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*Essex
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Series*

The Quodlibet Ensemble

Fenton Brown Emerging Artists Concert
April 8, 2018

This afternoon's concert is co-sponsored by GUILFORD SAVINGS BANK

Piano Sponsor: BRANDTECH SCIENTIFIC, INC

Chloe Fedor, *violin* Katie Hyun, *violin*
Daniel S. Lee, *violin* Edson Scheid, *violin*
Beth Wenstrom, *violin*
Kyle Miller, *viola* Nathan Schram, *viola*
Ezra Seltzer, *cello*
Joe Magar, *bass*
Jeffrey Grossman, *harpsichord*

Divertimento in B-flat major, K. 137 (1772) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Andante

Allegro di molto

Allegro assai

For Becca

Nathan Schram

String Symphony No. 13 in C minor (1823)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)

Grave – Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

The Four Seasons (1725)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Concerto No.1 in E Major, “Spring”

Allegro/ Largo/ Allegro

Concerto No.2 in G minor, “Summer”

Allegro non molto/ Adagio – Presto / Presto

Concerto No.3 in F Major, “Autumn”

Allegro/ Adagio molto/ Allegro

Concerto No.4 in F minor, “Winter”

Allegro non molto/ Largo/ Allegro

Program Notes

By Barbara Leish unless otherwise noted

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791) **Divertimento in B-flat Major, K. 137 (1772)**

“Divertimento” is something of a misnomer for this fresh and invigorating early work of Mozart’s. Divertimenti and Serenades were popular, easy-to-recognize musical forms in Mozart’s day. They were light entertainments, written to celebrate festive occasions like birthdays, weddings, and holidays. Listeners would expect to hear several movements, including two minuets. But this Divertimento in B-flat Major has just three movements, and it has no minuet. True, it has the relaxed gait and dance-like rhythms of the genre, and it was called a Divertimento on the manuscript. But that word wasn’t in Mozart’s handwriting. More likely the name was added by someone else.

So what exactly was Mozart writing? Alfred Einstein believes that Wolfgang -- who at sixteen already had written innumerable operas, symphonies, oratorios, and concertos -- was in the process of turning his attention to the string quartet. And Einstein thinks the young composer specifically was preparing music for his third journey to Italy.

Early in 1772 Mozart and his father had returned briefly to their home in Salzburg after two long tours of Italy. Mozart was unhappy in Salzburg: “There is no room here for someone like me,” he wrote to a teacher with whom he had studied counterpoint in Italy, “and music is not at all appreciated here.” But he looked forward to going back to Italy, where he had been commissioned to write an opera for the upcoming Milan carnival season. Wolfgang had flourished during his two earlier Italian trips. He had been feted by the nobility, had given acclaimed public and private concerts, and had written widely admired symphonies and operas, all while absorbing Italian lyrical style and ideas. In a letter from Milan to his sister he wrote happily, “Above us is a violinist, beneath us is another, next us is a singing master who gives lessons, and in the last room opposite us is an oboe player. That is jolly for composing. It gives one plenty of ideas.” Compositions poured out of him.

Because symphonies always were in great demand in Italy, Einstein thinks that in Salzburg Mozart wrote three works for strings that he could take with him on his trip and, if necessary, quickly turn into symphonies by adding wind instruments. In fact, the three -- K.136-138 -- are sometimes known as the “Salzburg Symphonies.” Whatever they are called, they are delightful works. While all three have two fast movements and one slow one, the B-flat Divertimento begins, unusually, with the slow movement, a gentle, melodically graceful Andante. The spirited Allegro di molto and courtly Allegro assai that follow are filled with the sprightly rhythms and buffo spirit of the Italian symphony. Leopold Mozart once advised his son that a piece should be “short, easy and popular... written in a natural, flowing and easy style -- and at the same time bearing the marks of sound composition.” The Divertimento in B-flat shows that at sixteen Wolfgang already had learned that lesson well.

