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Faculty recital series: Muir String Quartet, February 1, 2008

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
College of Fine Arts School of Music

MUIR STRING QUARTET

in residence at Boston University

PETER ZAZOFSKY violin

LUCIA LIN violin

STEVEN ANSELL viola

MICHAEL REYNOLDS cello

with EDWIN BARKER double bass

Friday, February 1st, 2008 at 6:00pm

CFA Concert Hall

855 Commonwealth Avenue

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- Phyllis Curtin, Dean *Emerita*
Boston University College of Fine Arts



Friday, February, 1st, 2008 at 6:00pm
CFA Concert Hall

FACULTY RECITAL SERIES
MUIR STRING QUARTET
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PETER ZAZOFSKY violin
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STEVEN ANSELL viola
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FELIX
MENDELSSOHN
(1809–1847)

Quartet in A Minor, op. 13

Adagio—Allegro vivace
Adagio non lento
Intermezzo, Allegretto con moto—Allegro di
molto
Presto

ANTONIN DVORÁK
(1841–1904)

Bass Quintet in G Major, op. 77

Allegro con fuoco
Scherzo, Allegro vivace
Poco andante
Finale, Allegro assai

PROGRAM NOTES

Much has been written about the phenomenal talent of young Felix Mendelssohn, creator of songs, sonatas, cantatas, a symphony, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and the Octet, all before his seventeenth birthday. As with Mozart, tributes to Mendelssohn's prodigism sometimes trivialize the enormous effort that went into writing these masterpieces. That study is clearly reflected in his Quartet in A Minor, which Mendelssohn wrote in 1827. This is a loving tribute to Beethoven, who died that same year, and in it we find numerous references to the Master's middle and late quartets, which were considered the work of a cranky old man, too deaf and sick to write coherent music. In creating this quartet, eighteen year old Mendelssohn stood in opposition to prominent elders such as his father, Von Weber, and Spohr, who's historical judgement persisted for more than one hundred and fifty years.

To me, the most remarkable aspect is the way in which Mendelssohn established a synergy between Beethoven's strategies and his own artistic sensibility. You are aware of the near quotations, from Op. 59 #1, 74, 95, 130 and most prominently 132, but it all "sounds" like the precocious young composer. We hear the elfin, "Puckish" Scherzo, the classic beauty of his Adagio non Lento, a real Lied Ohne Wort.

As the Motto of his quartet, Mendelssohn does use words, borrowing a song that he had written months earlier — "Frage" — Is it true? The idea comes from Schubert, ("Death and the Maiden") and the cadence of these words mimics Beethoven's own "Muss es ein?" The poem, by Mendelssohn's friend Johann Droyson, asks a lover's question, and Mendelssohn waits until the end of this quartet, and his sunniest harmonies, to answer it.

—Peter Zazofsky

Lied Op. 9 "Frage"

Is it true? Is it true?

that over there in the leafy walkway,

you always wait for me by the vine-draped wall?

And that with the moonlight and the little stars

you consult about me also?

Is it true? Speak!

What I feel, only she grasps -

she who feels with me

and stays ever faithful to me,

eternally faithful.

"Frage" translated from English by Wen-Hsuan Lin

是真實的嗎？是真的嗎？

你總爲我守候

在那林蔭小徑 滿佈藤蔓的牆邊

伴隨夜月星光

你探聽我的一切嗎？

告訴我！這是真的嗎？

我只能感覺她的緊握

那與我一同感受

永遠忠誠的她

永恆不變的忠誠

MUIR STRING QUARTET

The Muir String Quartet, in Residence at Boston University, begins its 29th anniversary this season. It has long been acknowledged as one of the world's most powerful and insightful ensembles, distinguishing itself among audiences and critics with its "exhilarating involvement" (Boston Globe), "impeccable voicing and intonation" (San Francisco Examiner) and "unbridled musicality" (American Record Guide).

Winner of the 1981 Naumberg Chamber Music Award and 1980 Evian International String Quartet Competition, the Muir first appeared on the scene in 1980, and was greeted with rave reviews and an extensive feature in *The New Yorker*. The quartet was also featured on the internationally acclaimed PBS broadcast, *In Performance at the White House*, for President and Mrs. Reagan. Formed in 1979 following graduation from the Curtis Institute of Music, the Muir String Quartet's principal chamber music teachers were Felix Galimir and members of the Guarneri Quartet.

In its commitment to advancing contemporary American music, the Muir Quartet has had commissioned works written for them by such distinguished composers as Joan Tower (*Night Fields*), Sheila Silver (*From Darkness Emerging*), Richard Danielpour (*Shadow Dances* and *Psalms of Sorrow* – featured on CBS Sunday Morning), Richard Wilson (*Third String Quartet*), and Charles Fussell (*Being Music* – based on poetry by Walt Whitman). The quartet also gave the World Premiere performance of the Native American collaborative work, *Circle of Faith*, featured on National Public Radio. Recently premiered works include those by esteemed American composers Richard Danielpour (*Feast of Fools* – for bassoon and string quartet), Lukas Foss (*String Quartet No. 4*), Ezra Laderman (*String Quartets Nos. 9 and 10*), and Joelle Wallach (*String Quartet No. 3*).

