



**PROGRAM: SUNDAYS WITH
THE ST. LAWRENCE**
APRIL 12 / 2:30 PM
BING CONCERT HALL

ARTISTS

St. Lawrence String Quartet

Geoff Nuttall, *violin*

Mark Fewer, *violin*

Lesley Robertson, *viola*

Christopher Costanza, *cello*

Aiyun Huang, *percussion*

Alikeness was commissioned for the St. Lawrence String Quartet with the support of Joan and Allan Fisch.

There will be a pre-performance discussion at 1:30 pm with Geoff Nuttall and Jaroslaw Kapuscinski.

PROGRAM

Franz Joseph Haydn: String Quartet No. 5 in E-flat Major, op. 1, no. 0, Hob. II:6 (ca. 1757-1759)

Presto

Menuet

Adagio

Menuet

Finale: Presto

Erwin Schulhoff: Five Pieces for String Quartet (1923)

Alla valse Viennese (allegro)

Alla serenata (allegretto con moto)

Alla Czeca (molto allegro)

Alla tango milonga (andante)

Alla tarantella (prestissimo con fuoco)

INTERMISSION

Jaroslaw Kapuscinski: *Alikeness* (2015) (World premiere)

Eight movements for string quartet and percussion

Franz Joseph Haydn: String Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 33, no. 2, Hob. III:38, *The Joke* (1781)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegro

Largo e sostenuto

Finale: Presto

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.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)
STRING QUARTET NO. 5 IN E-FLAT
MAJOR, OP. 1, NO. 0, HOB. II:6
(CA. 1757–1759)

Who “invented” the string quartet? With his ten earliest quartets—the ones we now know as Op. 1 and Op. 2 and today’s quartet known as Op. 0—Franz Joseph Haydn was the first composer to have international success with a string quartet. Editions of his early quartets were assembled by publishers in Paris, Amsterdam, and London into the Op. 1 and Op. 2 collections. Many more were copied by hand and circulated throughout Europe. The entire set even found its way to the United States as early as 1770 and was among the first works of Haydn to be played in the New World. So Haydn’s ten quartets were certainly the earliest to have real success with the public. This success also helped establish the distinctive combination of two violins, viola, and cello as the medium that evolved into the classical string quartet. Later in life, Haydn acknowledged his originality in writing for four-part strings but was reluctant to overstate his position. He did not call these early work quartets. He originally called them cassations or nocturnes. Later in life, he referred to them as divertimentos. And that is what they really are: collections of five-movement quartet-divertimentos.

Haydn wrote them in the late 1750s as a young freelance musician in Vienna for a commission from a government official, Count von Fűrnberg. He hosted a regular meeting of a quartet ensemble made up of his estate steward, his chaplain, Albrechtsberger (either the composer or his cellist brother), and Haydn playing violin. The new medium of two violins, viola, and cello provided Haydn with a springboard for music that is immediately entertaining and pleasing. It fired his imagination and led directly to a substantial cycle of 68 quartets that shines like a beacon in the chamber music of the 18th century. This E-flat quartet moved in and out of the various published Op. 1 collections. It was eventually given the designation “Op. 0”

in the 1930s when it was rediscovered. At the same time, it replaced another quartet in the set, now known to have been an arrangement of a symphony. A taut rising theme, just three notes plus a trill, opens the quartet and is passed from instrument to instrument. It is heard in combination and expanded into other brief ideas in a sprightly, polished movement of great charm. Like the majority of the ten early quartets, Op. 1, No. 0 contains two contrasted minuets, here separated by a soulful aria for first violin. The first violin again leads the chase in the scurrying *Presto* finale.
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ERWIN SCHULHOFF (1894–1942)
FIVE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET
(1923)

Czech composer Erwin Schulhoff, one of the most gifted of a lost generation of composers to die in concentration camps, was born ahead of his time. His magpie-like interest in music of all sorts would make him right at home in today’s culture. In the 1920s, when he wrote the *Five Pieces*, Schulhoff was a prominent pianist and composer, appearing regularly at international contemporary music festivals. His interests tended toward modernism, often combining Arnold Schoenberg’s free atonality with the strong dance rhythms of folk music. As a pianist, Schulhoff championed the quarter-tone music of his fellow countryman Alois Hába. He soaked up the neoclassicism of Igor Stravinsky. He followed developments in Paris and was an enthusiast of the music of Darius Milhaud and other members of Les Six. He also played in nightclubs and drew inspiration from the then new and exciting phenomenon of jazz and ragtime, integrating them into his music as successfully as any composer of the time. Like his almost exact contemporary Bohuslav Martinů, Schulhoff was something of an outsider. He wrote the first of his five works for string quartet while still a student. The *Five Pieces* are the first of his mature works for the medium and had immediate success when given their premiere at the International Society for Contemporary

Music festival in Salzburg in 1924. These short pieces show considerable technical skill and confidence, great variety with economic means, and rhythmic ingenuity. Together, as a series of complementary dance movements, they bring a modern face to the tradition of the Baroque suite.

