

One-of-a-Kind Chamber Music Series
“Music for Protest”
Saturday, February 17, 2018 @ 7:30pm
Viterbo University Nola Starling Recital Hall
THE ARTARIA STRING QUARTET
Mary Ellen Hauptert, piano

PROGRAM

I.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95, “Serioso”
Allegro con brio
Allegretto ma non troppo
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso
Larghetto; Allegretto agitato

Written in 1810, Op. 95 is often seen as the culmination of Beethoven’s Middle Period or the beginning of his powerful Late Period. It is probably both, but, even more accurately, it stands alone in its expressiveness, its human qualities, and its musical ingeniousness. It is sometimes grouped casually with the earlier Op. 74 Quartet as a transitional work, but in fact the two works could not differ more.

To say that the downdraft of a love affair, encroaching deafness, and financial woes could have affected the composition of Op. 95 is to treat Beethoven like an ordinary human. Academicians turn instead to his use of the Neapolitan Sixth, *i.e.*, a chromatic chord progression from the tonic to the flattened supertonic in its first inversion. In other words, in C Major the Neapolitan Sixth chord would be F, A-flat, and D-flat and in F minor A, D-flat, and G-flat. This writer, however, chooses the less technical approach to figuring out the erratic and inscrutable Op. 95.

The work bursts upon us with angry protest followed by petulant silence that gives way to lyricism before the anger returns. So this pattern continues, the cello warring against the other instruments. The tantrum is quickly over.

The cello opens the second movement in a slow crawl down the scale before all turns lyrical. Lyricism, however, is complicated by a fugue before it returns. This second movement ends on a diminished seventh chord, riveting in itself, that leads directly to the fast third movement bearing the interesting tempo marking, *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso*.

Despite its fast tempo, this third movement is not designated as a scherzo. Indeed, it has nothing jocular about it and, in fact, may be the cornerstone of the work’s “Serioso” subtitle which Beethoven himself inscribed on the score.

Consistent with his surprise tactics in this piece, Beethoven opens the final movement with a slow introduction filled with expressive yearning. But true to form, he kicks us in the pants with a comic ending.

II.

“Rhythm and Resistance in South Africa”

Dr. Matthew Bersagel Braley, Associate Professor of Business and Leadership

Dr. Matthew Bersagel Braley is a husband, dad, and an associate professor in the College of Business and Leadership at Viterbo University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on racial reconciliation, social justice, South Africa, peacemaking, ethics, religion, global health, and servant leadership. He is passionate about getting students out of the classroom and into the community to serve and learn— here in La Crosse as well as in Africa and the Caribbean through study abroad courses.

He earned a Ph.D. in Religion with an emphasis on social ethics and human rights from Emory University in Atlanta. While there he focused on the role of religion in the global social justice movement and the HIV crisis in South Africa. While at Emory, served as executive director of Southern Truth and Reconciliation, a university-community partnership highlighting truth and reconciliation practices in U.S. communities confronting legacies of racial violence.

The son of an elementary music teacher and student of the religious resonances of social movements, he feels responsible for bringing group singing into the classroom and out into the community as a reminder of what we, in our diverse cultures, have always known and sought to enact: the transformative power of making music together. He is thrilled to be co-teaching a new study abroad course this year with the indefatigable Dr. Mary Ellen Hauptert – *Rhythm and Resistance in South Africa* – whose energy and creative spirit he can only hope to keep up with!

III.

Kevin Volans (b.1949-)

String Quartet No 1 "White Man Sleeps" (1986) – Second Dance

It was a request from Adrian Jack that prompted this piece. He asked me to rework White Man Sleeps (originally written for two harpsichords, viola da gamba and percussion) for the Kronos Quartet for a performance at the ICA. I resisted the idea at first, especially as the African tuning of the original piece would have to be dropped. It occurred to me however, that the western tuning (equal temperament) would mask the source material and make my intentions clearer. I began work.

Sources: In composing this piece I drew from the following sources: the first movement owes something to the style of Basotho concertina music; the second and fourth movements are drawn from traditional Nyungwe music played by Makina Chirenje and his Nyanga panpipe group at Nsava, Tete, Mozambique, recorded and transcribed by Andrew Tracey (to be found in an article entitled ‘The nyanga panpipe dance’ in *African Music*, Vol.5, No.1 (1971)); the third movement derives from the San bow music (recorded by Tony Traill of the University of Witwatersrand) and from Basotho *lesiba* music, transcribed by myself; in the fifth movement I added my own invented folklore. My approach to the original music was anything but purist – it is played in Western tuning, filtered, slowed down by a few “time-octaves”, cast into non-African metres (like the 13-beat pattern of the first dance) and redistributed between the players in several ways. I also used interlocking techniques where they were absent in the original models and vice versa.

