

## Guest Ensemble Concert:

2013-03-02 – Linden String Quartet



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# UI String Quartet *Program*

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7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 2, 2013  
Riverside Recital Hall

*presents*



## LINDEN STRING QUARTET

Sarah McElravy, *violin*

Catherine Cosbey, *violin*

Eric Wong, *viola*

Felix Umansky, *cello*



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March 2, 2013, 7:30 p.m. RIVERSIDE RECITAL HALL

## PROGRAM

**String Quartet, op. 76, No. 5 in D Major**

*Allegretto – Allegro*  
*Largo cantabile e mesto*  
*Menuetto: Allegro*  
*Finale: Allegro ma non troppo*

Franz Joseph HAYDN (1732–1807)

**Snapshot: Circa 1909**

**A Black November Turkey**

John CORIGLIANO (b. 1938)

**Three Rags for String Quartet**

*Poltergeist*  
*The Graceful Ghost Rag*  
*Incineratorag*

William BOLCOM (b. 1938)

- intermission -

**String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132**

*Assai sostenuto — Allegro*  
*Allegro ma non tanto*  
*Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die*  
*Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart: Molto adagio - Andante*  
*Alla Marcia, assai vivace*  
*Allegro appassionato*

Ludwig Van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

*Program subject to change*

Linden String Quartet is a winner of the Concert Artists Guild International Competition.

Linden String Quartet is represented by:  
Concert Artists Guild  
850 Seventh Ave, PH-A, New York, NY 10019  
[www.concertartists.org](http://www.concertartists.org)

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### *String Quartet in D Major, op. 76, No.5*

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Today's concert leads off with one of the quartets that formed the last complete set of quartets written by Haydn, the Opus 76, No. 5 Quartet. This quartet is the 79th of his eighty-three string quartets and was written between 1796 and 1797, when he was in his middle sixties and about to enter an important turning point in his life. He was no longer required to serve only the Esterhazy family and had achieved world fame from an extremely successful tour of England. He was materially well off and in full command of his artistic abilities. He was eager to turn away from instrumental music entirely and to devote the rest of his career to vocal music, songs, and choral works. Although not widely known for his operas and theatrical works, he was no stranger to these media. Even as he worked on these last quartets, he began working on his oratorio, *The Creation*.

In 1795, Haydn returned from his second visit to London where he had had fabulous success with his new symphonies which were written for the public to be performed by professional musicians. He felt encouraged to incorporate new elements into his other compositions as well. Thus, when he was commissioned by Count Joseph Erdödy in 1796 for a set of six quartets, he used the opportunity to try out his ideas. These quartets were to be performed in distinguished salons, not public concert halls, and they were to be for Erdödy's exclusive use until they were published in 1799 as Opus 76, dedicated to the Count. The Erdödy quartets, as they are known, include some of Haydn's most famous quartets, among them those carrying nicknames: "Emperor," "Sunrise," and "Fifths." However, the Opus 76, No. 5 in D Major lacks a nickname, probably due to its unusual technical features that make it difficult to select a characteristic that would lend itself to an identifying slogan. This will become apparent upon listening to the music.

The structure of the first movement of the D-Major quartet, marked *Allegretto-Allegro*, reveals one of Haydn's experiments with the sonata-form of an opening movement. Instead of his usual single theme development, he divided the movement into two parts, each at different tempi yet using the same theme. The *Allegretto* section opens with a graceful violin melody that is quickly developed with the cello underneath voicing the theme and mixing in with the complicated embellishment of the violin. This gives the whole a sense of a series of variations. The music suddenly becomes turbulent, almost plodding in nature. Then, the mood shifts back to its opening character and the *Allegro* section is launched. This uses the original opening melody for a briefly developed and abruptly closing section.

The lengthy second movement with its distinctive markings by Haydn (*Largo ma non troppo. Cantabile e mesto*) may be taken as having a special significance for the composer. As the markings indicate, the music is to sound like "singing and sad," and sad and even mournful it sounds. It is noteworthy that Haydn used as the key signature for this movement, F-sharp major, a key said to have been infrequently used in his day for orchestral and ensemble music, but rather reserved for keyboard music. Also, according to the tenets of the 18th century writings on music, the F-sharp major key was said to express feelings of relief after overcoming struggle. Why this from "Papa" Haydn? We look to the occasion of the quartet having been composed at the time of the composer's change in his life situation as already noted above.