Nathan Schram: *For Becca*

My wife Becca is one of the greatest musicians and songwriters I’ve met in life. I’ve had the astounding luck of being the focus and dedicatee of so many of her moving songs and compositions. The weight of being the subject of such heartfelt compositions inspired and pushed me to create something honest, simple, and beautiful for her.

As there is no greater writer of beautiful (Albeit, not so simple) string music than Gustav Mahler, “For Becca” uses the Adagietto from his 5th Symphony as a foundation. The piece opens with a gentle melody first sung by the first violins. As the texture opens, the second violins gently take over the scene. As the melody closes, the memory of Mahler enters, gently whispered throughout the orchestra. Finally, the orchestra returns with the opening melody split amongst all the sections before dissolving.

This short piece about love was initially written for string quartet to be performed at my wedding in September 2017. Thanks to Quodlibet and Essex Winter Series, this performance will be the orchestral premiere of “For Becca”.

— Nathan Schram

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847) **String Symphony No. 13 in C minor (1823)**

Mendelssohn’s String Symphony No. 13 is the second piece of music on tonight’s program that was written by a prodigiously gifted teenager. And as with Mozart’s Divertimento, there is a question about the title. For Mendelssohn never intended this piece to be called his thirteenth string symphony.

Mendelssohn’s extraordinary talents were evident early. At eight he was transposing music into different keys, on the spot; at nine he made his public piano debut; at ten he began studying counterpoint and harmony, took up the violin, and composed his first pieces, a short Lied and a two-piano sonata. By the time he was fourteen he already had produced well over 100 compositions, including keyboard and chamber works, concerti, Lieder and choral pieces, opera, and string symphonies. At Sunday musicales at his family’s home, he and his sister Fanny would transcribe full operas into piano duets at sight. Goethe, who heard Felix play when he was twelve, exclaimed, “What this little man can do in extemporizing and playing at sight, borders on the miraculous.” Among the many signs of his unusual precocity was his ability to work on unrelated compositions simultaneously.

Between the ages of twelve and fourteen, Felix wrote a dozen symphonies for strings. They were a kind of learning laboratory -- impressive works in which he was exploring and mastering the techniques of the Baroque and Classical composers he admired. By the time the young composer began the thirteenth in the series, however, he realized that he was ready to move on. Rather than complete another string symphony, he abandoned

the work he had started and instead began to write a new symphony for full orchestra, which he completed a few months later. On the autographed score Mendelssohn called this new work Sinfonia XIII, but it was published as the Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 11. And when the single movement on tonight's program was published many years after Mendelssohn's death, it was given the title String Symphony No. 13.

As a result, this movement – which is also sometimes called *Sinfoniesatz* (Symphonic movement) in C minor – retains its place as a satisfying culmination of Mendelssohn's ambitious string-writing adventures. It charms with youthful energy, effortless technique, and beautiful sonorities. It begins with a slow, Grave introduction that is written in the manner of a Baroque French overture, with a characteristic dotted rhythm. The vigorous double fugue that follows is an impressive demonstration of Felix's command of Baroque counterpoint, and of his sense of drama as he ends with a furious rush of octave scales. His biographer Larry Todd notes that this final passage anticipates a strikingly similar passage in the coda of the Hebrides Overture, written seven years later – a sign that stylistically Felix was showing increasing independence from familiar models. In other words, fourteen-year-old Felix was well on his way to finding his own voice.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

The Four Seasons (1725)

Italy in the 18th century was a hotbed of musical innovation, and no one's star shone brighter than Vivaldi's. Celebrated as a violin virtuoso and as one of Europe's most popular and influential composers, he was a standard-setter whose ideas pointed the way for the next musical generation.

Although Vivaldi became a priest, his passion always was music. According to one report, "One day when Vivaldi was saying Mass, a fugue subject came to his mind. He at once left the altar where he was officiating and repaired to the sacristy to write out his theme; then he came back to finish the mass." Not surprisingly, Vivaldi gave up church duties to devote himself to his secular job as musical director of Venice's Ospedale della Pietà, one of four Venetian orphanages and conservatories where young girls were trained to be musicians. During his 35 years there he wrote some 500 concertos, plus scores of operas, cantatas, masses, motets, and more. Vivaldi once boasted that he could write a concerto faster than a copyist could copy it.

