



St. Lawrence String Quartet

Haydn Mega-Concert

Geoff Nuttall / *Violin*

Owen Dalby / *Violin*

Lesley Robertson / *Viola*

Christopher Costanza / *Cello*

Sunday Afternoon, January 14, 2018 at 3:00

Rackham Auditorium

Ann Arbor

This afternoon's performance is supported by Carl Cohen, whose bequest will establish an endowment to support a UMS Chamber Arts performance in perpetuity.

Media partnership provided by WGTE 91.3 FM and WRCJ 90.9 FM.

Special thanks to Matt Albert, Heather Kendrick, Steven Whiting, and Steve Hall and Abby Olitzky of Spencer for their participation in events surrounding today's performance.

The St. Lawrence String Quartet appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists.

St. Lawrence String Quartet recordings can be heard on EMI Classics.

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

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

Haydn Mega-Concert: The Six Op. 20 String Quartets

Franz Joseph Haydn

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 6 in A Major

Allegro di molto e scherzando
Adagio cantabile
Minuetto: Allegretto
Fuga a 3 soggetti: Allegro

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 3 in g minor

Allegro con spirit
Minuetto: Allegretto
Poco adagio
Finale: Allegro molto

Intermission

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 4 in D Major

Allegro di molto
Un poco adagio affettuoso
Allegretto alla zingarese
Presto scherzando

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 5 in f minor

Allegro moderato
Minuetto
Adagio
Finale: Fuga a due soggetti

Dinner Break

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 1 in E-flat Major

Allegro moderato
Minuetto: Allegretto
Affettuoso e sostenuto
Finale: Presto

String Quartet Op. 20, No. 2 in C Major

Moderato
Adagio: Capriccio
Minuetto: Allegretto
Fuga a 4 soggetti

Why Haydn?

“He could amuse, shock, arouse laughter and deep emotion as no other.”

—*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart speaking about Franz Joseph Haydn*

Mozart and Beethoven are generally considered the two great musical geniuses of the classical era, with Haydn as an afterthought. One could argue however that Joseph Haydn was at least as talented, imaginative, and groundbreaking as the two giants. When it comes to the string quartet there is little debate. Haydn composed 68 quartets. Over 50 are masterpieces, and the influence they had on Mozart, Beethoven, and composers of string quartets that followed cannot be overstated.

Why Opus 20?

“Every page of the six quartets of Op. 20 is of historic and aesthetic importance...there is perhaps no single or sextuple opus in the history of instrumental music which has achieved so much or achieved it so quietly...”

—*Sir Donald Francis Tovey*

These particular quartets by Haydn are the first great masterpieces — by any composer — for the medium of two violins, viola, and cello. In addition to solidifying the formal four-movement structure of the string quartet, for the first time in a small ensemble context one can hear the democratic participation of four truly equal voices. Haydn draws on an immense range of emotional

expression in Op. 20, with brilliant compositional flourishes to match. He synthesizes the very pinnacle of Baroque-era counterpoint with his distinctive wit, whimsy, pathos, and the groundbreaking use of silence as “topic.” It is these six quartets specifically that threw down the gauntlet and which inspired every major later composer to compose their most profound utterances for the medium of string quartet.

Why all six?

“If I hadn’t have known, I would have thought that all six quartets were written by different composers!”

—*A music student after a St. Lawrence String Quartet concert of the complete Opus 20*

The six Opus 20 quartets of Haydn are immensely — and intensely — varied. Each of the six quartets has its own life, spirit, mood, energy, and personality, and no two take the same path as they express emotion. Even within a single Opus 20 quartet we hear unparalleled imaginative and creative passion; just to pick one example, No. 2 in C Major begins with a beautifully flowing and singing first movement, proceeds to a wildly dramatic and operatic slow movement, flows directly into a folk-inspired minuet, and closes with a lively four-part fugue with four subjects. Multiply that level of creativity by six and we have a unique cycle of unprecedented inventiveness; showcasing the complete collection of six highlights the full range of Haydn’s brilliant and unique compositional gifts.

STRING QUARTETS, OP. 20 (1772)

Franz Joseph Haydn

Born March 31, 1732 in Rohrau, Lower Austria

Died May 31, 1809 in Vienna

UMS premieres: No. 1 has never been performed on a UMS concert.

No. 2: Belcea Quartet; October 2009 in Rackham Auditorium.

No. 3: Tetzlaff Quartet; April 2011 in Rackham Auditorium.

No. 4: Budapest String Quartet; February 1951 in Rackham Auditorium.

No. 5: Jerusalem Quartet; April 2007 in Rackham Auditorium.

No. 6: Brentano String Quartet; February 2001 in Rackham Auditorium.

Snapshots of History...In 1772:

- The British schooner *Gaspee* is burned by American patriots off the coast of Rhode Island in an event that prepared the way for the Revolution
- Scottish chemist Daniel Rutherford isolates nitrogen
- Mozart, age 16, writes his three divertimenti for strings (K. 136-138), making the transition from child prodigy to mature genius

No. 6 in A Major

An ebullient, effortless, quirky *scherzando* opening movement gives way to a floating, dreamy aria that is pure song. The third movement is a rhythmically traditional minuet (eminently danceable) with a contrasting middle section called a “trio.” In acknowledgement of the original meaning of that formal term, Haydn scores the trio for just three parts (omitting the second violin). Each of the three parts, as indicated by the composer, should be played on one string. The master also instructs that all three of the fugal finales in Opus 20 be played *sempre sotto voce* (in a hushed voice throughout), in this case a buoyant and bubbly movement with three subjects.

