

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2013 AT 8:00PM

Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Late Night Jam Session with the St. Lawrence String Quartet following the concert

## ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

Geoff Nuttall, violin

Scott St. John, violin

Lesley Robertson, viola

Christopher Costanza, cello

**Franz Joseph HAYDN** (1732-1809)

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 71, No. 2

Adagio - Allegro

Adagio cantabile

Menuetto: Allegro

Finale: Allegretto

**R. Murray SCHAFER** (b.1933)

String Quartet No. 3

Slowly, but with great passion

Allegro energico

Slow; calm; mystical

— INTERMISSION —

**Antonin DVORÁK** (1842-1904)

String Quartet in A-flat Major, Op. 105

Adagio ma non troppo—Allegro appassionato

Molto vivace

Lento e molto cantabile

Allegro non tanto

*Please join us following the concert for the Late Night Jam Session with the St. Lawrence Quartet.*

## ABOUT THE ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET



photo by Marco Borggreve

The St. Lawrence String Quartet's mission is to bring every piece of music to the audience in vivid color, with pronounced communication and teamwork, and great respect to the composer. Since winning both the Banff International String Quartet Competition and Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 1992, the quartet has delighted audiences with its spontaneous, passionate, and dynamic performances. Whether playing Haydn or premiering a new work, the "SLSQ" has a rare ability to bring audiences to rapt attention. Alex Ross of *The New Yorker* magazine writes, "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." They reveal surprising nuances in familiar repertoire and illuminate the works of some of today's most celebrated composers, often all in the course of one evening. John Adams has written two critically-acclaimed works for the quartet, including *String Quartet* (2009) and *Absolute Jest* (2012), which they premiered with the San Francisco Symphony. In 2011, SLSQ premiered *Qohelet*, a work by Osvaldo Golijov, also composed for them.

SLSQ maintains a busy touring schedule. Some 2013/14 season highlights include visits to Vancouver, Portland (OR), Toronto, Philadelphia, Ann Arbor, Palm Beach, and Washington, DC. They will premiere a new work by George Tsontakis in Carmel, CA. They will perform *Absolute Jest* with the Toronto Symphony, and also on a European tour with the San Francisco Symphony. During the summer season, SLSQ is proud to continue its long association with the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC.

Since 1998 the SLSQ has held the position of Ensemble-in-Residence at Stanford University. This residency includes working with music students as well as extensive collaborations with other faculty and departments using music to explore myriad topics. Recent collaborations have involved the School of Medicine, School of Education, and the Law School. The foursome's passion for opening up musical arenas to players and listeners alike is evident in tonight's Late Night Jam Session with amateurs, as well as their annual summer chamber music seminar at Stanford and their many forays into the depths of musical meaning with preeminent music educator Robert Kapilow.

Violist Lesley Robertson is a founding member of the group, and hails from Edmonton, Alberta. Cellist Christopher Costanza is from Utica, NY and joined the quartet in 2003. Violinists Geoff Nuttall and Scott St. John both grew up in London, Ontario; Geoff is a founding member and Scott joined in 2006. Depending on concert repertoire, the two alternate the role of first violin. All four members of the quartet live and teach at Stanford, in the Bay Area of California; however, at the end of 2013, violinist Scott St. John will be leaving the quartet to relocate to Canada with his family. Tonight's concert marks their last performance as a foursome. The SLSQ will begin 2014 with a new member to be announced soon. Continuing SLSQ members Geoff Nuttall, Lesley Robertson, and Christopher Costanza have issued the following statement: "We are all sorry to see Scott leave the quartet – he has been a substantial contributor to the most musically and personally rewarding of SLSQ's 24 years – but we respect his decision and bid farewell with warm wishes. More information on the Quartet can be found at [www.slsq.com](http://www.slsq.com).

