

CD 2005--23

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2004-2005

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Monday, April 4, 2005
7 pm. Walter Hall

University of Toronto Faculty of Music
Chamber Music Series
Presents

St. Lawrence String Quartet

Geoff Nuttall, violin
Barry Shiffman, violin
Lesley Robertson, viola
Christopher Costanza, cello

PROGRAM

Doubles (2004) - Canadian Premiere Jonathan Berger
b.1954

Introduction and Allegro Maurice Ravel
1875-1937
for flute, clarinet, harp and strings
With Judy Loman, harp; Amy Lin, flute; Cecilia Kang, clarinet

INTERMISSION

String Quintet in D major, K.593 Wolfgang A.Mozart
1756-1791
Larghetto - Allegro - Larghetto
Adagio
Menuetto (Allegretto)
Finale (Allegro)

With Scott St. John, viola

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The latest recording by the St. Lawrence String Quartet, *AWAKENING*, featuring string quartets by Christos Hatzis is available for sale in Walter Hall lobby. All proceeds will be donated to the Lorand Fenyves Residency Program.

Guest Artists of the Chamber Music Series are funded through the Visiting Chamber Ensembles program at the Faculty of Music.

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Program Notes

Doubles

JONATHAN BERGER

Doubles recalls songs of peace, freedom and resistance that were influential in my youth. Some of the references are readily identifiable, others obscured.

The title 'Doubles' refers to the seventeenth century practice of pairing a short piece with a highly embellished version of itself. The doubles in the quartet consist of three pairs of ornamental variations. In each double a new theme emerges. This theme is itself ornamented in the subsequent section, thus creating two simultaneous shifted sets of doubles.

The work was commissioned by the Hudson Valley Chamber Music Circle for the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

-Jonathan Berger

Jonathan Berger

The premier of *Doubles* marks Jonathan Berger's fifth collaboration with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. The SLSQ commissioned his earlier quartet, *Miracles and Mud*, and performed the work over sixty times. Berger's setting *Eli Eli* was included in SLSQ's tour with the Pilobolus dance company. His arrangement of *Deep River* marked the quartet's memorial for the victims of 9/11 in their first performance after the tragedy. Berger's commission for music for the dedication of the Clark Center at Stanford marked the SLSQ's first interaction with electronic music. Berger has composed symphonic works, three concerti, works for all varieties of chamber ensemble, vocal, choral and electroacoustic works. Among his awards and commissions are three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, prizes from ASCAP, commissions from WDR, and prizes from the Bourges Festival. His works are available on Sony, Neuma, CRI and Harmonia Mundi labels. Berger's works for string quartet are currently being recorded by the St Lawrence String Quartet.

Introduction and Allegro for Harp Solo, Flute, Clarinet and Strings

MAURICE RAVEL

Born in Ciboure, France, in 1875

Died in Paris in 1937

During the first five years of the twentieth century, Maurice Ravel's budding career took two contradictory directions. On one hand, he achieved critical success through such works as his *String Quartet in F* and his *Pavanne pour un infante défunte*. On the other hand, he failed three times, between 1900 and 1905, to win the prestigious Prix de Rome. His exclusion from the prize by judges at the Paris Conservatoire eventually erupted into a public controversy: the *scandale* led to the resignation of the Conservatoire's director and, ironically, made Ravel famous.

Thus, in 1905 the instrument-manufacturing firm of Erard turned to the well-known young composer to write a piece for harp. Erard had a need for new music for the double-action pedal harps that the company built: in 1896 the rival firm of Pleyel, Wolff and Company had introduced a fully chromatic harp – and in 1904 commissioned Debussy to compose his *Danse sacrée et danse profane* for the new instrument. The firm of Erard wanted a composition that would demonstrate that the double-action harp was still suitable for modern music.

Ravel took to the task with enthusiasm. "I have been terribly busy," he wrote to a friend, "the reason being a piece for the harp commissioned by the Maison Erard. Eight days of strenuous work and three sleepless nights permitted me to complete it the best I could."