The first piece is a Viennese waltz with an edge, cunningly notated. Next comes a 5/8 serenata, a stylized dance with a Spanish flavor whose recurring rhythm ranges from the exuberant to the ghostly. The rhythm and energy of the third dance bring to mind the music of Béla Bartók in a rhythmically driven piece reminiscent of the Czech *skocná*. The two closing pieces are again finely drawn dances, deriving from the Argentinean tango and Neapolitan tarantella respectively. Speaking of his passion for dances of all types, Schulhoff said, reasonably enough, “If Bach and his contemporaries—not to mention Mozart, Brahms, and Schubert—wrote and loved the dances of their day, why shouldn’t I love and write these dances of my own time?”
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JAROSLAW KAPUSCINSKI (B. 1964)
ALIKENESS (2015)

Alikeness is a suite of eight movements imagined and composed for a Sunday afternoon at Bing Concert Hall with the St. Lawrence String Quartet and Aiyun Huang—an unhurried occasion with magnificent musicians and lush acoustics. The invitation to contribute in this way to the 25th-anniversary celebration of the St. Lawrence String Quartet was a joy, an honor, and a tempting challenge. One of the characteristics of percussion and string quartet is their inherent dissimilarity. Percussion became a solo instrument only in the 20th century as the aesthetic trends promoted an appreciation for complex sound colors and noise. On the other hand, the idiomatic vocabulary of the string quartet was formed almost two centuries earlier by Joseph Haydn, and since then the form continuously thrived on pitch, harmony, and

purity of tone. The contrast appeared even stronger in my mind as the performers of this concert are some of the world's most sophisticated proponents of these qualities. Hybridism is something I have been dealing with in most of my work as it usually mixes media, so the attempt to marry the seemingly incompatible musical pair was both a welcome continuation and an irresistible new challenge.

My approach to the disparity was inspired by *Jazz*, a series of cutouts by Henri Matisse. This masterpiece from late in the artist's life builds on careful arrangement of simple shapes cut out from single colored sheets of gouache painted paper. The power of line and color contrast has been perfectly harnessed. Similarly, I decided to expose contrasting edges and differences between strings and percussion. At first, I imagined never letting the two play a single note together. Everything was to be rhythmically offset. Later, as the piece progressed, that literal approach was expanded by other configurations that allowed dynamic hiding and revealing of one sound world from behind the other.

The title *Alikeness* refers to two conceptual notions as well. The first is an interest in portraiture—in this case, my fascination with the almost disturbing resemblance of people's eyes in Rembrandt's work. Their depth and wise expression seem to transcend pictorial realism. Each of my movements is based on a character but despite external differences of instrumentation and pace, all are shown with a certain calm nostalgia. None of the characters or movements is named to avoid distracting listeners from gazing directly into music's eye. All that is given are numbers representing their order of appearance. To reveal another important, recent inspiration, I should say that the constancy may resemble that of the masks in Noh drama, which change under the stage lights with the slightest movement of the actors.

Second, I have a great interest in the ostensibly familiar. Seeing things with a fresh and simple mind as if for the first time is of

great value to me. To fully internalize that feeling and then share it with the audience, I tend to redance, repaint, or remusic the world. I have done intermedia "remixes" of Chopin, Webern, Scarlatti, and Mondrian as well as poetic reinventions of airports, typewriters, or fruit. I think of these as my little battles of affirmation against entropy.

Finally, I wish to express great gratitude to the St. Lawrence String Quartet musicians and Aiyun Huang for their contribution to the creation of the piece. The warmth of the word *like* hiding within the title feels most appropriate as a permanent testimony.

—Notes by the composer

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1723–1809)
STRING QUARTET IN E-FLAT MAJOR,
OP. 33, NO. 2, HOB. III:38, *THE JOKE*
(1781)

In music, what goes around comes around. Toward the end of 1781, Haydn kick-started his own crowdfunding platform. He mailed a series of letters to likely backers who might have an interest in a series of quartets he was about to create. There are to be six "entirely newly produced quartets," he said in his pitch, "written in an entirely new special manner, for I have not composed any [quartets] for ten years." In return for their pledges, backers (read "patrons") would receive prepublication manuscript copies and their names would be included in the list of subscribers in the printed edition. Haydn's aim in the six Op. 33 quartets was to broaden his audience without dumbing down his style or in any way compromising his integrity as a composer. His innovation largely lies in the sense of humor and wit that runs throughout the quartets. At the same time, he makes the medium of the string quartet—rather than his symphonies, piano sonatas, or operas—a vehicle for his most sophisticated writing.

When published, the new quartets, combining accessibility with artistic excellence, immediately created a stir.

Their popularity is reflected in the number of nicknames that have become attached to the collection (*Russian*, *Jungfernquartette*). Another nickname, *Gli scherzi* (Italian for *joke*), reflects the fact that Haydn adopts the newer, more folk-like scherzo in place of the older, more stately minuet. The slow movements of Op. 33 are generally deeper and more complex in texture. And elements of popular folk music find their way into the finales. Mozart, just launching a career as a freelance composer in Vienna when the quartets were first published in 1782, admired their compactness; their perfect balance of character, form, and technique; and the way in which Haydn gives all four instruments equal importance. He painstakingly composed a set of six in emulation of Haydn's Op. 33, with several of Haydn's movements clearly used as direct models.

