

CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 25, 2017, AT 7:30 ▶ 3,695TH CONCERT

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage

Home of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

GEOFF NUTTALL, violin

OWEN DALBY, violin

LESLEY ROBERTSON, viola

CHRISTOPHER COSTANZA, cello

JOSEPH HAYDN **Quartet in C major for Strings, Hob. III:32,** (1732–1809) **Op. 20, No. 2 (1772)**

- ▶ Moderato
- ▶ Capriccio: Adagio
- ▶ Menuet: Allegretto
- ▶ Fuga a quattro soggetti: Allegro

JOHN ADAMS **Quartet No. 2 for Strings (2014)**

- (b. 1947)
- ▶ Allegro molto
 - ▶ Andantino—Energico

INTERMISSION

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS **Quartet in E minor for Strings, Op. 112 (1899)**

- (1835–1921)
- ▶ Allegro
 - ▶ Molto allegro quasi presto
 - ▶ Molto adagio
 - ▶ Allegro non troppo

This concert is made possible, in part, by the **Aaron Copland Fund for Music**,
The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, **The Florence Gould Foundation**,
and the **Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation**.

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Photographing, sound recording, or videotaping this performance is prohibited.

ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dear Listener,

It's hard for us to believe that tonight's ensemble, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, will celebrate its 30th anniversary in just a couple of seasons. This is a quartet that has always exuded perpetual youth, for perhaps several reasons. The quartet members' advocacy of new music through performances that breathe fire and commitment position them at the forefront of the evolution of quartet composition. The quartet's immersion in Haydn is easily explainable if one knows them personally: each member contributes the kind of spirit, wit, and sense of humor in music and in life that is inseparable from any valid Haydn interpretation. But perhaps the highest compliment we can pay the St. Lawrence is to note the ensemble's essence, as an artistic entity which is always growing, expanding, re-imagining itself and its repertoire, shining fresh light on older music, and championing contemporary works into the international chamber music arena. Certainly more youthful pursuits could not be easily imagined, and in total, they seem to constitute the magic elixir that affords the St. Lawrence its ageless charisma.

The music we are about to hear represents a wide spectrum of the chamber music experience. Haydn's Op. 20 quartets are widely acknowledged as the first definitive models of the Classical style, works that changed the way string quartets would be composed from 1772 onwards. This second of the set, in C major, actually begins with a groundbreaking feature: the opening theme is played straight away by the cello, a previously unheard of novelty which opened doors for lucky quartet cellists for centuries to come. John Adams no doubt is among today's most well-known classical composers, and a glance at his biography in this program book will explain why: he has been awarded every conceivable honor by the music industry and performed by the greatest artists of our time. That he has chosen the St. Lawrence as his quartet muse speaks not only highly of the ensemble but also of Adams's depth as a chamber composer. The work we'll hear shortly is likely to be among the repertoire's most challenging and we are lucky to hear it in the hands of Adams's ensemble of choice. And finally, the St. Lawrence offers us a jewel of the literature, a discovery for many from a composer universally popular. There is no one we know who doesn't love Saint-Saëns, and that affection is certain to be deepened this evening.

Enjoy the performance,



David Finckel

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Wu Han



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

In the St. Lawrence String Quartet, chamber music is full-contact, life-or-death stuff. Tonight's program is 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. All quartets play Haydn, of course, but his familiarity cloaks what a true revolutionary he was. For me, Haydn's Op. 20 Quartets are nothing short of righteous democratic activism! In its open, simple, sunny way, the C major quartet's egalitarianism is its most powerful weapon. Every moment contains a new spark of genius, and a sparkling spirit of discovery of what the four equal voices of a string quartet could be. Meanwhile, our good friend John Adams is nearly as big of a string quartet fanatic as we are, and like Haydn, you can hear the sheer delight he takes in writing for this medium. John's craftsmanship and inspiration are inseparable; he is a modern master with the wild enthusiasm of a kid. Finally, Saint-Saëns has left us a moody, ardent, almost mystical masterpiece that is chock full of brilliant counterpoint, unexpected turns of phrase, explosive virtuosity, and deeply sincere, almost painfully intimate utterances. It is a mystery to us as to why this piece is not universally known—we aim to fix that!