Creating a work that lies halfway between a concerto and chamber music, Ravel gave his unique composition the somewhat misleading title, *Introduction and Allegro*. To be sure, there is an introduction, with thematic material stated in the woodwinds and then in the strings. But in the "allegro" which follows, tempo is a constant state of flux, as the two opening

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themes are expanded and transformed. Through masterful orchestration, Ravel makes dazzling use of his “accompanying” instruments’ colouristic possibilities: pizzicato and muted effects in the strings, and shimmering tremolos in the woodwinds. The harp part is full of lush chords, delicate harmonics and sweeping glissandi (well suited to the double-action harp). A series of short, solistic passages for the harp throughout the piece culminates in a cadenza, in which both themes are touched upon.

Disaster was narrowly averted when Ravel accidentally left the score to the *Introduction and Allegro* in a tailor’s shop. Fortunately the work was retrieved, and premiered in February 1907 at a Cercle Musicale concert in Paris by the harpist Micheline Kahn.

String Quintet in D Major K. 593
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Born in Salzburg in 1756
Died in Vienna in 1791

The writer Paul Roussel has described the year 1790 as “the least prolific in Mozart’s entire life,” pointing out that the composer completed no works between June and December of that year

The year was also one of Mozart’s most unhappy – marked by professional disappointment and financial problems. He was pointedly excluded from the musical events surrounding the marriage celebrations of archdukes Franz and Ferdinand in Vienna, and was not invited to the coronation of Leopold II, in Frankfurt am Main in October. Undaunted, he set out for German city anyway, in search of such work as he could find. He gave several concerts on this journey, but they were not

financially successful, and he returned to Vienna no better off than when he left.

It was not until the year’s end that Mozart returned to the business of composing. In December he completed his *String Quintet in D Major K. 593* (and also a fantasia for a mechanical organ). While there is some debate as to whether he began work on his string quintet before his trip to Frankfurt, or wrote the whole piece during the Christmas season, it is known that the work was commissioned by a Hungarian merchant and amateur musician, Johann Tost.

This piece is one of six string quintets that Mozart composed – mostly in the last five years of his life. In this genre he was preceded by Luigi Boccherini. But whereas the Italian composer’s quintets are all scored for a traditional string quartet plus an additional cello, Mozart’s all contain an extra viola.

The quintet opens with structurally complex movement: a cross between a sonata and rondo that is often contrapuntally intricate. The movement ends abruptly, with a recapitulation of the slow introduction, followed by a few measures of the first theme. The second movement, marked “Adagio,” is in a clearly delineated sonata form, with its first theme in G major and its second in D minor. The development section is notable for its advanced “dissonant” harmonies. The third-movement minuet is also sophisticated: rich, polyphonic sonorities contrast with light, pizzicato-accompanied textures. The finale is in sonata form, cast in a lively 6/8 metre. Again, this piece is highly contrapuntal and chromatic – and remarkably fluid in its part-writing, with thematic material shared amongst all five instruments.

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Biographies

Having walked on stage together over 1500 times in the past fifteen years the **ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET** has established itself among the world-class chamber ensembles of its generation. In 1992, they won both the Banff International String Quartet Competition and Young Concert Artists Auditions, launching them on a performing career that has brought them across North and South America, Europe and Asia.

The long awaited initial recording of the St. Lawrence Quartet, Schumann's First and Third Quartets, was released in May 1999 to great critical acclaim. The CD, first in a series with EMI Classics, received the coveted German critics award, the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, as well as Canada's annual Juno Award, granted by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for "Best Classical Album: Solo or Chamber Ensemble." BBC Music Magazine gave the recording its "highest rating," calling it the benchmark recording of the works. In October of 2001, EMI released their recording of string quartets of Tchaikovsky. In 2002 their recording Yiddishbuk featuring the chamber music of the celebrated Argentinean-American composer Osvaldo Golijov received two Grammy nominations.

Highlights of the 04/05 season include an invitation by the Emerson Quartet to perform the Mendelssohn Octet at Carnegie's Zankel Hall, and a performance of R. Murray Schafer's "Four Forty" with the Toronto Symphony. They will appear (among many other venues) in Chicago, Denver, La Jolla, Pasadena, San Antonio, Kansas City, Vancouver, and Montreal, along with their annual European tour.

The SLSQ has been involved in numerous inventive collaborations, including a 2003 project with the renowned Pilobolus Dance Theatre, which premiered at Stanford University.

The quartet's summer calendar featured their 10th year as Resident Quartet to the Spoleto USA Festival in Charleston, SC. Other summer festival appearances included Napa and Sonoma, CA (at the invitation of Jeffrey Kahane), Ottawa, Maverick Concerts, and the Rockport festivals (both MA and ME).

