

ESTABLISHED 1941 • OUR 82ND SEASON

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY *of* UTICA

with generous support from

The Gilbert and Ildiko Butler Family Foundation

presents

Verona Quartet

Jonathan Ong and Dorothy Ro, violins

Abigail Rojansky, viola • Jonathan Dormand, cello

PROGRAM

String Quartet No. 4..... Grażyna Bacewicz
Andante—Allegro molto (1909-1969)

Andante

Allegro giocoso

String Quartet No. 3 in C-sharp Major Béla Bartók
Prima parte : Moderato (1881-1945)

Seconda parte: Allegro

Ricapitulazione della prima parte: Moderato

Coda: Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 7 in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1, “Rasumovsky” Ludwig van Beethoven
Allegro (1770-1827)

Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando

Adagio molto e mesto

Thème Russe: Allegro

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
MARY KERNAN BUTLER AND MARTHA GILBERT BUTLER

Sunday, 30 April 2023 • 2:30 PM
Munson • Sinnott Family Bank of Utica Auditorium
310 Genesee Street • Utica, New York 13502

PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet No. 4 (1951).....Grażyna Bacewicz

Grażyna Bacewicz began composition, violin, and piano studies in her native city of Lodz, then in Warsaw and later in Paris with the sponsorship of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. She was a laureate of the very first Wieniawski International Violin Competition and enjoyed a substantial career as a violin soloist throughout Europe concurrently with her composing. Her catalogue consists mainly of instrumental music—four symphonies, numerous shorter orchestral pieces of a popular character, many concertos, seven string quartets, many other chamber music works, violin sonatas and music for the piano. Among the many honors she was awarded are the International Rostrum of Composers orchestral prize in 1958 for *Muzyka*, for trumpets, strings and percussion, and a Gold Medal from the Queen Elizabeth Competition in 1965 for her seventh violin concerto.

Her fourth string quartet was a commission from the Polish Composers Union, to be entered in the International Composers Competition in Liege, Belgium. It won the first prize in 1951 and remains her most often performed quartet. It has been called “folkloristic” in that it uses melodies and rhythms at least reminiscent of popular tunes. It has the three movement fast-slow-fast scheme of a concerto and is straightforward in construction, consisting mostly of contrasting sections in alternation without much elaborate development. Although quite virtuosic, it is skillfully written to be comfortable to play.

String Quartet No. 3 in C-sharp Major (1927).....Béla Bartók

Many consider Béla Bartók to have been the greatest Hungarian composer of the twentieth century. He was an excellent pianist, as a soloist, chamber player, or accompanist, and early on thought this would be his main career and not composition. But later his pioneering research in ethnomusicology became a source of new ideas and inspirations, greatly influencing his own compositions. He and Zoltán Kodály scoured the territory in and around Hungary searching for indigenous folk music, recording items on Edison wax cylinders. Bartók was particularly interested in tracing international relationships in ethnic music, and he continued to do musicological research for most of his life. In 1934 he was commissioned by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to organize their collection of some 13,000 items of Romanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Ruthenian, Slovak and Serbo-Croatian folk music.

The third quartet is usually performed as one continuous work despite having four movements. Its form can be represented as “ABab”, where “A” (the Prima parte) is an exposition and development of more lyrical material, “B” (the Secunda parte) is faster and dance-like, and “a” and “b” are short recapitulations. This very colorful music is replete with unusual melodies, scales, and rhythms, complex imitative counterpoint, forceful dissonant harmonies, and special effects of glissando (sliding between notes), col legno (using the wooden part of the bow to strike the strings), and sul ponticello (playing the strings with the bow on or very close to the bridge of the instrument).

String Quartet No. 7 in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1 (1806)..... Ludwig van Beethoven

Among the lesser-known works of Beethoven are some ten volumes of folksong arrangements for one to several voices with piano trio accompaniment. A few years before Beethoven began these, Count Rasumovsky had commissioned the three Opus 59 quartets with the request that each should contain a Russian folk melody. It so happened that while Beethoven was writing the quartets he was approached by the Scottish publisher Thomson for collections of songs that would appeal to the popular market. Thomson published the first few volumes of Scottish, Irish and Welsh songs, but then abandoned the project as they did not sell well. Beethoven continued with several more volumes, including three international collections. Ironically there is not a single Russian folksong in them.

