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School of Music

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1994-04-18

# Muir String Quartet, April 18, 1994

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*Boston University School for the Arts  
Music Division*

—presents—

# FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

## THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

PETER ZAZOFSKY, *violin*  
BAYLA KEYES, *violin*  
STEVEN ANSELL, *viola*  
MICHAEL REYNOLDS, *cello*

—with—

LUKAS FOSS, *piano*

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Monday, April 18, 1994 at 8:00 p.m.  
The Tsai Performance Center  
685 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts

# THE MUIR STRING QUARTET

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## PROGRAM

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### String Quartet in F major

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1929)

Allegro moderato, très doux  
Assez vif, très rythmé  
Très lent  
Vif et agité

### Nightwinds (1993)

Joan Tower  
(b. 1938)

- I. ♪ = ca. 52  
II. ♪ = ca. 50  
III. ♪ = ca. 138

—Intermission—

### Piano Quintet in E-flat major, Op. 44

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

Allegro brillante  
In modo d'una Marcia  
Un poco largamente  
Scherzo: Molto vivace  
Allegro, ma non troppo

## PROGRAM NOTES

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The music of **Maurice Ravel** is marked by jazz influences, dance rhythms, and impressionistic techniques, including extended chords, bitonality and modal harmony. The *String Quartet in F major*, completed in 1903 while Ravel was a student at the Paris Conservatory, was rejected for the Prix de Rome that year by academics opposed to these progressive compositional techniques. This was Ravel's third rejection for this prize, and it touched off a scandal which led to the replacement of the Conservatory's director with Gabriel Faure, Ravel's teacher.

Although the work contains all of the elements of Ravel's impressionist techniques, the form remains within the structure of classical compositions, including an almost sonata-like form in the first movement. The second movement is a scherzo in 6/8 against 3/4 with a slow middle section featuring the same themes. The third movement is slow, and presented in keys unrelated to the original F major, and the last movement, in keeping with the "classical" form, is a rondo.

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**Joan Tower** is one of this generation's most dynamic and colorful composers. Her first orchestral work, *Sequoia*, quickly entered the repertory, with performances by orchestras including Saint Louis, New York, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Minnesota, Washington, D.C., Tokyo, and the London Philharmonia. *Silver Ladders*, written in 1987 for the Saint Louis Symphony as part of her three-year residency with that orchestra, won the prestigious 1990 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition and has been performed by the Saint Louis, Chicago, Louisville, Indianapolis, Dallas, and Berlin (Radio) orchestras. Her *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* (No. 1) has been played by 100 different ensembles since its premiere in 1987 and is recorded on RCA with the Saint Louis Symphony.

Tower is currently Asher Edelman Professor of Music at Bard College, where she has taught since 1972. The following notes were written by Joan Tower about her quartet "Night Fields":

"Night Winds, my first string quartet, was commissioned by Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa, and the Snowbird Institute for the Arts and Humanities. The commission was funded, in part, by Chamber Music America funds from the Pew Charitable Trusts. This quartet is dedicated with affection and admiration to the Muir Quartet. It is a one-movement work and lasts about 16 minutes. The title was conceived after the work was completed and provides an image or setting for some of the moods of the piece: a cold, windy night in a wheat field lit up by a bright, full moon where waves of fast-moving colors ripple over the fields occasionally, settling on a patch of gold."

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The **Quintet in E-flat major for piano and strings, Op. 44** is a result of the "Chamber Music Year" of **Robert Schumann**. It was during the period starting in 1842 that Schumann composed almost exclusively chamber music, having already devoted his early years to piano compositions, the year 1840 to song cycles, and 1841 to orchestral works.

The first movement opens with an expansive theme for all five instruments. The second theme is marked by a pre-emptive start in the piano which is satisfied by a response in the cello and viola. The slow movement is a sober and reflective march, featuring song-like episodes and a brief soloistic *agitato* played by the piano. The third movement, in the form of a scherzo, shows brilliant compositional technique by use of ascending and descending scales supplemented by rhythmic and harmonic variety without benefit of melodies or thematic material. The last movement begins with a simple theme which soon gives way to complex counterpoint in all five instruments, including a surprising use of the first theme as accompaniment to second theme. The movement ends with the original proclamatory theme presented at the beginning of the first movement.

### **MEET THE ARTISTS**

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**Peter Zazofsky**, violinist, has won widespread recognition as a prolific soloist and chamber musician, playing first violin in the Muir Quartet and appearing as soloist with many of the great orchestras in North America, Asia and Europe, including the Boston Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, and Philadelphia Orchestra. Following studies at the Curtis Institute with Ivan Galamian, Mr. Zazofsky in 1979 became the first and only American to win the Montreal International Violin Competition. That victory was followed by a gold medal at the 1980 Queen Elizabeth Competition in Brussels and the 1985 Avery Fisher Career grant. Most recently, Mr. Zazofsky has premiered chamber works by Charles Fussell and Richard Danielpour, as well as the new violin concerto by Frederic Van Rossum, released on Cypress CD label. He also gave the Boston debut of Lukas Foss' *Three American Pieces*, in their orchestral version, with the composer conducting the Boston University Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Zazofsky is currently a member of the faculty of the Boston University School for the Arts.

**Bayla Keyes**, violinist, received her bachelor's degree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. During her school years she concertized extensively as a member of the Lupot Quartet and the Concerto Soloists; in the summers, she played with the Santa Fe Opera and later in the Marlboro Music Festival. She has toured with the acclaimed Music from Marlboro, formed the Alma Quartet, and served as concertmaster of the Pennsylvania Orchestra for two years. Ms Keyes earned her Master's Degree from Yale University. Her teachers have included Paul Kling, Ivan Galamian, Oscar Shumsky, Felix Galimir, and Karen Tuttle. Ms Keyes has performed solo and chamber recitals at the Interlochen Chamber Music Conference. She is a member of the violin faculty at the Boston University School for the Arts.

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**Steven Ansell**, violist, attended the Curtis Institute, where he studied with Michael Tree and Karen Tuttle. Upon graduation from Curtis, Mr. Ansell appointed assistant professor of music at the University of Houston. He has performed at many summer festivals including those at Marlboro, Newport, Rutgers, and Tanglewood. Mr. Ansell performed as assistant principle violist of the Pittsburgh Symphony from 1977 to 1979 under Andre Previn, after which he became one of the founding members of the Muir Quartet and taught at Yale University. Since 1983, Mr. Ansell has been a member of the faculty of Boston University School for the Arts. He is a frequent guest artist of the Boston Chamber Music Society.

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**Michael Reynolds**, cellist, attended the Curtis Institute as a student of David Soyer and Martita Casals. After graduating in 1977 he continued his studies with Karen Tuttle and George Neikrug. As a member of the Muir Quartet, Mr. Reynolds has participated in the Marlboro, Spoleto, Newport, Blossom, Tanglewood, and Snowbird Festivals. In addition, Mr. Reynolds is the director of the Montana Chamber Music Festival. He performs throughout America as a soloist to benefit the Nature Conservancy, and he has created a new recording label, Eco Classics, to record classical literature for the benefit of the environment. Mr. Reynolds is currently a member of the faculty at the Boston University School for the Arts.

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**Lukas Foss**, piano, is conductor laureate both of the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He is as renowned for his composing as his conducting. As one of the nation's leading composers, Mr. Foss has more than one hundred compositions to his credit. As a guest conductor he has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, and Berlin Philharmonic.

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