No. 3 in g minor

The opening movement is stormy and tumultuous, with dramatic

stops and starts as well as sudden, massive dynamic shifts. The darkness continues in the brooding minuet, finally finding release in the trio that is almost a sigh of relief and in a second violin solo that is simply beautiful. A regal, serene *adagio* with a magnificent extended cello solo in the middle section is followed by a *rondo finale*. This return to g minor and the breathless flamboyance and excitement of the first movement is instigated by the second violin.

No. 4 in D Major

The calm pastoral theme that opens this musical story gives no hint of the virtuosic, brilliant, and quicksilver music that follows without warning. This movement is a tale of two distinct characters — one serene, one excited — that interact and interrupt each other throughout. The slow movement is perhaps Haydn’s most deeply felt

and emotional theme and variations. It sustains an almost painful *affettuoso*, culminating in an extended final variation and coda that explodes in anguish, and then ends with quivering pain. A dance follows: a jubilant minuet in the Hungarian gypsy style. Here Haydn is playing on the knowledge and expectation of the minuet rhythm (see No. 6). One can almost hear him chuckling as players and the dancing audience stumble. In contrast, the trio (the middle section) could not be a more perfectly symmetrical, danceable, and proper cello solo. The emotional release from the *adagio* continues with an effervescent *rondo finale*. *Scherzando* throughout — musical laughter with a hint of bluegrass.

No. 5 in f minor

F minor was Haydn's key of choice to express his darkest and most potent thoughts. The opening movement is one of his most powerful in any genre. There is a moment of respite from the brooding opening music with a second theme in smiling major, but when this music returns later it is back in f minor with devastating effect. The two themes are jammed together in the coda, distilling the essence of the movement with a dramatic conclusion. The darkness continues with a frustrated and angry minuet. The trio arrives as a ray of sunlight in F Major. The *adagio* is a simple *cavatina*, the kind that a minstrel might strum and sing under the balcony of his beloved. The fugue returns to f minor and demonstrates that Haydn knew and loved Handel's oratorio *Messiah*. The first of the two subjects is stolen from the chorus, "And with his stripes we are healed."

No. 1 in E-flat Major

The first movement is friendly, warm-hearted, and generous with a brief moment of melodrama in the middle; four friends in jovial discussion of topics they are passionate about. The minuet continues confident and upbeat, with the trio more searching and uncertain. The surprising and slightly confused return of the minuet music at the wrong time and place is a stroke of genius. The "Affettuoso e sostenuto" third movement is a sublime yet simple testament to that genius. There is very little music that is at once so deeply felt and so effortless. The *rondo finale* is an exuberant exclamation of joy that begins with a whoop! — and ends with a wink.

No. 2 in C Major

This quartet begins with a cello solo, while the viola plays the bass line — musical democracy in action! The second violin leads a dramatic transformation in the second half of the movement to stormy minor material before a return to the sunny opening music. The *adagio* is one of the most groundbreaking and influential movements in the history of the string quartet. It invokes a Greek chorus, opera, recitative, aria, and full symphony orchestra, all in one capricious musical journey. The movement flows without pause to the sound of bagpipes in the folk-inspired minuet. The trio returns to the solo cello and the dark, brooding qualities of the slow movement. Haydn proudly announces a fugue with four subjects to end this quartet. It's serious counterpoint, albeit with a very unserious jig-like spirit. Haydn wrote at the end of his autograph score,

counterpointing a deep religious faith with characteristic wit, “*Laus omnip: Deo / Sic fugit amicus amicum*” (Praise to Almighty God / Thus one friend escapes another).

Program notes compiled by the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

UMS ARCHIVES

Today’s performance marks the **St. Lawrence String Quartet**’s fifth performance under UMS auspices, following the Quartet’s UMS debut in November 2009 at Rackham Auditorium. The Quartet most recently appeared at UMS in February 2014 at Rackham Auditorium. UMS welcomes violinist Owen Dalby, who joined the Quartet in 2015, as he makes his UMS debut this afternoon.

Photo (next spread): St. Lawrence String Quartet; photographer: Marco Borggreve.

ARTISTS

“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** (SLSQ). 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 the last season included performances of John Adams’s *Absolute Jest* for string quartet and orchestra with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles 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 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 recorded 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.”

For more information, please visit www.slsq.com.





TODAY'S VICTOR FOR UMS:



Carl Cohen

Supporter of today's performance by the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

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|------|---------------------|
| 1/27 | Russian Renaissance |
| 3/11 | Elias Quartet |
| 4/8 | Artemis Quartet |

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

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| 1/31 | Master Class: Gabriel Kahane
(Stamps Auditorium, Walgreen Drama Center, 1226 Murfin Avenue,
4:30 pm) |
| 2/3 | Master Class: Ian Bostridge
(Britton Recital Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 12:30 pm) |
| 2/13 | Artist Interview: Janai Brugger
(Watkins Lecture Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 2:30 pm) |

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.