

FINE ARTS QUARTET

Ralph Evans | Efim Boico | Robert Cohen | Juan-Miguel Hernandez

55th and final season at UWM!



{ free admission all season long }
October 8, January 27 & 28 | 3PM

UWM Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts | 2419 E Kenwood Blvd

fineartsquartet.com

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String Quartet in B Flat Major, Op.76, No.4 ("Sunrise").....Joseph Haydn
 Allegro moderato (1732-1809)
 Andantino grazioso
 Menuetto: Allegro
 Finale: Vivace

String Quartet, Op.11 (1936) Samuel Barber
 Molto allegro e appassionato (1910-1981)
 Molto adagio
 Molto allegro (come prima)

--- INTERMISSION---

String Quartet in C Sharp minor, Op. 131 Ludwig van Beethoven
 Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo (1770-1827)
 Allegro molto vivace
 Allegro moderato
 Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile - Più mosso - Andante moderato e
 lusinghiero - Adagio - Allegretto - Adagio, ma non troppo e
 semplice - Allegretto
 Presto
 Adagio, quasi un poco andante
 Allegro

PROGRAM NOTES || TIMOTHY NOONAN

Haydn, String Quartet in B-Flat Major, Op. 76 No. 4 "Sunrise"

In about 1796 Haydn received a commission from Hungarian Count Joseph Erdödy for a set of six string quartets. He set to work, writing all or most of the music in 1797, and the set was published in 1799. Appropriately, these celebrated quartets have come to be known as the "Erdödy" Quartets. Here, in the last years of his creative powers—he turned 65 in 1797—the extraordinary originality and craftsmanship of his compositional skill was still at full force. Writing the Op. 76 quartets, Haydn drew upon nearly fifty years of compositional experience, and the result was a group of works long treasured in the chamber music repertoire.

The fourth Erdödy quartet earned the nickname "Sunrise" from its quiet opening that features a rising figure in the first violin part. This **first movement** is monothematic, in that its secondary thematic material is closely related to the opening; however, where the violin ascended at the beginning, here the cello descends. The **second movement** is a sonata form without development that uses sarabande rhythm in its main theme, i.e., a slow triple meter with emphasis placed on the second beat. The **minuet** follows the traditional form, with a minuet in two parts, each repeated, a trio section that proceeds in the same manner, and a return to the initial minuet section. But in this quartet, Haydn elides the end of the minuet, rather than leaving a silence between it and the trio. And the trio is a quaint and enigmatic section, a fine example of the richness of Haydn's creativity. The **finale** is cast in an A-B-A shape, in which the B section is in a minor key. But after A returns, there is a substantial coda that recalls elements of both A and B. As it begins, the tempo increases, and then it turns even faster, yielding a thrilling finish. This particular sunrise began a remarkable day.

Barber, String Quartet in B Minor, Op. 11

Like many American composers born in the early twentieth century, Samuel Barber studied in Europe. In Vienna in his 20s, he studied conducting and voice, and for a time worked primarily as a baritone, performing in a series of radio broadcasts. This early experience impacted his large output of songs, works that show his deep understanding of the voice. As a composer, Barber won awards for a violin sonata already at age 18 (the work is unfortunately lost), and at age 21, for his overture *The School for Scandal*. His Symphony in One Movement of 1936 was performed at the Salzburg Festival the following year, marking the first American symphonic work ever performed there. In this same period, in his mid-20s, Barber composed his only string quartet, written in 1936. The work's celebrated slow movement, known as the *Adagio for Strings*, was given its premiere along with his *Essay No. 1* by Arturo Toscanini in an NBC Symphony Orchestra broadcast on November 5, 1938. This achievement sealed Barber's fame as an international compositional figure. The Adagio has come to be the composer's best known work. It is an utterance of great power and passion; the silence at the climax of the piece is truly breathtaking. Barber's Adagio was broadcast at the deaths of Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy and was performed for the funerals of Albert Einstein and Princess Grace.

