

Victor Steinhardt has performed extensively as soloist with orchestras, in solo recitals, and in chamber ensembles. He has been a featured artist at the Oregon Bach Festival, the Mohawk Trails Concerts in Massachusetts, the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival in California, Chamber Music Northwest in Oregon, and Bargemusic in New York. Steinhardt has collaborated in chamber music with many outstanding musicians, among whom are cellist Leonard Rose, violinists Arnold Steinhardt, Ida Kavafian, Stephanie Chase, and Pamela Frank, clarinetist David Shifrin, flutist Ransom Wilson, and the Penderecki, Peterson, Angeles, Lafayette, and Guarneri String Quartets. Steinhardt's recordings include David Schiff's *Scenes from Adolescence* (Delos), songs of Bartók and Kodály (Vox-Turnabout), and works by Robert Fuchs for viola/violin with piano (Biddulph). As a composer, Steinhardt has received wide acclaim for several of his works. Available from TownHall Records is a new recording of his works entitled *Sonata Boogie* (THCD-52; orders: 1-800-327-4212).

The **Oregon String Quartet**, formed in 1982, is in residence at the University of Oregon School of Music. Committed to excellence in performance and music education, the members teach while maintaining busy concert schedules with the quartet and as soloists. They bring together a wide range of musical experiences, including years of chamber music collaborations with world-renowned artists, solo appearances with major orchestras and festivals, and principal positions with major symphonies. They have recorded on the Koch International, CRI, Centaur, and Albany labels. The Oregon String Quartet most recently recorded a compact disc, released by Koch International Classics, of works by the early 20th century African-American composer William Grant Still. The disc has been praised by the press for its beauty as well as its significant content. *Strad Magazine* hailed: "MUSICAL HEAVEN: OREGON STRING QUARTET . . . you will adore William Grant Still's 1960 string quartet, especially in a performance as sumptuously voiced and stunningly engineered as this." The Oregon String Quartet has been featured at the internationally-renowned Oregon Bach Festival, and is heard frequently on NPR. The quartet continues to enjoy performing and recording new compositions, including recently works by composers Victor Steinhardt and David Crumb.

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106th Season, 57th program



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Beall Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

Thursday evening
January 26, 2006

MARCUS THOMPSON, Viola

with

Victor Steinhardt, Piano

and the

OREGON STRING QUARTET

Kathryn Lucktenberg, Violin

Fritz Gearhart, Violin

Yoichiro Etsuki, Viola

Steven Pologe, Cello



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

PROGRAM

Sonata in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1 (1894) Johannes Brahms
Allegro appassionato (1833–1897)
Andante un poco Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Vivace
Marcus Thompson, viola
Victor Steinhardt, piano

Scene Andalouse Joaquin Turina
for string quartet, piano and viola solo (1882–1949)
Crepuscule Du Soir: Allegretto
A la Fenetre: Andantino mosso
Oregon String Quartet
Marcus Thompson, viola
Victor Steinhardt, piano

INTERMISSION

Quartet No. 6, Op. 96 “American” Antonín Dvořák
Allegro ma non troppo (1841–1904)
Lento
Molto vivace
Finale: Vivace ma non troppo
Oregon String Quartet

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theme are both built on pentatonic scales. In the *Lento*, the first violin and cello take the lead in a passionately restrained aria. The third movement alternates two versions of the same theme, first fast then slow; the first section is said to include the song of a scarlet tanager that the composer heard and wrote down on his walks in Spillville. The *Finale* begins with a percussive rhythm that was perhaps inspired by the Iroquois music Dvořák heard on these same walks. The pentatonic first theme at one point gives way to a more chorale-like melody, perhaps a tune the composer heard or played in the Spillville church. The vigorous first theme returns, however, to close the movement with great gaiety.

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ABOUT TONIGHT’S ARTISTS

Marcus Thompson has appeared as viola soloist, recitalist and chamber music player in series throughout the Americas, Europe and the Far East. He was featured as soloist with the Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Saint Louis, and the Czech National Symphony. He has recorded the Bartok Viola Concerto and the Bloch Suite with the Slovenian Radio Symphony conducted by Paul Freeman. Thompson has received critical acclaim for performances of the John Harbison Viola Concerto with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Chicago Sinfonietta, and for performances of the Penderecki *Viola Concerto* in Boston and London. His solo repertoire includes the recent: Ligeti, Overton, Schnittke; as well as the exotic, with works by Ariosti, Vivaldi and Hindemith performed on the viola d’amore. He has been a guest of the Audubon, Borromeo, Cleveland, Emerson, Lydian, Muir, Orion, Shanghai, and Vermeer String Quartets, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; and a frequent participant in chamber music festivals in Amsterdam, Anchorage, Dubrovnik, Montreal, Seattle, Sitka, Los Angeles, Okinawa, Portland and Vail. Thompson, a member of the Boston Chamber Music Society, earned a doctorate degree at the Juilliard School following studies with Walter Trampler. He is an alumnus of Young Concert Artists, Inc. Born and raised in The Bronx, N.Y.C., he currently lives in Boston where, as the Robert R. Taylor Professor of Music, he founded and leads programs in chamber music and performance study at MIT and serves on the viola faculty at New England Conservatory of Music.

