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2009-2010

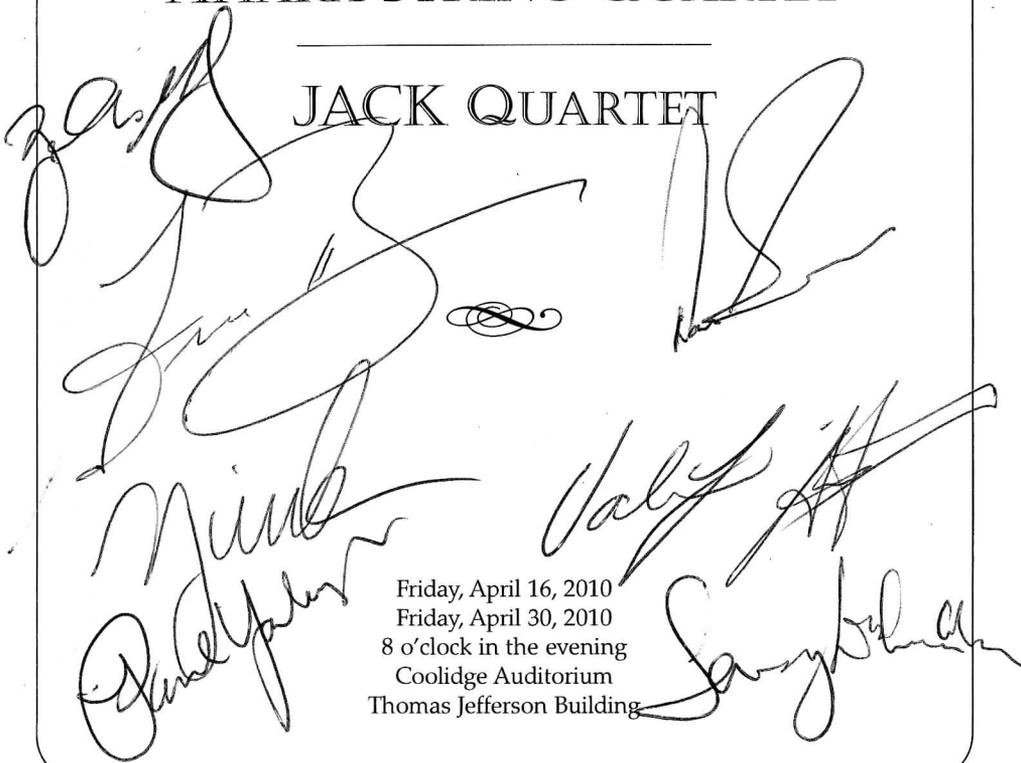
The McKim Fund

The Boris and Sonya Kroyt Memorial Fund

in the Library of Congress

ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET
AFIARA STRING QUARTET

JACK QUARTET

A collection of handwritten signatures in black ink, arranged in a circular pattern around the text. The signatures are highly stylized and cursive, representing the members of the Alexander, Afiara, and Jack Quartets.

Friday, April 16, 2010
Friday, April 30, 2010
8 o'clock in the evening
Coolidge Auditorium
Thomas Jefferson Building

The MCKIM FUND in the Library of Congress was created in 1970 through a bequest of Mrs. W. Duncan McKim, concert violinist, who won international prominence under her maiden name, Leonora Jackson, to support the commissioning and performance of chamber music for violin and piano.

The BORIS and SONYA KROYT MEMORIAL FUND in the Library of Congress was established in 1980 by Yanna Kroyt Brandt and Nathan Brandt in memory of her mother, Sonya and father, Boris Kroyt, the illustrious violist of the famous Budapest String Quartet, to present concerts each year featuring the talents of gifted by not yet widely known musicians and to support concert broadcasts and recordings.



The audiovisual recording equipment in the Coolidge Auditorium was endowed in part by the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Fund in the Library of Congress.

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NOISE-MAKING OBJECTS THAT WOULD DISRUPT THE PERFORMANCE.

Thank you.

The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium

Friday, April 16, 2010 – 8 p.m.

ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET

Zakarias Grafilo, *violin* Frederick Lifszitz, *violin*
Paul Yarbrough, *viola* Sandy Wilson, *cello*
with Aglika Angelova, *piano*

AFIARA STRING QUARTET

Valerie Li, *violin* Yiri Cho, *violin*
David Samuel, *viola* Adrian Fung, *cello*



PROGRAM

Mink Stole
Commissioned by the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress

Julia WOLFE
(born 1958)

Zakarias Grafilo, *violin* Aglika Angelova, *piano*

String Quartet Set

Lou HARRISON
(1917–2003)

1. Variations
2. Plaint
3. Estampe
4. Rondeaux
5. Usul

Alexander String Quartet

Intermission

Cat o' Nine Tails

John ZORN
(born 1953)

Afiara String Quartet

Afiara String Quartet

String Sextet, H224

Bohuslav MARTINŮ
(1890–1959)

Lento – Allegro poco moderato
Andantino – Allegretto scherzando – Tempo I
Allegretto poco moderato

Zakarias Grafilo	<i>violin</i>	Frederick Lifnitz
Paul Yarbrough	<i>viola</i>	David Samuel
Sandy Wilson	<i>cello</i>	Adrian Fung

Two Pieces for String Octet, op. 11

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)

Prelude: Adagio
Scherzo: Allegro molto

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

MINK STOLE

(World Premiere: March 13, 1997, Lisa Moore, piano; Diane Monroe, violin;
Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC)

I was thinking about the fact that a mink stole was the ultimate symbol of glamour for a woman in the 1950s (movie stars, etc.). And I thought about how a piece of music might serve the same function, a kind of replacement for the mink stole—a glamorous virtuosic fun piece to wrap around you; one that luxuriated in rapid passages and expressive tunes. The piece was originally written for two women, but the glamour metaphor works for men as well.