Onstage, I'm never sure exactly what will happen from moment-to-moment, and frankly I would have it no other way. I hope that you will embrace the challenge of listening actively, and if you spend the next few hours on the edge of your seat, well, that's right where we want you!

—Owen Dalby

Quartet in C major for Strings, Hob. III:32, Op. 20, No. 2

JOSEPH HAYDN

- Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Lower Austria.
- Died May 31, 1809, in Vienna.

Composed in 1772.

- First CMS performance on October 19, 1980.
- Duration: 22 minutes

The six works of Op. 20, composed in 1772, were known to Haydn's contemporaries as the "Sun" Quartets because the cover of their first published edition (1774) was emblazoned with a drawing of the rising sun. The sobriquet

was just as appropriate for musical reasons as well, since these were really the earliest quartets in which Haydn's full genius in the form dawned. "Everything that his later works were to bring to fruition is here, not merely in embryo but breaking into flower," wrote Rosemary Hughes. Sir Donald Tovey added, "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." Haydn applied to the Op. 20 Quartets the

richness of invention and mastery of craft learned in the three dozen symphonies he had written during the preceding decade. These quartets are remarkable for the manner in which all four of the instrumental voices participate fully in the musical conversation, a distinct stylistic advance over the Rococo *divertimento*, in which the violins largely played their pretty tunes above the discrete background of the lower strings. Haydn's new musical democracy is confirmed by the contrapuntal nature of all the movements, especially the finales, four of which use fugal procedures. The importance of the Op. 20 Quartets was not missed by Haydn's colleagues and

successors—Mozart wrote six quartets directly under their influence (K. 168–173, the first and last of which have fugal finales) and Beethoven copied out the first of the set for his own study.

The second of the Op. 20 Quartets, in C major, opens with a full sonata-allegro form enriched with enough counterpoint to lend many of its passages the air of a Baroque chorale prelude. The *Adagio*, with its stark, unison pronouncements, bold melodic leaps, and portentous C minor tonality, is not far removed in spirit and technique from some scene of profound pathos in an *opera seria*. The movement pauses on an incomplete harmony to

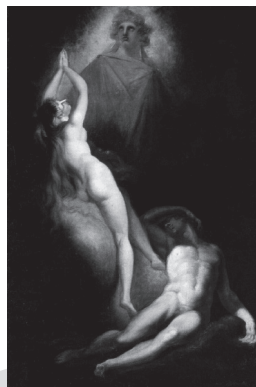
THE ASCENT OF STURM UND DRANG

There exists a strain in the German character that seems to demand the expression of strong emotions and profound thoughts in its art works. It was probably inevitable therefore that the ephemeral sweetness of much music of the Rococo and early Classical periods would not be entirely satisfactory to northern tastes. Beginning as early as the 1750s, there came into the works of several important composers, notably Carl Philip Emanuel Bach ("He is the father, and we are his children," said Haydn), a striving after a heightened musical style through the use of minor keys, sudden contrasts,

chromatic harmonies, and a pervasive sense of agitation. The name given to this expressive, new tonal dialect was borrowed from Friedrich Maximilian von Klinger's 1776 play, Wirrwarr, oder, Sturm und Drang (Confusion, or, Storm and Stress). Klinger's drama grew from the soil of Rousseau's philosophy of free personal expression, an idea that was to become doctrine for Romantic artists and which found an earlier manifestation in some music of the late 18th century. Haydn explored the expanded expression of the Sturm und Drang in the Symphonies No. 44 in E minor ("Mourning"),

No. 45 in F-sharp minor ("Farewell"), No. 49 in F minor ("La Passione") and No. 52 in C minor, and in his splendid Op. 20 String Quartets.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda



► The Creation of Eve from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, 1793, by Henry Fuseli

lead directly into the *Menuet*, one of the most understated, indeed, almost dreamy, of all Haydn's essays in that form. The finale is a rollicking fugal mélange of four different subjects

whose interweavings fly about with such seemingly merry abandon that Haydn placed the legend, "Thus one friend runs away from the other," beneath the last measure of his manuscript. ♦

Quartet No. 2 for Strings

JOHN ADAMS

► Born February 15, 1947, in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Composed in 2014.

