

Sunday, February 23, 2014, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Calder Quartet

Benjamin Jacobson, *violin*
Andrew Bulbrook, *violin*
Jonathan Moerschel, *viola*
Eric Byers, *cello*

with

Yulia Van Doren, *soprano*

PROGRAM

Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) String Quartet No. 2 in F-sharp minor,
Op. 10 (1908)

Mäßig
Sehr rasch
“Litanei,” langsam
“Entrückung,” sehr langsam

Yulia Van Doren, *soprano*

Jörg Widmann (b.1973) String Quartet No. 3, “Jagdquartett” (2003)

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810,
“Der Tod und das Mädchen” (1824)

Allegro
Andante con moto
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Presto

Cal Performances' 2013–2014 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

SONGS OF DEATH AND TRANSCENDENCE

It was the pestilence of 1579 that got dear old Augustin. Or so it seemed. Actually Vienna's beloved ballad singer was stone drunk when he was mistaken for a plague victim and tossed into an open pit. When he awoke the next morning he had a song to sing: "Augustin, Augustin, lie down in your grave! O, you dear Augustin, it's all over!" It's a catchy tune and when it popped up uninvited in the second movement of Schoenberg's second string quartet the audience took note. Earlier Schoenberg premières had provoked protests but the uproar over this one—it was December 21, 1908—seemed to confirm Augustin's dire prognostication: *Alles ist hin*, this really is the end.

At a century's remove it may be difficult to understand the fuss. The quartet is relatively short and compared to its immediate predecessor, its textures and formal layout are both clear and transparent. The impassioned first movement is an abbreviated sonata form, its thematic material concise and memorable. The second movement, a fidgety scherzo, is admittedly more disconcerting. Its stop-and-go nervousness, fragmented texture, and multiplicity of motivic ideas fit uneasily in the scherzo form, as does the sudden appearance of the sweet triviality of Augustin's refrain. But the third movement, which recalls earlier themes and motives, delivers an unprecedented shock: a soprano voice. This setting of Stefan George's *Litanei* ("Litany") does double duty as a series of variations that act as a kind of delayed development section for the truncated opening movement. Most listeners, however, will experience this song as a single arching line reaching up toward a gripping climax with the words "Deaden all yearning, close up the wound! Take all my passion"—here the soloist takes a dramatic downward leap—followed by this hushed appeal: "give me thy joy!" There are unmistakable echoes of *Parsifal*: the agony of Amfortas's wound and Kundry's anguished longing for release.

Release comes in *Entrückung* ("Rapture"), which begins "I feel the breath from another planet" (it is the last of a cycle of poems George wrote following the death of a much

idolized 16-year-old youth, Maximilian Kronberger). Schoenberg's ethereal introduction is so exquisitely inviting that even today many are unaware that this movement marks Schoenberg's own radical leap into atonality—the original velvet revolution. It is doubtful that the first audience had any clue one way or the other because by this point in the evening the music was being drowned out by a phalanx of vociferous rowdies convinced that they were witnessing a catastrophe only slightly less calamitous than that long-ago plague. Most critics were ready to toss the work into a mass grave for failed experiments, but the quartet, like Augustin, proved remarkably resilient and soon found more congenial company in the standard repertory.

Jörg Widmann, noted both as a composer and clarinetist, has already established a significant presence in the repertoire, not least through an astonishing cycle of five single-movement string quartets, of which the *Jagdquartett* ("Hunting Quartet") is the third. This fierce scherzo casts a glance toward Schoenberg and Augustin, but its proximate inspiration is the finale of Schumann's piano suite *Papillons*. What begins as a robust hunting motif, however, is transformed into a manic pursuit in which the quartet itself divides into hunters and the hunted as the upper strings unite against the cello. The theme and its dotted rhythm are gradually fragmented, torn, and shredded by shouts and percussive blows that leave little more than a skeletal carcass: "It is only with effort," the composer writes, "that the mood of exaggerated playfulness can mask the grim seriousness that has suddenly overtaken the piece."

Death is likewise the protagonist in Schubert's *Der Tod und das Mädchen* ("Death and the Maiden"), but here he triumphs through seduction, not the mob brutality of the hunt. Composed in 1817, this song is a miniature through-composed drama that uses a gentle dactylic rhythm—long, short, short—to guide us to a transcendent D major. There is no reason to assume that quoting a song in an instrumental work imposes an interpretive program, but in this case the quartet's austerity and D minor tonality, a key Schubert associated

with death, is in full accord with the text's narrative trajectory.

