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PRAŽÁK and ZEMLINSKY QUARTETS

THE PRAŽÁK QUARTET

Jana Vonášková, violin
Vlastimil Holek, violin
Josef Kluson, viola
Michal Kanka, cello

THE ZEMLINSKY QUARTET

František Souček, violin
Petr Strižek, violin
Petr Holman, viola
Vladimir Fortin, cello



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2018-19
HAMBER
MUSIC
BEALL@

Feb. 3, 2019 | 3:00 p.m. | Beall Concert Hall

PROGRAM for **PRAŽÁK and ZEMLINSKY QUARTETS**

String Octet in F Major, Op. 17 (1848)

- I. Allegro molto e con fuoco
- II. Andantino, quasi Allegretto
- III. Scherzo. Allegro moderato e tranquillo
- IV. Finale. Allegro vivace

Niels Gade
(1817 - 1890)

Zemlinsky Quartet
Pražák Quartet

Two Pieces for String Octet, Op. 11 (1925)

- I. Prelude: Adagio
- II. Scherzo: Allegro molto

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906 - 1975)

Pražák Quartet
Zemlinsky Quartet

INTERMISSION

String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20 (1825)

- I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
- II. Andante
- III. Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
- IV. Presto

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809 - 1847)

Pražák Quartet
Zemlinsky Quartet

Recordings for both the PRAŽÁK QUARTET and ZEMLINSKY QUARTET available on the Praga Digitals/Harmonia Mundi label.

The PRAŽÁK QUARTET and ZEMLINSKY QUARTET appear by arrangement with Christina Daysog Concert Artists.



Music.uoregon.edu/cmb | 541-682-5000

2018-19
**CHAMBER
MUSIC
BEALL@**

TICKETS
\$50, \$45, \$35, \$25 reserved

Join us this season for more world class chamber music
in historic Beall Concert Hall.



ERICA TRIO
Sept. 30 | 3:00 p.m.



**DALI QUARTET
WITH OLGA KERN**
Oct. 21 | 3:00 p.m.



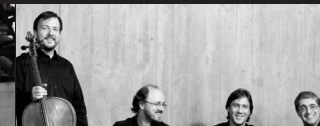
**AKROPOLIS
REED QUINTET**
Nov. 18 | 3:00 p.m.



**PRAŽÁK +
ZEMLINSKY QUARTETS**
Feb. 3 | 3:00 p.m.



SMETANA TRIO
Feb. 24 | 3:00 p.m.



BORODIN QUARTET
March 17 | 3:00 p.m.



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Niels W. Gade (1817-1890), while lesser-known today, held national acclaim as a violinist, conductor, and composer in his homeland of Denmark. He developed a special relationship with **Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847), who – after conducting the premiere of Gade’s first symphony – served as his mentor in Leipzig. While in Leipzig, Gade worked as Mendelssohn’s assistant conductor for the Gewandhaus Orchestra and as a teacher at the conservatory. After studying with Mendelssohn, the Danish public felt that his style became too international, and lost its “distinctive ‘Nordic’ color” – an assessment that frustrated Gade, who is said to have complained to fellow Scandinavian composer Edvard Grieg that, “one becomes tired of patriotism.” Gade’s String Octet in F Major, op. 17 was written in 1848, and in many ways references Mendelssohn’s Octet in E-flat Major, op.20 – composed roughly twenty years earlier in 1825.

The influence of Mendelssohn’s Octet is instantly recognizable in Gade’s introduction, which mirrors the iconic, soaring violin that dominates Mendelssohn’s own opening. There are marked differences, however, in each composer’s Scherzo. Gade’s is more relaxed, allowing the performers to move playfully from one motif to the next. Mendelssohn’s Scherzo, on the other hand, calls for a light, whispered execution that creates a scurrying and at times frenzied affect. We know from Felix’s sister, Fanny, that his Scherzo was inspired by the dream-like ‘Walpurgisnachtstraum’ in Goethe’s Faust, which features an orchestra of insects and small animals. Overall, Mendelssohn treats all of the octet voices with more equality than Gade, who largely favors the first violin and places the other voices in supporting roles. This equality is most apparent in Mendelssohn’s finale, where the opening motif begins in the second cello, and is then passed through each successive ascending voice.

Dimitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) began writing his octet in 1924. He originally planned for a five-movement suite, and by the summer of 1925 had finished the opening two movements. He began work on a third, but neither it nor the remaining movements were ever completed. Instead, he kept the initial Prelude and Scherzo and renamed them Two Pieces for Octet, op. 11. At the time, Shostakovich believed the Scherzo to be the “very best thing” he had ever written. Stylistically, this piece stands in stark opposition to Mendelssohn’s and Gade’s, and shows Shostakovich exploring modernism and extremely dissonant harmonies. Indeed, when Shostakovich showed the Scherzo to Maximilian Steinberg, his composition instructor, he reported that Steinberg “made a sour face and expressed the hope that, when I turn thirty, I will no longer write such wild music.” Shostakovich dedicated the piece to his friend, Volodiya Kurchavov, who had died earlier that June.

ABOUT **HOLLY J. ROBERTS**



Holly J. Roberts is a Ph.D. candidate in musicology at the University of Oregon, studying early music and historical performance practice. She was recently the recipient of the University of Oregon’s prestigious Graduate Award, the Oregon Humanities Center’s Graduate Research Support Fellowship, and was recognized for her research contributions to the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art’s 2017 Barberini Tapestries exhibit. She is also the executive director and co-founder of the University of Oregon “Musicking Conference,” a yearly event that focuses on combining historical performance practice scholarship, education, and performance.



Trotter Visiting Professor

Lawrence Dutton, viola
Emerson String Quartet

March 3 | 4:30 p.m. _____

VIOLA MASTER CLASS

Frohnmayr Music Building, Room 190, Free

March 3 | 6:30 p.m. _____

CHAMBER MUSIC MASTER CLASS

Frohnmayr Music Building, Room 190, Free

March 4 | 2:00 p.m. _____

LECTURE

Frohnmayr Music Building, Room TBA, Free

March 4 | 7:30 p.m. _____

LAWRENCE DUTTON in CONCERT

with Fritz Gearhart, violin; Steve Pologe, cello;
Arnaud Ghillebaert, viola; and David Riley, piano

Beall Concert Hall

\$12 General, \$8 Students and Seniors

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Zemlinsky Quartet is named after the Austrian composer, conductor and teacher Alexander Zemlinsky (1871-1942), whose enormous contribution to Czech, German and Jewish culture during his 16-year residence in Prague had been underrated until recently. His four string quartets (the second one being dedicated to his student and brother-in-law Arnold Schönberg) belong to the basic repertoire of the ensemble. Since 2005, the quartet has maintained a special relationship with the Alexander Zemlinsky Foundation in Vienna.

The Zemlinsky Quartet performs regularly in the Czech Republic and abroad (Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, Monaco, Luxembourg, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Canada, USA, Brazil, Japan, South Korea). Recent major appearances of the Zemlinsky Quartet include London's Wigmore Hall, Cité de la Musique in Paris, Library of Congress, Place des Arts in Montreal, Prague Spring Festival, and their New York debut on Schneider/New School Concerts Series. Their vast repertoire contains more than 200 works ranging from Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Dvorak to works by contemporary composers. The members of the ensemble also perform as soloists and are individual prize-winners of several competitions (Concertino Praga, Spohr International Competition Weimar, Tribune of Young Artists UNESCO, Rotary Music Competition Nürnberg, Beethoven International Competition, Kocian International Competition).