– Julia Wolfe

The music of JULIA WOLFE has been performed at the Next Wave Festival at BAM, Sydney Olympic Arts Festival, Holland Festival, Theatre de la Ville, San Francisco Symphony, and Brooklyn Philharmonic, among others. Recent works include STEEL HAMMER, an evening length ballad for the Bang on a Can All-Stars and Trio Mediaeval; FUEL for Ensemble Resonanz with a film by Bill Morrison, *My Beautiful Scream* for

Kronos and orchestra, *Cruel Sister* for string orchestra, *Impatience* for the Asko Ensemble, and an accordion concerto commissioned by the Miller Theater and written for Guy Klucevsek. In addition to *Mink Stole*, her chamber works include the string quartets *Dig Deep*, *Early that Summer*, and *Four Marys*.

Collaborations include *Shelter* (with composers Michael Gordon and David Lang, writer Deborah Artman, and the Ridge Theater Company) for musikFabrik and Trio Mediaeval; the oratorio *Lost Objects* (with Concerto Köln and director François Girard); *Singing in the dead of night* for eighth blackbird and WATER (with Athelas and Ars Nova); and an opera commissioned by the Settembre Musica Festival in Turin, *The Carbon Copy Building* (with Gordon and Lang, comic book artist Ben Katchor, and Ridge Theater), which received the 2000 *Village Voice* OBIE Award for Best New American Work. Wolfe received another OBIE in 2001 for the music to *Jennie Ritchie*, a collaboration with playwright Mac Wellman and Ridge Theater.

Co-founder of New York's Bang on a Can Festival, Wolfe has received commissions and awards from the Koussevitzky Foundation, Kronos Quartet, the Library of Congress, Cary Trust, Meet the Composer, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and many others. Born in Philadelphia, Wolfe studied with Martin Bresnick at Yale. She is currently on the composition faculty at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

STRING QUARTET SET

(Commissioned by Robert Aiken, Artistic Director of New Music Concerts and the Canada Council)
(World Premiere: April 28, 1979, Orford Quartet, Walter Hall at the Faculty of Music,
University of Toronto, as part of New Music Concerts 1979-80 season)

1. Variations on Walter von Vogelweide's *Nu alrêst leb' ich mit werde*. These were begun in the '40s when I first encountered that Minnesingers's lovely melody. Walter lived from 1107 to 1228 and the variations are in European-style quintal counterpoint, also medieval in origin.

2. *Plaint*. We all complain, at least a little.

3. *Estampie*. A medieval peasants' stamping dance, roughneck and Breughelish.

4. *Rondeaux*. This homage to Dandrieu and the French Baroque is my only fully "harmonic" piece in the European style.

5. *Usul* (Turkish for a rhythmic mode). As 18th-century European composers wrote Turkish marches imitating the Janissary bands, I have here written imitating the gentle melodic style of the old Turkish Court.

– Lou Harrison
(Notes to CD, *Music of Lou Harrison*)

Born in Portland, Oregon, LOU HARRISON grew up in San Francisco, where he absorbed the city's diverse culture including Cantonese Opera, Gregorian chants, Spanish-Mexican music, Indonesian Gamelan music, and jazz. In his twenties, he studied with Henry Cowell and became friends with another Cowell student, John Cage. Together Harrison and Cage produced the first concert series devoted to new music for percussion.

In the early 1940s Harrison studied with Schoenberg at UCLA before moving to New York and as music critic of the *Herald Tribune*, he championed the works of Ives and conducted the premiere of Ives's Third Symphony, 35 years after it was written. That performance earned the Pulitzer Prize for Ives, who shared the prize money with Harrison. In addition to Ives, Harrison espoused the music of other unconventional American composers, including French-born Edgard Varèse, Carl Ruggles, and Alan Hovhaness.

After a brief teaching stint at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, he returned to California in 1953, settling in Aptos on Monterey Bay. He and his life partner, William Colvig, built an "American gamelan," which, unlike the traditional Indonesian instrument made of bronze, iron, or bamboo, used resonated aluminum keys and tubes, oxygen tanks, and other found percussion instruments.

Harrison composed several works for a string quartet alone, as well as in combination with piano and percussion. He composed *String Quartet Set* in 1978–1979; the first two movements are adapted from an unfinished guitar suite. He died in Lafayette, Indiana, from a heart attack enroute to a festival of his music at the Ohio State University.

CAT O' NINE TAILS

[n., pl., cat-o'-nine-tails= A whip consisting of nine knotted cords fastened to a handle, used in flogging, and leaves marks like the scratches of a cat.]

Cat o' Nine Tails, commissioned by the Kronos Quartet and included in its CD, *Short Stories* (1993), exemplifies a compositional approach that John Zorn developed in the 1980s-early '90s, which involved discrete musical "moments" written on file cards whenever his Muse visited him. By sorting the cards in a specific order, he creates music that has been compared to what one hears on a car radio when the pre-set buttons are pushed rapidly, or the soundtrack created by continuously pushing the channel button of the television remote from one station to another, or the analogous experience of jump cut editing seen in music videos and in the films of Godard and other French New Wave filmmakers of the late 1950s and 1960s.