The third movement (*Menuetto. Allegro ma non troppo*) is a more conventional piece of the dance. Its middle trio section offers a change in tempo that lends a contrasting and tension-provoking mood before the music returns with a brief reprise of its opening.

The Finale (*Presto*) is essentially a wild, high pitched race that echoes with the sounds suggestive of a rustic band interrupted with brief moments of silence. It is a romp to end the quartet and may well bring an audience to its feet!

-Arthur Canter

### *Snapshot Circa 1909*

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

When the Elements Quartet asked me to write a piece inspired by a photograph, I immediately thought of one I have had since I was a child. It was taken in Greenwich Village in my grandparents' Sullivan Street apartment, which I have only seen in photos. The photographer came to do a group shot of my grandparents, whom I never met, and their six children. After taking that picture, the photographer was coaxed into doing a shot of my father and his brother Peter performing on violin and guitar.

The picture has never ceased to move me. My father looked about eight years old, wearing knickers and earnestly bowing his violin, while my uncle, then a teenager, held a guitar in an aristocratic position and stared at the camera. In the short quartet inspired by the photo, the second violin plays a nostalgic melody, while the other strings are pluck their instruments in a guitar-like manner. This solo is the boy violinist singing through his instrument.

After the melody is completed, however, the first violin enters, muted, in the very highest register. In my mind, he was playing the dream that my eight-year-old father must have had — of performing roulades and high, virtuosi musing passages that were still impossible for him to master. This young violinist grew into a great soloist — my father, John Corigliano, concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic for over a quarter century. He, as an adult, performed the concerti and solos that as a child he could only imagine. The two violins, boy and dream, join together at the end as the guitar sounds play on.

- John Corigliano

### *A Black November Turkey (1973, arr. 2003)*

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

In 1973, John Corigliano published two settings of poems by the American poet Richard Wilbur for a cappella choir; one was "L'Invitation au Voyage," a translation of Baudelaire, and the other was "A Black November Turkey," which was later transcribed for string quartet by the composer. Corigliano calls the latter a "savage barnyard allegory [...] set against an inane patter of clucking chickens, and [portraying] a sad and endless futility, a celebrated and unnoticed death." Indeed, the poem describes a both macabre and ironically regal black "turkey-cock" wistfully gazing upon nine blithely innocent chickens that will, unlike him, survive the night.

Corigliano's setting parallels the poem and presents three distinct parts, the first describing absurd "chicken" music created, in the string quartet version, by erratic staccato patterns and, in the original, by quite literal clucking by chorus members. The middle section of the work takes on a mysterious and ominous quality that both stylistically and tonally recalls early chant, corresponding to the part of the quickly darkening poem that describes the turkey.

The Vast black body floats  
Above the crossing knees  
As a cloud over thrashed branches, a calm ship  
Over choppy seas,

Shuddering its fan and feathers  
In fine soft clashes  
With the cold sound that the wind makes, fondling  
Paper-ashes.

The final section is an abrupt return to the music of the opening that brings the piece to a hasty end in a humorous, galline flourish.

- Eric Wong (*Linden Quartet*)

### *Three Rags For String Quartet* (1989)

*Poltergeist,*

*The Graceful Ghost*

*Incineratorrag*

William Bolcom (b. 1938)

William Bolcom is one of the contemporary post-modernist composers who cannot be categorized as propounding any special style in his compositions. He is a true eclectic, recognized as a distinguished composer, brilliant pianist, author, and teacher. Among other things, he is a champion of ragtime piano music. With his wife, singer Joan Morris, he has appeared on tours throughout the country presenting concerts of popular American songs, such as those from the Gershwin song-book and Jerome Kern's musicals.

Bolcom's fascination with ragtime music began in 1967 after he sought information about the ragtime opera *Treemonisha* by Scott Joplin — a composer he knew nothing about. His inquiries led to securing a copy of the vocal score and, hence, an exploration of Joplin's rags. It was not long before Joplin's name became widely known after the recording of Joplin's rags played by Joshua Rifkin and Gunther Schuller's period instrumentation of Joplin recorded in the album *The Red Back Book*. At the same time, Bolcom and other composers began to immerse themselves in the rag idiom. In the recent edition (1999) of his *Complete Rags for Piano*, Bolcom notes:

What may be less well-known is that from about 1968 on a whole group of young American composers, Peter Winkler, William Albright and several others, joined me in writing new traditional-style rags ... Bill Albright and I would send each other rags by mail like chess problems. It was all delightful ... but I think we all felt the real impetus from our picking up a dropped thread of our emerging American tradition. Few of us would continue to write traditional rags after about 1975, but in the Ragtime Revival we younger composers internalized rag in such a way that our subsequent music became profoundly changed, whatever styles we each pursued.