The Muir Quartet has been in residence at Boston University's School of Music since 1983, and coaches students of the String Quartet Workshop at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. The Muir has also given master classes at schools nationwide, including the Eastman School of Music, the Curtis Institute, and the Shephard School of Music at Rice University in Houston, Texas. For over a decade, the quartet has taught, coached, and administered the Advanced Quartet Program at the Summit Institute for the Arts and Humanities in Utah, formerly the Snowbird Institute, now in Park City, Utah, where the Muir works in tandem with composer Joan Tower.

In keeping with the quartet's namesake, the great naturalist, explorer and Sierra Club Founder, John Muir, the quartet donates proceeds from its much-touted EcoClassics CDs to a variety of environmental and conservation organizations. Its recording of the Beethoven Quartets (Op. 132 and the Grosse Fugue) on this label received a 1995 Grammy nomination. The most recent EcoClassics release is a mixed repertoire CD with flutist Carol Wincenc and baritone Douglas Webster. The Muir can also be heard on a recording for DDA/Qualiton and EMI, for which it received two Grand Prix du Disque.

EDWIN BARKER double bass

Edwin Barker is recognized as one of the most gifted bassists on the American concert scene. Acknowledged as an accomplished solo and ensemble player, Mr. Barker has concertized in North America, Europe, and the Far East.

Edwin Barker has performed and recorded with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Chamber Players and with Collage, a Boston-based contemporary music ensemble. He is also a frequent guest performer with the Boston Chamber Music Society in Boston's Jordan Hall. Edwin Barker performed the world premiere of James Yannatos' Bass Concerto (which was written especially for him) with Alea III and subsequently with Collage. He was the featured soloist at the New England premiere of Gunther Schuller's Bass Concerto, conducted by the composer, with the Boston Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Barker graduated with honors from the New England Conservatory in 1976, where he studied double bass with Henry Portnoi. That same year, while a member of the Chicago Symphony, he was appointed at age twenty-two to the position of principal bassist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Barker continues to teach and perform internationally with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Chamber Players.

Mr. Barker was invited to inaugurate the One-Hundredth Anniversary Season of the Boston Symphony Orchestra with a solo performance of the Koussevitsky Bass Concerto, a performance the Boston Globe praised as having possessed "everything that makes great artistry - tone, technical equipment, temperament, repose, a keen sense of rhythm, and fine conception." Other solo engagements include appearances at Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, the Festival of Contemporary Music at Tanglewood, Carnegie Recital Hall's "Sweet and Low" series, and recitals at major universities and conferences throughout the world. His other engagements have included solo appearances with the Boston Classical Orchestra as well as with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Boston and in Europe. In July 1995, Mr. Barker was chosen by Maestro Sir Georg Solti to lead the bass section of the United Nations' orchestra "Musicians of the World," an orchestra which comprised prominent musicians from the world's finest orchestras.

Mr. Barker is an Associate Professor at the Boston University College of Fine Arts where he teaches double bass, orchestral techniques, and chamber music. His other major teaching affiliations include the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood Music Center, where he is Chairman of Instrumental and Orchestral Studies, and the National Orchestral Institute at the University of Maryland.

Edwin Barker's solo CD recordings include *Three Sonatas for Double Bass* on Boston Records, James Yannatos' *Variations for Solo Contrabass*, on Albany Records, and the recently released *Concerti for Double Bass*, on GM Recordings, which includes bass concerti by Gunther Schuller and Thodore Antoniou.

Edwin Barker's other double bass teachers have included Peter Mercurio, Richard Steinhilber, Angelo LaMariana, and David Perleman.

Boston University School of Music

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Wednesday, February 6th, 8pm

ALEA III
SCOTT WOOLWEAVER viola
JOHN MCDONALD piano
DEBORAH BOLDIN flute
ELIZABETH ANKER contralto
Works by Antoniou, Bourland, Breschnik, Clark,
Kalogeras, Merryman, Orenstein, and Pinkham
Tsai Performance Center

Friday, February 8th, 8pm

Bach Competition Winners concert
LESLIE LEVI violin
CHEN LIN viola
ZOYA TSVETKOVA violin
MIYUKI YAMAGUCHI violin
CFA Concert Hall

Tuesday, February 12th, 8pm

Boston University Symphony Orchestra
DAVID HOOSE conductor
HECTOR BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*
DONALD SUR *Lacrimosa*
BÉLA BARTÓK *Suite from "The Miraculous Mandarin"*
Tsai Performance Center

