

the firm 2003

CONCERT FIVE

LANGBEIN STRING QUARTET

LANGHEIM STRING QUARTET

Michael Milton violin 1
Minas Berberyan violin 2
Rosie McGowran viola
David Sharp cello

Please join the performers and living
composers after the concert for
complimentary drinks and a selection of
Tortes by Gabriele.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2003

LEOS JANACEK

Adagio from String Quartet No.2

RAYMOND CHAPMAN SMITH

Divertimento for String Quartet

QUINCY SD GRANT

String Quartet No.3

INTERVAL

DAVID KOTLOWY

(Untitled) (2003)

JOHN POLGLASE

Toccata from String Quartet No.4

LEOS JANACEK

String Quartet No.2 *Intimate Letters*

Adagio

Leos Janáček (1854-1928) was born in Moravia and spent most of his life in the city of Brno. The influences of the folk music of the region is a feature of his style, but there are many other ingredients of a more strongly individual – and one could say eccentric – nature that combine to give his music a distinctive personality.

The String Quartet *Intimate Letters*, the second of Janáček's quartets is his last completed work. He wrote it immediately after he had finished his opera *From the House of the Dead*, between the 29th of January and the 19th of February 1928, only half a year before his sudden death. The quartet is an intense and spontaneous expression of his deep and passionate predilection for a much younger woman, Kamila Stösslová.

In his letters to her, he originally gave the quartet the title of *Love Letters* but eventually changed it as he did not want "to deliver his feelings up to the discretion of stupid people".

Janáček described the quartet's *Adagio* second movement as representing a series of summer events at the Luhacovice Spa in Moravia; the holiday retreat where he had first encountered Kamila.

RAYMOND CHAPMAN SMITH

Divertimento for String Quartet

1. Moderato cantabile molto espressivo
2. Allegretto
3. Molto adagio
4. Andantino
5. Vivace

There are moments when a little tender diversion is necessary and hopefully efficacious. Especially so at a time, and in a country, ruled over by bellicose, oafish, bullying, mendacious, meanspirited, opportunistic, witless thugs. At this point I had thought of a small dissertation on the formal and poetic aspirations of my little *Divertimento* but will divert myself, to your certain relief, from such residual pedagogy by simply quoting a text that is the most insightful and beautiful description of music I have yet encountered.

To Music

Music: breathing of statues. Perhaps:
stillness of paintings. You language where languages
end. You time,
placed erect on the course of hearts that expire.

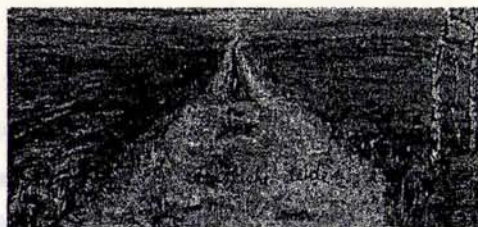
Feelings . . . for whom? O you the mutation
of feelings . . . into what? – : into audible landscape.
You stranger: music. You heartspace
grown up from us. Innermost thing of ours,
which, exceeding us, crowds out, –
sacred farewell:
when the inner surrounds us
as the most practiced distance, as the air's
other side:
pure,
gigantic,
no longer lived in.

Rainer Maria Rilke
Munich, January 11-12, 1918

QUENTIN SD GRANT

String Quartet No.3

Andantino; Moderato; Con moto.



Anselm Kiefer: *March Heath*

The road seemed broken, haunted. There was a line of enormous sand dunes muffling the sounds of a not too distant sea. My hand began bleeding. There was the blood of generations here, in the sand, at the side of the road. Not dozens, but hundreds of generations...

Moira Morris, *The Coorong* (1956)



Anselm Kiefer: from *Better Red than Dead*

I understood it all now, yet I did not understand it, for every detail that was revealed to me as I went through the museum from room to room and back again, ignorant as I feared I had been through my own fault, far exceeded my comprehension. I saw pieces of luggage brought to Terezín by the internees from Prague and Pilsen, Würzburg and Vienna, Kufstein and Karlsbad and countless other places; the items such as handbags, belt buckles, clothes brushes and combs which they had made in the various workshops...

W.G Sebald, *Austerlitz* (2001)

DAVID KOTLOWY

(Untitled) (2003)

When I saw the proportions and subtle red hues of our program cover – a detail of Franz Kupka's *Disks* – my first thought was "Rothko", and this coincidence is not inappropriate, as the artist was born on September 25, 1903.

Russian-born Mark Rothko is closely identified with the New York School, a circle of painters that emerged during the 1940s as a new collective voice in American art. By that time, Rothko had settled upon a compositional format composed of several vertically aligned rectangular forms set within a coloured field. In these paintings, colour and structure are inseparable: the forms themselves consist of colour alone, and their translucency establishes a layered depth that complements and vastly enriches the vertical architecture of the composition.

Rothko generally avoided explaining the content of his work, believing that the abstract image could directly represent the fundamental nature of "human drama." To this end, he also abandoned conventional titles and resorted to numbers or colours to distinguish one work from another. "Silence is so accurate," he said, fearing that words would only paralyze the viewer's mind and imagination.

This quartet – in memorium, Mark Rothko – is thus an open-structured work that explores the expressive potential of colour contrasts and modulations within the suspended sonorities of a limited chromatic field.

JOHN POLGLASE
String Quartet No.4

Final movement - Toccata

Of the six movements of my fourth string quartet only the finale can stand alone, others flow into each other or are separated only by short pauses.

The title *Toccata* refers to a species of writing most closely associated with the solo keyboard; free and bold, often alternating runs and spectacular technical display with fugal or contrapuntal work. Transferring this idiomatic keyboard style to the ensemble and maintaining coherence and 'playability' was part of the challenge and most of the fun.

Throughout the movement the recurring motto of the quartet is easily discerned and the closing gesture (sounding perhaps a little out of place in this context) states clearly this unifying germ which is so prevalent throughout the whole work.



Pilgrim Church provides wheelchair access via
the rear (northern) doors.

Toilets can be accessed through the door on
the left of the performance area.

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