- Premiered on January 18, 2015, at the Bing Theater of Stanford University by the Saint Lawrence String Quartet.
- Tonight is the first CMS performance of this piece.
- Duration: 22 minutes

John Adams is one of today's most acclaimed composers. Audiences have responded enthusiastically to his music, and he enjoys a success not seen by an American composer since the zenith of Aaron Copland's career: a recent survey of major orchestras conducted by the League of American Orchestras found John Adams to be the most frequently performed living American composer; he received the University of Louisville's distinguished Grawemeyer Award in 1995 for his Violin Concerto; in 1997, he was the focus of the New York Philharmonic's Composer Week, elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and named Composer of the Year by *Musical America* magazine; he has been made a *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture; in 1999, Nonesuch released *The John Adams Earbox*, a critically acclaimed ten-CD collection of his work; in 2003, he received the Pulitzer Prize for *On the Transmigration*

of Souls, written for the New York Philharmonic in commemoration of the first anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks, and was also recognized by New York's Lincoln Center with a two-month retrospective of his work titled "John Adams: An American Master," the most extensive festival devoted to a living composer ever mounted at Lincoln Center; from 2003 to 2007, Adams held the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall; in 2004, he was awarded the Centennial Medal of Harvard University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences "for contributions to society" and became the first-ever recipient of the Nemmers Prize in Music Composition, which included residencies and teaching at Northwestern University; he was a 2009 recipient of the NEA Opera Award; he has been granted honorary doctorates from the Royal Academy of Music (London), Juilliard School and Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, and Northwestern universities, honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, and the California Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts.

John Adams was born into a musical family in Worcester, Massachusetts, on February 15, 1947; as a boy, he lived in Woodstock, Vermont, and in New Hampshire. From his father, he learned the clarinet and went on to become an accomplished performer on that



The new Quartet ... is based on tiny fragments—‘fractals,’ in the composer’s words—from Beethoven.

instrument, playing with the New Hampshire Philharmonic and Sarah Caldwell’s Boston Opera Orchestra, and appearing as soloist in the first performances of Walter Piston’s Clarinet Concerto in Boston, New York, and Washington. (Adams first met Piston as a neighbor of his family in Woodstock, and received encouragement, advice, and understanding from the older composer, one of this country’s most respected artists.) Adams’ professional focus shifted from the clarinet to composition during his undergraduate study at Harvard, where his principal teacher was Leon Kirchner.

Rather than following the expected route for a budding composer, which led through Europe, Adams chose to stay in America. In 1972, he settled in California to join the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where his duties included directing the New Music Ensemble, leading the student orchestra, teaching composition, and administering a graduate program in analysis and history. In 1978, he became associated with the San Francisco Symphony and conductor Edo de Waart in an evaluation of that ensemble’s involvement with contemporary music. Two years later he helped to institute the Symphony’s “New and Unusual Music” series, which subsequently served as the model for the “Meet the Composer” program, sponsored by the Exxon Corporation, the Rockefeller Foundation,

and the National Endowment for the Arts, which placed composers-in-residence with several major American orchestras; Adams served as resident composer with the San Francisco Symphony from 1979 to 1985. He began his tenure as Creative Chair with the Los Angeles Philharmonic with the premiere of *City Noir* on October 8, 2009. He also serves as composer-in-residence with the Berlin Philharmonic during the 2016–17 season.

The Second Quartet is the third work Adams has written for the St. Lawrence String Quartet, 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. The St. Lawrence premiered the Second Quartet, commissioned by Stanford Lively Arts, Library of Congress, Carnegie Hall, Juilliard School, and Wigmore Hall (London) at Stanford University on January 18, 2015. Adams’ website, earbox.com, provides the following information:

“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*.