In Zorn's own words:

Composing *Cat o' Nine Tails* was a breakthrough for me in terms of being able to relate to classical players on their own terms. To take advantage of classical musicians at their best, you give them written material, because that's what they do best. But you have to inspire them from the page. I try to put as much extra musical material and information into my music as I can possibly squeeze in. A very important thing all through my musical life is to make sure that the musicians involved are having fun and like what they're doing If it means I have to play compositional games to excite the musicians, or include improvisational elements if I think those musicians will get into it, then I'll do that. Making it fun is the best way to get a good performance.¹

(continued on p. 13)

The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium

Friday, April 30, 2010 – 8 p.m.

JACK QUARTET

Christopher Otto, *violin* Ari Streisfeld, *violin*
John Pickford Richards, *viola* Kevin McFarland, *cello*



PROGRAM

Dopamine for string quartet

Jeff MYERS
(born 1977)

Study IV for "Treatise on the Veil"

Matthias PINTSCHER
(born 1971)

Intermission

World Premiere

Contritius

Commissioned by the Boris and Sonya Kroyt Memorial Fund

Caleb BURHANS
(born 1980)

Tetras for string quartet

Iannis XENAKIS
(1922–2001)

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

DOPAMINE

(World Premiere: March 26, 2009, JACK Quartet, University of Huddersfield, UK)

Dopamine was written for the JACK Quartet. It uses *scordatura* harmonics on all the instruments to obtain precise microtonal notes and chords. The title refers to a hormone and neurotransmitter which occurs in humans and some mammals. Dopamine is typically associated with the pleasure system; people with higher dopamine levels tend to seek out more pleasurable activities and vice versa. Dopamine is also associated with creativity and the generation of new ideas. I used dopamine as a metaphor for this string quartet because it was written within a short span of a few days in an unprecedented creative fervor. My motivation came from both the creative experience and from the music itself, which gave me great pleasure to listen to. Perhaps my own level of dopamine was very high as I wrote this music. I suppose I will never know.

– Jeff Myers
(<http://jeffmyers.info>)

JEFF MYERS writes music that draws on an eclectic array of musical forms, styles, and genres, as well as visual art and natural phenomena. Filipino *kulintang* music, works by M.C. Escher, overtone music, and more recently, folk music and geographical narratives have been a source for inspiration. His operatic collaboration with writer and filmmaker Royce Vavrek yielded the one-act opera *The Hunger Art*, based on Kafka's *Hunger Artist* and the Adam and Eve story. Currently Myers is working on an opera with writer Quincy Long and the American Lyric Theater based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

His works have been played by members of the New World Symphony, Center City Opera, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, L'Orchestre National de Lorraine, the American Composers Orchestra, and PRISM Saxophone Quartet. In addition, his music has been heard on the radio, the internet, and in such venues as Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, Arsenal (Metz), Het Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ (Amsterdam), and Miller Theater, among others.

An alumnus of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Michigan, Myers has studied with William Bolcom, Martin Bresnick, Michael Daugherty, Betsy Jolas, Bright Sheng, and Allen Strange.

STUDY IV FOR "TREATISE ON THE VEIL"

(World Premiere: December 16, 2009, Minguet Quartett, Mozartwoche, Salzburg)

(US Premiere: January 23, 2010, JACK Quartet, Kimmel Center, Philadelphia)

In the early 1970s American painter Cy Twombly created a series of art works called "Treatise on the Veil"—it included numerous sketches and two major paintings. My own "Treatise" cycle* refers to this series, while also acting as an homage to an artist I very much admire; an artist whose work heavily influenced the structural make-up of my very own compositions, especially in recent years. "Veil" is a term that, when used

with an audio or visual reference, has multiple meanings—and these are particularly welcome when listening to this piece of music. Cy Twombly also refers to “veil” as a derivation of the Italian “velo,” which is a drawing instrument developed by Leonardo da Vinci to help detect and analyze perspective. And thus my musical discourse is indicative of my attempts to draw this perspective line.

By the use of several, multilayered composition and playing techniques, I try to create exactly this allusion of crossing lines in dialogue with each other. Similar to the line sketched on a surface, long-drawn notes (“lines”) appear to develop an added dimension of space, in alignment to the audio perspective. Among other things, the processes of veiling/unveiling are achieved by the preparation of the instruments, thus prising open the actual audible result of articulation and having it appear in a “different quality.” I often find myself wishing that I was able to draw directly onto the sound of the instruments like a painter.

– Matthias Pintscher
(Translation: Cristin Stein)

[* *Study I* for violin and cello (2004), *Study II* for violin, viola, and cello (2005), and *Study III* for solo violin (2007)]

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER was born in Marl in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany and studied composition with Giselher Klebe and Manfred Trojahn. Formative influences were his encounters with Hans Werner Henze, who invited him to Montepulciano in 1991 and 1992, and with Helmut Lachenmann, Pierre Boulez, and Peter Eötvös. Awards include first prize in the Hitzacker Composition Competition (1992), the Rolf Liebermann Prize and the Opera Prize from the Körber Foundation Hamburg (1993 and 1996), the Prince Pierre de Monaco Prize (1999), Composition Prize from the Salzburg Easter Festival and the Hindemith Prize from the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival (2000).