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

*This concert offers a distillation of the historical evolution of the string quartet as an expressive medium. Joseph Haydn brought the genre to its maturity in the 1770s, establishing the model for the number and progression of its movements, the integration of its voices, the generation and working-out of its themes, and the form's place in modern musical life. Haydn's immaculately reasoned string quartets are one of the greatest musical achievements of the Age of Enlightenment. Antonín Dvořák, writing a century later, learned Haydn's lessons of form and thematic development well, but he brought to the medium a distinctly Romantic sensibility – not just a lyricism, an expanded*

*harmonic palette and a wider range of instrumental colors, but also a strong nationalistic feeling that imbued his works with the spirit and idioms of Czech song and dance. Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer's Quartet No. 3 of 1981 reflects the wide range of ideas and influences admitted to the genre in recent decades – novel use of the instruments; microtones, slides and percussive effects of non-Western music; introspective mysticism; even vocal effects inspired by Oriental martial arts. The St. Lawrence String Quartet presents an evening not just of superb music-making, but also a testament to the historical depth and continuing vitality of the art form to which the ensemble is dedicated.*

### *Quartet in D Major, Op. 71, No. 2 (H. III:70)*

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

*Composed in 1793*

Haydn's first triumph in London ended in July 1792, and he promised the impresario Johann Peter Salomon that he would return several months hence for another series of concerts. Haydn spent the intervening time at home in Vienna, composing, teaching a few pupils (including Beethoven), recouping his strength after the rigors of the London trip, and attending to domestic matters, especially seeing to the demand of his shrewish wife (he referred to her, privately, as the "House-Dragon") for new living quarters. Anna Maria had discovered a house in the Viennese suburb of Gumpendorf that she thought would be perfect, she explained to her husband, when she was a

widow. Haydn was understandably reluctant to see the place, but he found it pleasing, and bought it the next year. It was the home in which, in 1809, a decade after Anna Maria, he died.

One of the greatest successes of Haydn's London venture was the performance of several of his string quartets by Salomon, whose abilities as an impresario were matched by his virtuosity on the violin. Such public presentations of chamber works were still novel at that time, and their enthusiastic reception made it easy for Salomon to convince Haydn to create a half-dozen additional quartets for his projected visit in 1794-1795. Though composed for Salomon's concerts, the new quartets were formally commissioned by Count Anton Apponyi, who had come to know Haydn and his music when he married one of the scions of the Esterházy clan, the composer's employer for a half-century. Apponyi was an active patron of the arts in Vienna (he was a subscriber to Beethoven's Op. 1 Piano Trios), owner of a fine collection of paintings, a good violinist, and a founder and president of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, the city's principal concert-giving organization. The six Quartets were divided into two sets as Op. 71 and Op. 74 when they were published in London in 1795. Salomon had played them to great acclaim at his Hanover Square Rooms concerts the preceding year.

## JOIN US!

Following the concert, you are invited to a **Late Night Jam Session** with the St. Lawrence Quartet. As soon as the concert is over, the stage will be reset and all pre-registered members of the public with a string instrument in hand will be invited to the stage to read a Haydn String Quartet with the St. Lawrence Quartet.

Be an observer or, if you have come with an instrument but had not signed up in advance to participate, please go to the box office at intermission to check availability. All ages and abilities welcome.

