

Candlelight Concert Society
presents the

Borealis String Quartet

Patricia Shih, violin
Yuel Yawney, violin

Nikita Pogrebnoy, viola
Shih-Lin Chen, cello

with

Jean-François Latour, piano

Saturday, December 3, 2011, 8:00 PM
Pre-concert discussion – Holly Thomas, moderator
Smith Theatre, Howard Community College

This performance is sponsored in memory of David Johnson

String Quartet No. 1, "A falcon, a storm, or a great song"

Imant Raminsh
(1943 -)

Introduction
Con brio
Elegy: Lento
Animato

Selection of Taiwanese Folk Songs

arranged by Zhe-I Lee

Sky Shower
Taiwanese Lullaby
Temple Square
Heartbroken Flower
The Hope of Spring Breezes
Diu-Diu-Dong

— *Intermission* —

Quintet No. 2 in A Major for piano and strings, Op. 81

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Allegro, ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto; Vivace
Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro

The Borealis String Quartet and Jean-François Latour are represented by
Melvin Kaplan, Inc.

115 College Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401
www.melkap.com www.borealisstringquartet.com

Program Notes

Imant Raminsh (1943 -)

String Quartet No. 1, "A falcon, a storm, or a great song"

*I am circling around God, around the ancient tower, and I have been circling for a thousand years,
and I still don't know if I am a falcon, or a storm,
or a great song. — Rainer Maria Rilke*

Born in 1943 in Ventspils, Latvia, **Imant Raminsh** came to Canada in 1948. After completing an ARCT diploma in violin at the Royal Conservatory of Toronto and a Bachelor of Music program at the University of Toronto, he spent two years at the Akademie "Mozarteum" in Salzburg, Austria, studying composition, fugue, violin and conducting, and playing in the professional Camerata Academica orchestra.

Mr. Raminsh is the founding conductor of the Prince George Symphony, the Youth Symphony of the Okanagan, NOVA Children's Choir, and AURA Chamber Choir. His compositions have been performed on six continents by such ensembles as the Vancouver, Edmonton, Hamilton, Toronto, Okanagan, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick Symphonies, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Tafelmusik Baroque Chamber Choir, the Tokyo Philharmonic Chamber Choir, the Stockholm Chamber Choir, the Finnish Radio Chamber Choir, Ave Sol (Latvian Chamber Choir), and many others. His music has been heard in such world-renowned halls as Carnegie Hall (New York), Tchaikovsky Hall (Moscow), the Orpheum (Vancouver), Canterbury Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Notre Dame (Paris) and Santa Maria del'Fiore (Florence).

Commissioned by Chamber Music Kelowna for the Borealis String Quartet, the **String Quartet No. 1, "A Falcon, A Storm, or A Great Song,"** was written in 2004. The work received its motivation from the tragic death of David Mardon, a chamber music enthusiast from the Okanagan region of British Columbia. The work opens with a lonely theme stated by the viola and then repeated individually by the violins in the *Introduction*, growing in intensity before leading into the dramatic *con brio* first movement. This movement has an immediate sense of foreboding and dramatic tension with rhythmic drive and pulse. The movement finishes with a noble conclusion and is followed by a beautiful and haunting *Elegy*. In this very introspective and mournful movement, the melodies are interwoven among the voices of the quartet and each instrument takes a turn to express the main theme. The work concludes with an energetic and rhythmically intricate *Finale* with thematic material bouncing back and forth between the instruments. The work concludes quietly, as though to suggest the material has reached a peaceful resolution returning to a restatement and development of the main theme from the *Introduction*.

— Notes provided by the Borealis String Quartet

Selection of Taiwanese Folk Songs

— Arranged by Zhe-I Lee

This "suite" of Taiwanese folk songs, arranged by Zhe-I Lee, is a collection of popular melodies, each with its own unique character and folk-like charm. Vignettes portray scenes in front of temples, beautiful lullabies sung by loving mothers, depict the excitement of steam trains, and sorrowful love songs. These folk songs capture the intimacy and spirit of the Taiwanese culture.

Sky Shower portrays a young girl walking in the rain with her large hat in the countryside thinking of her lover. It has a rural feel that expresses many different characters.

Taiwanese Lullaby is the most famous folk song in Taiwan and tells of the love from mother to child.

Temple Square is a vignette of scenes in front of a Taiwanese temple. The square is a place where people of all ages come and congregate.

Heartbroken Flower is a beautiful but mournful song written after the composer learned his young daughter had passed away while he was away.

The Hope of Spring Breezes reflects the innocent love of a young girl expressing her feelings as she imagines and recollects the one she loves.

Diu-Diu-Dong (Train Song) is an exciting depiction of a steam train of olden days.

— Notes provided by the Borealis String Quartet

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) **Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81**

Dvořák composed his first piano quintet (*A Major, Op. 5*) in 1872, but, unhappy with the results, destroyed the score shortly after its premiere later that year. Some fifteen years went by and Dvořák reconsidered his rash act. He retrieved a friend's copy of the music and made extensive revisions. Still not satisfied, he decided not to submit it for publication after all. Instead, he wrote the completely new ***Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81***, which is now one of the three acknowledged masterpieces in the form; the others are by Schumann and Brahms.

By 1887 Dvořák had achieved acclaim and acceptance for his nationalistic music, having passed through a few years of crisis in the early 1880's, a time when he was torn between his desire to continue incorporating national musical elements into his compositions and the urging of Brahms and other friends to live in Vienna and devote himself to the creation of operas in German. As part of his renewed devotion to the Bohemian folk idiom, Dvořák composed the piano quintet, the E-flat piano quartet, and the "Dumky" Trio, works that have come to epitomize the composer's nationalistic style.

Fresh and lovely, gleaming with bright melodies, glowing harmonies, and piquant rhythms, the quintet opens with a wonderfully lyrical theme in the cello. Dvořák immediately puts the melody through a succession of transformations before the viola introduces the second subject, less cantabile than the first, and with a slight tinge of sadness. Here, too, Dvořák varies the melody at once, changing its serious character to one of increasing jubilation. After a full development of the two subjects, Dvořák has a free recapitulation that is much shorter than the exposition.

The *Dumka* is modeled on an old folk-ballad form, with repetitions of a sober, pensive melody separated by fast, happy interludes. It can be diagrammed as A-B-A-C-A-B-A. The A section consists of the refrain (piano) and variations on the melancholy principal theme (viola); B is a contrasting melody, fast and sunny, shared by both violins and the piano. After the return of A, the quick and vigorous C section, which is derived from the opening refrain, is announced by the viola. The overall elegiac tone, alternating with abrupt changes in mood and tempo, readily conveys the spirit of the Slavonic folk ballads that were Dvořák's source of inspiration.

Although Dvořák parenthetically adds *Furiant* after the title, *Scherzo*, this movement lacks some of the customary characteristics of the folk-dance form. It sounds rather like a fast waltz, with a slow middle section that is really a nostalgic reminder of the *Scherzo* section and a shortened repeat of the first part in conclusion.

The *Finale* is a high-spirited, lightsome cap to the entire quintet. Combining the vigor of a peasant dance with the playful badinage of a humorous folk song, the entire movement, including the fugal section in the development and chorale in the coda, coruscated brilliantly throughout.

Dvořák composed the quintet from August 18 to October 8, 1887, and it was first heard in Prague on January 6, 1888.