Vivaldi's music was filled with new ideas. He turned the violin into a virtuoso instrument and introduced dazzling instrumental solos. His concertos helped shape elements of Classical style: three movements in a fast-slow-fast pattern; the use of recurring motifs to give unity; tight structure; and rhythmic drive. You can hear all of these elements in *The Four Seasons*, a set of four concertos that were as enormously popular in Vivaldi's lifetime as they are today. Unusually for their time, they are program music -- each of the concertos paints vivid pictures of activities associated with the season. Composers had written about the seasons before, but never so literally. In *The Four Seasons* birds chirp, brooks murmur, thunder roars, winds blow, dogs bark, peasants dance, insects

buzz, hunters give chase. Adding to the concertos' uniqueness was that the published score was accompanied by four sonnets – apparently written by Vivaldi himself – that give a detailed description, movement by movement, of what the music is portraying.

The Four Seasons is a violinist's tour de force. From season to season, Vivaldi paints his pictures in a variety of ways. In "Spring" trills imitate bird calls, running violins describe breeze-caressed streams, solo violin triplets imitate lightning, and in the Largo the violas' repeated two-note phrase captures the barking of the sleeping shepherd's dog. "Summer," languidly long-lined, contains brilliant violin solos, an Adagio in which insects buzz furiously, and a fearful third-movement storm. Among the highlights of "Autumn" are drunken peasants -- deliciously portrayed by lurching scales and arpeggios and hiccupping syncopations -- and hunting horns. "Winter" is a dissonant, icy confection, with rapid scales conjuring biting winds and double stops imitating chattering teeth, and with a Largo that is a delightful example of Vivaldi's gift for writing expansive lyrical melodies. As Jan Swafford wrote of Vivaldi, "Rarely has such an important artist managed to be so much fun."

Vivaldi's Descriptive Sonnets for *The Four Seasons*

Spring – Concerto in E Major

Allegro

Springtime is upon us.

The birds celebrate her return with festive song,
and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes.

Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar, casting their dark mantle over heaven,
Then they die away to silence, and the birds take up their charming songs once more.

Largo

On the flower-strewn meadow, with leafy branches rustling overhead, the goat-herd sleeps,
his faithful dog beside him.

Allegro

Led by the festive sound of rustic bagpipes, nymphs and shepherds lightly dance beneath
the brilliant canopy of spring.

Summer – Concerto in G minor

Allegro non molto

Beneath the blazing sun's relentless heat
men and flocks are sweltering,
pines are scorched.

We hear the cuckoo's voice; then sweet songs of the turtle dove and finch are heard.
Soft breezes stir the air...but threatening north wind sweeps them suddenly aside. The shepherd trembles, fearful of violent storm and what may lie ahead.

Adagio e piano - Presto e forte

His limbs are now awakened from their repose by fear of lightning's flash and thunder's roar, as gnats and flies buzz furiously around.

Presto

Alas, his worst fears were justified, as the heavens roar and great hailstones beat down upon the proudly standing corn.

Autumn – Concerto in F Major

Allegro

The peasant celebrates with song and dance the harvest safely gathered in.
The cup of Bacchus flows freely, and many find their relief in deep slumber.

Adagio molto

The singing and the dancing die away
as cooling breezes fan the pleasant air,
inviting all to sleep
without a care.

Allegro

The hunters emerge at dawn,
ready for the chase,
with horns and dogs and cries.
Their quarry flees while they give chase.
Terrified and wounded, the prey struggles on,
but, harried, dies.

Winter – Concerto in F minor

Allegro non molto

Shivering, frozen mid the frosty snow in biting, stinging winds;
running to and fro to stamp one's icy feet, teeth chattering in the bitter chill.

Largo

To rest contentedly beside the hearth, while those outside are drenched by pouring rain.

