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Fry Street Quartet

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Robert Waters

Rebecca McFaul

Bradley Ottesen

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fry street quartet



FRIDAY, FEB 17, 7:30 PM
CAINE PERFORMANCE HALL, USU CAMPUS
featuring works by Haydn, Beethoven, and Bartók

The Fry Street Quartet

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

*Friday, February 17, 2017
7:30pm - Caine Performance Hall*

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 76 no. 3

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Allegro

Poco adagio; cantabile

Menuetto - Allegro

Finale Presto

String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, "Serioso"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serioso

Larghetto espressivo; Allegretto agitato; Allegro

Intermission

String Quartet no. 6

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Mesto - Più Mosso, pesante - Vivace

Mesto - Marcia

Mesto - Burletta

Moderato, Mesto

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.

String Quartet in C Major, op. 76, no. 3

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

Duration: 22 minutes in four movements.

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. Nicknames adorn so much of Haydn's music, and so often they are based on just a single passing element in the score. But not always. In the case of the 3rd Quartet in the Opus 76 bouquet, the special name "Emperor" actually came from something the composer wrote himself. Not for Napoleon but for his own Emperor Franz, Haydn wrote a hymn of inspiration for the Austrian sovereignty that was not dissimilar to one he might have heard on his travels to England. The hymn makes up the bulk of the quartet's 2nd movement and projects a mood that is altogether more respectful than militant. Quartet No. 3 was published with the rest of the set in 1799 but was likely written in 1796 or 1797. - Jeff Counts © 2017

String Quartet in F Minor, op. 95

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Duration: 22 minutes in four movements.

Scholars have been fussing over the "period" designations of Beethoven's music since the moment he laid down his pen. Early? Middle? Late? Who knows. These distinctions do mean something, though, and not just because they can make something as grand as the catalogue of Beethoven feel almost manageable. No, they also help us understand, in fine-point detail, the creative journey of man whose every step toward the future carried the weight of an entire art form. Where he went, everyone had to eventually follow. The Op. 95 string quartet of 1810 is most often grouped into Beethoven's middle or "Heroic" period but, in truth, it straddles the fence a bit. It the last quartet he wrote before beginning what we all now call the "Late" ones and, in its way,

Op. 95 is predictive of what's to come. In fact, Beethoven was fairly tentative about letting people even hear it. "The Quartet is written for a small circle of connoisseurs" he wrote when Op. 95 was offered for publication, "and is never to be performed in public." What was he afraid of, you wonder? Perhaps it was the unusual formal construction, or emotional severity the music projected. Whatever it was, Beethoven was concerned enough about the quartet's public reception that he gave it the honor of an off-putting nickname. Luckily, the "Quartetto serioso" did see the light of day and we should be ever grateful. As a portrait of deep human feeling, much of it here dark and brooding, the Op. 95 paints with incredible clarity and accuracy. Late middle? Early late? Again, who knows. The "circle of connoisseurs" grows with every performance. - Jeff Counts © 2017

String Quartet No. 6

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945)

Duration: 29 minutes in four movements.

Bartók'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 Bartók 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 Bartók 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. But how then do we consider the 6th Quartet since, in all the ways that matter, it is indeed Bartók's final statement on the form? Written in 1939 when there was already so much to fear across Europe, the composer was facing the impending death of his mother. Perhaps this is why each movement of the quartet was fitted with an opening theme and recurring motto marked *mesto* (sadly). The complexity and poignancy of this introductory lament increases with each iteration and it eventually comes to dominate the entirety of the 4th movement. Bartók wrote this work for the Kolisch Quartet but it did not have its premiere until 1941, after the composer had relocated to America, chased by war and his lost mother. He would be dead himself just four years later and the 7th Quartet that he had supposedly begun to sketch is with him in the beyond. - Jeff Counts © 2017

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 Fischhoff 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

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