The Allegro opens with an implacable fanfare in bold octaves and adamant triplets. It is a recurring rhetorical gesture, a kind of Beethovenian scowl that frames the movement's agitated contrapuntal filigree in which every motive is held to full account. Even the lyric second subject is unsettled by an undercurrent of restless triplets derived from the opening bars. It is 1824 and Schubert has a wary eye on his most famous contemporary, the preeminent master of the quartet genre.

The theme of the G minor Andante is death, or rather the piano accompaniment to his entreaty in *Death and the Maiden*. The music is chaste, hymn-like, little more than a series of chord progressions, almost stationary but animated by that familiar dactylic rhythm. With a bit of imagination one might hear in the variations that follow the five stages of grief: a sobbing lament, an imploring cello aria, an outburst of anger, a touch of

sentimental nostalgia (here Schubert restores a degree of maidenly poise to death's rhythmic ostinato), and an extended finale, whose coda attains a level of contemplative peace.

The Scherzo that follows (based on the sixth of Schubert's Twelve German Dances, D. 790) returns us to d minor with a motive that anticipates the grim forges of Nibelheim. A grace-note gesture, with all the charm of a whiplash, carries over into the no-nonsense finale, a headlong 6/8 *saltarello*, whose second theme—*con forza*—features three upbeat eighth notes that recall those snarly triplets from the first movement. Back, too, are the forthright octaves and muscular textures that announced from the outset Schubert's determination to stake his claim to Vienna's Olympian heights. This he does, but on his own terms, combining rigor with grace and wresting transcendence from death.

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Stefan George (1868–1933)

Litanei

Tief ist die trauer,
die mich umdüstert,
Ein tret ich wieder,
Herr! in dein haus...

Lang war die reise,
matt sind die glieder,
Leer sind die schreine,
voll nur die qual.

Durstende zunge
darbt nach dem weine.
Hart war gestritten,
starr ist mein arm.

Gönne die ruhe
schwankenden schritten,
Hungrigem gaume
bröckle dein brot!

Schwach ist mein atem
rufend dem traume,
Hohl sind die hände,
fiebernd der mund.

Leih deine kühle,
lösche die brände,
Tilge das hoffen,
sende das licht!

Gluten im herzen
lodern noch offen,
Innerst im grunde
wacht noch ein schrei...

Töte das sehnen,
schliesse die wunde!
Nimm mir die Liebe,
gib mir dein glück!

Litany

Deep is the sorrow,
which darkens about me,
I enter again,
Lord! into thine house...

Long was the journey,
weary the limbs,
Empty the coffers,
full but the pain.

Thirsting tongue
starves for the wine.
Harsh was the fighting,
numb is my arm.

Grant then thy peace
to faltering footsteps,
For the hungry palate,
break now thy bread!

Weak is my breathing
calling the dream,
Hollow the hands,
fevered the mouth.

Lend thy coolness,
quench the fires,
Extinguish all hoping,
send me the light!

Fires in the heart
still are ablaze,
Deep within me,
yet lingers a cry...

Deaden all yearning,
close up the wound!
Take all my passion,
give me thy joy!

George
Entrückung

Ich fühle luft von anderem planeten.
Mir blassen durch das dunkel die gesichter,
Die freundlich eben noch sich zu mir drehen.

Und bäum und wege die ich liebte fahlen
Dass ich sie kaum mehr kenne und du
lichter
Geliebter schatten—rufer meiner qualen—
Bist nun erloschen ganz in tiefern gluten
Um nach dem taumel streitenden getobes
Mit einem frommen schauer anzumuten.

Ich löse mich in tönen, kreisend, webend,
Ungründigen danks und unbenamten lobes
Dem grossen atem wunschlos mich ergebend.

Mich überfährt ein ungestümes wehen
Im rausch der weihe wo inbrünstige schreie

In staub geworfner beterrinnen flehen:

Dann seh ich wie duftige nebel lüpfen
In einer sonnerfüllten klaren freie
Die nur umfängt auf fernsten bergess-
chlüpfen.

Der boden schüttert weiss und weich wie
molke...

Ich steige über schluchten ungeheuer.
Ich fühle wie ich über letzter wolke

In einem meer kristallinen glanzes schwimme—
Ich bin ein funke nur vom heiligen feuer,
Ich bin ein dröhnen nur der heiligen stimme.

Rapture

I feel the breath from another planet.
In the darkness pale the faces
Which just were kindly turned toward me.

And trees and pathways which I loved fade
That I hardly know them still—and thou
luminous
Belovèd shade—summoner of my torments—
Art now expired in deeper fires
To seem, after the frenzied battling clamor,
Like awed devotion.