Friday, February 15th, 12pm

Lunchtime Concert Muir String Quartet
in residence at Boston University
BÉLA BARTÓK *Quartet No. 4*
CFA Concert Hall

Tuesday February 19th, 8pm

Boston University Choral Ensembles Concert
Marsh Chapel

February 21st-24th

Boston University Mainstage Opera
WOLFGANG AMADÉ MOZART *The Magic Flute*
ALBERT SHERMAN guest stage director
WILLIAM LUMPKIN conductor
Boston University Theatre

Tuesday, February 26th, 8pm

Boston University Wind Ensemble
DAVID MARTINS conductor
DON LUCAS trombone
STRAUSS *Vienna Philharmonic Overture*
STRAVINSKY *Octet for wind Instruments*
MASLANKA *Trombone Concerto*
JAGER *Epilogue: "Lest We Forget"*
TICHELI *Symphony No. 2*
Tsai Performance Center

Tsai Performance Center, 685 Commonwealth Avenue
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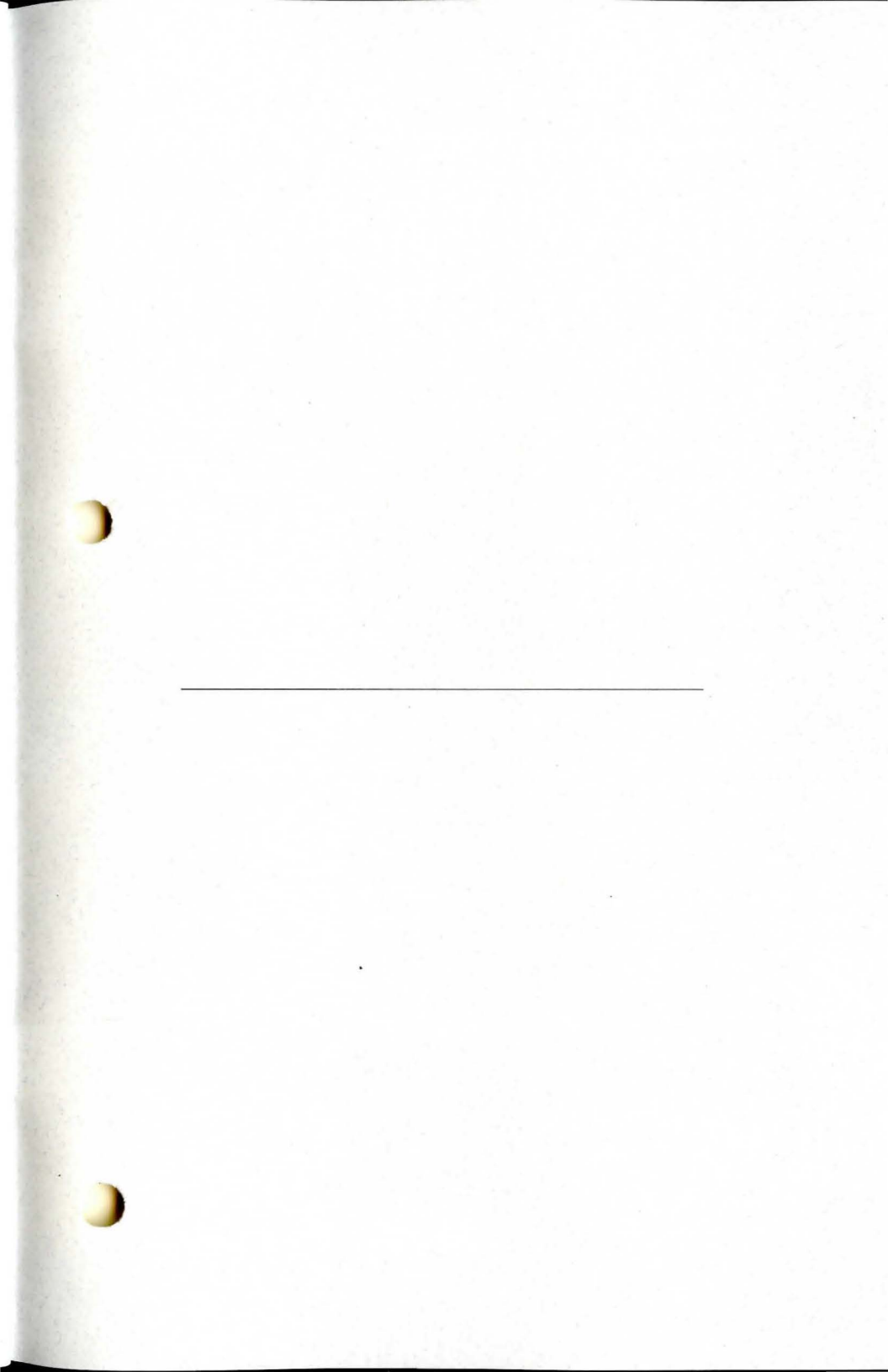
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