Allegro

We tread the icy path slowly and cautiously, for fear of tripping and falling.
Then turn abruptly, slip, crash on the ground and, rising, hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up.
We feel the chill north winds coarse through the home despite the locked and bolted doors...
this is winter, which nonetheless brings its own delights.



The **Quodlibet Ensemble** is a group of unique, accomplished, and dedicated musicians who seek to learn from each other and explore the possibilities of an abundant musical spectrum.

The players hold degrees from the Yale School of Music, Curtis Institute, Juilliard, New England Conservatory, and Harvard University among others. Currently they pursue careers as performing artists in both solo and prominent chamber ensembles ranging from early music group the Sebastians, to contemporary ensemble New Morse Code, to the Amphion String Quartet. A few of the players also serve as faculty at universities such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Connecticut College in addition to their performing careers. The group was founded to be a place where a wide variety of musical ideas can come into realization, bringing together performers from different backgrounds (mainly early music and modern). Quodlibet Ensemble has performed at Yale University, both at the British Arts Center and Dwight Chapel, and also performs every year for the Maxwell Shepherd Arts Fund in Collinsville, CT as well as the Spring Glen Church in Hamden, CT. Their debut CD, Quodlibet Ensemble: Concerti Grossi, in which all players adapt gut strings, was released in the fall of 2014.



Transcending her humble musical beginnings involving a macaroni box disguised as a violin, **Chloe Fedor** has since received critical acclaim for her “lovely, plush, seductive tone” (New York Times) and appears as soloist, concertmaster, and chamber musician in period ensembles throughout the country. She can be seen and heard performing with Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, Early Music New York, Clarion Music Society, The Sebastians, New York Baroque Incorporated, The American Classical Orchestra, Oregon Bach Festival, and the Bach Society of Charleston, among others. Highlights of this season include soloist for Mozart’s Sinfonia Concertante with Project Amadeus, Vivaldi’s Winter with the Sebastians, Concertmaster of Seckendorff’s Proserpina with New York Baroque Incorporated, and her debut with Quodlibet Ensemble and Musica Angelica. She completed her studies at The Eastman School of Music and The Juilliard School, receiving two Master of Music degrees from the latter— both in Violin and Historical Violin Performance. Miss Fedor is one of ten Juilliard graduates to have received the esteemed Career Advancement Fellowship, and she enthusiastically continues her music-making and teaching from her New York City base.



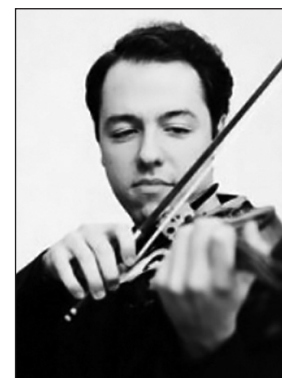
A winner of Astral’s 2016 National Auditions, violinist **Katie Hyun** has appeared as soloist with the Houston Symphony, the Dallas Chamber Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Columbia Festival Orchestra, among others. Praised for her “sensitivity and top shelf artistry” (Cleveland.com), she has also been featured as concerto soloist with South Korea’s Busan Sinfonietta and Incheon Philharmonic. She has appeared in numerous festivals, including the Chelsea Music Festival (NY), Bravo! Vail (CO), Chamber Music Northwest Winter Festival (Portland, OR), Bright Sheng’s “The Intimacy of Creativity” festival in Hong Kong, and the “New York in Chuncheon” and Busan Chamber Music festivals, both in South Korea.

On Baroque violin, Ms. Hyun has recorded and frequently appears with Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Sebastians, and New York Baroque Incorporated. Ms. Hyun is the founder and artistic director of Quodlibet Ensemble, that debuted to great acclaim in 2008. The Ensemble has since performed at the Shepherd Music Series in Collinsville, the Yale British Arts Center, and at Drew University in Madison, NJ. Quodlibet Ensemble made its New York debut in March 2016, followed by an appearance at Rockefeller University. In the spring of 2014, the ensemble released its debut album. Ms. Hyun was also a founding member of the award-winning Amphion String Quartet. She received an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music, where she studied Baroque violin with Robert Mealy, and modern violin with Ani Kavafian. She holds a Master’s degree from SUNY Stony Brook, where she studied with Pamela Frank, Ani Kavafian, and Philip Setzer. She also studied with Aaron Rosand and Pamela Frank at the Curtis Institute of Music, where she earned a Bachelor of Music degree.



