every interaction with a composer, especially about the creative process and all that goes into the art of composing. We also gain insight into the minds of the composers of the past through our work with contemporary composers; many of the same principals of creativity and musical exploration driving the minds of living composers must also have inspired those of past eras.

Contemporary music has its challenges for sure, but personally, I don't find most new works particularly more daunting than gnarly and difficult older works, perhaps because much of my training and early musical development included a certain amount of contemporary music study. As for bringing new works to audiences, the key is to be 100% committed to each and every piece, performing with passion, focus, and great energy.

WHILE AT UMD, YOU'VE PARTICIPATED IN A READING OF STUDENT COMPOSERS' WORKS. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT WORKING WITH YOUNG COMPOSERS, AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN GENERAL?

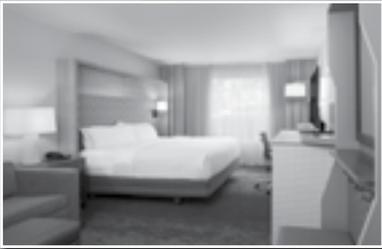
I think working with young composers speaks to a core principal of performing musicians and artists: we must encourage creativity in the young to assure continuity and development of all things artistic in the future. It's very exciting to see young student composers think creatively and explore musical and technical options as they realize their dreams, and playing their works for them in a workshop setting allows for them to hear their pieces live, often for the first time, giving them a chance to try new and varied ideas as we provide direct feedback. All of us who are serious performers must continue the important tradition of championing the composers of tomorrow!



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ABOUT THE ARTIST PARTNER PROGRAM

THE ARTIST PARTNER PROGRAM at The Clarice curates a multi-arts performance with regional, national and international artists and creative innovators program dedicated to creating performance and learning opportunities for students and our community through artist residencies workshops, master classes, K-12 student matinees and artistic exchange. We believe artists can be a catalyst for community change, leadership and empowerment.

As part of a major public research university, the Artist Partner Program is committed to the creation and investigation of new work and new ways of participating in the performing arts.

The Artist Partner Program has three primary missions:

To supplement and extend the academic learning and investigation of the classroom for UMD students;

To provide artistic and cultural opportunities as part of the UMD experience for students, faculty, staff, alumni and university friends;

To enhance and develop the artistic and cultural ecology of the community that surrounds and supports the university.

Visit theclarice.umd.edu/app for more info.

UPCOMING VISITING ARTIST SERIES PERFORMANCES

LINDA MAY HAN OH GRP (MALAYSIA/AUSTRALIA/USA)

THU, MAR 8 . 7PM & 9PM

MILKBOY ARTHOUSE

Though the bass rarely takes center stage, in this jazz performance, Linda Oh showcases the instrument's funky, soulful potential.

CYRO BAPTISTA &

BANQUET OF THE SPIRITS (BRAZIL)

FRI, MAR 16 . 8PM

MILKBOY ARTHOUSE

A wild, unstoppable world beat percussive band featuring international musicians and spontaneous dance breaks!

RENÉ MARIE (USA)

EXPERIMENT IN TRUTH

THU, MAR 29 . 7PM & 9PM

MILKBOY ARTHOUSE

This GRAMMY-nominated vocalist borrows various elements of folk, R&B and even classical and country to create a captivating style uniquely her own.

600 HIGHWAYMEN (USA)

THE FEVER

WED, APR 4 - FRI, APR 6 . 8PM

SAT, APR 7 . 2PM

This theatrical piece, performed in collaboration with the audience, examines how we care for people in light of a continuing legacy of violence and cruelty.

SIRIUS QUARTET (USA)

THU, APR 19 . 8PM

MILKBOY ARTHOUSE

This inventive contemporary quartet's forward-thinking, multi-genre approach includes collaborations in post-rock, avant-jazz and electronic music.

AAKASH OEDRA (UK/INDIA)

RISING

WED, MAY 9 . 8PM

Rooted in traditional Indian dance, Aakash Oedra's style is graceful, provocative and unflinching. Featuring solo pieces from the UK's most thrilling choreographers.

APP Visiting Artists Third Coast Percussion engage with K-12 students during a special matinee performance.



NURTURE THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS

We believe artists can be catalysts for community change, leadership and empowerment.

This season, our Visiting Artists will:

- **CREATE** opportunities for young audiences to experience live performances and creative conversations through the K-12 School Partner Program
- **ENHANCE** our understanding of the world through Do Good Dialogues, exploring social justice and the ways the human spirit informs art
- **SUPPORT** creation and development of new work by UMD students through master classes, coaching and performances of their work by visiting artists
- **ENGAGE** students through intimate, unplugged performances in residence halls throughout the year, creating connections through art, food, and shared experiences

Immerse yourself in a world of artistic discovery with our 2017-2018 visiting artists and strengthen the future of the arts by making your gift today.

To support the Visiting Artist Series visit theclarice.umd.edu/make-gift. Or call 301.405.4517.

THE CLARICE

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Director, National Orchestral
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ANDREW GIZA
Artist Services Coordinator

AMANDA STAUB
Graduate Assistant