It must be remembered that Ragtime developed as a music form at the end of the 19th century from the fusion of African and European musical ideas, often by self-taught musicians who played in the streets and bars of southern cities of the United States. Ragtime means "ragged" music, referring to the nature of the rhythm heard, usually from the piano, where the right hand plays a syncopated tune contrasted by the left hand playing a simple regular line of alternating bass notes and simple chords (often called a "two step").

The *Three Rags for String Quartet* was arranged by Bolcom in 1989 from piano rags he had composed in 1970 and 1971. Two of the Rags, *Poltergeist* and *The Graceful Ghost*, are derived from the *Three Ghost Rags* that Bolcom published as a set. The title "Ghost Rags" had been suggested earlier by the late piano virtuoso Paul Jacobs when he recorded them. The third piece included in the works for String Quartet was arranged from *Incineratorrag*, one of a second set Bolcom called *Three Classical Rags* that dates back to the same period as the Ghost Rags. The Lark String Quartet gave the première performance of the *Three Rags for String Quartet* at a chamber music festival held in 1994 at the Grand Canyon, Arizona.

As described by the composer, *The Graceful Ghost* "is a reminiscence of my father. In this piece I have tried to imagine an extension of Louis Chauvin's gentle French Creole quality." (Louis Chauvin was a fabulous young ragtime player and composer of the early 1900s) The work was written in 1970, the year Bolcom's father died. *Poltergeist*, as noted in its original piano form, "explores nearly every frozen arpeggiatura and substitution in the harmonic book."

*Incineratorrag*, a harmonically complex work considered by Bolcom to be the closest of his *Three Classical Rags* to the standard rag form, has been characterized as "full of excitement."  
-Arthur Canter

## ***Quartet in A minor, Opus 132***

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

In the 1820s, Beethoven was able to reconstruct his life and gain a new sense of vitality. His productive surge at the time was matched with revived interest in his works by Viennese audiences. In 1822, Prince Galitzin, a cellist and admirer of Beethoven's music, asked the composer for a set of two or three quartets. Beethoven was already preoccupied with completing the *Missa Solemnis* and the *Ninth Symphony*. After stalling Galitzin for a while, he turned to the task in 1824, and by the end of November 1825 completed the three quartets known as the "Galitzin Quartets" (Opuses 127, 130 and 132)

The *String Quartet in A minor, Opus 132* was actually the second in order of completion of the three Galitzin quartets. Beethoven apparently started to work on both the A-minor quartet and E-flat major (Op. 127) quartets after May, 1824, completing the latter in February 1825. His work on the A-minor quartet was interrupted sometime in the summer of that year by a severe attack of jaundice and a bowel inflammation. He was gravely ill for three months during which time he was convinced he was about to die. Recovery was slow and in October he wrote to his physician, Dr. Anton Braunhofer, "Judging by what I know of my own constitution, my strength will hardly be restored unaided." He closed the letter with a canon: "Doctor, close the door to Death! Music will also help in my hour of need". It seems that he also turned to a higher spiritual authority for the help he needed for in a Conversation Book of this time. He wrote: "Hymn of Thanksgiving to God of an Invalid in his Convalescence. Feeling of new strength and reawakened feeling." These are the words, in slightly altered form, which are marked on the score of third movement of the A-minor quartet.

The Quartet in A minor op. 132, in five movements, is structured in the form of an arch around the central "Hymn of Thanksgiving" movement. The quartet opens with a brief slow introduction in a dark-sounding vein which is transformed by the violin and the upper register of the cello into the dramatic but lyrical main theme of the *allegro*. The melody is expanded and followed successively by two new ideas, each interrupted by developments of the main theme. Perhaps it was intended to convey the feeling that suffering can be progressively relieved by hope.

