



PROGRAM: SUNDAYS WITH THE ST. LAWRENCE JANUARY 17 / 2:30 PM BING CONCERT HALL

ARTISTS

St. Lawrence String Quartet
Geoff Nuttall, *violin*
Owen Dalby, *violin*
Lesley Robertson, *viola*
Christopher Costanza, *cello*

Paul Groves, *tenor*
Laura Dahl, *piano*

Sundays with the St. Lawrence is presented in
partnership with Music at Stanford.

PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn: String Quartet in C Major, op. 20, no. 2 (1772)

Moderato
Capriccio: Adagio
Minuetto: Allegretto
Fuga a quattro soggetti: Allegro

Ralph Vaughan Williams: *On Wenlock Edge* for Tenor, Piano, and String Quartet (1908–1909)

1. *On Wenlock Edge*
2. *From Far, from Eve and Morning*
3. *Is My Team Ploughing?*
4. *Oh, When I Was in Love with You*
5. *Bredon Hill* (first line: “In summertime on Bredon”)
6. *Clun* (Housman’s title and the first line: “Clunton and Clunbury”)

INTERMISSION

Sergey Rachmaninoff: Four Songs for Tenor, Piano, and Violin

1. *In the Silence of the Secret Night*, op. 4, no. 3
2. *Before My Window*, op. 26
3. *How Fair This Spot*, op. 21
4. *Oh, Never Sing to Me Again*, op. 4, no. 4

Camille Saint-Saëns: String Quartet No. 1 in E Minor, op. 112 (1899)

Allegro
Molto allegro quasi presto
Molto adagio
Allegro non troppo

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please be considerate of others and turn off all phones, pagers, and watch alarms, and unwrap all lozenges prior to the performance. Photography and recording of any kind are not permitted. Thank you.

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)
STRING QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 20,
NO. 2, HOB. III: 32 (1772)

When Haydn's Opus 20 quartet collection was issued in an unsanctioned printing in Amsterdam and Berlin in 1779, its publisher (Hummel) put an emblem of a full sun or sun god atop two neoclassical pillars on the front cover—and this is why the six quartets are occasionally referred to by the nickname “Sun quartets” to the present day. Thanks to wide distribution through official and unofficial channels, the collection did much to popularize the medium of the string quartet during Haydn's lifetime. When a new edition of the quartets was advertised in Vienna in 1801, its publisher (Artaria) described them as works with which “Haydn so decisively founded his fame.” Mozart admired the collection. Beethoven copied them out to better understand their craft. And, at the end of the 19th century, Brahms owned the original autograph manuscripts, which he donated to the Vienna Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, where they remain to this day.

In these manuscripts, Haydn was still using the established catch-all title “*Divertimento a quattro*” rather than “string quartet.” But the C Major Quartet is no easy-going divertimento, and the piece is in many ways the least conventional quartet of the set. The sonorous cello solos at the opening of its first two movements show not only independence but also a striving for new harmonic effect. The first of these melodies, moreover, introduces a passage of what amounts to triple invertible counterpoint—a kind of musical version of Sudoku that is to permeate the entire quartet. The slow movement, too, strives for dramatic impact, with recitative-like passages that resolve into a melting *arioso* melody. This movement is straight out of the opera house and full of the gestures of the recitative and aria. It leads to a wonderful minuet, rich in allusions to folk dances. The finale bustles with fragments of themes busily passing from one voice to another. “*Fuga a quattro soggetti*,” Haydn proudly titles his fugue with

four themes, which is softly played (*sotto voce*) until its concluding burst of exuberance.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
(1872–1958)
ON WENLOCK EDGE FOR TENOR,
PIANO, AND STRING QUARTET
(1908–1909)