The quartet is set in just two movements (the original version contained a third, in sonata-rondo form, which Barber discarded), and is largely built on the unison theme that opens the first (its unison texture and strong rhythmic profile remind one of Beethoven's quartet Op. 18 No. 1). The movement is structured in a large sonata form. The second movement, the celebrated Adagio, which is marked *Molto adagio*, presents a 17-note theme made up largely of evenly placed notes, a theme that is presented eight times during the course of the movement.

Beethoven, String Quartet No. 14 in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 131

In 1822, Prince Nikolai Galitzin, a cellist and music lover from St. Petersburg, commissioned Beethoven to write "one, two or three new quartets." This came in a letter of November 9 that requested whatever fee the composer deemed appropriate and that the works be dedicated to Galitzin. Beethoven replied the following January 25, accepting the proposal and charging 50 ducats per quartet. While he promised to deliver the first work by mid-March, work on the *Missa Solemnis*, Op. 123, and the Ninth Symphony, Op. 125, delayed his progress. Even before the commission came, Beethoven was working on a quartet, his first since completing Op. 95 in 1810, and he completed that piece, Op. 127, in February 1825. Then Beethoven turned to the second quartet for Galitzin, Op. 132, and completed it in July 1825, whereupon he began work on the third, the quartet Op. 130, written from July to December 1825 and premiered by the Schuppanzigh Quartet on March 21, 1826. With it, the Galitzin commission was fulfilled. However, only the first quartet was paid for, and Galitzin now owed Beethoven 100 ducats for the remaining two quartets plus 25 more for the dedication of the Consecration of the House Overture, Op. 124, of 1822. He acknowledged the debt, indicating that he admired the quartets but was short of funds, and the monies remained unpaid at Beethoven's death in March 1827. Near the end of his life, Beethoven wrote two more quartets, the great Op. 131 and his last, Op. 135. The string quartet was the dominant genre of the final five years of Beethoven's career.

Today we hear the first of these two final quartets, Op. 131. As the **first movement** begins, the first violin presents a solo idea at a slow tempo. As it concludes, the second violin enters while the first continues, forming a duet, with the same idea, albeit beginning on a different pitch. The viola and then the cello enter in turn, each offering this same idea, or subject, alternating between the pitch level of the first and second entries. This is a fugue, a time-honored compositional procedure that originated in the Baroque era and was brought to a level of perfection, still unsurpassed, by Johann Sebastian Bach. Over its course, this fugue

explores the melodic content of its initial exposition by the four instruments in a variety of ways, indicative of Beethoven's awareness, since he was in his teens, of the fugues of Bach, that utilize comparable procedures. The fugue ends with a slow ascending octave that gives way to the **second movement**, also beginning with an ascending octave. Moving to a quick tempo, this movement is more in the manner of a traditional first movement than the one that precedes—as though the initial slow fugue was an extended introduction. The movement's form is akin to the sonata-rondo. The **third movement**, again entering without the traditional break, takes on the character of an operatic recitative—i.e., a passage that precedes an aria. Indeed, as the **fourth movement** arrives as a resolution of the brief third movement, we hear a lyrical “aria” as Beethoven presents a theme for a set of variations. The result is a sectionalized movement, with marked changes of style with the coming of each variation. Here we hear some of the most remarkable musical textures ever written in the medium of the string quartet. A final passage ending in pizzicato—which Beethoven sketched extensively—brings us to a quick and abrupt four-note cello utterance, and those notes begin the theme of the lighthearted **fifth movement** in the style of a scherzo and trio—except that here, as in a few of Beethoven's other works, the three-part scherzo-trio-scherzo form is rather in five parts, with two appearances of the trio. Near the end of the movement, the quartet performs *sul ponticello*, placing the bow closer than usual to the bridge, with a resulting very distinctive timbre, before Beethoven instructs that they return to standard playing to conclude the movement. The **sixth movement** is akin to the third: it is brief, functioning essentially as a transition more than a full movement. The final **seventh movement** returns to the key in which the quartet opened, with an energetic theme, tinged with the minor mode. The movement is in sonata form and, recollecting the fugue of the first movement, returns to ideas closely related to the subject of its fugue. These very ideas, combined with the rhythmic gestures of the finale, occupy the coda, and this monument of the string quartet literature closes with a turn to the major key.