The foursome regularly delivers traditional quartet repertoire, but is also passionately committed to performing and expanding the works of living composers. Among those with

whom the St. Lawrence Quartet currently has active working relationships are R. Murray Schafer, Osvaldo Golijov, Christos Hatzsis, Jonathan Berger Melissa Hui and Mark Applebaum.

Having been privileged to study with the Emerson, Tokyo and Juilliard String Quartets the St. Lawrence, are themselves passionate educators. Since 1998 they have held the position of Ensemble in Residence at Stanford University. In addition to teaching in the Department of Music the group is deeply committed to bringing music to less traditional venues than the classroom or concert hall. The foursome's passion for opening up musical arenas to players and listeners alike is evident in their annual chamber music institute for adult amateurs at Stanford and their many forays into the depths of musical meaning with preeminent music educator Robert Kapilow.

Whether at Lincoln Center or an elementary school classroom, the St. Lawrence players maintain a strong desire to share the wonders of chamber music with their listeners, a characteristic of the foursome that has led them to a more informal performance style than one might expect from chamber musicians. 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."

The St. Lawrence String Quartet records exclusively for EMI/ANGEL

JUDY LOMAN is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with the celebrated harpist, Carlos Salzedo. She has been Principal harpist with the Toronto Symphony since 1960, and has appeared as a soloist with that organization in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Ms. Loman's performances are heard frequently on CBC Radio and she has recorded for RCA, Columbia, CBC, Centre Disc, Aquitaine, Marquis and Naxos. Her playing has been featured in two films by Rhombus Media, presented by the CBC and TV Ontario. She is a recipient of Canada's Juno Award for best classical recording, and the Canada Council's Grand Prix du Disc. She has adjudicated at The International Harp Contest of Israel and the USA International Harp Competition. Ms. Loman teaches Harp at the University of Toronto, and

has recently been appointed harp instructor at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

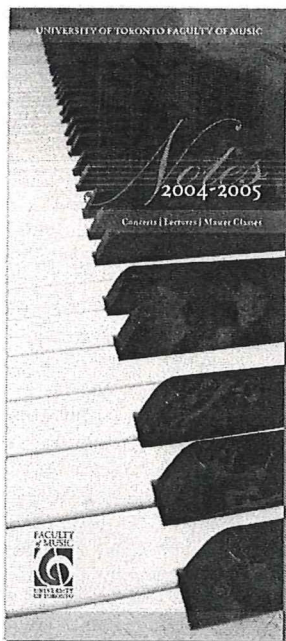
SCOTT ST. JOHN is a graduate of the Curtis Institute and a prize-winner of numerous competitions and awards, including a 2003 Avery Fisher Career Grant. He has delighted recital and chamber audiences around the globe, stretching from Japan's Casals Hall to New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Scott teaches violin, viola and chamber music at the University of Toronto, where he also coordinates the chamber music programme. *Salon Parisien*, on CBC Records, is his newest release.

CECILIA KANG is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet performance at the University of Toronto with Joseph Orłowski. Top prize winner of the woodwind category at the Toronto Kiwanis Music Festival, the Ontario Music Festival and the Canadian Music Competitions, Cecilia has also been featured as soloist with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra and the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. She has participated in

music festivals at the Banff Center for the Arts, the Orford Arts Center and Aria International Academy of Music and has also had the opportunity to play in master classes of Yehuda Gilad, Ricardo Morales, James Campbell, and Michael Rusinek, among others. Cecilia looks forward to touring across the country with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada this summer.

AMY LIN is currently a fourth year student at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music studying with Nora Shulman. She has competed successfully at the Kiwanis Music Festival and has received scholarships from the Canadian Music Competitions, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Toronto Musicians' Association and the University of Toronto. She has appeared as soloist with the Earl Haig Secondary School Symphony Orchestra, the EHSS Chamber String, with whom she toured Vienna and Amsterdam, the Toronto Chinese Artists Youth Orchestra, the Toronto Flute Choir, and the Canadian Sinfonietta, with whom she premiered a work by R. Maksimovic.

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2005-2006

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PROGRAM
Haydn Quartet in F minor, Op. 20 No. 5
Ravel Quartet in F major
Mendelssohn Quartet in E minor, Op. 44 No. 2



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