Early on in a career that was late to bloom, English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams felt that his work had come to a dead end and that “a little French polish” might add luster. Already 35, with expert tuition from leading English composers and Max Bruch in Germany behind him, he settled on further studies with Maurice Ravel, three years his junior, in Paris. “I came back with a bad attack of French fever and wrote a string quartet which caused a friend to say I must have been having tea with Debussy,” he reported. The quartet was followed by—and eventually premiered in the same concert with—the song cycle *On Wenlock Edge*. Its combination of tenor, piano, and string quartet was new to England, but it was a grouping that the English composer may have heard in Paris in music by Fauré or Chausson. Vaughan Williams drew six poems from A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* of 1896, a collection whose themes are love, nostalgia for times past, and the tragedy of young soldiers going to war (the Boer War) never to return. In the title song, a violent gale becomes a metaphor for inner turmoil, represented by shimmering strings and French atmospheric coloring. The melancholy second song reflects the transience of life and stresses the urgency of meaningful relationships on Earth. The tension of tragedy underlying the cycle comes to the fore in the third song, where, in a dramatic scena, a fallen soldier's voice from the grave questions where his sweetheart's affections now lie, to an ironic reply. The lightness of touch in the accompaniment of the fourth song, almost a folk song in spirit, reflects Ravel's influence as do the sonorous string chords of *Bredon Hill*, suggesting the untroubled languor of a summer morning. In this intense, evocative

setting, Vaughan Williams' pen reveals the most subtle coloring. It's a far cry from the “lumpy and stodgy” textures the composer had complained about prior to his studies with Ravel. Similarly in the final song, *Clun*, Vaughan Williams, now a mature, more confident composer, transcends Housman's feelings of fatality with a vision of a noble, spiritual end to life.

SERGEY RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)
FOUR SONGS FOR TENOR, PIANO,
AND VIOLIN

Rachmaninoff composed more than 80 songs, all of them before he left Russia at the time of the revolution for a life abroad. His favored genre was the romance, with its joy at the wonder of nature and its emotional mood swings from the forlorn to the ecstatic. His first collection, Opus 4, was published in 1893, one year after he had left the Moscow Conservatory. *V molchan'i nochi taynoy* (*In the Silence of the Secret Night*), the third of the set of six, falls somewhat under the shadow of Tchaikovsky, but its coda looks forward to the mature Rachmaninoff. His Opus 26 collection of 15 songs dates from 1906. This was the year that two of Rachmaninoff's operas, *The Miserly Knight* and *Francesca da Rimini*, were premiered with mixed success at the Bolshoi. The second song, *U moyego okna* (*Before My Window*), is gently reflective, finding joy in cherry blossoms and the love songs of birds outside the window. Its text, as with the song that follows, comes from a collection by the Countess Einerling, published under the pseudonym Galina. Rachmaninoff wrote *Zdes' khorosho* (*How Fair This Spot*) in 1902, immediately before his wedding, and dedicated the song to his bride. Just 22 bars long, it finds joy in dreams of his beloved, in nature, and in God and cumulatively builds as it soars to an ecstatic conclusion. A decade earlier, Rachmaninoff also dedicated the romance *Ne poy, krasavitsa, pri mne* (*Oh, Never Sing to Me Again*) to Natalya Satina, his future bride. This fine setting of Pushkin begs a young girl not to sing songs from Georgia because of

the memories they hold. Its colorful, oriental harmonies are reminiscent of Borodin, and the skill with which the young composer builds and then unwinds the vocal line has made it among the best known of his songs.

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)
STRING QUARTET NO. 1 IN E MINOR,
OP. 112 (1899)

A prolific composer, Camille Saint-Saëns said that he produced music as naturally as an apple tree produces apples. The apple tree first blossomed and bore fruit when he was three. A few years later, it had grown branches. At his Paris debut, the 10-year-old French prodigy offered any Beethoven sonata his audience cared to name as an encore. The full apple crop totaled over 169 published works, not to mention his writings on music, a book of philosophy, essays on botany and zoology, several plays, and much poetry. A monograph on the archeology of the classical theater is said to be a creditable work of scholarship.