The title ‘White Man Sleeps’ comes from a moment in nyanga panpipe music where the performers leave off playing their loud pipes for a few cycles and dance only to the sound of their ankle rattles, to let the white landowner sleep – for a minute or two. ~ Kevin Volans

INTERMISSION | IDEA SPREAD

Engage in conversations with students of the “Rhythm & Resistance in South Africa” course. Each student will have a conversation starter (word, song title, or name) printed on a card, which will make them easier to spot! Find out what they’re learning in class!

IV.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Quintet in G Minor for Piano and Strings, Op. 57

Prelude: Lento

Fugue: Adagio

Scherzo: Allegretto

Intermezzo: Lento

Finale: Allegretto

The many photographs of Shostakovich’s unsmiling face accurately depict the man, his sensibilities, and his music, but that depiction is unendingly complex. Arguments continue even today on his political views and on the compromises he may have made to sustain his creativity. The only thing certain is his position as a victim in the Soviet regime’s attempt to control the arts and make them subservient to its political ideals. That many artists died in this process is enough to confirm its devastating effect.

There is always danger of artistic compromise when politics toys with art. Particularly in his chamber music, Shostakovich solved the problem by retreating to the inner sanctum of his creative genius, which was more abstract and therefore more impervious to political controversy. The changing face of Soviet policy towards art at first encouraged Shostakovich’s style, later condemned it, and everywhere misunderstood it. Threatened with extinction by Stalin in 1936 for his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Shostakovich was in turn awarded the Stalin Prize of \$25,000 in 1940 for his Piano Quintet.

The musical appeal of the Piano Quintet is so great that it eluded or transcended, as the case may be, any political opinion and was therefore labeled politically correct despite its dark implications and the personal courage demanded to write it.

A solemn opening introduced by the piano alone gives way to a faster section but solemnity returns before the movement ends. The powerful *Fugue* then displays Shostakovich’s full compositional powers in a form he revered and explored so magnificently in his *24 Preludes and Fugues* for piano. The folk-like subject is announced by the violin alone and then works its way through the other instruments with many permutations. A fiery *Scherzo* follows containing dissonances meant to disturb and a contrasting dance-like middle section. The following *Intermezzo* combines lyricism and a staccato bass line in an exploration of the five instruments’ color range. The piano foreshadows the fifth movement that continues without interruption. Here Shostakovich employs a clown theme traditionally used in Russian circuses. While there is a certain lyricism to the movement, the dark undercurrents remain, particularly in the march-like rhythms.

The Quintet was received with such enthusiasm in Moscow on November 23, 1940, that the performers were forced to repeat the *Scherzo* and *Finale*, a practice often followed today should the audience demand it.

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Lucy Miller Murray is the author of Chamber Music: An Extensive Guide for Listeners published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2015.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

ARTARIA STRING QUARTET

Described as an “exceptional ensemble with impressive confidence in its interpretations” and “Minnesota's foremost teaching and performing string quartet”, the Artaria String Quartet recently celebrated its 30 year of chamber music concerts. Winners of the 2004 McKnight Fellowship for Performing Musicians, and named 2013-14 Minnesota Public Radio Artists-in-Residence, Artaria was also featured on Twin Cities Public Television as part of the "Minnesota Originals" series.

Artaria's refined and thoughtful playing has brought them to major venues throughout the United States and Europe, on national television and public radio stations, and at top summer festivals including the Banff Centre in Canada, Festival de L'Epau in France, and the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, MA.

Artaria has earned numerous awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, and the Minnesota State Arts Board for excellence in performance and educational outreach. Directors of the Artaria Chamber Music School, a premiere weekly string chamber music program in Saint Paul; and Stringwood Chamber Music Festival, featuring the ASQ and renowned guest artists every June in Lanesboro, MN; they are founders of the Saint Paul String Quartet Competition, which showcases the nation's top high school age string quartets each April.

MARY ELLEN HAUPERT spreads her musical abilities between her roles as music director for Roncalli Newman Parish and as a tenured professor of music at Viterbo University. One of the great joys of her life has been collaboration with the ARTARIA STRING QUARTET. The quartet has been a staple of Viterbo University's (ten-year-old) One-of-a-Kind Chamber Music Series (for which Mary Ellen is both founder and artistic director) and has helped her to establish BONFIRE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL at the Myles Reif Performing Arts Center in Northern Minnesota.

Mary Ellen has received Viterbo University's most prestigious teaching awards, Teacher of the Year (2014) and the Alec Chui Memorial Award (2012) for her dedication to active learning and student scholarship. Her interest in student engagement led to a research fellowship with the *D.B. Reinbart Institute for Ethics and Leadership* in 2015-2016. The grant allowed for a year of travel and study which culminated in paper for the *Athens Journal of Humanities and Arts*, “Weaving Words and Music: Fostering a Meaningful Intercultural Exchange through Music Composition.” Her theory pedagogy has been widely presented; the International Conferences on Fine and Performing Arts (Athens, Greece, 2010 and 2016) and the International Conference on Education and New Technologies (Barcelona, Spain, 2009, 2012, 2013, and 2016) are two of her favorite venues.