



HOPKINS CENTER
FOR THE ARTS

presents

DANISH STRING QUARTET

Post-Performance Discussion

You are invited to remain in the theater immediately following the performance for an informal discussion with the artists.

Funded in part by Frank L. Harrington 1924 Fund No.3 and by the Patricia S. and Robert A. Levinson 1946 Fund in Support of the Hopkins Center's Visiting Performing Artists Program.

Tuesday, January 31, 2017 • 7 pm

Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College

PROGRAM

Swans Kissing, for String Quartet

Rolf Wallin (b. 1957)

Folk Music from Nordic Countries

Selections to be announced from the stage

• INTERMISSION •

String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2, 'Razumovsky'

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro

Molto adagio

Allegretto

Finale – Presto, alla breve

DANISH STRING QUARTET

Frederik Øland *violin*

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen *violin*

Asbjørn Nørgaard *viola*

Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin *cello*

Representation

Kirshbaum Associates Inc.
711 West End Avenue, Suite 5KN
New York, NY 10025
www.kirshbaumassociates.com

PROGRAM NOTES

Swans Kissing, for String Quartet **Rolf Wallin (b.1957)**

The abstract paintings of Hilma af Klint, the Swedish visionary painter, predate Kandinsky's first abstract work by five years. As with many other abstract pioneers, her path was a spiritual one, coming from an urge to reveal the deeper truth that lies behind the reality we perceive with our senses. She never showed her paintings in public, and painted 'on commission' from spirits.

Her series of large paintings named *The Swan* (1914) is a set of increasingly abstract variations

on a striking figurative picture: one white swan flying down from above on black background (the night sky?), and one black swan flying up from below on white background (a frozen lake?). Their beaks meet with a kiss in the middle of the picture. In the following paintings one can see echoes, in curves and shapes, of the original image.

Swans Kissing, just as these canvases, is split in two. Two bodies of music mirror each other exactly in some aspects, but differ vastly in character. The first body flows slowly and

PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

viscerally upwards, the second pushes downwards with a relentless pulse. They meet with a "kiss" halfway through the piece.

In these paintings, Hilma af Klint combines a strong, "masculine" constructivist geometry with "feminine" dream-like sensuality, resulting in visionary work of striking precision. This has inspired me to revisit an earlier path of my own, combining fractal mathematics and geometry with a playful, sensual attitude.

Rolf Wallin

String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2 **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

During Beethoven's lifetime, the musician most closely associated with performances of his string quartets was Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776-1830), a Viennese violinist who led various quartets in private and public concerts from the early 1790s. By the time Schuppanzigh was twenty years old, he was a paid quartet player for Prince Karl Lichnowsky, one of Beethoven's most important noble patrons. He formed his own quartet in 1804 in order to give public quartet concerts, and in 1808 created a resident quartet for another Beethoven patron, Count Andreas Razumovsky (1752-1836). Beethoven jokingly called Schuppanzigh "Falstaff" because of his corpulence, but clearly respected the violinist's musicianship and ability to interpret his quartets. A contemporary critic wrote, "Herr Schuppanzigh himself has an original, piquant style most appropriate to the humorous quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven—or, perhaps more accurately, a product of the capricious manner of performance suited to these masterpieces. He plays the most difficult passages clearly, although not always quite in tune...He also accents very correctly and significantly, and his *cantabile*, too, is often quite singing and affecting. He is likewise a good leader for his carefully chosen colleagues, who enter admirably

into the spirit of the composer, though he disturbed me often with his accursed fashion, generally introduced here [Vienna], of beating time with his foot."

At the end of 1805, Beethoven received a commission for three quartets from the Russian Ambassador to Vienna, Count Razumovsky. The Count was a musician and a great connoisseur of music who held many quartet evenings in his home; he was also related by marriage to the quartet-loving patron Prince Lichnowsky, so it was quite natural that Razumovsky should also wish to sponsor the composition of new works to be performed by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in his own residence. With these quartets Beethoven left behind the restrained language of Mozart and Haydn and brought the quartet genre into the heroic realm of his *Eroica* symphony and Waldstein sonata. Beethoven worked on the three quartets, Opus 59, throughout the summer of 1806, completing them sometime that fall. On February 27, 1807, a critic reported: "Three new, very long and difficult Beethoven string quartets, dedicated to the Russian Ambassador, Count Razumovsky, are also attracting the attention of all connoisseurs. The conception is profound and the construction excellent, but they are not easily comprehended." The new works stretched the resources of the instruments for which they were written and even the limits of the quartet genre itself, seeming often to strive toward a symphonic idiom. Count Razumovsky requested the inclusion of a Russian folk theme in each quartet; in the E minor quartet, it appears in the trio section of the *scherzo* movement. Titled *Glory to the Sun*, the song had been transcribed by the great Russian polymath and ethnographer Nikolai Lvov, and set to music by his collaborator Ivan Prach; their *Collection of Russian Folk Songs with Their Tunes* had likely been put into Beethoven's hands by Razumovsky himself. Also

PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

noteworthy is the radiant E major slow movement, a prayerful *Molto adagio* that according to Beethoven's friend, Carl Czerny, was inspired by

the composer's contemplation of a starry night and his attempt to evoke the music of the spheres.