Saint-Saëns worked in most of the major musical forms of his day. He can even stake a claim to being the first major composer to have written for film (*L'assassinat du duc de Guise*, in 1908). His music is unmistakably French in character: finely crafted and proportioned, polished, balanced, and ordered, with a keen sense of tradition. He wrote two string quartets later in life and today's concert is a welcome opportunity to hear the first of them. Both are essentially neoclassical in spirit, gracefully written for the string instruments, and they are Saint-Saëns' only chamber works without keyboard. The E Minor Quartet dates from 1899, when he was already 64 years old. It is dedicated to the great Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. An introduction with a somewhat melancholy air leads to a vigorous *Allegro*. Its form is clear and precise. There follows a series of variations based on a popular song from Brittany. An intense slow movement, with broad, sweeping gestures, is next. Its textures echo the late quartets of Beethoven from time to time,



though without Beethoven's intensity and conviction. The finale is a closely argued and serious movement, which cools down somewhat before a brisk coda propels the work to an end.

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ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

Established in 1989, the St. Lawrence String Quartet has developed an undisputed

reputation as a truly world-class chamber ensemble. Called "witty, buoyant, and wickedly attentive" (*Montreal Gazette*) with a "peerless" sense of ensemble (*Financial Times*), the quartet is celebrated for its "smoldering intensity" (*Washington Post*) and "flexibility, dramatic fire, and...hint of rock 'n' roll energy" (*Los Angeles Times*). The SLSQ performs internationally and has served as ensemble-in-residence at Stanford University since 1998.

The St. Lawrence continues to build its reputation for imaginative and spontaneous music making through an energetic commitment to the great established quartet literature as well as the championing of new works by such composers as John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Ezequiel Viñao, and Jonathan Berger. Of its collaborations with Adams, the *Washington Post* asserted, "If good relationships are built on trust, the bond between the St. Lawrence String Quartet and

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Red Horse (Minneconjou Lakota Sioux, 1822–1907), Untitled from the Red Horse Pictographic Account of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1881. Graphite, colored pencil, and ink. NAA MS 2367A, 08569900 National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

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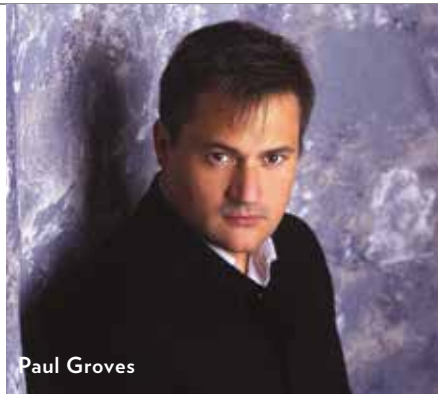
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composer John Adams is a marriage made in chamber music heaven.”

In late summer 2015, the quartet toured Europe with the San Francisco Symphony, performing Adams’ *Absolute Jest* under the baton of conductor Michael Tilson Thomas for audiences in the United Kingdom, Germany, Romania, and Switzerland. Later in the season, the SLSQ performed at Carnegie Hall in New York and in Vancouver and Toronto; Madison, Wisconsin; Worcester, Massachusetts; Eugene, Oregon; and East Lansing, Michigan. Spring highlights included a residency at the University of Maryland and a special Haydn-themed performance at the 92nd Street Y in New York. During the summer season, the ensemble also continued its long association with Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina.

In recent seasons, the SLSQ has been highlighting first violinist Geoff Nuttall’s admiration for Joseph Haydn with a series of concerts in which the foursome explores and unpacks the composer’s string quartets from various perspectives and then performs the works in their entirety. Nuttall, hailed as “the Jon Stewart of chamber music” (*New York Times*), explains, “To be really devastated by the genius of Haydn’s music, the performers and audiences have to be connected... exploring the material in a really active way.” The quartet will continue to offer these Haydn discovery programs at least through the 2016–17 season.

The quartet’s residency at Stanford includes work 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, the School of Education, and the Law School. In addition to their appointment at Stanford, the members of the SLSQ serve as visiting artists at the University of Toronto. The foursome’s passion for opening up musical arenas to players and



Paul Groves

listeners alike is evident in its annual summer chamber music seminar at Stanford.

Lesley Robertson and Geoff Nuttall are founding members of the group and hail from Edmonton, Alberta, and London, Ontario, respectively. Christopher Costanza is from Utica, New York, and joined the group in 2003. Owen Dalby, from the San Francisco Bay Area, joined in 2015. All four members of the quartet live and teach at Stanford University.