The second movement, *Allegro ma non tanto*, is essentially a scherzo that hints at a minuet but does not quite make it. The music is somewhat wistful in tone with two motifs that are threaded throughout the movement. The trio section has a bag-pipe dance quality with the first violin sustaining a pipe-like drone. The movement returns to its opening section as it ends.

The long central movement of the quartet, *Molto adagio — Andante*, bears the inscription *Heiliger Dankesgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart* (Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity by a Convalescent, in the Lydian mode). The use of the Lydian mode refers to an ancient ecclesiastical scale that gives the music a spiritual tone. There are five lines of a slow, solemn hymn, each preceded by a faster contrapuntal prelude. The five lines are followed by a brief second section of a contrasting nature, marked *Neue Kraft fühlend* (Feeling of new strength) in which loud and soft tones alternate. Then the music reverts to slight alterations of both sections before the movement ends with a restatement of the "Thanksgiving Song." Beethoven marked the score that this ending was to be played with the most intimate emotions.

The *Alla marcia, assai vivace* suddenly breaks the mood left by the preceding with its military style march that is slightly subdued, thus not overbearing. The march breaks off suddenly with speech-sounding music, or recitative, by the first violin with minimal accompaniment, and without pause the finale (*Allegro appassionato*) begins. Although quite lyrical, the orchestral texture and intensity give the music of the finale a dramatic air that leads to a joyful rondo, bringing the work to an end.

-Arthur Canter

## BIOGRAPHIES

### LINDEN STRING QUARTET

Sarah McElravy & Catherine Cosby, *violins*; Eric Wong, *viola*; Felix Umansky, *cello*

Described as "...polished, radiant and incisive..." by *The Strad*, the Linden String Quartet is the winner of the 2010 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition. Founded in spring 2008 at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Quartet has enjoyed remarkable success in four short years, also winning the Gold Medal and Grand Prize of the 2009 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the Coleman-Barstow Prize at the 2009 Coleman National Chamber Ensemble Competition, First Prize at the 2010 Hugo Kauder Competition, and most recently, the ProQuartet Prize at the Ninth Borciani International String Quartet Competition. Praised for "...performances of consummate artistry and near-flawless execution." (Classical Voice of North Carolina), the Linden Quartet was also selected recently for the prestigious 2011 A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett Fellowship (which included a \$25,000 award).

Featured engagements for the 2012–13 season include the season-opening concert on New York's renowned Schneider Concerts Series at the New School and a weeklong residency for the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, culminating in a performance with Grammy award-winning clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. Other season highlights include: Market Square Concerts, the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival (N.C.), Acadiana Symphony Chamber Music Series (La.); and in Canada: the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, Toronto's Lindsay Concert Foundation, and the third annual week-long summer residency at the Music at Port Milford Chamber Music Festival in Ontario. In fall 2013, the Quartet also reunites with CAG First Prize-winning pianist Michael Brown in joint recitals at the Reston Community Center, the Brooklyn Public Library and the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College.

Dedicated to sharing their passion for chamber music with students, the foursome is quite active with educational residencies in 2012–13, including The University of Iowa School of Music, the Auditorium Chamber Music Series (Moscow, Idaho), Sheldon Friends of Music (Lincoln, Nebr.) and the Chamber Music Society of Logan, Utah. The Linden Quartet was the 2011–12 Ernst Steifel Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, leading a series of educational workshops in the school districts surrounding the Center. That residency culminated in a performance at the Caramoor Festival in July 2012, featuring the world premiere of Gabriel Kahane's *Line Up!* for string quartet, commissioned by Caramoor.

Now based in Cleveland, the Linden Quartet recently completed the two-year Graduate String-Quartet-in-Residence program at Yale University School of Music, where the ensemble was mentored by the Tokyo String Quartet. Previous mentors have included the Cavani String Quartet, Peter Salaff and Paul Kantor. The Quartet has also worked with Donald Weilerstein and William Preucil of the Cleveland Quartet, Joel Smirnoff and Robert Mann of the Juilliard String Quartet and members of the Guarneri and St. Lawrence Quartets. The Quartet has collaborated with pianist Peter Frankl, guitarist Jason Vieaux, mezzo-soprano Jana Baty, violinist Geoff Nuttall, as well as acclaimed accordion and bandoneón player Julian Labro.