Kathryn L. Libin © 2016

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Embodying the quintessential elements of a fine chamber music ensemble, the **Danish String Quartet** has established a reputation for an integrated sound, impeccable intonation and judicious balance. With technical and interpretive talents matched by an infectious joy for music-making and "rampaging energy" (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*), the quartet is in demand worldwide by concert and festival presenters alike. Since making their debut in 2002 at the Copenhagen Festival, the musical friends have demonstrated a passion for Scandinavian composers, whom they frequently incorporate into adventurous contemporary programs, while also giving skilled and profound interpretations of the classical masters. *The New York Times* selected the quartet's concerts as highlights of 2012 and 2015, praising "one of the most powerful renditions of Beethoven's Opus 132 String Quartet that I've heard live or on a recording," and "the adventurous young members of the Danish String Quartet play almost everything excitingly." The Danish String Quartet received the 2016 Borletti Buitoni Trust provided to support outstanding young artists in their international endeavors, joining a small, illustrious roster of past recipients since the Trust's founding in 2003.

The Danish String Quartet's 2016-2017 season includes debuts at the Tanglewood, Caramoor and Edinburgh Festivals and Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, where the group perform Shostakovich's *String Quartet in E flat minor* as well as Schubert *Cello Quintet* with eminent Swedish cellist Torleif Thedéen. In addition to

their New York engagement, the quartet's robust North American schedule takes them to Salt Lake City, Stanford, Ashland and Portland (OR), Vancouver, Kansas City (MO), Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Chicago, Boston, Orono, Washington DC, Rochester, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Kalamazoo, Detroit, St. Paul and Denver. Internationally, they perform in their home country, Denmark, as well as throughout Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland, Israel and in South America. As champions of contemporary music from Scandinavian composers, the Quartet premieres a new work by Rolf Wallin titled *Swans Kissing* based on the 1914 series of paintings, *The Swan*, by Swedish painter Hilma af Klint. This work was commissioned by the Quartet for its world premiere in London's Wigmore Hall in September.

The Quartet's recent debut recording on ECM Records features works of Danish composers Hans Abrahamsen and Per Nørgård and English composer Thomas Adés and received five stars from *The Guardian*, praised as "an exacting program requiring grace, grit and clarity and the Danish players sound terrific...It's a sophisticated performance." The recording debuted at #16 on the Billboard Classical Chart and continues to earn international acclaim. They also recently presented the US premiere of Danish composer Thomas Agerfeldt Olesen's *Quartet No. 7 "The Extinguishable"* at the University of Chicago. In addition to their commitment to highlighting Scandinavian composers, the Danish String Quartet derive great pleasure in traditional Nordic folk music.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS CONTINUED

Since winning the Danish Radio P2 Chamber Music Competition in 2004, the quartet has been greatly desired throughout Denmark, and in October 2016 they present their tenth annual DSQ Festival, a four-day event held in Copenhagen that brings together musical friends the Quartet has met on its travels. In 2009 the Danish String Quartet won First Prize in the 11th London International String Quartet Competition, as well as four additional prizes from the same jury. This competition is now called the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, and the Danish String Quartet has performed at the famed hall on several occasions, including their final concert of the 2015-2016 season performing a program of Beethoven, Janáček and Nielsen.

The Danish String Quartet was awarded First Prize in the Vagn Holmboe String Quartet Competition and the Charles Hennen International Chamber Music Competition in Holland First Prize as well as the Audience Prize in the Trondheim International String Quartet Competition in 2005. They were awarded the 2010 NORDMETALL-Ensemble Prize at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival in Germany and, in 2011, received the prestigious Carl Nielsen Prize.

In 2006, the Danish String Quartet was Danish Radio's Artist-in-Residence, giving them the opportunity to record all of Carl Nielsen's string quartets in the Danish Radio Concert Hall, subsequently released to critical acclaim on the Dacapo label in 2007 and 2008. *The New York Times* review said: "These Danish players have excelled in performances of works by Brahms, Mozart and Bartok in New York in recent years. But they play Nielsen's quartets as if they owned them." In 2012 the Danish String Quartet released an acclaimed recording of Haydn and Brahms quartets on the German AVI-music label.

Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* said: "What makes the performance special is the maturity and calm of the playing, even during virtuosic passages that whisk by. This is music making of wonderful ease and naturalness." They recorded works by Brahms and Fuchs with award-winning clarinetist Sebastian Manz at the Bayerische Rundfunk in Munich, released by AVI-music in 2014, and are currently signed with ECM Records.

Violinists Frederik Øland and Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen and violist Asbjørn Nørgaard met as children at a music summer camp where they played both soccer and music together, eventually making the transition into a serious string quartet in their teens and studying at Copenhagen's Royal Academy of Music. In 2008 the three Danes were joined by Norwegian cellist Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin. The Danish String Quartet was primarily taught and mentored by Professor Tim Frederiksen and have participated in master classes with the Tokyo and Emerson String Quartets, Alasdair Tait, Paul Katz, Hugh Maguire, Levon Chilingirian and Gábor Takács-Nagy. This is the Danish String Quartet's first engagement at the Hopkins Center. www.danishquartet.com

Asbjørn Nørgaard viola (b. 1984) has established himself as one of the most sought after viola players in Denmark and is the recipient of multiple accolades, including Jacob Gade's large music grant and Sonnings Music Scholarship. First and foremost, Nørgaard is a vivid chamber musician and has founded The Danish String Quartet as well as Inviolata, a viola-accordion duo. With these two ensembles, he is prize winner in several national and international competitions and has recorded a plethora of CDs, the latest being a recording of all J.S. Bach's Viola da Gamba Sonatas. In addition to this, Nørgaard is an experienced orchestral

ABOUT THE ARTISTS CONTINUED

player, and has led the viola sections of the Copenhagen Philharmonic and the Danish National Chamber Orchestra.

Nørgaard has studied in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Berlin. He graduated from the soloist scheme at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in 2013 performing Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* at the Radio Hall in Copenhagen. At the moment he is learning to speak Portuguese and his favorite writer is Thomas Mann. He is a huge fan of encyclopedias and is always reading something about everything.

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen violin (b. 1983) started playing violin at the age of five after a failed attempt of learning the accordion. Now he is the concert master of Copenhagen Philharmonic, teacher at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, violinist in the Danish String Quartet and a well known soloist in Denmark. In 2008, Sørensen was the only Danish semi-finalist at the international Carl Nielsen Competition in Odense, and he also received a prize for best performance of The danish pieces in the competition. He has always been a curious musician. He has been playing folk music most of his life, he is educated in organ and church music and he always likes a good jam session.

Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin cello (b. 1982) has the honor of being the only Norwegian member of The Danish String Quartet. However (and this is often pointed out during rehearsals), as Norway

was effectually a tributary to Denmark until 1814, he is actually sort of Danish. Sjölin grew up in Trondheim, where he had his first cello lessons as a six-year old at the local music school. After finishing high school, he moved to Stockholm to study with Torlief Thedéen. In 2007 he graduated from the diploma-programme and subsequently won a place in the prestigious two-year "intro klassisk" scheme, run by Concerts Norway. In 1996 he won Norway's national competition for young string players, and two years later he won the second prize in EMCY's international competition. He has performed as soloist with several of the Norwegian orchestras including: The Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Trondheim Symphony Orchesra and the Bergen Philharmonic.

Frederik Øland violin (b. 1984) was educated by Serguei Azizian in Copenhagen and Ulf Wallin in Berlin. In 2009 at the age of 23 he won the position as concert master at Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra. The same year he was also employed as a teacher of violin and chamber music at The Royal Danish Academy of Music. Øland has been awarded various Danish prizes such as grants from Jacob Gade Foundation, Victor Borge Foundation and Léonie Sonning Foundation. He has appeared several times as a soloist, most recently with his colleagues in Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra. In his spare time he relaxes in his apartment in the Vesterbro-borough in central Copenhagen.

CONNECTING ARTISTS TO THE COMMUNITY

While at Dartmouth, the Danish String Quartet visited a class in the Music Department, coached student chamber musicians, joined students and faculty for dinner and conversation, and will participate in a post-performance discussion. For more information on Hop Outreach & Arts Education, call 603.646.2010 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach.



PIOTR ANDERSZEWSKI *piano*

tue FEB 14 • 7 pm • SPAULDING AUDITORIUM

Program includes works by Bach, Chopin and Mozart played with expressive musical imagination and sublime technique.



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HILARY HAHN *violin* **with ROBERT LEVIN** *piano*

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Grammy-winning violinist plays probing interpretations of Bach, Mozart, Schubert and more.



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wed MAY 3 • 7 pm • SPAULDING AUDITORIUM

Led by charismatic harpsichord virtuoso Jeanette Sorrell, a brilliant sextet from this early music ensemble channels the music of Bach, Telemann and Vivaldi.



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