

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Café Provençal remains open until 6:00 pm.

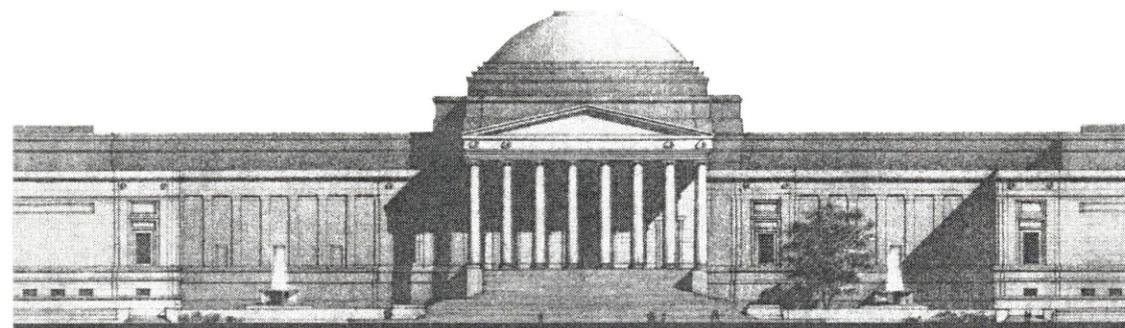
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
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The Sixty-fourth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,559th Concert

The Auryn String Quartet
Matthias Lingenfelder, *violin*
Jens Oppermann, *violin*
Stewart Eaton, *viola*
Andreas Arndt, *violoncello*

February 12, 2006
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

String Quartet in D Minor, op. 76, no. 2 (“Fifths”) (1797)

Allegro

Andante o piuttosto allegretto

Menuetto: Allegro ma non troppo

Finale: Vivace assai

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

String Quartet no. 1 in A Minor, op. 7 (1908)

Lento

Allegretto

Allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

String Quartet no. 12 in F Major, op. 96 (“American”) (1893)

Allegro ma non troppo

Lento

Molto vivace

Finale: Vivace ma non troppo

The Musicians

The Auryn String Quartet takes its name from Michael Ende's 1979 novel, *Die unendliche Geschichte* (The Neverending Story), in which the Auryn is an amulet that, as the quartet's Web site describes, “bestows its bearer with a capacity to realize his or her dreams and an ability to access extraordinary powers of imagination.” The members of the ensemble studied with the Amadeus Quartet in Cologne as well as the Guarneri Quartet at the University of Maryland. Soon after completing their studies, they won first prizes at the prestigious ARD International Music Competition in Munich and the International String Quartet Competition in Portsmouth, England. In 1987, as a representative of the German Radio Stations Organization, the Auryn Quartet won the Competition of European Radio Stations.

The ensemble has concertized in most of the major music centers of the world and has been invited to the music festivals of Bregenz, Gstaad, Lockenhaus, Lucerne, Mondsee, Kuhmo, and Schleswig-Holstein, as well as the Beethovenfest Bonn and the Berliner Festwochen. In the summer of 2003 the quartet appeared at the Salzburg Festival and KlangBogen Wien, and performed a cycle of three all-Mendelssohn concerts at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam. The Auryn also participated in the Beethoven quartet cycle of the International Beethoven Festival in Bonn, played at the Edinburgh Festival, and served as the quartet-in-residence of Washington's Schubert, Schubert, and Schubert Festival.

The Auryn Quartet regularly tours in North America and has appeared at the Frick Collection and in the quartet series at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall. Other American venues and series have included the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Notre Dame University, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the Da Camera Society of Los Angeles. The ensemble has performed with such internationally renowned musicians as Christian Tetzlaff and members of the Guarneri

and Amadeus Quartets. The Auryn Quartet is a strong champion of contemporary music and has played the world premieres of works by Brett Dean, Peter Michael Hamel, Maria Cecilia Villanueva, and Charlotte Seither.

