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Fry Street Quartet Concert and CD Release Celebration

The Fry Street Quartet

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rebecca.nelson@usu.edu.
The Fry Street Quartet

Robert Waters, violin; Rebecca McFaul, violin; Bradley Ottesen, viola; Anne Francis Bayless, violoncello

Tuesday, September 20, 2016
7:30 pm - Caine Performance Hall

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 76 no. 5
Franz Joseph Haydn
Allegretto
Largo. Cantabile e mesto
Menuetto. Allegro
Finale. Presto

Emergence for String Quartet
Libby Larsen
Radiant
Reactive
Rage
Resolve
Reverence

Intermission

String Quartet no. 5
Béla Bartók
Allegro
Adagio molto
Scherzo: alla bulgarese
Andante
Finale: Allegro vivace

The Fry Street Quartet holds the Endowed String Quartet Residency at Utah State University’s Caine College of the Arts. We gratefully acknowledge Dan C. and Manon Caine Russell for their generosity in establishing this endowment. The FSQ is represented by the management firm Jonathan Wentworth and Associates.
Haydn wrote nearly all of his 60-plus string quartets in tidy sets of 6 that publishers bound conveniently into single opus numbers. The op. 76 group was the last such collection he would complete during his prolific life and it was arguably the greatest of the lot. Haydn composed the works during 1796 and 1797 at the behest of Count Joseph Erdody and saw them published and premiered to thrilling effect two years later. At 65, he was finally home to stay after his highly successful London journeys and enjoying a comfortable semi-retirement from his duties in the Esterhazy court. Haydn’s fame and reputation were truly evergreen by this time and he must certainly have felt free to create exactly and only the music of his liking. The op. 76 quartets emerged from this bold liberty as an incredibly rich and summative statement on his genius as a quartet writer. As Haydn string quartets generally go, No. 5 was a bit of an odd one. In a reversal of expectation, the first movement is uncharacteristically light, formally speaking, while the second is much more emotionally dense and seems to peer wistfully over the precipice of the coming century-turn. Haydn, in so many ways, took the classical era with him to his grave and this notion is often reflected in the easy juxtaposition of antique and progressive sensibilities found in his later quartets. It is fascinating to recall, as commentator James M. Keller reminds us, that Beethoven was at work on his first set of string quartets at the same time Haydn prepared his Op. 76 collection. Indeed, all torches must pass.

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Emergence for String Quartet
LIBBY LARSEN (1950 - )
Duration: 20 minutes

Two years ago, during a visit to Utah State University, I met Rebecca McFaul and was immediately taken with her intense commitment to the idea that music can act as a powerful agent of transformation and change. She spoke eloquently and forcefully about her concern for the environment, and told me of the Fry Street Quartet’s dedication to actively making art that is relevant to the challenges of our time. She then introduced me to the Crossroads Project and asked if I might be interested in joining them. Yes.

The idea was that I attempt to compose music around the concept of the transformation of societal consciousness in the wake of our Climate Crisis.

The dream was that I would compose music that can stand alone as a string quartet and also be used in collaboration with a scripted, multimedia performance piece on the same subject.

As a point of departure, I suggested (to myself at first) that we consider the water cycle as a metaphor for transformation and change. I’ve organized
an abstract narrative that explores water’s fundamental and elemental qualities around these water topics -

Evaporation
Condensation
Precipitation
Fluvial patterns
Viscum (captured water, saturation, seepage)
Alluvium (Deltas, river convergences..)
Natural attenuation

This narrative adopts the water cycle as an agent for messages of interconnectedness, transformation, change, and adaptation with the hope of helping to ignite an emergent philosophical flame in those in the audience.

Right now, we are in the midst of the collaboration, exploring the music for its potential meaning in light of our subject. We are on a journey and invite each one of you to join us.