In 2002 he was awarded the Hans Werner Henze Prize (Westphalian Music Prize). Pintscher first came to international attention with the opera *Thomas Chatterton* at the Semper Opera, Dresden (1998), and later with his second opera *L'espace dernier* at the Opéra National de Paris (2004). Since then he has made his name with significant works for leading interpreters and orchestras throughout the world. He was composer-in-residence with the Cleveland Orchestra in 2002, the following season at the Konzerthaus Dortmund, at the Lucerne Festival in 2005, with the Radio Symphony Orchestra Saarbrücken in 2006, 2007 and at the Philharmonie, Cologne in 2007–2008. In 2008–2009 he was artist-in-residence with the Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart of South West German Radio.

Recent events include the U.S. premiere of *Towards Osiris* by the New York Philharmonic led by Christoph Eschenbach on March 18. Pintscher is currently at work on a song cycle for baritone Thomas Hampson, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra. The piece received its world premiere on April 16 at New York City's Symphony Space as part of the New York Philharmonic's new music series Contact.

As a conductor, Matthias Pintscher works regularly with leading orchestras and ensembles in Europe and the USA. Since 2007, he has been professor of composition at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich and artistic director of the Heidelberg Studio at the Heidelberg Spring Festival.

World Premiere

CONTRITUS

(Commissioned by the Boris and Sonya Kroyt Fund in the Library of Congress for JACK Quartet)

Contritus is Latin for "crushed by guilt." In the Catholic Church there are many prayers of contrition and penance. Composed in the fall and winter of 2009, *Contritus* is in three sections that organically flow into one another. These sections represent three different prayers of contrition. Much of the string writing in *Contritus* is evocative of early music and viol consorts while still portraying a sense of modern guilt.

– Caleb Burhans

Composer, violinist/violist, singer, and multi-instrumentalist CALEB BURHANS, born in Monterey, California, attended the Interlochen Arts Academy and the Eastman School of Music, where he received a bachelor's degree in viola performance and composition. Besides violin and viola, his main instruments are guitar and piano; he is also active as a countertenor soloist. His awards include the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship, the Music Educators National Conference Composition Competition, and Eastman's Bernard and Rose Sernoffsky Prize. He has been featured on newmusicbox.org performing his own works.

Burhans's compositions have been commissioned and premiered by ensembles he works with, including ACME, Alarm Will Sound, Beyondo, Bleknlok, Escort, itsnotyouitsme, Newspeak, Signal, Trinity Wall Street Choir, and the Wordless Music Orchestra. He has also been commissioned by Lincoln Center for the re-opening of Alice Tully Hall in 2009, the Albany Symphony, clarinetist Bill Kalinkos, Dogs of Desire, Fuma Sacra, Janus, mezzo-soprano Abby Fischer, percussionist Payton MacDonald, Scalene, Tarab Cello Ensemble, trombonist James Hirschfeld, violinist Yuki Numata, and violists John Graham, Eric Nowlin, and Nadia Sirota.

A specialist in early music, new music, pop/rock, and improvisation, Burhans has worked with such composers as La Monte Young, Lou Harrison, Philip Glass, Steve Reich, John Adams, Meredith Monk, Gavin Bryars, Max Richter, David Lang, Michael Gordon, Jacob Ter Veldhuis, Poul Ruders, Roger Reynolds, George Crumb, and Bernard Rands, among others.

TETRAS

(Commissioned by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Portugal for Arditti Quartet, which gave the first performance on June 8, 1983, in Lisbon)

I first encountered Xenakis's music rummaging through my teacher's CD collection. The liner notes described his works with words such as "mathematical," "calculus," and "scientific," which I found a bit off-putting. At the time, I had inherited my teacher's skepticism of the application of math to composition, even though I

enjoyed math (especially calculus) often to the chagrin of my peers. The sounds I heard couldn't have been more contrary to my expectations. I would have described them as being brutal, primitive, and alien. I didn't quite know how to process what I was hearing at the time; I didn't know whether I liked it, hated it, or what.

I rediscovered Xenakis in college when I read *Formalized Music*, his treatise on composition. The book completely changed my approach to writing music. Influenced by the Ancient Greeks, he believed that music should be treated as a science as well as an art. For example, he demonstrated the application of stochastic processes (previously used to model chaotic systems such as the behavior of gas molecules) to "clouds" of string pizzicati or the density of woodwind attacks. These techniques were very exciting to me as a composer; there existed an entire world of potential mathematical processes that seemed much more interesting than say, twelve-tone rows.

However, at the same time, I was listening to many recordings of Xenakis's music, and the paradox of process versus aesthetic became apparent again. This was not heady-sounding music at all, but rather visceral, primal, corporeal. The process of composition was not obvious on the surface of the music. Instead, one might imagine the wailings of a mourning woman, the thunder of a summer storm, or even sexual or religious ecstasy.

Perhaps no composition better embodies this contradiction than *Tetras*. Written relatively late in his career, *Tetras* [Greek word meaning, roughly, "four-ness"] is a work of starkly contrasting textures. The piece opens with a virtuosic glissando violin solo followed by the viola in double stops and then the whole quartet in a quiet echo of the solos. From there the piece moves through a handful of [nine] sections, often with little or no transition in between. The feeling I get from this work is that Xenakis had already liberated string sounds from traditional roles and was then completely free to create in the wake of this revolution. It is a work of uncompromising vision, savage brutality, and startling beauty.