The group's many recordings include the complete cycle of Schubert's quartets on the CPO label—awarded the Diapason d'Or—and, recently, the string quartets of Debussy, Fauré, Ravel, and Brahms. Their Hugo Wolf and Schumann CDs have also won the German Record Reviewers prize, and *Gramophone* magazine rated their recordings of the complete Beethoven quartets the best currently available. Since 2000 the ensemble has recorded exclusively for the German label Tacet. The Auryn Quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Shupp Artists Management, Inc., of Port Jefferson, New York.

Program Notes

Written in 1797 and 1798, the string quartets of Haydn's opus 76 represent the culmination of his long and productive mature period. Having invented the string quartet as a genre in the 1760s, he had improved upon it little by little over the years, giving it a standard form (two fast outer movements surrounding a slow movement and a minuet). In spite of their predictable form, each of Haydn's late quartets has a distinct personality. No. 2, in D minor, gets its nickname, "Fifths," from the falling fifths that pervade the first movement. The first violin, always the workhorse in Haydn quartets, plays flourishes that grow out of the falling-fifth motif. In the second movement, *Andante o piuttosto allegretto* (andante, or more readily allegretto), the form comes close to a theme with variations but does not quite match the criteria. The movement features modulations that might be mistaken for Haydn's indecision as to the key, were it not for their satisfying resolution. The main body of the *Menuetto* is a strict canon. The opening section is thick in texture, with the violins and the two lower instruments pairing off, while the trio is lighter in weight, wispy, and mysterious. The final movement uses falling intervals, as did the first movement, but here they are not all fifths. It reiterates the key of the quartet (D minor) but closes optimistically in the parallel major key.

Bartók was still under the spell of the great romantic composers, especially Liszt and Brahms, when he wrote his first string quartet. He departs from his predecessors though, in handling tonality in an adventuresome manner that his heroes would not have recognized. For example, the basic A minor chord is most often presented as A-B-E, rather than the textbook A-C-E. The folk melodies that were beginning to preoccupy Bartók's research appear only sporadically in this work, but the emphasis on the offbeat, a mark of Magyar musical dialect, occurs frequently.

The *Quartet no. 1 in A Minor* is in three movements, which Bartók intended to be played without breaks. The intense contrapuntal writing of the first movement (*Lento*) is often compared to Beethoven's *String Quartet no. 14*, which also begins with a slow fugue. The second movement (*Allegretto*) introduces a homophonic texture, in contrast to the polyphony of the opening *Lento*. An introductory duet for the first and second violin is countered by a duet for the viola and cello. After the duets the solo violin announces a fluttering motif that appears throughout the rest of the movement. This motif is destined to become a basic element of the final movement (*Allegro vivace*), where it informs the energetic first theme, the lyric second theme, and the *fugato* at the core of the movement. Up to this point in the quartet, each change of tempo has been from slow to fast, and as the work surges to its conclusion, the tempo moves from *allegro vivace* to *allegro molto* to a breathtaking *presto*.

The composition was in part inspired by Bartók's unrequited love for the violinist Stefi Geyer. In a letter to her, he characterized the first movement as a "funeral dirge," calling attention to his reuse of a motif that first appeared in his *Violin Concerto no. 1*, a work dedicated to Geyer and suppressed by Bartók for many years.

Dvořák was sojourning in the Bohemian immigrant community of Spillville, Iowa, when he wrote his *String Quartet no. 12 in F Major*, op. 96, and it represents a conscious effort on his part to incorporate American music into his writing. No folk tunes or spirituals are directly quoted, but the spirit and characteristic rhythms of those genres and of American Indian music are present at many points. Listeners who are familiar with the Bohemian musical tradition will detect that it is present in equal proportion to the American elements. The last movement has been described as a *furiant* (a traditional Bohemian dance) danced on American soil. With only two brief moments of repose, the fiery rhythm continues relentlessly until the full-blown conclusion, which comes as close to an orchestral texture as is possible with only four instruments.