The Quartets, Opp. 71 and 74 occupy an important niche in the history of chamber music as the first such works written expressly for public performance. Haydn, who was always sensitive to accommodating his audiences, made the Quartets suitable for the concert hall by fitting several of them with introductions (to set the mood and alert the listeners to the start of the music), providing them with ample dramatic contrasts, basing them on easily memorable thematic material, allowing a certain virtuosity to the first violinist in the fast movements (to show off Salomon's considerable skills), and giving them an almost symphonic breadth of expression. (In her study of the composer, Rosemary Hughes noted, "It is as if Haydn were pushing open a door through which Beethoven was to pass.") The D-Major Quartet, Op. 71, No. 2, begins with a brief slow introduction that juxtaposes explosive isolated chords with quiet phrases in a decorated chordal texture. The main body of the movement commences with a principal theme built from leaping octaves shared imitatively among the participants. The second subject, presented without fuss, is a short stuttering motive. Some delicately spun passages and a quiet reference to the octave-leap main theme close the exposition. The compact development section deals with permutations of the main and closing themes, and leads seamlessly to the full return of the earlier motives to round out the movement. The Adagio is a richly decorated instrumental song in free sonata form which explores distant harmonic areas that look forward to the heightened expressive style of the encroaching Romantic age. The Menuetto, more elegant than rustic, recalls the octave-leap motive of the first movement; a smoothly flowing trio occupies the center of the movement. The brilliant finale is a dashing rondo built on a theme of infectious jocularly.

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JC STRINGS in Lawrenceville, NJ  
and  
PRINCETON VIOLINS in Kingston, NJ  
for their support of tonight's concert and for their service  
to string players throughout our community.

## ***Quartet No. 3***

**R. MURRAY SCHAFER (B. 1933)**

*Composed in 1981*

*Premiered on September 30, 1981 in Boston by the Orford String Quartet*

R. Murray Schafer is among the most inventive and free-spirited of Canada's musicians. Born in Sarnia, Ontario on July 18, 1933, he studied piano as a boy and enrolled at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto in 1952, but dropped out before completing his degree work in favor of studying music, languages, literature and philosophy on his own. He spent two years in Vienna, absorbed in Medieval German, before moving to England, where he took a few informal lessons with Peter Racine Fricker, who was then teaching at London's Royal College of Music. Schafer supported himself in England as a free-lance journalist and BBC interviewer, collecting enough material to produce a book on *British Composers in Interview*. He also edited the score and prepared a BBC performance of Ezra Pound's opera *Le Testament de François Villon*, seeding an interest that resulted in his 1977 study of *Ezra Pound and Music*.

Upon returning to Canada in 1961, Schafer founded the Ten Centuries Concerts in Toronto to perform rarely heard music from all historical eras. From 1963 to 1965, he was Artist-in-Residence at Memorial University in Saint John's, Newfoundland, after which he moved to British Columbia to teach at Simon Fraser University, where he established the World Sound Project (now the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology), dedicated to studying the relationship between people and their acoustical environments. He left SFU in 1975 to live in Montegale Valley in rural Ontario, where he has continued to compose, write on his theories of music education and acoustic ecology (his *The Tuning of the World*, published in 1977, was a seminal book in the field), and promote cultural activities in the region's small towns. He has received many distinguished Canadian and international grants and awards, including the 1987 Glenn Gould Prize, 2005 Walter Carsen Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts, and 2009 Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement.

Though numerous of his compositions are in the traditional abstract forms, Schafer has principally written works that are referential or programmatic, and often socially, satirically, environmentally or politically motivated: his *Music for Wilderness Lake* is scored for twelve trombones performing around an isolated rural pond at dawn and dusk; *The Son of Heldenleben* parodies themes from Richard Strauss' tone poem; *Protest and Incarceration* sets poems by East European authors; *Ko wo kiku* incorporates a Japanese ceremony in which a jar of incense is passed from performer to performer. Schafer's most ambitious creative undertaking, begun in 1966, is the series of twelve

“The Schafer Quartet is a spellbinding spectacle, and a hilarious send-up of the emotional infantilism of the ultramodern repertory.”

— Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*

interrelated theatrical-operatic-ritualistic pieces collectively titled *Patria* (“Country”); *Requiems for the Party Girl* uses outrageous stagecraft, obscure symbolism and texts in invented languages, and places the audience at odd angles with respect to the action; *The Greatest Show*, cast as a country fair, allows the audience to wander from exhibit to exhibit, accosted by strolling performers; *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon* is an eight-day wilderness camping trip for which audience members prepare props and costumes, learn their parts, and gather on the final day to perform an enormous ritual. When Schafer was presented with the first Glenn Gould Award in 1987, Yehudi Menuhin described him as “a strong benevolent, with a highly original imagination and intellect, a dynamic power whose manifold personal expressions and aspirations are in total accord with the needs and dreams of humanity today.”