In summer 2010, the Linden String Quartet was resident ensemble at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, as well as chamber music festivals in Banff, Alberta and Stanford, California. As winners of the Fischhoff Grand Prize, the Quartet toured the Midwest in fall 2009, and the 2009–10 season included appearances at Italy's Emilia Romagna Festival, and a week-long tour throughout the state of Kentucky. The group also served previously as the Canton Symphony Orchestra's Quartet-in-Residence, featuring a series of presentations in elementary schools throughout Northeastern Ohio designed to promote Classical music.

*(cont. on back)*



Violinist **SARAH McELRAVY** received both her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She is a laureate of the 2008 International Stepping Stone Competition and has won the Silver Medal Award from the Royal Conservatory of Music, first prize at the Ontario Provincial Finals, and second prize at the Canadian Music Competition National Finals. Ms. McElravy has performed as a soloist with the Pulawy Festival Orchestra, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Orchestra, the Lexington Bach Festival Orchestra, and the CIM Orchestra and served as Concertmaster of the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra, the Suburban Symphony, the CIM Orchestra, and the Banff Music and Sound Festival. An avid chamber musician, Ms. McElravy has performed twice at the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival and has attended the Pacific Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. Ms. McElravy studied violin with Witold Swoboda, Erika Raum, Sylvia Rosenberg, Scott St. John, Paul Kantor and Lorand Fenyves. She has collaborated with Gary Graffman and Roberto Diaz, and has been coached by Cho-Liang Lin, Lynn Harrell, as well as the Guarneri, Emerson, and Tokyo String Quartets. Ms. McElravy performs on a Pietro Guarneri (of Mantua) violin of 1682, on loan from an anonymous patron.

Violinist **CATHERINE COSBEY** received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Glenn Gould School in Toronto and her Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Ms. Cosby has attended the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Banff Chamber and Summer Music Sessions, the St. Lawrence String Quartet Seminar, the Domaine Forget Chamber Music Program, and the Centre D'arts Orford. As an orchestral musician, Ms. Cosby has been a member of the Regina Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada and is currently a member of CityMusic Cleveland and the Canton Symphony. Ms. Cosby has performed chamber music across Canada and Iceland, most notably with Quartetto Constanze and the Flaming Leafs. She has collaborated with artists such as Edward Arron, Kai Gleusteen, Kyung-Sun Lee, Geoff Nuttall, Erika Raum, and Barry Shiffman. Ms. Cosby's teachers and mentors include Paul Kantor, Eduard Minevich, and Erika Raum. She plays on a 1721 Guidantus violin and a Voirin bow generously on loan by the Banff Centre.

Violist **ERIC WONG** received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Mr. Wong is the first prize winner of the 48th Annual Lima Symphony Young Artists' Competition, the 2007 Ohio Viola Society competition, and the 2006 Louisiana String Teachers Association solo competition, as well as the third-prize winner of CIM's 2008 Milhaud Competition. As a soloist, Mr. Wong has performed with the CIM Orchestra and the Acadiana and Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestras. His performances have taken him to Carnegie Hall, Severance Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Tanglewood Music Center. Mr. Wong currently holds the position of assistant concertmaster of the Akron Symphony. As a chamber musician, Mr. Wong has performed in recitals sponsored by the Aspen Institute, the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, and the Cleveland Chamber Music Guild. Mr. Wong has collaborated with members of the Cleveland Quartet, with Kirsten Docter and Merry Peckham of the Cavani Quartet, and with Secretary of State and pianist Condoleezza Rice. Mr. Wong has studied with Heidi Castleman, Kirsten Docter, Paul Kantor, Kevork Mardirossian, Lynne Ramsey, David Updegraff, and Zvi Zeitlin. Coaches and mentors include Peter Salaff and the Cavani and Miró Quartets.

Cellist **FELIX UMANSKY** received both his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music. An avid performer, Mr. Umansky is currently a member of CityMusic Cleveland and has performed concerts in Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Germany. As a chamber musician, Mr. Umansky has received coachings from members of the Artemis, Borromeo, Cavani, Cleveland, Guarneri, Miro, St. Lawrence, Takacs, and Tokyo String Quartets, as well as the Beaux Arts Trio. Mr. Umansky was selected as an inaugural fellow with the Cleveland Chamber Music Society helping to bring music to hundreds of elementary school students. Mr. Umansky studied cello with Polina Umansky, Yehuda Hanani, Janos Starker, Michael Mermagen, Eleanor Schoenfeld, Richard Aaron, and Desmond Hoebig.

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