



Sunday, November 23, 2014, 3pm  
Hertz Hall

## St. Lawrence String Quartet

Geoff Nuttall *violin*  
Mark Fewer *violin*  
Lesley Robertson *viola*  
Christopher Costanza *cello*

### PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) String Quartet No. 62 in C major, Op. 76, No. 3  
(Hob.III:77), “Emperor” (1797)

- I. Allegro
- II. Poco adagio cantabile
- III. Menuet. Allegro — Trio
- IV. Finale. Presto

Osvaldo Golijov (b. 1960) Qohelet (2011)

*Qohelet was composed for the St. Lawrence String Quartet and was co-commissioned by Carnegie Hall and Stanford Lively Arts, Stanford University, with the generous support of Kathryn Gould.*

### INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor,  
Op. 131 (1825–1826)

- I. Adagio, ma non troppo e molto espressivo
- II. Allegro, molto vivace
- III. Allegro moderato
- IV. Andante, ma non troppo e molto cantabile
- V. Presto
- VI. Adagio, quasi un poco andante
- VII. Allegro

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**Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)**  
**String Quartet No. 62 in C major, Op. 76,**  
**No. 3, (Hob.III:77), “Emperor” (1797)**

In 1796, the city of Vienna was under threat of invasion from Napoleon. French troops led by Napoleon were advancing from the Po valley into Styria. Other troops were advancing from the East and both were closing in on Vienna in a pincer-like move. Vienna was in a state of emergency and a civilian militia had been mobilized to protect the city. Following a state commission, Haydn, a strong nationalist, contributed a beautiful, heartfelt national song to the cause. *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser* (“God Protect Emperor Franz”) echoes the patriotism of the British *God Save the King*. It was a bold challenge to the *Marseillaise* and was instantly adopted as the Austrian national anthem. In fact, so universal was the appeal of Haydn’s melody that it was later to be used as the “Brotherhood” anthem of Freemasonry, as the German national anthem *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, and even as the Protestant hymns *Praise the Lord! Ye heavens, adore him* and *Glorious things of Thee are spoken*.

The slow movement of the Op. 76, No. 3, String Quartet is a set of variations on this celebrated, dignified tune. Hence the quartet’s nickname “Emperor,” or “Kaiser.” Each instrument in turn introduces the solemn melody, while the other three instruments weave an increasingly intricate web around it. In the early 1900s, an English music critic, Cecil Gray, commented: “One cannot imagine the *Marseillaise* or any other anthem serving as the thematic basis of a movement of a string quartet. It inhabits all three worlds—the world of religion, the world of national politics, and the world of pure art. It is perhaps true to say that it is the greatest tune ever written.”

Haydn goes further than basing his slow movement on this famous melody. He structures the entire work around the slow movement, making it the focal point of the quartet. The melody also finds its way into the first

movement. Its five-note theme derives from the German title of Haydn’s patriotic song: G (*Gott*)–E (*erhalte*)–F (*Franz*)–D (*den*)–C (*Kaiser*). This cryptic message would have been recognized in Haydn’s day as one of the many “learned” effects he used in his late quartets, complementing such popular elements as the lively country dance he fashions out of the same notes over a viola and cello drone in the central development section. The intensity and dignity of the four slow movement variations is set into relief by the forthright minuet. The finale, an intense, powerful movement, then completes the strong architectural structure that Haydn has built.

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**Osvaldo Golijov (b. 1960)**  
**Qohelet (2011)**

*Qohelet* is inspired by some of the teachings and poetic images in *Ecclesiastes*. I thought that this short book of experience would balance in some way the youthful innocence of *Yiddishbbuk*, which brought us (me?) together with the St. Lawrence String Quartet 20 years ago.

The first movement of the work flows like two slow river currents, perhaps memory and present. The merging and bifurcations of these currents are punctuated by cradling bells: reflection rather than action.

The second movement is a meditation on motion and melancholy. Those seemingly contradictory states actually feed each other here: a lyrical line emerges in the first violin from a gritty, ever more propulsive ride in the other instruments. The first violin finally lifts in flight and the movement ends suspended in midair, like the sword of Don Quijote at the end of Chapter VIII in that book.