ABOUT THE FINE ARTS QUARTET

They have been called the “The Dream Team” and were declared by the *Washington Post* “one of the gold-plated names in chamber music”. But these statements seem inadequate when you consider that American first violinist **Ralph Evans** was a prizewinner in the International Tchaikovsky Competition, the “fiercest, most nerve-shredding competition in the classical world”; that Russian-born second violinist **Efim Boico** was chosen by Daniel Barenboim to be concertmaster of the Orchestre de Paris, that Canadian violist **Juan-Miguel Hernandez** recorded with Norah Jones and Chick Corea, and the British cellist **Robert Cohen**, in the words of *New York Stereo Review*, “plays like a God”.

Despite their unique and diverse musical makeup and the individual impact each artist has had on the world of music, there is an overwhelming force that drew them together and marks the Fine Arts Quartet as a musical entity like no other. They have an instantly identifiable sound, an intense beauty, a deeply warming, fluent communication that envelops their audience. It has been called a sound from the Golden Era, a sound that restores and enriches.

The Fine Arts Quartet holds an extraordinary and legendary history of its own. Founded in Chicago in 1946, now celebrating its 70th anniversary season, the Quartet has recorded over 200 works and continues to tour throughout the world. The thirty-three year membership of Evans and Boico has created a unity of violin sound like no other. Four years ago, Cohen brought his extraordinary musical passion to the Quartet, followed shortly by Hernandez with his dynamism and heartfelt warmth.

ABOUT THE FINE ARTS QUARTET CONT.

The Fine Arts Quartet are an inspiration to young chamber ensembles and have nurtured many of today's top international quartets whilst teaching as guest professors at the major conservatoires of Paris, Lyon, Lugano and London. They are Artists-in-Residence at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and give masterclasses at summer schools in the US and throughout Europe. They also go into the heart of communities, introducing music with flair, humour and passion to school children, demonstrating close-up their excitement and love for the music and their instruments.

The Quartet's recordings have received numerous distinctions.

Most recently on the Naxos label:

Fauré Quintets with pianist Cristina Ortiz "Gramophone award-winner and recording of legendary status" (Gramophone Magazine).

Franck Quartet "Editor's Choice" (Gramophone Magazine).

Glazunov, Mendelssohn and Fauré CD's were each "Recording of the Year" (Musicweb International).

"Four American Quartets" album "BBC Music Magazine Choice".

Schumann "one of the very finest chamber music recordings of the year" (American Record Guide).

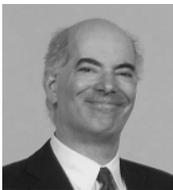
Mozart Quintets "Critic's Choice" (American Record Guide).

CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming ((contemporary music), given jointly by Chamber Music America and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.

Many of the Quartet's Naxos recordings have been selected for Grammy® Awards entry lists in the "Best Classical Album" and/or "Best Chamber Music Performance" categories.

Recent special projects have included the release on Naxos of two of Mozart's greatest piano concertos in Ignaz Lachner's 19th century chamber transcriptions of the orchestra parts for string quartet and bass, with pianist Alon Goldstein; a monthly WUWM National Public Radio series by Cohen called 'On That Note'; and the creation and development of 'Musical Heights Foundation' by Hernandez, a nonprofit foundation bringing high-level musical teaching into developing countries. For more details, visit: www.fineartsquartet.com

BIOGRAPHIES



Ralph Evans, violinist, prizewinner in the 1982 International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, concertized as soloist throughout Europe and North America before succeeding Leonard

Sorkin as first violinist of the Fine Arts Quartet. Evans, who has toured worldwide with the Quartet since late 1982, has recorded over 100 works. A complete discography is listed at: fineartsquartet.com/evansrecordings Evans, a cum laude graduate of Yale University and Fulbright Scholar in London, studied with Szymon Goldberg and Nathan Milstein in

Europe, and subsequently won the top prize in a number of major American competitions, among them, the Concert Artists Guild Competition in New York.