Beethoven’s six Opus 18 quartets, published in 1801, adhered very much to a classical aesthetic of formal balance and universal expression. The three Opus 59 quartets from 1806, on the other hand, are quintessential middle Beethoven emphasizing formal dynamism and personal expression. From a present-day perspective these differences may not seem glaring, but audiences of Beethoven’s time found the Opus 59 quartets somewhat perplexing. For example, the lengthy first movement of Opus 59, No. 1 has a marvelous sense of unfolding forward momentum, yet also of uncertainty as to destination. The second movement begins with a drum-like repeated note and a light and airy tune but later erupts with forceful outbursts. The beautiful Adagio is so much more than a sad song that anyone might sing, instead the listener is drawn into a deeply subjective experience. The fiery virtuosity of the Thème Russe finale strains the capacities of the instruments to their utmost.

Notes by Raymond Zoekler

Information from the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Wikipedia, You Tube, www.triovanbeethoven.at

THE ARTISTS

Acclaimed as an “outstanding ensemble...cohesive yet full of temperament” (*The New York Times*), the Verona Quartet has firmly established itself among the most distinguished ensembles on the chamber music scene today. The group’s singular sense of purpose most recently earned them Chamber Music America’s coveted 2020 Cleveland Quartet Award, and a reputation for its “bold interpretive strength, robust characterization and commanding resonance” (*Calgary Herald*).

A string quartet for the 21st century, the Verona Quartet champions the rich breadth of the string quartet repertoire from the time-honored canon through contemporary classics. In addition, the Quartet strives for a dynamic, imaginative approach to collaboration and programming that champions cross-cultural and interdisciplinary enterprises.

Drawing from the mentorship of the celebrated Cleveland, Juilliard and Pacifica Quartets, the Verona Quartet’s rapid rise to international prominence was fueled by top prize wins at the Wigmore Hall, Melbourne, M-Prize and Osaka International Chamber Music Competitions, as well as the 2015 Concert Artists Guild Competition.

The ensemble’s “vibrant, intelligent” (*The New York Times*) performances emanate from the spirit of storytelling; the Quartet believes that this transcends genre and therefore the name “Verona” pays tribute to William Shakespeare, one of the greatest storytellers of all time.

The Quartet—consisting of violinists Jonathan Ong and Dorothy Ro, violist Abigail Rojansky, and cellist Jonathan Dormand—serves on the faculty of the Oberlin College and Conservatory as the Quartet-in-Residence.

As the Verona Quartet considers it a privilege to educate future generations of musicians, the artists have been engaged to present a school outreach program on Monday, May 1, 2023, to the string students of Clinton Central School District. We thank The Winter Fund of the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties for sponsoring this event.

UPCOMING MUSICAL EVENTS

B Sharp Musical Club Concert

Sunday, May 7, 2023, at 3 PM

Munson

310 Genesee Street, Utica

Sinnott Family Bank of Utica Auditorium

~Free Admission~

Clinton Symphony Orchestra of the Mohawk Valley

Octavio Más-Arocas, Music Director

Saturday, May 20, 2023, at 7:30 PM

Pre-Concert Lecture at 6:30 PM

Clinton Central Schools Theatre

Chenango Avenue, Clinton

Program includes Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Suite Ma Mère l'Oye*
and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3 "Eroica"*

For tickets and information phone 315-404-2016

B Sharp Musical Club Concert

Monday, July 10, 2023, at 6 PM

Grace Episcopal Church

6 Elizabeth Street, Utica

~Free Admission~

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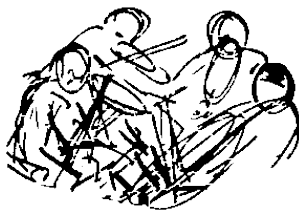
MARIETTA VON BERNUTH

Kate Adams



Our school outreach program is made possible with a gift from the Winter Family Fund of the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties. Our season is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.





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