Schafer wrote of his String Quartet No. 3, commissioned in 1981 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the Orford String Quartet, “When I began the Third String Quartet I had the notion to join it somehow to the Second, and this idea was to be sustained through the composition of the next five quartets, giving them an organized unity.

“At the end of the Second Quartet, the three upper players have left the stage, leaving the cello alone. The Third Quartet begins with a long cello solo, referring back to material the cellist had played at the end of the previous work, most significantly a very slow rendition of the song of the White-Throated Sparrow, a bird commonly heard all summer long in the woods around my Montecagle Valley farmhouse. The other three instrumentalists begin playing from places backstage and in the hall where they had gone at the end of the Second Quartet and gradually return to join the cellist on stage.

“The second movement is fast and rhythmic and includes vocalizations reminiscent of oriental gymnastic exercises. I have always been amazed at the physical energy required by string players during vigorous playing and decided to allow them to release this energy by making vocal cries similar to those in karate (*bê; djê; dzi; ba chi; om ba; da ba*).

“The final movement is a long, quiet meditation in unison, at the conclusion of which the first violinist slowly rises, repeating a simple phrase over and over, and departs backstage, carrying the phrase into the distance so that in the end we don’t know whether we are still hearing it or if it is only lingering in our memory. This was the first instance in my work of what I might call ‘phantom sounds,’ that is, sounds that seem to remain in a space from which they have departed.”

## *Quartet in A-flat Major, Op. 105* ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

*Composed in 1895*

*Premiered on April 16, 1896 in Prague*

Dvořák’s first year in the United States as director of the new National Conservatory of Music in New York City following his arrival on September 27, 1892 was an unmitigated success. He propounded the philosophy that the country’s concert music should find thematic material and emotional inspiration in its indigenous songs and dances, and then wrote the “New World” Symphony to demonstrate his point. The work created such a sensation when it was introduced by Anton Seidl and the New York

Philharmonic on December 16, 1893 in Carnegie Hall that Dvořák was named an honorary member of that organization. He spent the summer of 1893 in the Czech community of Spillville, Iowa, assuaging his homesickness for Bohemia and composing his F-Major String Quartet (Op. 96, "American") and E-flat-Major String Quintet (Op. 97). Despite the acclaim he was receiving in this country (the new Quartet was played some fifty times within a year by the Kneisel Quartet after they introduced it in Boston on New Year's Day 1894), Dvořák was increasingly unhappy about being separated from his homeland and his friends and his beloved country house at Vysoká, forty miles south of Prague. (The following year he wrote, "Now I am finishing the finale of the Violoncello Concerto. If I could work as free from cares as at Vysoká, it would have been finished long ago. Oh, if only I were in Vysoká again!") After he had been in New York City for two years, he informed Mrs. Jeanette Thurber, founder and guiding force of the Conservatory, that he wanted to return to Bohemia for the summer. His leave was granted, and he spent the months from May until October in Prague and Vysoká. His return to New York was difficult — he missed his children desperately and he was so thoroughly homesick that winter that his usually robust health was affected. He completed the masterful Cello Concerto between November 1894 and the following February, but was then unable to create anything further except for some sketches for an opera on Longfellow's *Hiawatha* (never completed) that Mrs. Thurber had been pestering him to write for two years and the first seventy measures of what became the A-flat-Major Quartet. Though there was strong incentive for him to remain in America (he boasted in a letter to one friend about his \$15,000 salary, an enormous sum in the 1890s), Dvořák had had quite enough of playing the role of the musical émigré (which he did with considerable skill), and left New York for the last time on April 16, 1895. He arrived in Prague eleven days later, and went straight to Vysoká. His heart soared.