Evans has also received international recognition for his work as a composer. His award winning composition "Nocturne" has been performed on American Public Television and his String Quartet No.1, released on the Naxos label, has been warmly greeted in the press ("rich and inventive" - *Toronto Star*; "whimsical and clever, engaging and amusing" - *All Music Guide*; "vigorous and tuneful" - *Montreal Gazette*; "seductive, modern sonorities" - *France Ouest*; "a small masterpiece" - *Gli Amici della Musica*).



Efim Boico, violinist, enjoys an international career that has included solo appearances under conductors Zubin Mehta, Carlo Maria Giulini, Claudio Abbado and Erich Leinsdorf, and

performances with Daniel Barenboim, Radu Lupu and Pinchas Zuckerman. After receiving his musical training in his native Russia, he emigrated in 1967 to Israel, where he was appointed Principal Second Violin of the Israel Philharmonic - a position he held for eleven years. In 1971, he joined the Tel Aviv Quartet as second violinist, touring the world with guest artists such as André Previn and Vladimir Ashkenazy. In 1979, Boico was appointed concertmaster and soloist of the Orchestre de Paris under Daniel Barenboim, positions he held until 1983, when he joined the Fine Arts Quartet. Boico has been guest professor at the Paris and Lyons Conservatories in France, and the Yehudi Menuhin School in Switzerland. He is also a frequent juror representing the United States in the prestigious London, Evian, and Shostakovich Quartet Competitions. As music professor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, he has received numerous awards, including the Wisconsin Public Education Professional Service Award for distinguished music teaching, and the Arts Recognition and Talent Search Award from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.



Juan-Miguel Hernandez, violist, was born in Montreal in 1985. He began studying the violin at the age of seven and switched to viola five years later. He received a bachelor's

degree from the Colburn Conservatory and graduate diploma from the New England Conservatory. Hernandez was a first prize winner of the 16th International Johannes Brahms Competition in Austria, as well as prize winner in both the National Canadian Music Competition and the 9th National Sphinx Competition. He has appeared as guest soloist with orchestras in Atlanta, Seattle, Colorado, Rochester, and Chicago,

and has performed in the US, Canada, South America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. He is a founding member of the Harlem Quartet, with whom he performed from 2006-12, as well as the Trio Virado and Boreal Trio. He has appeared on NBC's Good Morning America, the Today Show and the Telemundo Network. His discography includes three quartet CDs as well as multiple collaborations with Chick Corea, Gary Burton and Norah Jones. In 2010 he was honored with the medal of the National Assembly of Quebec.



Robert Cohen, cellist, made his concerto debut at the age of twelve at the Royal Festival Hall London and throughout his distinguished international career, he has been hailed as one

of the foremost cellists of our time. "It is easy to hear what the fuss is about, he plays like a God" (New York Stereo Review). "Cohen can hold an audience in the palm of his hand" (The Guardian). Invited to perform concertos world-wide by conductors Claudio Abbado, Kurt Masur, Riccardo Muti, and Sir Simon Rattle, Cohen has also collaborated in chamber music with many eminent artists such as Yehudi Menuhin and the Amadeus String Quartet, with whom he recorded the Schubert Cello Quintet on Deutsche Grammophon. At age nineteen, Cohen recorded the Elgar Concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra for the EMI label, and since then, he has recorded much of the cello repertoire for Sony, Decca, DGG, EMI, and BIS. Cohen, who studied with the legendary artists William Pleeth, Jacqueline du Pré, and Mstislav Rostropovich, is an inspirational teacher who has given masterclasses all over the world. He is a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London and is director of the Charleston Manor Festival in the south of England. He joined the Fine Arts Quartet in January 2012.

For further information about Robert Cohen, including links to his monthly radio show, lectures and latest news, please go to his website: www.robertcohen.info

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