Period violinist **Daniel S. Lee** enjoys a varied career as a soloist, leader, chamber musician, and teacher. Praised for his “ravishing vehemence” and “soulful performance” (New York Times), he has appeared as a soloist and guest concertmaster with the Early Music New York, New York Baroque Incorporated, Quodlibet Ensemble, San Francisco Bach Choir, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and Yale Schola Cantorum. He has founded and co-directs the Sebastians, a period ensemble lauded for its “well-thought-out articulation and phrasing” (Early Music Review) and “elegant string playing” (Early Music Today). As a violino piccolo specialist, he frequently appears as a soloist in Bach’s first Brandenburg

Concerto and cantata 140, and has given the modern-day premiere of his own transcription of Johann Pfeiffer’s concerto. Mr. Lee is on the violin, viola and chamber music faculty at Connecticut College and University of Bridgeport. More information can be found at www.danielslee.com.



Two-time winner of the Historical Performance Concerto Competition at The Juilliard School and recipient of the Broadus Erle Prize at the Yale School of Music, violinist **Edson Scheid** has been praised for his “polished playing” (The Strad) and for being “more than equipped to deal with the virtuosic challenges” (Seen and Heard International). A native of Brazil, Mr. Scheid has performed as a soloist with orchestras such as Juilliard415, Sejong Soloists, Sinfonieorchester der Universität Mozarteum Salzburg and the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. He has toured extensively in Asia, Europe, South America and the United States, and has served as concertmaster of the Aspen Philharmonic

Orchestra, Juilliard415 and the Yale Philharmonia. His many performances of the 24 Caprices of Paganini have been received with enthusiasm around the world. Mr. Scheid holds degrees from the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg and the Yale School of Music and is currently pursuing his Graduate Diploma degree in Historical Performance at The Juilliard School as a recipient of the Kovner Fellowship.



Violinist **Beth Wenstrom’s** performances have been described by The New Yorker as “elegant and sensual, stylishly wild.” Ms. Wenstrom is a founding member of Wayward Sisters, winner of the 2011 Early Music America/Naxos Competition. As guest concertmaster, Ms. Wenstrom has performed with the Sebastians, Baroque Orchestra of Maine as well as William Christie’s Les Rencontres musicales en Vendée in Thiré, France. Ms. Wenstrom also frequently enjoys playing in Apollo’s Fire, Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, Sarasa Chamber Music Ensemble and the 17th

century band, ACRONYM. In addition to performing, Ms. Wenstrom was a sabbatical replacement at Oberlin Conservatory for both modern and baroque violin in Spring 2014. She has also taught violin undergraduates at SUNY Stony Brook University and has coached baroque ensembles at Rutgers University and SUNY Stony Brook.



Violist **Kyle Miller** is a graduate of the Juilliard School's Historical Performance program, in which he was a student of Cynthia Roberts and Monica Huggett. Performance highlights from his studies include concerts in England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Myanmar, the Netherlands, and Singapore and performances of Bach's sixth Brandenburg concerto and Mozart's third string quintet, both alongside Monica Huggett. Mr. Miller dwells in New York City as a swashbuckling freelance musician. A founding member of ACRONYM, Diderot String Quartet, and New York Baroque Incorporated (with whom he has performed Telemann's solo viola concerto), Mr. Miller also has appeared

in concert with Apollo's Fire, the Bach Players of Holy Trinity, Clarion Orchestra, the English Concert, Quodlibet Ensemble, the Sebastians, and Trinity Baroque Orchestra. He was recently selected as an English Concert American Fellow, and he performed at the 2015 Carmel Bach Festival. In his free time, Mr. Miller seeks out cutthroat matches of table tennis (ping-pong) and miniature golf (putt-putt).