*Osvaldo Golijov*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)  
 String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor,  
 Op. 131 (1825–1826)

This, the greatest of Beethoven's quartets, was the music that the gravely ill Franz Schubert asked to be played five days before his death. More than any other work, it epitomizes the profundity, inwardness, idiosyncrasy and timelessness of Beethoven's late compositions. When he sent the score to his publisher, Beethoven rather flippantly scribbled an extraordinary note in the margin. "Patched together from pieces filched from here and there," he declared in one of the biggest understatements of all time. Indeed, this quartet does contain themes and ideas that he worked with in other quartets he had written. But what ideas! What themes! And what working-out of their potential he reveals in its 40-minute expanse. Beethoven was less ambiguous in his true feelings for the work when he spoke to a violinist friend, Karl Holz. "My mind has been struck by some good ideas that I want to exploit," he said. "As for imagination, thank God, it abounds more than ever."

Throughout his later works, Beethoven tended less and less to cast his music in the traditional three or four movements. Op. 131 contains seven. Unusually for Beethoven, it begins with a slow movement, a calm yet gently forceful fugue that Wagner said "floats over the sorrows of the world." It gradually builds to its full intensity and prepares the listener for the scale and depth of what is to follow. The movement appears to explore every aspect of a four-note theme: G-sharp, B-sharp, C-sharp, A. But then these four notes go on to provide the thematic underpinning of the entire quartet. They are, moreover, the recurring motto theme of two other late string quartets, Opp. 130 and 132, which Beethoven had already completed, and, additionally, the very bedrock of the *Grosse Fuge*.

A chromatic shift upwards leads to the second movement. It forms a bright and optimistic balance to the first, tempered by frequent

hesitations. Two sharp chords herald a brief, recitative-like third movement, which is just eleven measures long. The slow movement follows without break. This is the emotional center of gravity of the entire quartet. It begins with another gentle theme marked *dolce* (sweetly) that Wagner called the "incarnation of innocence." The scale of the movement is huge: a theme with six variations and a coda. Contrast again follows with the *Presto*, a brilliant scherzo.

With its calm, ethereal mood, the brief *Adagio* enters another world. It serves as an introduction to the extended movement that follows. This final *Allegro* is the only movement written in sonata form. The profusion of themes, however, and the power of their utterance strain at the boundaries of the edifice. Wagner thought that the movement expressed "the fury of the world's dance—fierce pleasure, agony, ecstasy of love, joy, anger, passion and suffering, lightning flashes and thunder rolls."

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**E**STABLISHED in 1989, the **St. Lawrence String Quartet** (Geoff Nutall and Mark Fewer, *violins*, Lesley Robertson, *viola*; and Christopher Costanza, *cello*) has developed an undisputed reputation as a truly world-class chamber ensemble. The Quartet performs more than 120 concerts annually worldwide and calls Stanford University home, where the group is Ensemble in Residence.

The SLSQ continues to build its reputation for imaginative and spontaneous music-making, through an energetic commitment to the great established quartet literature as well as the championing of new works by such composers as John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Ezequiel Viñao, and Jonathan Berger.

The SLSQ maintains a busy touring schedule. The Quartet's 2014–2015 season includes a three-concert series at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., during which the Quartet will play Stradivari instruments from the library's prized collection. In January 2015, the SLSQ will premiere a string quartet by John Adams—his third work composed for

the group—at Stanford. The Quartet will also perform and give master classes around North America, with visits to Houston, Toronto, Philadelphia, Oberlin, Durham, and many other cities. During the summer season, the SLSQ is proud to continue its long association with the Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina.

Since 1998, the SLSQ has held the position of Ensemble in Residence at Stanford University, which includes working with music students as well as extensive collaborations with other faculty and departments using music to explore myriad topics. Recent collaborations have involved the School of Medicine, the School of Education, and the Law School. In addition to their appointment at Stanford, the SLSQ are visiting artists at the University of Toronto. The foursome's passion for opening up musical arenas to players and listeners alike is evident in their annual summer chamber music seminar at Stanford and their many forays into the depths of musical meaning with preeminent music educator Robert Kapilow.

Lesley Robertson and Geoff Nuttall are founding members of the group and hail from Edmonton, Alberta, and London, Ontario, respectively. Christopher Costanza is from Utica, New York, and joined the group in 2003. Mark Fewer, a native of Newfoundland, begins his first season with the quartet in 2014, succeeding violinist Scott St. John. All four members of the Quartet live and teach at Stanford, in the Bay Area of California.

The St. Lawrence String Quartet appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists ([www.davidroweartists.com](http://www.davidroweartists.com)). St. Lawrence String recordings can be heard on EMI Classics and ArtistShare ([www.artistshare.com](http://www.artistshare.com)). To learn more, visit [www.slsq.com](http://www.slsq.com).