Between 2006-2011, the Zemlinsky Quartet were Assistant Quartet-in-Residence at Musikakademie Basel in Switzerland. Music education is an important part of their professional life and during their tours, the quartet is often invited to give master classes to students of any age. They also perform educational concerts for students. Recently, František Souček and Petr Holman have been appointed Professors at the Prague Conservatory.



One of today's leading international chamber music ensembles, **The Pražák Quartet** was established in 1972 while its members were students at the Prague Conservatory. Since then, the quartet has gained attention for its place in the unique Czech quartet tradition, and for its musical virtuosity.

The 1974 Czech Music Year saw the Pražák Quartet receive the first prize at the Prague Conservatory Chamber Music Competition. Within twelve months their international career had been launched with a performance at the 1975 Prague Spring Music Festival. In 1978, the quartet took the first prize at the Evian String Quartet Competition as well as a special prize awarded by Radio France for the best recording during the competition. Further prizes were awarded at various other Czech competitions.

For more than 30 years, the Pražák Quartet has been at home on music stages worldwide. They are regular guests in the major European musical capitals—Prague, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Milan, Madrid, London, Berlin, Munich, etc.—and have been invited to participate at numerous international festivals, where they have collaborated with such artists as Menahem Pressler, Jon Nakamatsu, Cynthia Phelps, Roberto Diaz, Josef Suk, and Sharon Kam.

The quartet has toured extensively in North America, having performed in New York (Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, 92nd St. Y), Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Houston, Washington, Philadelphia, Miami, St. Louis, New Orleans, Berkeley, Cleveland, Tucson, Denver, Buffalo, Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. They will return to the US and Canada in the 2016-17 season.

The Pražák Quartet records exclusively for Praga/Harmonia Mundi which, to date, has released more than 30 award-winning CDs. In addition to numerous radio recordings in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic, the Pražák Quartet has also made recordings for Supraphon, Pantan, Orfeo, Ottavo, Bonton, Nuova Era.

In 2015, the Pražák Quartet, like the Janacek and Guarneri Quartets before them, opened a new chapter in their career by turning to youth and welcoming as leader the excellent violinist, Jana Vonaskova. A graduate of the Royal College of Music in London, she was a member of the Smetana Trio for 9 years. After two years of intensive study re-learning the repertoire in its new line-up, the quartet has once again taken to the international stage with great success. The spirit, freshness and agility of youth combine with the extensive experience of the ensemble's founder-members to produce a renewed sound and energy and a sense of unity and togetherness that is truly remarkable. World tours to the United States and Japan and performances in Europe have been greeted with enthusiasm and numerous invitations. Currently the quartet is preparing for a new recording of the Smetana quartets: 20 years after their original version this is an opportunity to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the First Czechoslovak Republic while also honoring this great national composer.

Founded in 1994 while the members were still students, the **Zemlinsky Quartet** has become a much-lauded example of the Czech string quartet tradition. The Zemlinsky Quartet won the



First Grand Prize at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition in 2010. They have also been awarded top prizes at the Banff International String Quartet Competition (2007), Prague Spring International Music Competition (2005) and London International String Quartet Competition (2006), where they also received the Audience Prize. The Quartet was recipient of the Alexander Zemlinsky Advancement Award in 2008. Other notable prizes include Beethoven International Competition (1999), New Talent Bratislava (2003), Martinů Foundation String Quartet Competition (2004), and the Prize of Czech Chamber Music Society (2005). In the season 2016/17, Zemlinsky Quartet was appointed as the residential ensemble of the Czech Chamber Music Society.

While students at the Prague Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts Prague, the ensemble was coached by members of renowned Czech string quartets including the Talich, Prague, Kocian and Pražák Quartets. The ensemble also took part in several master classes including ProQuartet, in France and Sommerakademie in Reichenau, Austria where they were awarded First Prize for the best interpretation of a work by Janáček. From 2005 to 2008, the quartet studied with Walter Levin, the first violinist of LaSalle Quartet. Their recent mentor has been Josef Klusoň, the violist of the Pražák Quartet.