

# Organ Vesper Series

With support from the Tom and Mary Jetton Charitable Fund  
Through the Omaha Community Foundation  
and  
The Lied Center for the Performing Arts  
ARTS ACROSS NEBRASKA

Presents

## The Chiara String Quartet

Rebecca Fischer, Julie Yoon, violins  
Jonah Sirota, viola Gregory Beaver, cello

Sunday, April 27, 2008

3:00 pm

### Program

String Quartet No. 16 in E flat, K. 428 W.A. Mozart  
Allegro non troppo  
Andante con moto  
Menuetto e trio  
Allegro vivace

String Quartet No. 1 in B minor, Op. 50 Sergei Prokofiev  
Allegro  
Andante molto  
Andante

### INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 131 Ludwig Van Beethoven  
Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo  
Allegro molto vivace  
Allegro moderato  
Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile — Più mosso —  
Andante moderato e lusinghiero — Adagio — Allegretto  
— Adagio, ma non troppo e semplice — Allegretto  
Presto  
Adagio quasi un poco andante  
Allegro

www.organvesper.com



**The Chiara Quartet** (Rebecca Fischer, Julie Yoon violin; Jonah Sirota, viola; Gregory Beaver, cello) has forged a new path for the string quartet medium. In the concert hall and in intimate galleries and clubs, the Chiara embraces a “no-holdsbarred” approach (*The Strad*). The group presents exhilarating contemporary works—through their club tours and New Voice Singles recordings—to a growing circle of newcomers and committed chamber music fans alike, while exploring more established repertoire with fresh ears. The Chiara Quartet has been praised for a range that encompasses “glowing warmth to hard-edged acerbity” (*The New York Times*), and for possessing a “potent collective force” (*Strings Magazine*).

The Chiara Quartet was recently named the Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University, a post they will begin in the fall of 2008, in addition to their ongoing artist residency at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Recently awarded with the Guarneri Quartet Residency Award for artistic excellence by Chamber Music America, the Quartet’s other honors include a top prize at the Paolo Borciani International Competition, winning the Astral Artistic Services National Audition, and winning First Prize at the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. In addition to performing in concert halls such as Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, the American Academy in Rome, Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center, and Harris Hall in Aspen, Colorado, the Chiara devotes much of its performance season to reaching new audiences through concerts in non-classical venues.

The Quartet has performed at Caffè Vivaldi in New York’s West Village, Kansas City’s The Brick, Houston’s Mucky Duck, Lincoln’s The Chatterbox, Wichita’s The Artichoke, and Chicago’s The Hideout, among many others. The Chiara Quartet’s recent special programs include Mestizaje: Harmony of Differences, which they premiered at New York’s Merkin Hall in January 2007. The program features composers whose music spans multiple cultures, including Gabriela Lena Frank, Zhou Long, Béla Bartók, and Osvaldo Golijov.

### Program Notes

String Quartet in E Flat Major, K. 428 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

This quartet is one of a group of six “Haydn” quartets Mozart composed between December of 1782 and January, 1785. They were written with express purpose of honoring his older contemporary, of whom Mozart said, “I have learned from Haydn how to write quartets.”

The inventive changes Mozart was now to bring to quartet writing were many and varied, and show themselves at the beginning of the opening *Allegro* movement. We hear a melody, played by all four instruments in unison, without harmony, and not quite definitely in the proper key. The key is then established with other material, and the opening phrase now returns with a harmonization that is rich and strikingly unexpected. A second theme, heard in the first violin and viola, is the main occupation of a brief development section. In the recapitulation, the principal theme continues to be developed. A coda is lacking.

The Andante is most notable for its chromatic harmony and its use of sonata form. The development contains a theme that has been compared to a famous motif from Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*. The harmony of the movement, with its use of suspensions, at times creates a poignant atmosphere.

The *Menuetto* is strongly rhythmic, but the reflective nature of the earlier move-

ments returns in its trio. The image of Haydn emerges in the buoyant and sprightly rondo of the finale (*Allegro vivace*). Jaunty tunes are interrupted by sudden silences, there are abrupt contrasts of loud and soft, and all is carried forward with a Haydnesque stoutness, albeit with interludes of a more lyrical character.

String Quartet in C Sharp Minor, Opus 131 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

One of a group of six sometimes called his “Last Quartets,” this work was begun by Beethoven late in 1825 and given to his publisher on July 12, 1826. Attention has been called to thematic relationship between this quartet and the quartets opera 130, 132, and 133. Alec Robertson has said of Opus 131, “The C sharp minor is the most original and the most consistently sublime of these quartets. This music floods the mind with its beauty.” Beethoven’s penchant for breaking with tradition confronts us immediately. The work consists of seven movements, to be played without pause, and lasting nearly forty minutes.

The opening *Adagio* is begun by the first violin with a theme that is intently serious, treated in fugal style. The second movement is a marked contrast, bright and vigorous, with two themes that are worked out before returning. The third movement is but eleven measures long, and resembles a recitative in its rhythmic freedom. What follows is an *Andante* of more extended dimensions. A theme of two eight-measure sections, each repeated, is followed by seven variations. Variation IV resembles the theme closely, and in variation V all the instruments begin with double stops. Variation VII is incomplete and recalls recitative style. A coda is in country-dance style and features the use of trills. At its close, virtuoso technique is required.

The fifth movement, *Presto*, is the equivalent of a *Scherzo* movement, begun in the lower register in the cello and assuming a dance-like character, at times evincing a more legato style. The final return of the first theme is to be played *sul ponticello* (high on the string) producing an eerie metallic timbre. The sixth movement (*Adagio*) is twenty-eight measures long, and has a rather pessimistic theme, introduced by the viola.

The last movement begins with two wrathful phrases in unison before the main theme, in dotted rhythms, appears. A contrasting melody related to the opening fugue appears, before a second theme that gradually descends, then leaps, is heard. Wagner said of this movement: “This is . . . fierce pleasure, agony, ecstasy of love, joy, anger, passion, and suffering: lighting flashes and thunder rolls.”

String Quartet No. 1 in B Minor, Opus 50 Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

For fifteen years (1918-1933), Prokofiev exiled himself from Russia, continuing his tours as concert pianist and his composing. In 1930, while touring the United States, he was commissioned to write this work by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation of the Library of Congress in Washington.

The quartet has only three movements. Moreover, the lengthy, intense *Andante* with which it closes was considered by the composer to be the pinnacle of the work’s accomplishment, rather the reverse of traditional writing for this medium. The first movement is begun by the first violin, in the impertinent, tonality-twisting style for which Prokofiev is famous, but a second theme is serious and more in keeping with the overall mood of the work. There is a third, march-like theme before a brief development and recapitulation.

Few scherzo movements begin with a slow introduction, but that is the case with the second movement. The first theme is forward-moving and forceful in nature. Some loud *pizzicati* lead to the second theme, presented in a high register by the cello, which maintains the high-energy atmosphere. There is a sudden stop and a shortened return of the foregoing material. There are some quiet moments before a driving close. The lengthy (nine and one-half minute) *Andante* is pervaded by fervor and emotional depth, powerfully portrayed.

Commentators have described the material as Russian in style, and rhapsodic in treatment, with an ending that presents an atmosphere of hope deferred, but

which also expresses tenacity and resolution .

(Notes by H. Bruce Lobaugh)

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Programs are developed in partnership with community leaders, TierOne Bank Foundation, the Friends of Lied, the University of Nebraska's Cooperative Extension Service, and the artists. Mini-tours and community based projects extend the outreach of Lied artists to all areas of the state. The Lied Center thanks TierOne Bank Foundation for funding Arts Across Nebraska.



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