Hailed by the New York Times as an "elegant soloist" with a sound "devotional with its liquid intensity," **Nathan Schram** is a sought after violist, composer, arranger and improviser living in Brooklyn, New York. Working with many of today's great composers he has premiered music by Steve Reich, Nico Muhly, Becca Stevens, Timo Andres, and others. He is a founding member of the string trio Speed Bump, an ensemble devoted to improvisation and performing their own compositions which released their debut album, *Wedding Music*, this year. Mr. Schram is also a violist in the Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall, Decoda. He explores other musical interests by working with an

array of adventurous ensembles and artists such as Björk, Alarm Will Sound, ACME, The Sebastians, and the Becca Stevens Band. Apart from performing, Mr. Schram is the Founding Director of Musicambia, a New York based initiative establishing a network of music conservatories within prisons and jails in the United States. Musicambia currently runs a music conservatory in Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining, New York.



Lauded for his "beauty of tone and keenness of musicianship" (Opera Britannia), cellist

Ezra Seltzer is a founding member and principal cellist of the Sebastians, and has performed as guest principal cellist of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Musica Angelica, Orchester Wiener Akademie, the Spire Chamber Ensemble, and the Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra. He has also been a soloist and principal cellist at the Boulder Bach Festival, and is the associate principal cellist at the Carmel Bach Festival. With the vocal ensemble TENET, he has performed at the Festival Casals de Puerto Rico as well as at Berkshire Bach in Massachusetts. Last season Mr. Seltzer also appeared with the Portland Baroque Orchestra, Chicago's Baroque Band, and New York Baroque Incorporated. He attended Yale University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in history and Master of Music in cello, and graduated from the inaugural class of Juilliard's historical performance program.



Joe Magar has spent his career exploring the versatility of the double bass and is as comfortable on the bandstand as he is in a bass section. Mr. Magar tours nationally with the Mari Black World Fiddle Ensemble and the Danny Burns Band. He has appeared at some of the country's premier music festivals and theaters including Austin Celtic Festival, Charm City Folk and Bluegrass Festival, Saltwater Celtic Festival, Appaloosa Roots Festival, City Winery (NYC and Nashville), World Cafe Live, Yachats Celtic Music Festival and Fire in the Kitchen. As a chamber musician, Mr. Magar has performed at venues including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Strathmore Center for the Performing Arts. He is a founding member of Quodlibet Ensemble and appears on the group's debut recording of Arcangelo Corelli's concerti grossi. He is also an enthusiastic performer of new music in many genres, with appearances including the Evolution New Music Series, the American Composers Orchestra's Composers Out Front Series and the Incubator Arts Series. Mr.



Magar is a Michigander by birth, a Baltimorean by choice and has received degrees in music from the University of Michigan and Yale.

Jeffrey Grossman's extensive musical activities include frequent performances as a harpsichordist, pianist, and conductor. Acclaimed for his musicality, he has been praised as a "sensitive and fluent accompanist" of "flair and conviction" in *Fanfare* magazine. As co-leader of the acclaimed baroque ensemble the Sebastians, last summer Mr. Grossman music directed Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in collaboration with dell'Arte Opera Ensemble, and this

summer led Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* with dell'Arte and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Connecticut Early Music Festival. In addition to frequent performances with the Sebastians, Mr. Grossman performs with numerous groups in the New York metropolitan area, including Quodlibet, PHOENIXtail, and the Bach Players of Holy Trinity. He also tours parts of the rural United States with artists of the Piatigorsky Foundation. He can be heard on the Gothic, Naxos, Albany, Métier, and MSR Classics record labels. A native of Detroit, Michigan, Mr. Grossman holds degrees from Harvard College, the Juilliard School, and Carnegie Mellon University. For more information, please visit his website: <http://www.jeffreygrossman.com>