Scène Andalouse for Solo Viola, Piano, and String Quartet, Op. 7
Joaquin Turina

Joaquin Turina was one of the notable Spanish composers of the early 20th century who shared the goal of promoting and depicting their native land. *Scène Andalouse* (Andalusian Scene) is one of the first works in which he followed this path. Its two movements use Spanish musical idiom in suggesting a scene that begins at twilight (*Crépuscule du soir*) and continues with a serenade (*Serenata*) at the beloved's window (*A la fenêtre*). The solo viola is the protagonist, and the piano and the quartet depict the setting and represent the beloved. The first movement opens with a piano solo before the solo viola and quartet enter. It then moves into the serenade itself, in a more rapid tempo; this section is interrupted for a time by a languid habañera. The second movement repeats some of the themes heard before as the dialogue between the lovers continues.

String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96, "American"
Antonin Dvořák

Dvořák came to New York in 1892 as director of the National Conservatory of Music, a school established and controlled by Mrs. Jeanette Thurber. He held that position for three years until Mrs. Thurber's financial difficulties gave the by then homesick composer an opportunity to resign. During his first year in America he composed three of his finest and best known pieces: the *Symphony from the New World*, Op. 95; the "American" *Quartet*, Op. 96; and the *String Quintet*, Op. 97. The symphony was composed in New York in early 1893, but the two chamber works were composed later that same year in Spillville, Iowa, where he spent his summer holiday with a community of Czech immigrants. All three compositions contain Czech traits along with elements of the music of black and native Americans, expressing both the composer's nostalgia for home and his fascination with his new experiences.

The *Quartet in F Major* was sketched in only three days, June 8-10, and the score was completed by June 23. Dvořák wrote beneath the last line of the sketch: "Thanks be to God, I am content. It was quick work." It was indeed quick and sure inspiration, and the result was one of his best-loved compositions. All four movements make prominent use of pentatonic or five-note scales (corresponding to the black keys on the piano), which are common to folk music the world over, also of the lowered-seventh scale step in minor mode and dotted and syncopated rhythms. The *Allegro ma non troppo* is dominated by the jaunty first theme. This and the songful second

PROGRAM NOTES
by Peter Bergquist

Sonata in F Minor for Viola and Piano, Op. 120, No. 1
Johannes Brahms

When Brahms completed his String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111, in 1890, he thought of it as a farewell to active life as a composer. Fortunately, he did not hold to that decision, primarily because of the admiration he developed for the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, the principal clarinetist of the Meiningen orchestra. His last four chamber works were written for Mühlfeld: the Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Op. 114, and the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 115, both composed in 1891, and the two Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120, which followed in 1894. Brahms issued alternate versions of all four of these pieces in which the clarinet is replaced by a viola, in part to allow the music to circulate more widely. He changed the clarinet parts only slightly, for instance through the addition of occasional double stops. The trio and quintet might be less than satisfactory without the clarinet, since the contrast of color is so important in both pieces, but that is not true of the sonatas, which have become a cornerstone of both the viola and clarinet repertoires. They are effective on either instrument, and many writers have in fact expressed a preference for the viola tone in them.

The Sonata in F Minor has four movements in standard order, all of them artfully composed. The *Allegro appassionato* recalls the turbulence found in other music by Brahms in F minor, such as the Piano Quintet, Op. 34. After a few introductory measures, the viola presents the wide-ranging first theme, which is followed by several others, different from each other and at the same time subtly linked. The introductory measures, for instance, are echoed in more than one of the themes that follow them. Throughout the movement agitation alternates with calmness until the quiet close. The three remaining movements all shift to major mode, so that the entire sonata presents a passage from dark to light. The dreamy first subject of the *Andante un poco Adagio* sets the tone for the movement, surely one of Brahms's most beautiful slow movements. Other themes alternate with it, without changing the basic mood and character. Many times Brahms avoided a vigorous scherzo, providing instead a more relaxed intermezzo or dance. In this sonata the *Allegretto grazioso* is an easy-going waltz, with a busier middle section in which F minor returns for the last time in the sonata. The *Vivace* finale is a bright rondo in F major; its form can be summarized as ABACBA. The active first theme contrasts nicely with the calmer episodes that alternate with it. The three repeated notes in the short introduction to the first theme are heard repeatedly, almost like a bell sounding.