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CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

**THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
DAVID FINCKEL AND WU HAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTORS
PRESENTS**

THE ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

**WORKS BY
HAYDN, ADAMS,
& SAINT-SAËNS**

**APRIL 25
ALICE TULLY HALL**



The Chamber Music Society presents *The St. Lawrence String Quartet* on Tuesday, April 25, at 7:30 PM in Alice Tully Hall. The program features Haydn's Quartet in C major for Strings, Hob. III:32, Op. 20, No. 2; Adams's Quartet No. 2 for Strings; and Saint-Saëns's Quartet in E minor for Strings, Op. 112. In his own description of the quartet's selection of works, violinist Owen Dalby wrote that it provides "a great snapshot of who we are and what we stand for, musically speaking. We adore music that is alive with wonder and possibility, and even if

crafted with the utmost care sounds like it is being composed on the spot.” [Photo: Marco Borggreve.]

The St. Lawrence String Quartet’s concert opens with the second of Haydn’s six “Sun” quartets, Op. 20. Musicologist Donald Tovey wrote “With Op. 20, the historical development of Haydn’s quartets reaches its goal; further progress is not progress in any historical sense, but simply the difference between one masterpiece and the next.”

John Adams’s *Second Quartet* (2014) was written for the St. Lawrence String Quartet. It is the third work the composer wrote for the ensemble, following the *First Quartet* (2008), and *Absolute Jest* for String Quartet and Orchestra (2012), which is based on fragments from Beethoven, primarily from the Op. 131 and Op. 135 string quartets. An unattributed note on Adams’s website provides the following description of the work:

The new Quartet uses the same tropes as *Absolute Jest* in that it too is based on tiny fragments — ‘fractals,’ in the composer’s words — from Beethoven. But the economy here is much stricter. The first movement (*Allegro molto*), for example, is entirely based on two short phrases from the scherzo of the late Op. 110 Piano Sonata in A-flat major. The transformations of harmony, cadential patterns, and rhythmic profile that occur in this movement go way beyond the types of manipulations favored in *Absolute Jest*.

Closing the program will be the first CMS performance of Saint-Saëns’s *Quartet in E minor for Strings, Op. 112*. The quartet is evidence of the French interest in the traditional Classical genres of symphony, concerto, and chamber music that flourished following the founding of the Société Nationale in 1871 by Saint-Saëns and some of his colleagues to foster the musical life of the country (and to redress the pervasive influence in France of Germanic Wagnerism after the humiliation of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870). Saint-Saëns, who had been nurtured on the musical literature of 18th-century Classicism, produced some three dozen chamber compositions during his long life, a body of work that led Arthur Hovey to comment, “It may be said with truth that Saint-Saëns was the first French composer who showed himself able to compete successfully in the intimate and yet supremely difficult genre [of chamber music] with the German masters of the past.”

Established in Toronto in 1989, the **St. Lawrence String Quartet** quickly earned acclaim at top international chamber music competitions.. The quartet established an ongoing residency at Spoleto Festival USA, made prize-winning recordings for EMI of music by Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Golijov, earning two Grammy nominations and a host of other prizes, before being appointed ensemble-in-residence at Stanford University in 1999. At Stanford, the SLSQ is at the forefront of intellectual life on campus. The SLSQ directs the music department's chamber music program, and frequently collaborates with other departments including the Schools of Law, Medicine, Business, and Education. The quartet members perform regularly at Stanford Live, host an annual chamber music seminar, and run the Emerging String Quartet Program through which they mentor the next generation of young quartets. In the words of Alex Ross of the *New Yorker*: "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."

Listing Information:

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center at Alice Tully Hall
Tuesday, April 25, 7:30 PM
Tickets from \$32 available at the box office; by calling 212.875.5788;
on-line: www.ChamberMusicSociety.org

THE ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

Geoff Nuttall, Owen Dalby, violin; Lesley Robertson, Viola; Christopher Costanza, cello

HAYDN	Quartet in C major for Strings, Hob. III:32, Op. 20, No. 2 (1772)
ADAMS	Quartet No. 2 for Strings (2014)
SAINT- SAËNS	Quartet in E minor for Strings, Op. 112 (1899)