PAUL GROVES

American tenor Paul Groves enjoys an impressive international career performing on the stages of all the world’s leading opera houses and concert halls. Groves begins his 2015–16 season in a rare role debut singing Rodrigue in Massenet’s *Le Cid* with Boston’s Odyssey Opera. He then returns to the Metropolitan Opera for Berg’s *Lulu*, conducted by James Levine. He makes another role debut in February in the East Coast premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s *Cold Mountain* with Opera Philadelphia. He returns to Opéra de Lyon in May for performances of Stravinsky’s *Perséphone*, having been praised by *Opera Today* for his “splendid” portrayal of Eumolpus at the Aix-en-Provence Festival last July. A seasoned concert performer, Groves appears in a trilogy of Berlioz works this season—with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the *Te Deum* in February, with the San Francisco Symphony for the composer’s *Requiem* in March, and with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for *Roméo et Juliette* in April.

A gifted musician, Paul Groves is continually in demand for concerts with the world’s leading orchestras and conductors. He performed Stravinsky’s *Le rossignol* and Berlioz’s *Te Deum* with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas and Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Philadelphia Orchestra led by Christoph Eschenbach. The tenor made his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in performances of Berlioz’s *Faust*, led by Christoph von Dohnányi, and he has since appeared with it in performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, also under the direction of Dohnányi, at Cleveland’s Severance Hall and at New York’s Carnegie Hall. Other recent performances at Carnegie Hall include Berlioz’s *L’enfance du Christ* with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and Sir Charles Mackerras. He made his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a program of works of Mozart and Britten led by Esa-Pekka Salonen and soon returned for performances of Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung* and Stravinsky’s *Les noces*. The works of Benjamin Britten figure prominently in Paul Groves’ concert work, and he has performed of Britten’s *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* with the Atlanta Symphony and at the Caramoor Festival led by Donald Runnicles and the composer’s *War Requiem* with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, with the St. Louis Symphony, and at the Festival de Saint-Denis in Paris, led by Kurt Masur.

In addition to his several recordings with James Levine, Paul Groves’ performances in the Salzburg Festival’s productions of *Die Zauberflöte* and *La damnation de Faust* were recorded for release on DVD by Deutsche Grammophon and Naxos Records, respectively. He recently recorded Roger Waters’ new opera, *Ça Ira*, opposite Bryn Terfel for Sony Classics as well as Ravel cantatas with Michel Plasseon for EMI Classics. He can be heard as Tebaldo in Teldec Classics’ recording of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, led by Donald Runnicles. He also recorded the role of Belmonte in a video and audio recording of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*,



Laura Dahl

filmed in Istanbul and led by Sir Charles Mackerras, for the Telarc label. Groves' performances as Admète in *Alceste* at London's Barbican Centre were recorded for CD and DVD on the Philips Classics label.

LAURA DAHL

Pianist Laura Dahl is an active international performer and educator, appearing in venues including Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, and San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall as well as Stern Grove Festival, the Carmel Bach Festival, and the Henley Festival in Great Britain. A specialist in collaborative performance and chamber music, Dahl is the founder and artistic director of Music by the Mountain, a chamber music festival in Northern California, and the A. Jess Shenson Recital Series at Stanford University. She is a member of the music faculty at Stanford, where she teaches collaborative and solo piano, chamber music, art song interpretation, and diction. She has also taught at the New National Theatre Young Artists Training Program in Tokyo, Japan, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Dahl's education featured training on both coasts of the United States and in Germany. She was the first musician to be named a German Chancellor's Scholar of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. She lived in Germany for two years, studying under pianist Phillip Moll, pianist and composer Aribert Reimann, and baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Dahl holds degrees from the University of Michigan School of

Music and New England Conservatory of Music. A graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, she served as assistant conductor for Western Opera Theater and was associate director of the San Francisco Boys Chorus. She has been a coach at New England Conservatory of Music and the

University of Michigan Opera Theater. She was an invited fellow at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Center for two years and also studied at the Banff Academy of Singing and the Music Academy of the West. Laura Dahl was born and raised in the western states of Colorado and Montana. ❄️



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