– Kevin McFarland

Irvine Arditti on *Tetras*

I remember that when we were rehearsing in Lisbon in 1983, Iannis was most interested in finding the right character for each section, in particular for the noise-like sounds, leaving the technical difficulties to us. A work like *Tetras* continues to be challenging even after hundreds of performances, as it never seems to get any easier. So it could never be described as boring to play. This is true of many contemporary pieces that push us to the limits. The interpretation of a work like *Tetras* obviously grows and evolves over the years, and can never be fully accomplished in the beginning.

– from "Reflections on Performing the String Music of Iannis Xenakis"
Contemporary Music Review, Vol. 21, no. 2, 2002

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The JACK QUARTET has performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall and festivals including La Biennale di Venezia, Lucerne Festival, Festival Internacional de Música Contemporánea de Michoacán, and Intrasonus Festival of Contemporary Music in Venice. Since its members graduated from the Eastman School of Music, where in addition to the standard and contemporary repertoire they pursued period, non-Western, and popular performance styles, the Quartet has been mentored by the Arditti, Kronos, and Muir quartets, and members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Dedicated to the string quartet repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries, the JACK Quartet has worked closely with composers Helmut Lachenmann, Wolfgang Rihm, Matthias Pintscher, Aaron Cassidy, Aaron Travers, Roberto Rusconi, Cristian Amigo, Robert Wannamaker, Randall Woolf, Kirsten Broberg, Alexandra du Bois, and Samuel Adler. To broaden and diversify the potential audience for new music, the JACK Quartet has given educational presentations to a variety of ages, backgrounds, and levels of musical experience. The JACK Quartet derives its name from the initial letters of the members' first names: John, Ari, Christopher, and Kevin.

JOHN PICKFORD RICHARDS (*viola*), a member of Alarm Will Sound, has performed as soloist with the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra, Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Ossia New Music, and in Luciano Berio's *Chemins II* at the Lucerne Festival Academy conducted by Pierre Boulez.

A former member of Chicago's Ensemble Dal Niente and a recipient of an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, ARI STREISFELD (*violin*) has worked with composers Steven Mackey, Bernard Rands, Robert Morris, Carlos Sánchez-Gutiérrez, Ricardo Zohn Muldoon, and David Liptak.

CHRISTOPHER OTTO (*violin*) has worked with composers Harrison Birtwistle, Pierre Boulez, Helmut Lachenmann, and Steve Reich. He has participated as composer and performer in contemporary music festivals including the Internationale Musikinstitut Darmstadt and Festival Internacional de Música Contemporánea de Michoacán.

KEVIN MCFARLAND has performed with the Ossia New Music and Musica Nova ensembles. He is a member of the Tarab Cello Ensemble, dedicated to new music for cello octet. A mathematics tutor, McFarland has a serious interest in electronic music.



[*Cat o' Nine Tails*] is a fun piece to play and a fun one to listen to, a piece with a lot of drama and humor and many musical games hidden in the web of its inner details. Sly quotes and secret codes are scattered throughout my classical repertory, serving as both special tributes to the composers and compositions that feed my inspirations and, more importantly, as unifying devices to create structural integrity.²

The piece is subtitled "Tex Avery Directs the Marquis de Sade," suggesting "an echo of the infamous 18th-century author in the gleeful violence of the classic Warner Brothers cartoons of the 1940s and '50s," specifically those of Frederick Bean "Fred/Tex" Avery, creator of such characters of Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Droopy, Screwy Squirrel, Porky Pig, and Chilly Willy. The soundtracks of Avery's films were composed by Carl Stallings, and according to Zorn, when one listens to the music without the animations, one enters "a completely new dimension: you are constantly being thrown off balance, yet there is something strangely familiar about it all."³

In addition to film scores and cartoon soundtracks, JOHN ZORN has composed several works of diverse and mixed genres. These include unusual pieces for string quartet, solo cello, solo drums, full orchestra, clarinet quartet, and wind octet. For him, chamber music is more of a sensibility than the choice of instruments, and when he composes in a traditional manner, the music may be weird but it's "classical." Or at times he'll produce an unorthodox album of computerized static as part of an ongoing chamber music series. Aside from the Kronos Quartet, Zorn has been also been commissioned by the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress (*Le Momo* for violin and piano, 1999), and the New York and Brooklyn philharmonic orchestras.

Zorn was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2006 and the following year, he received Columbia University's School of the Arts William Schuman Award, in recognition of his lifetime achievement as an American composer "whose works have been widely performed and generally acknowledged to be of lasting significance."

¹ Quoted in Scott Maykrantz, www.scottmaykrantz.com/zorn01.html

² Quoted in www.kronosquartet.org/VM/prog3.html

³ Quoted in *Ibid.*

PANNONIA BOUNDLESS

Pannonia Boundless was commissioned by Kronos Quartet in 1997. Always open to new experience and eager to explore a new artistic territory, Kronos asked me to do six minutes of virtuosic music that would be based on Gypsy tunes and would employ a specific playing technique of these nomadic musicians. After the research in Novi Sad radio archives and many visits to Gypsy taverns in Vojvodina, I wrote this piece as an

homage to those musicians who from the margins of the society, as much as from the well known concert halls, have the power to touch our hearts. Published by Boosey & Hawkes in 2007, *Pannonia Boundless* is included in several albums: *Kronos Caravan* and *Hello Kronos* on the Nonesuch label, and on the CD *Pannonia Boundless* featuring the TAJJ String Quartet on the SKCNS label. The piece was used in the movie *Soupirs d'ame*, by Canadian director Helen Doyle, and in the ballet *The Little Prince*, by choreographer Dusan Tynek.