Dvořák took the summer of 1895 off — for seven months, from his arrival home in April until November, he did not put a single note on paper, the longest respite he had ever taken from creative work. He spent the warm months almost entirely at Vysoká, where the world-famous composer worked his garden and tended his pigeons. Dvořák's main sport that summer was furnished by his ex-pupil Josef Suk, a fine violinist and a promising composer,

who was courting his seventeen-year-old daughter, Otilie. Every time that the young suitor commuted from Prague, Dvořák, a passionate lover of railroads, insisted that he observe and report the type and number of the engine pulling his train. Once, when he was more intent on Otilie than on the particular species of locomotive, Suk forgot to do so, and Dvořák growled good-naturedly to his daughter, "How can you expect me to let you marry a young man with so little sense of responsibility?" Josef proved sufficiently observant, however, and he and Otilie were married three years later. Dvořák was back in Prague by September teaching again at the local Conservatory, but he was still unwilling to resume creative work. He enjoyed spending his evenings with the musicians and stage people who gathered at a café near the National Theater, though, no matter how stimulating the company, he always left punctually at nine o'clock so as not to delay his accustomed early bedtime. He also regularly attended the fashionable Friday soirées given by Josef Hlávka, president of the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences, where he met a number of the country's important political and cultural figures and frequently heard his music performed. By November, Dvořák was finally primed to return to composition, and his first project was the String Quartet in G Major (Op. 106), which he finished in less than a month. Just three days after completing that work on December 9, 1895, he took up the sketches for the A-flat Quartet that he had begun in New York City nine months earlier, and produced his fourteenth and last work in the form (Op. 105) just in time for Christmas. The happiness that he expressed in a letter to Alois Göbl immediately after

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finishing the Quartet is reflected by many pages of the music: "We are fortunately all well and are delighted that it has been granted to us, after three years, to spend a joyful Christmas in Bohemia! How different it was in America, when we were so far away and separated from our children and friends. But God has granted us this moment, and so we all feel inexpressibly happy." The Quartet was first played by an ensemble of students from the Prague Conservatory on April 16, 1896, the anniversary of his departure from New York City.

The A-flat Quartet was Dvořák's last piece of absolute music; the nine remaining years of his life were devoted to composing tone poems and the operas *The Devil and Kate*, *Rusalka* and *Armida*. The Quartet is marked throughout by his superb mastery of the craft of instrumental composition and by the distinctive melodic leadings and rhythmic patterns derived from the music of his native Bohemia. The first movement opens with a surprisingly morose introduction in which an embryonic version of the main theme, whose most distinctive feature is a prominent turn figure, is shared by all the instruments. The principal section of the movement is begun with the vivified tempo, the modulation to a brighter tonality (representing happiness at his return home?), and the announcement of the main theme by the first violin. The formal second subject is a bounding hunting-horn motive in triplet rhythms. The center of the movement is occupied with a vigorous democratic discussion of the motives by all the participants. The recapitulation provides balance and closure. The second movement, one of Dvořák's finest scherzos, was inspired by the Czech *furiant*. The Lento, lyrical and autumnal, follows a three-part form (A-B-A) whose center section is distinguished by pulsing accompaniment figures in triplet rhythms. Of the finale, Melvin Berger wrote, "The mood is one of warmth and geniality rather than of sparkling gaiety, of inner smiles rather than joyful laughter." This movement is a remarkable demonstration of Dvořák's ability to make a satisfying artistic creation out of such seemingly unpromising material as the crabbed theme proposed by the cello at the beginning. The music accumulates a fine energy as it proceeds, and is brought to an end by a burst of youthful spirits. Wrote Alec Robertson of this composition, "The A-flat Quartet ... is happy and springlike music, which shows careful workmanship and gives us, by common consent, Dvořák's finest scherzo.... In this kind of work, Dvořák never did anything better."

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