~Libby Larsen, 2015

**String Quartet No. 5**
BELA BARTOK (1881-1945)
Duration: 31 minutes in five movements.

Bartok’s string quartets seem so flawlessly complete as a creative statement it would be easy to believe they were always intended as a set of 6. Think of the other “perfection collections” of music history. The 9 symphonies of both Beethoven and Mahler. Mozart’s 27 piano concerti and Beethoven’s 5. As sets, they all appear so definitive, so neatly contained by premeditated design that the facts of each case matter little to us. For Bartok and his quartets, the truth is that there were plans for at least two others, one that would have preceded No. 1 and another that might have been No. 7 if Bartok had not died in 1945. The fact that the six might have been the seven or even the eight does not diminish their essential rightness as a single expressive testament. Truth be damned. String Quartet No. 5 was written in 1934 on commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation and dedicated to that great patron of the arts as well. Bartok completed the work in just one month, blazingly fast, especially given how much of that particular year he spent buried in folk music transcriptions. Like the 4th Quartet, No. 5 is set in an arch form and projects a certain natural architectural stability. Unlike the 4th, Bartok dialed back the relentless intensity of his musical language with No. 5 and, compared to the earlier work, it seems a rather mild statement. Mild does not equal boring with Bartok, however, and Quartet No. 5 is arguably the most popular of the set with very good reason. It was premiered by the Kolisch Quartet in Washington D.C. on April 8, 1935.
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ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

FRY STREET QUARTET - The remarkable Fry Street Quartet, hailed as “a triumph of ensemble playing” by the New York Times, is a multi-faceted ensemble taking chamber music in new directions. Touring music of the masters as well as exciting original works from visionary composers of our time, the Fry Street Quartet has perfected a “blend of technical precision and scorching spontaneity” (Strad). Since securing the Grand Prize at the Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition, the quartet has reached audiences from Carnegie Hall to London, and Sarajevo to Jerusalem, exploring the medium of the string quartet and its life-affirming potential with “profound understanding...depth of expression, and stunning technical astuteness” (Deseret Morning News).

Reaching in new directions, The Fry Street Quartet has commissioned and toured new works by a wide range of composers. Pandemonium by Brazilian composer Clarice Assad received its Fry Street premiere with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra; Michael Ellison’s Fiddlin’ was co-commissioned by the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music Series and the Salt Lake City based NOVA series; Laura Kaminsky’s Rising Tide was commissioned especially for the quartet’s global sustainability initiative, The Crossroads Project, toured with projections of paintings created for the project by artist Rebecca Allan, talks by physicist Dr. Robert Davies and photographs by acclaimed environmental photographer Garth Lenz. The quartet’s 2014-2015 season included its premiere of Kaminsky’s new chamber opera, As One with soprano Sasha Cooke and baritone Kelly Markgraff at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, as well as a new work by Libby Larsen entitled Emergence, which anchors the Crossroads Project’s Second Chapter, Crossroads: Emergence for string quartet, film, and actor.

For a full biography of the FSQ and its members, schedule of upcoming events and project descriptions, please visit frystreetquartet.com
The Crossroads Project album release

A one-of-a-kind collaboration, “The Crossroads Project” exemplifies the FSQ’s intellectual and musical curiosity. Joining science and art, the project aims to inspire reflection, foster engagement and incite action at a pivotal moment for our environment. On their new album, the Fry Street Quartet brings together works commissioned by Grammy winner Libby Larsen and Pulitzer Prize nominee Laura Kaminsky to create a thought provoking, viscerally affecting exploration of global sustainability. The quartet gratefully acknowledges the generous support provided by Utah State University for both the project and the commissioned works, and we thank all of you for joining us this evening to celebrate the release of the new album! CDs will be available in the lobby for purchase.

#makeityours

After 30 performances of the Crossroads Project, the FSQ has lived through the experience with literally thousands of audience members. A meditation on global sustainability, the performance offers an unflinching look at where we are and where we could be headed. A memorable refrain in the performance is to “pick something and make it yours” – our #makeityours campaign is a chance to share what you’ve picked and what you’re doing in celebration of the act of positive change-making. We want to hear from you because it’s only by coming together that we can create a new, sustainable path! So....#makeityours and inspire everyone around you to do the same!