– Aleksandra Vrebalov
(www.aleksandravrebalov.com)

ALEKSANDRA VREBALOV, born in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, studied composition with Miroslav Statkic at Novi Sad University, Zoran Erich at Belgrade University, Elinor Armer at the San Francisco Conservatory, Ivana Loudova at the Prague Academy of Music, and Evan Chambers and Michael Daugherty at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her compositions have been performed throughout Western and Eastern Europe, and in Turkey, Greece, and the United States; by such artists as the Kronos, Sausalito, and Utrecht string quartets; pianists Evi Yundt, Pavlina Dokovska, and Vladimir Valjarevic; New Music Ensemble; guitarist Jorge Caballero; Moravian and Belgrade philharmonics; Ad Libitum Ensemble; Robert Aitken; and Jeunesse Musicale Choir, among others.

She has received commissions from several groups and institutions including Merkin Concert Hall Zoom Series, Ad Libitum Ensemble, Jancic Fund, Barlow Endowment, Festival Ballet Providence, and Merkin Concert Hall Zoom Series. A co-founder of South Oxford Six, a composers collective in New York City, Vrebalov created the Composers' Forum, a weekly gathering of composition students at the Novi Sad University in Serbia to discuss the compositional process.

Widely recorded on several international labels, she is the recipient of the Vienna Modern Masters Recording, Highsmith Composition Competition, ASCAP, and Meet the Composer awards. She has also received the MacDowell Colony, Tanglewood, Rockefeller Bellagio Center, Charles Ives, and Douglas Moore fellowships.

STRING SEXTET, H224

Born in a small village of Bohemia, Bohuslav Martinů, one of the most prolific Czech composers of the twentieth century, wrote 6 symphonies, 15 operas, 14 ballet scores, and a large body of orchestral, chamber, vocal, and instrumental works. Expelled from the Prague Conservatory, he sustained himself as a violinist in the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra before leaving for Paris in 1923 at age 32. His purpose was "not to seek my salvation but to confirm my opinions. What I sought most on French soil was not Debussy, nor Impressionism, nor, in fact, musical expression, but the real foundations on which Western culture rests and which, in my opinion, conform much more to our proper natural character than a maze of conjectures and problems."¹

Forced to return to his hometown of Polička in July 1924 for lack of funds, he returned to Paris the following September with a grant from the Czech Ministry of Culture. It

was a time of counter Romanticism; Paris was the artistic center of Europe, the city of Picasso and the Cubists, Diaghilev and Ballet Russe, Stravinsky, Bartók, de Falla, Milhaud, Honegger, Auric, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Malipiero, Kodály, and Poulenc. This was also the time when Nadia Boulanger was sought after by several American composers at the newly-established American Conservatoire at Fontainebleau.

Impressionism was passé; since his death in 1918 Debussy's music was seldom heard in Paris, in favor of Les Six, Satie, Louis Armstrong, and Bessie Smith. Nineteenth-century musical seriousness was out of fashion; the sole purpose of music was to amuse. Initially influenced by the Stravinsky of *L'histoire du soldat* and *Les Noces*, Martinů was mentored by Roussel. Between 1925 and 1930 Martinů produced 9 works for the stage, mostly experimental and exploring the stylish, popular dance forms of the day including the Charleston, Tango, and Blues.

His marriage to Charlotte Quennehen on March 21, 1931, gave legitimacy to their cohabitation but it did not improve their financial situation. Early next year he turned down an offer of a professorship of composition at the Brno Conservatory:

Despite the difficult situation here, I feel I really should stay in Paris and would consider leaving to be an act of desertion for which I could not forgive myself, especially if I throw away everything merely for financial gain. I don't believe I could work at my compositions and teach at the same time. There are so many superfluous things involved in teaching that would occupy my mind. I assure you that every quarter-of-an-hour is precious to me. I don't waste a minute, for I have many schemes that must be fulfilled.²

The "schemes" involved works of chamber music. Within three years he completed 22 pieces for chamber ensembles of various instrumental combinations. Most of the works were hastily written and sounded it; exceptions were the String Quartet no. 3, the Piano Trio no. 1, but most significantly, two Sextets—the first for piano and wind quintet (with a second bassoon in lieu of a French horn), and the second for strings.

The String Sextet's "dramatic fluency and imaginative boldness"³ earned Martinů the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Prize for Composition in 1932. He later arranged it for string orchestra. Mrs. Martinů recounts:

In 1932, Bohuš received a telegram that he had been awarded the Coolidge Prize. The violinist Samuel Dushkin, who had come to our flat, saw the telegram and said: "What is that?" "Oh, nothing, friends played a joke on me, those often arrive, they send telegrams on anniversaries of friends, signed Beethoven!" "Look, old man, it is from Washington. You really have received the Coolidge Prize!"