I dissolve myself in sound, circling, weaving,
In fathomless gratitude and nameless praise
To the great breath wishlessly surrendering.

Fierce currents come over me
In the ecstasy of consecration, where fervent
cries
Of supplicants, thrown onto the dust, beseech:

Then I see how fragrant mists lift up
In a sun-filled limpid space,
Lingering only on remotest mountain
reaches.

The ground trembles, white and soft as
whey...

I stride across vast chasms.
I feel how above a final cloud

In a sea of crystal radiance I float—
I am but a spark of the sacred fire,
I am but a droning of the holy voice

Translations by Philipp O. Naegele
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Autumn de Wilde

The **Calder Quartet**—Benjamin Jacobson and Andrew Bulbrook, violins; Jonathan Moerschel, viola; and Eric Byers, cello—called “outstanding” and “superb” by *The New York Times*, performs a broad range of repertoire at an exceptional level, always striving to channel and fulfill the composer’s vision. Already the choice of many leading composers to perform their works—including Christopher Rouse, Terry Riley, and Thomas Adès—the group’s distinctive approach is exemplified by a musical curiosity brought to everything they perform, whether it’s Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, or sold-out rock shows with bands like The National or The Airborne Toxic Event. Known for the discovery, commissioning, recording, and mentoring of some of today’s best emerging composers (over 25 commissioned works to date), the group continues to work and collaborate with artists across musical genres, spanning the ranges of the classical and contemporary music world, as well as rock, and visual arts; and in venues ranging from art galleries and rock clubs to Carnegie and Walt Disney concert halls. Inspired by innovative American artist Alexander Calder, the Calder Quartet’s desire to bring immediacy and context to the works they perform creates an artfully crafted musical experience.

The 2013–2014 season sees débuts for the Calder Quartet at New York’s Mostly Mozart Festival, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (performing a Bartók cycle with a signature

Calder twist), the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and London’s Wigmore Hall. The group premieres a new work by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang with Los Angeles Master Chorale. Other highlights include returns to Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, Cal Performances, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s 2014 Minimalist Jukebox. Also this season, recordings from the group’s Eclectic Currents Project—a Kickstarter-funded commissioning project with the aim of recording and releasing twelve new quartets from twelve young composers—will be released.

In 2012–2013 the Calder Quartet continued an impressive run of collaborations and commissions with concerts across the globe. In the spring of 2013, the quartet performed Terry Riley’s *The Sands* with the Cleveland Orchestra. The quartet debuted at Vancouver’s Music on Main/Modulus Festival, opened both the Chamber Series and Parallels Series at Amherst College, and premiered three new works at Los Angeles’ Getty Museum. The group continued its regular concerts with ArtPower UC San Diego, returned to Australia with an appearance at the Adelaide Festival (with Iva Bittova), and made its London début at the 2013 Barbican Festival. The group has also maintained an active recording schedule. The quartet with pianist Gloria Cheng recorded works by Messaien and Saariaho for the Harmonia Mundi release entitled *The Edge of Light*. They also teamed with pianist Anne-Marie McDermott to record Mozart concertos for Bridge Records.

Other recent highlights include a première of a new clarinet quintet by Aaron Jay Kernis at La Jolla Music Society SummerFest; and performances at the Laguna Beach Festival alongside Joshua Bell and Edgar Meyer, and at Stanford Lively Arts and Le Poisson Rouge in New York with Grammy Award-winning pianist Gloria Cheng. The quartet debuted at the Edinburgh International Festival (broadcast on BBC 3), and made its Austrian début at the Esterházy Palace. They have performed at top halls and festivals across the globe, including Carnegie Hall, Washington Performing Arts Society, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the

Cleveland Museum of Art, the Melbourne Festival, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Big Ears Festival in Knoxville, New Haven's International Festival of Arts and Ideas, and the Hollywood Bowl.

The Calder Quartet has toured across North America with So Percussion and with rockers Andrew W.K. and The Airborne Toxic Event. The quartet has been featured on KCRW's *Morning Becomes Eclectic*, *Late Show with David Letterman*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien*, *Late Night with Jimmy Kimmel*, and *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*.