“Like the First Quartet this new work is organized in two parts. The first movement has scherzo impetus, and moves at the fastest pace possible for the performers to play it. The familiar Beethoven cadences and half cadences reappear throughout the movement

like a homing mechanism and each apparition is followed by a departure to an increasingly remote key and textural region.

“The second part begins *Andantino* with a gentle melody drawn from the opening movement of the Op. 111 Piano Sonata. Here the original Beethoven harmonic and melodic ideas go off in unexpected directions, almost as if they were suggestions for a kind of compositional ‘free association.’ The *Andantino* grows in range and complexity until it leads into the final

Energico part of the piece, a treatment of one of the shortest of the *Diabelli Variations*. This particular variation in Beethoven’s work features a sequence of neighbor-key appoggiaturas, each a half step away from its main chord. Adams amplifies this chromatic relationship without intentionally distorting it. Like its original Beethoven model, the movement is characterized by emphatic gestures, frequent uses of *sforzando* [strongly accented notes], and a busy but convivial mood of hyperactivity among the four instruments.” ♦

Quartet in E minor for Strings, Op. 112

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

- ▶ Born October 9, 1835, in Paris.
- ▶ Died December 16, 1921, in Algiers.

Composed in 1899.

- ▶ Premiered in May 1899 in Buenos Aires.
- ▶ Tonight is the first CMS performance of this piece.
- ▶ Duration: 30 minutes

James Harding titled the final part of his 1965 study of *Saint-Saëns and His Circle* “The Legend,” and opened it with the following priceless anecdote: “One day in the 1890s, a devout Breton peasant woman bought a packet of chocolate. It contained the picture of a saint, one in a series of cards depicting famous people given free with every packet. As the woman’s son was very ill and prayers for his recovery had so far gone unanswered, she decided to invoke this saint of whom she had never heard before, vowing that should he cure her son she would always display the holy effigy on her own person. Almost immediately her plea was met: the boy

returned to health, and ever afterwards she carried reverently attached to her bosom the yellowing likeness of Camille Saint-Saëns.”

Though Saint-Saëns was never canonized by the church, he certainly was lionized by the musical world. The 50th anniversary, in 1896, of his debut as a virtuoso pianist at age 11 provided the catalyst for a stream of honors, awards, citations, memberships, honorary degrees, and demands for personal appearances that continued unabated until the day he died. Though his health deteriorated gradually during his later years, his tenacity and remarkable energy never flagged. He visited the United States for the first time in 1906, giving concerts of his music in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. despite being seriously ill with diphtheria. He attended the unveiling of a statue in his honor in Dieppe in 1907, and left enough mementos of his life to the town to establish a *Musée de Saint-Saëns* there. He represented France at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San

Francisco in 1915, conducting his choral work *Hail California*, written especially for the occasion. In 1916, he made his first tour of South America; in May 1920, he took part as conductor and pianist in a festival of his music in Athens; he gave a solo recital at Dieppe in August 1921 in observance of his 86th birthday; he put in two hours of practice at the keyboard on the morning he died, December 16, 1921, in Algiers. Saint-Saëns allowed that he composed music as easily, naturally and inevitably as an apple tree produces fruit, and he remained active and creative to the very end of his long life.

Saint-Saëns was nearly 65 before he applied his elegant craft to the composition of a string quartet. The Quartet No. 1 in E minor (dedicated to the renowned Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, with whom the composer occasionally appeared in recital in Brussels) was composed in 1899, soon after Saint-Saëns had triumphed with his music for a huge theatrical pageant titled *Déjanire*, which was performed (by an orchestra including 120 strings, 18 harps, and 25 trumpets) in the open-air arena at Béziers, in the south of France. The quartet was completed during Saint-Saëns' tour of South America in the spring of 1899, and premiered in Buenos Aires in May; in September at the Salle Pleyel, Ysaÿe and the quartet he had recently formed to promote contemporary French chamber music gave the first performance in Paris.