It took some time before Dushkin convinced Bohuš of the authenticity of the telegram. It was only at this moment that we began to enjoy ourselves. Thanks to this prize, Bohuš was able to buy himself a piano—a Pleyel—and he was no longer compelled to be satisfied with a rented piano.⁴

With the imminent Nazi invasion, Martinů fled from Paris in 1940 and eventually settled in New York City the following year. He achieved relative success in America, receiving several commissions, notably from Serge Koussevitzky, music director of the Boston Symphony at the time. While teaching at the Berkshire Summer Music School at Tanglewood in 1945, he fell from a second floor balcony and sustained serious injuries that left him partially deaf in his right ear, making composing difficult.

Despite the hardships he and his wife lived through, they were forced to remain in the United States after the communists occupied Czechoslovakia in 1948. He then accepted a position as visiting professor of composition at Princeton and also taught at the Mannes School and Curtis Institute. He returned to Europe in 1956 to serve as composer-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome. He wrote his last works in Switzerland, where he died of stomach cancer in 1959.

TWO PIECES FOR STRING OCTET, OP. 11

In the fall of 1924, while Martinů was eking out a living as a composer in Paris, some thirteen hundred miles east-northeast, an eighteen-year old Shostakovich began writing his first symphony, a requirement for graduation from the Petrograd (later Leningrad, today St. Petersburg) Conservatory. He interrupted work on the Symphony to write a prelude in memory of his friend, the young poet Volodya I. Kurchavov. Along with a fugue it was intended to be part of a five-movement suite for double string quartet.

By the time he completed the Symphony in the summer of 1925, his enthusiasm for a large-scale chamber work had diminished, his mind now preoccupied with other projects. Instead he dropped the fugue, wrote a scherzo to complement the earlier prelude, and gave the two pieces the opus number 11. It was first performed at the Mozart Concert Hall in Moscow (now called the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater) on January 9, 1927.

Premiered in 1926, the First Symphony was the first major achievement of Shostakovich as a composer. Although the symphony brought him international recognition, the two pieces—"brash, inventive, experimental"⁵—are more reflective of the musical milieu during the early years of the Soviet Union, when the avant garde works of composers such as Berg and Hindemith were being performed and discussed.

Despite its smaller scale, op. 11 echoes the First Symphony in its orchestral texture. Given its original purpose, the prelude is aptly an adagio, mournful and brooding. The scherzo, considered by the composer himself as "the very best thing I have written,"⁶ has been described as the "wildest" single movement in the literature of the string octet, a musical evocation of "crowds swirling crazily through the streets."⁷ A "slow, brooding Prelude followed by an exuberant, exhilarating Scherzo" came to be a typical characteristic of Shostakovich's compositional style.⁸

—Tomás C. Hernández
Music Division, Library of Congress

¹ Quoted in Brian Large, *Martinů*, 1975

² Quoted in *Ibid.*

³ Large, *op. cit.*

⁴ Charlotte Martinů, *My Life with Bohuslav Martinů*, 1978, trans. by Diderick C.D. DeJong

⁵ Program Notes by Jay Weitz, Chamber Music Columbus, February 26, 2005

⁶ Laurel Faye, *Shostakovich, A Life*, 2000

⁷ Quoted in Weitz, *op. cit.*

⁸ Laura Tomlin, CD notes to the *Music of Dmitri Shostakovich*, Arco Chamber Orchestra



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET has performed in major halls throughout North America and Europe, including Lincoln Center, 92nd Street Y, Metropolitan Museum, Jordan Hall, and the Library of Congress. Recent tours have taken the Quartet to the U.K., the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, France, Greece, the Republic of Georgia, Argentina, and the Philippines.

Collaborators have included pianists Menahem Pressler, Gary Graffman, Roger Woodward, and Jeremy Menuhin; clarinetists Eli Eban, Charles Neidich, Joan Enric Lluna, and Richard Stolzman; violists Toby Appel and Andrew Duckles; cellist Lynn Harrell and Sadao Harada; soprano Elly Ameling; and saxophonists Branford Marsalis, David Sánchez, and Andrew Speight. Among the Quartet's more unusual collaborations were numerous performances of Eddie Sauter's seminal Third Stream work, *Focus*, in collaboration with both Branford Marsalis and David Sánchez.

An advocate of new music, the ASQ has commissioned more than 25 works, including the work by Korean-born composer Jeeyoung Kim commissioned for them by San Francisco Performances. Other works it premiered include Augusta Read Thomas's *Rise Chanting* (commissioned for it by the Krannert Center), String Quartets nos. 2 and 3 by Pulitzer Prizewinner Wayne Peterson, and works by Ross Bauer (commissioned by Stanford University), Richard Festinger, David Sheinfeld, Hi Kyung Kim, and Robert Greenberg (Koussevitzky commission).

ASQ's discography includes two complete Beethoven cycles, Mozart's "Haydn" Quartets, the complete Shostakovich quartets, and the complete quartets of Wayne Peterson.

Now based in San Francisco, the Alexander String Quartet was formed in New York City in 1981. The following year it was the first string quartet to win the Concert Artists Guild Competition. The Quartet captured international attention after becoming the first American ensemble to win the London International String Quartet Competition in 1985, receiving both the jury's highest award and the Audience Prize.

In 2008, the AFIARA STRING QUARTET won the top prize at the Munich ARD International Music Competition and the Concert Artists Guild International Competition in New York. It has performed at Carnegie Hall in the "Kronos: Signature Works" series, and has been featured on Bavarian Radio, CBC Radio 2, KALW, and in the documentary *Road to Banff*. In 2007–2008, it was the Morrison Fellowship Quartet-in-Residence at San Francisco State University's International Center for the Arts, and its members served as teaching assistants to the Alexander String Quartet.