The group has longstanding relationships with composers Terry Riley, Christopher Rouse, and Thomas Adès. The Calder Quartet first met Riley when they shared a concert as part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Minimalist Jukebox Festival in 2006. They subsequently released a limited edition vinyl release of Riley's Trio and Quartet in commemoration of the composer's 75th birthday. The Calder is the first quartet in two decades to have a work written for them by composer Christopher Rouse. An album of works by Rouse, called *Transfiguration*, was released in 2010. After featuring the music of Thomas Adès on their first recording in 2008 (along with Mozart and Ravel), the group worked directly with the composer on a performance of *Arcadiana* as part of the Green Umbrella Series at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. The relationship evolved into collaborating on concerts together at the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra's Konserthuset in 2009, the Melbourne Festival in 2010, and at Cal Performances in 2011. Of the Stockholm performance, *The Guardian* said, "the Calder Quartet played the most insightful and moving performance of Thomas Adès's *Arcadiana* I've ever heard."

In 2011 the Calder Quartet launched a nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering its efforts in commissioning, presenting, recording, and education. The nonprofit has co-commissioned works with the Getty Museum, Segerstrom Center for the Arts, and the Barbican Centre; funded the recording of twelve string quartets commissioned for the Calder Quartet by emerging composers; and made possible visits to Inner City Arts and

Chinatown's Castelar Elementary as part of LA's Best.

The Calder Quartet formed at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music and continued studies at the Colburn Conservatory of Music with Ronald Leonard, and at the Juilliard School, where it received the artist diploma in chamber music studies as the Juilliard Graduate Resident String Quartet. The quartet regularly conducts master classes and has been featured in this capacity at the Colburn School (where the quartet was in residence for three years), the Juilliard School, the Cleveland Institute of Music, University of Cincinnati College Conservatory, and USC Thornton School of Music.



Andrew Schaff

Recognized by *Opera Magazine* as "a star-to-be," young Russian-American soprano **Yulia Van Doren** recently made her debut with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in a performance that was acclaimed as "[t]his year's big revelation...a ravishing lyric voice and an ease with vocal ornamentation that turned her into an enchanted songbird" (*Toronto Star*).

Particularly in love with the collaborative process of bringing to life repertoire off the beaten path, recent highlights include creating the lead female role in the world premiere of Shostakovich's *Orango* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, directed by Peter Sellars and released on Deutsche Grammophon; two Grammy-nominated opera recordings with the Boston Early Music Festival; the modern revival of Monsigny's opera *Le Roi et le fermier* at Opéra Royal de Versailles, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center (recorded for Naxos); and a Carnegie Hall debut, premiering a commissioned work by composer Angel Lam; a leading role in Scarlatti's *Tigrane* at Opéra de Nice; and Nielsen's *Symphony No. 3* with the American Symphony Orchestra, released on the ASO label. Dawn Upshaw is an important mentor to Ms. Van Doren, and they recently performed together with the City of London Sinfonia in nationally televised performances at the Cartagena International Music Festival.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Especially recognized for her work in the Baroque repertoire, her other recent appearances include the Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, and Tanglewood festivals (Handel's *Orlando* with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra); Kennedy Center (Charpentier's *Actéon* with Opera Lafayette) Macao International Music Festival (Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin); Houston and Baltimore symphonies (*Messiah*); Milwaukee Symphony (Pergolesi and Handel); and her Concertgebouw début with Radio Kamer Filharmonie as the title role in *Acis and Galatea*. A frequent collaborator of choreographer Mark Morris, recent projects include multiple tours and international performances as Belinda in his iconic version of *Dido and Aeneas*, St. Teresa in Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and featured soprano of the 2013 Ojai Music Festival and Ojai North! (curated by Mr. Morris). This past season witnessed her first Mendelssohn *Elijah* (Nashville Symphony) and Mahler Symphony No. 4 (Pasadena Symphony).

Highlights of her 2012–2013 season included appearances at the Kennedy Center

(*Actéon* with Opera Lafayette); Music of the Baroque (Bach's *St. John Passion* with Jane Glover); Phoenix Symphony (*Messiah* with Michael Christie); and Bard Music Festival (recital with Kent Tritle). She traveled twice to the Netherlands for performances with the Radio Kamer Filharmonie, including her Concertgebouw début in broadcast performances as the title role in *Acis and Galatea*. Her acclaimed symphonic débuts that season included the Toronto Symphony (*Messiah*), Baltimore Symphony (*Messiah*), Milwaukee Symphony (Pergolesi and Handel), and Albany Symphony (Bach's *Magnificat*).

In the current season, she appears in two different programs with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, makes her débuts with the Philadelphia Orchestra (Handel), the Columbus Symphony (Mozart), and the Oregon Bach Festival (Bach and Monteverdi); and returns to the Toronto Symphony for a program of opera arias and duets. In addition, she joins the Calder Quartet at Cal Performances in performances of Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 2.