The opening movement of Haydn's E-flat quartet is built rigorously on the good-natured rhythmic figure of its first few bars. Its musical argument is intricate. Very little in the movement has to do with anything other than this thematic material. In the *Scherzo*, Haydn's focus moves from high culture to folk culture, to accessibility and innovation. It begins as a country dance, a *Deutsche Tanz*, with suggestions of thigh slapping, stamping, and the swirling movement of a peasant dance. Later, Haydn makes the first documented use of the wavy line in a score to indicate that typically Viennese glissando, famous shortly afterwards from the waltzes of the Strauss family and others. It's a rustic touch in a rustic movement and was viewed with suspicion by generations of editors. In fact, it wasn't until 1974 that Haydn's original directions were restored to a printed score. The mood swings again in the highly sophisticated variations of the slow movement, in which a transparent, eight-measure melody is shared among the instruments in every possible permutation. The E-flat quartet is often called *The Joke* because of the witty "false ending" of its rondo finale. Here, in a touch of self-mockery perhaps, Haydn deconstructs the much-repeated theme, giving us the melody phrase

by phrase, each separated by a measure of silence. Three more measures of silence and he now gives us the opening phrase again, pianissimo—and with it, a good chuckle.

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ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

Currently celebrating its 25th-anniversary season, the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ) has developed an undisputed reputation as a truly world-class chamber ensemble. The quartet performs over 120 concerts annually worldwide and calls Stanford University home, where the group is ensemble-in-residence. The SLSQ 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.

The quartet maintains a busy touring schedule. Its 2014–15 season includes a three-concert series at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, during which the quartet will play Stradivari instruments from the library's prized collection. In January 2015, the SLSQ premiered at Stanford University a string quartet by John Adams—his third work composed for the group. The quartet will also perform and give master classes around North America, with visits to Houston, Toronto, Philadelphia, Oberlin, Montreal, and many other cities. The SLSQ is proud to continue its long association with the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, during the summer season.

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 collaborating extensively with other faculty and departments to use music to explore a myriad of topics. Collaborations have involved the School of Medicine, the School of Education, the Law School, and others. In addition to their appointments

at Stanford, the members of the SLSQ are visiting artists at the University of Toronto. The foursome's passion for opening up musical arenas to players and 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. Mark Fewer, a native of Newfoundland, began his first season with the quartet in 2014, succeeding violinist Scott St. John. All four members of the quartet live and teach at Stanford.

AIYUN HUANG

The ever-evolving Aiyun Huang enjoys a musical life as a soloist, chamber musician, researcher, teacher, and producer. She won first prize and the Audience Award at the Geneva International Music Competition in 2002. Her past highlights include performances at the Victoria Hall in Geneva, Weill Recital Hall in New York City, Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella series, Los Angeles County Museum of Art's concert series, Holland Festival, Agora Festival in Paris, Banff Summer Arts Festival, 7ème Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Vancouver New Music Festival, CBC Radio, La Jolla SummerFest, Scotia Festival of Music, Cool Drummings, Montreal New Music Festival, Centro Nacional de las Artes in Mexico City, and National Concert Hall and Theater in Taipei. She is a founding member of the Canadian trio Toca Loca with pianists Gregory Oh and Simon Docking. Since 2011, she has been performing with Musicians from SoundSCAPE with soprano Tony Arnolds and pianist Thomas Rosenkranz. Her recent highlights include concerto appearances with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Ms. Huang has commissioned and championed more than 100 works in the last two decades, working with composers internationally.

She is also a researcher at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology in Montreal. In 2012, Mode Records released *Save Percussion Theater* featuring Ms. Huang and friends documenting important theatrical works in the percussion repertoire. Ms. Huang's research focuses on the cross-pollination between science and music from the performer's perspective. Her current research project, *Memory in Motion*, focuses on the understanding of memory in percussion ensemble playing.

In May 2013, she cohosted the festival *Random Walks: Music of Xenakis and Beyond* with Canada's leading research institutions: the Perimeter Institute, Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences, and Institute for Quantum Computing. In 2013, she produced *Inflorescence: Music from SoundSCAPE* on New Focus Recordings. Upcoming releases include a recording on Naxos Records featuring Canadian composer Chris Harman's percussion and keyboard music produced by Ms. Huang.

Born in Kaohsiung, a southern city of Taiwan, Ms. Huang holds doctor of musical arts and master of arts degrees from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Toronto. Her teachers included Steven Schick, Russell Hartenberger, Gaston Sylvestre, Robin Engelman, Bob Becker, and Francois Bedel. Between 2004 and 2006, she was a faculty fellow at UCSD. She currently holds the position of associate professor in percussion at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She regularly teaches and performs in summer festivals including the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, SoundSCAPE in the Italian Alps, and *Roots and Rhizomes* at the Banff Centre. She is a proud endorser of Sabian, Yamaha Canada, and Innovative Percussion. ❁