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, from the Quintet for Piano and Strings of 1855 (when he was 20) to the Bassoon Sonata of 1921 (at age 86), a body of work that led Arthur Herve 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." The String Quartet opens with an elegiac introduction led by the muted first violin; the main body of the movement is formed around the incisive main theme and a stark contrasting subject. Émile Baumann wrote of the *Quasi presto*, the quartet's scherzo, "It would be impossible to produce with greater charm the suggestion of twilight phantoms fading into nothingness." The *Adagio* grows from the radiant phrase initially pronounced by the first violin. The music of the finale is angular, and not without touches of turn-of-the-20th-century modernity. ♦

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS



MARCO BONGIOVE

ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

(L-R: OWEN DALBY, GEOFF NUTTALL, LESLEY ROBERTSON, AND CHRISTOPHER COSTANZA)

► The St. Lawrence String Quartet has “A sound that has just about everything one wants from a quartet, most notably precision, warmth and an electricity that conveys the excitement of playing whatever is on their stands at the moment.” (*New York Times*) The SLSQ is renowned for the intensity of its performances, its breadth of repertoire, and its commitment to concert experiences that are at once intellectually exciting and emotionally alive. Highlights in 2016-17 include performances of John Adams’ *Absolute Jest* for String Quartet and Orchestra with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and with Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony, as well as the European premiere of Adams’ Second String Quartet. Fiercely committed to collaboration with living composers, the SLSQ’s fruitful partnerships with Adams, Jonathan Berger, Osvaldo Golijov and many others have yielded some of the finest additions to the quartet literature in recent years. The quartet is also especially dedicated to the music of Haydn, and is recording his groundbreaking set of six Op. 20 quartets in high-definition video for a free, universal release online in 2017. According to the *New Yorker*, “...no other North American quartet plays the music of Haydn with more intelligence, expressivity, and force...” St. Lawrence String Quartet recordings can be heard on EMI Classics, Warner Classics, and Nonesuch.

Established in Toronto in 1989, the SLSQ quickly earned acclaim at top international chamber music competitions and was soon playing hundreds of concerts per year worldwide. 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."

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ABOUT THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) is known for the extraordinary quality of its performances, its inspired programming, and for setting the benchmark for chamber music worldwide: no other chamber music organization does more to promote, to educate, and to foster a love of and appreciation for the art form. Whether at its home in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, on leading stages throughout North America, or at prestigious venues in Europe and Asia, CMS brings together the very best international artists from an ever-expanding roster of more than 150 artists per season, to provide audiences with the kind of exhilarating concert experiences that have led to critics calling CMS "an exploding star in the musical firmament" (*The Wall Street Journal*). Many of these extraordinary performances are livestreamed, broadcast on radio and television, or made available on CD and DVD, reaching thousands of listeners around the globe each season.

Education remains at the heart of CMS' mission. Demonstrating the belief that the future of chamber music lies in engaging and expanding the audience, CMS has created multi-faceted education and audience development programs to bring chamber music to people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages, and levels of musical knowledge. CMS also believes in fostering and supporting the careers of young artists through the CMS Two program, which provides ongoing performance opportunities to a select number of highly gifted young instrumentalists and ensembles. As this venerable institution approaches its 50th anniversary season in 2020, its commitment to artistic excellence and to serving the art of chamber music, in everything that it does, is stronger than ever.

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 Randall Scarlata, *baritone*
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 Alessio Bax, *piano*
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 Gilbert Kalish, *piano*
 Anne-Marie McDermott, *piano*
 Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, *piano*
 Jon Kimura Parker, *piano*
 Juho Pohjonen, *piano*
 Thomas Sauer, *piano*
 Gilles Vonsattel, *piano*
 Huw Watkins, *piano*
 Orion Weiss, *piano*
 Shai Wosner, *piano*
 Wu Han, *piano*
 Wu Qian, *piano**
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 Kenneth Weiss, *harp*
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 Ying Fu, *violin*
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 Danbi Um, *violin**
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