The Quartet has given the world premieres of Huck Hodge's String Quartet no. 2 in New York, Brett Abigana's *Une Grande Messe*, and Jason Bush's string quartet *Vision* (written for the Afiara) in San Francisco, and the East Coast premiere of Peteris Vasks's String Quartet in New York. In collaboration with timpanist Louis Siu, the Afiara has commissioned and premiered new chamber music repertoire for string quartet and the tenor timpani.

This season, the Afiara will play concerts with Chamber Music in Occidental, Old First Church Concerts, San Jose Chamber Music Society, Sierra Chamber Society, Calgary ProMusica Series, and the Montreal International Chamber Music Festival. The quartet will also appear with the Alexander String Quartet in Mendelssohn's Octet with San Francisco Performances; with pianist Stephen Prutsman in San Jose and Nevada City's Music in the Mountains; and with Bonnie Hampton in Schubert's Cello Quintet at the Starcross Festival. The Afiara Quartet's debut CD includes quartets by Mendelssohn and Schubert, as well as the Mendelssohn Octet with the Alexander String Quartet.

The Afiara String Quartet takes its name from the Spanish *fiar*, meaning "to trust." Committed to education, the group connects to audiences on different levels. In addition to collaborations with the rap group Blunt Delphix, it programs Haydn and hip-hop together, including a rapping cellist.

Guest Artist

AGLIKA ANGELOVA has served as artist-in-residence at the Limassol Festival, Banff Center for the Arts, Moab Music Festival, and the Olympic Music Festival, among others. She has appeared in solo recitals, orchestra and chamber music concerts in her native Bulgaria as well as in Germany, Belgium, Cyprus, Lithuania, the United States, Canada, Japan, and throughout the Pacific Rim.

Born in Bulgaria and educated in Germany, Angelova came to the United States in 1997 and joined the piano faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. There she co-founded the Jupiter Trio—with violinist Robert Waters and cellist Julian Hersh—which won a Gold Medal and First Prize at the 4th Annual Osaka International Chamber Music Competition.

Currently on the piano and chamber music faculty at DePaul University School of Music, she serves as faculty-in-residence at the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra and the annual Yehudi Menuhin Chamber Music Seminar at the San Francisco State University.

Saturday April 17, 2010 – 2 p.m.
Coolidge Auditorium (*no tickets required*)

LECTURE & PERFORMANCE: BEETHOVEN'S STRING IN B-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 130
Robert Greenberg & Alexander Quartet

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Saturday, April 24, 2010 – 8 p.m.

DAFNIS PRIETO *Sí O Sí* QUARTET
with Christian Howe, *violin*

Program includes Don Byron's *Spin* (*McKim commission*)
6:15 p.m. – Larry Appelbaum interviews Dafnis Prieto

Saturday, May 8, 2010 – 8 p.m.

SIMON SHAHEEN AND MEMBERS OF QANTARA

World premiere of a new McKim piece by Shaheen

Saturday, May 22, 2010 – 2 p.m.

URI CAINE TRIO

6:15 p.m. – Larry Appelbaum interviews Uri Caine

CONCERTS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Since the inaugural concerts in 1925, the Coolidge Auditorium, built by ELIZABETH SPRAGUE COOLIDGE, referred to then as the new "auditorium for chamber music" in the Library of Congress, has been the venue for countless world-class performers and performances. Another grande dame of Washington, GERTRUDE CLARKE WHITTALL, presented to the Library a gift of five Stradivari instruments to be played in concerts, the first of which was held on January 10, 1936. These parallel but separate concert series served as the pillars that now support a full season of concerts made possible by gift trusts and foundations that followed those established by Mrs. Coolidge and Mrs. Whittall.

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Next concerts of the 2009–2010 Season

Friday, May 14, 2010 – 8 p.m.

WOODLEY ENSEMBLE
Frank Albinder, *Music Director*

A program specially created for the Library of Congress celebrates the birth anniversaries of Robert Schumann and Samuel Barber. Highlights include Schumann's *Vier doppelcörige Gesänge*, op. 141, and Barber's *Reincarnations*, op. 16 (*Part of A Festival of American Vocal Music*)

6:15 p.m. – Whittall Pavilion (*no tickets required*) – Pre-concert talk
“Wellness and Growth: Acoustic Medicine and Music Therapy”
Jayne Standley and Vera Brandes
(*Part of “Music and the Brain II”*)

Friday, May 28, 2010 – 8 p.m.

ENSEMBLE CAPRICE
Matthias Maute, *Artistic Director*

BACH AND THE BOHEMIAN GYPSIES

Music of J.S. Bach, Telemann, and selections from the
Uhrovska collection of gypsy music

6:15 p.m. – Whittall Pavilion (*no tickets required*)
Pre-concert presentation: “Nip/Tuck: The world of
J.S. Bach Transcriptions and Revisions”
Norman Middleton, *Music Division, Library of Congress*

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Saturday, May 29, 2010 – 2 p.m. (*no tickets required*)

MAHAN ESFAHANI, *harpsichord*

Program includes selections from Wanda Landowska's concert at the Library of Congress in 1928 played on her own Pleyel harpsichord



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