Hopkins Center for the Arts
at Dartmouth

presents

ChamberWorks
A Musical Joke

Letitia Quante, violin
David Horak, violin and viola
Marcia Cassidy, viola
John Dunlop, cello
Patrick Kennelly, horn
Michael Huang ’20, horn

Sun, Jan 19, 1 pm
Top of the Hop • Dartmouth College • 2020

ChamberWorks is a series of free concerts presented by the Hop and the Dartmouth Department of Music, showcasing the talent of faculty and special guests, and is made possible by support from the Griffith Fund.

Program

Horn Quartet in E flat Major, K. 407 — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Rondo: Allegro

Quartet in C major, Op. 33, no. 3 *The Bird* — Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

I. Allegro Moderato
II. Scherzo – Allegro
III. Largo
IV. Presto

Ein Musikalischer Spass (A Musical Joke), K. 522 — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

I. Allegro
II. Menuetto and trio
III. Adagio cantabile
IV. Presto

Program Notes

Horn Quintet in E flat major K. 407
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart's works containing parts for the horn can broadly be put in two categories: those written for hornists whose playing he knew and esteemed, and those who couldn't be trusted. Of the first category, to which his Horn Quintet K. 407 belongs, most were written for his friend Joseph Leitgeb (or Leutgeb). Although Leitgab was much older than Mozart, they were evidently fairly close; Mozart dedicated his third Horn Concerto K. 447 to Leitgeb—teasingly calling him, in the dedication, an "ox, ass, and simpleton"—as well as writing at least another three concerti (K. 412, 417, and 495) and a concert rondo (K. 371) for him.

Leitgeb was, apart from his acquaintance with the Mozart family (he also borrowed money from Mozart's father, Leopold), a hornist of considerable renown in the latter half of the 18th century, touring through Italy, Germany and Austria and earning a considerable salary during a brief stint with Haydn's orchestra in Esterhazy. Unfortunately, recent scholarship has cast doubt on the idea, long-cherished by horn players, that he retired from playing to open a cheesemonger's shop on the outskirts of Vienna.

But even if those biographical details were unknown, the music Mozart wrote for Leitgab leaves little doubt about his virtuosity. The Horn Quintet is essentially a chamber concerto, calling on the full range of abilities of a solo hornist of the time. The work is oddly scored by Mozart, calling for two violas instead of the more usual two violins, perhaps to bring into relief the horn part, sitting as it does mostly in the middle register, or perhaps simply to suit the musicians for available for the occasion. Whatever the reason, the effect is to bring into sharp relief the violin and horn, which exchange and develop melodic material.

Approx duration: 60 minutes

The first movement is an allegro in typically Mozartian sonata form, with its effortless proliferation of themes, each seemingly more beautiful than the last. After a relatively brief sequential development, which instead of developing previous material introduces yet more, Mozart proceeds with a straightforward recapitulation of the brief forte introduction and lyrical first theme. However, the themes that follow are more like variations of their initial forms. A more parsimonious composer might have made two or three whole movements with less!

The second movement is a lyrical andante, presenting its theme first in the violin and then developing it in the horn. After a brief foray into contrasting key areas and tessituras the theme returns, now shared intimately by horn and violin. The coda features a theme shared with an aria from Mozart's opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, leading some to suppose that it was written around the same time.

Unlike the rondos of his horn concerti, the third movement of the Horn Quintet, also in rondo form, is quite a lively movement in tempo, showing off the technical capabilities of the natural horn for which it was written. The movement contains its own sly joke: the rondo theme, which sounds for all the world as if it begins on the strong beat of the measure, instead starts on a pickup note, a trick not revealed until a discomfiting rhythmic hiccup precedes the episode that follows it. The movement closes with the requisite acrobatic horn arpeggio as well as a final presentation of the theme in wonderful, close, five-part counterpoint, followed by an ebullient finish.

—Patrick Kennelly

Quartet in C major, op. 33, no. 2 *The Joke*
Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

For almost a decade the usually prolific Haydn produced no string quartet, a medium, along with the symphony, to which his paternity is ascribed, with 83 quartets to his credit. In 1781, when he returned to composing in this medium, he produced a six-pack of quartets. (Both Mozart and Haydn were given to writing string quartets in groups of 6. In fact, these quartets would be the inspiration for Mozart's "Haydn" quartets). These works, Op. 33, Nos. 1- 6, have become collectively known as the "Russian Quartets." Why? Because they were dedicated to the then Grand Duke Paul of Russia, the future Tsar Paul II.

They were also known as the "Jungfernquartette" (the Maiden Quartets) because the cover of the printed edition featured a picture of a young woman. But they were also known as "the scherzos", because the typical minuet movement found in previous quartets was replaced by the scherzo, also in three-quarter time but usually at a livelier tempo than the stately court dance.

Haydn scholar Karl Geiringer, in his book Haydn: *A Creative Life in Music 2*, writes that Haydn temporarily abandoned the string quartet form because "the progressive Haydn ... wanted unification and concentration, but not knowing how to achieve them adequately, he renounced the compositions of string quartets for the time being and it was not until nine years later that he found a solution to his problem."

The "Russian" quartets used thematic elaboration—a method of dissecting the subjects of the exposition and then developing and reassembling the resulting fragments in an unexpected manner. Furthermore, Geiringer writes, "all instruments as a matter of course were given equal shares in the melodic work. Even the accompanying and purely filling parts were based on motives taken from the main subjects."

It is said that the Russian quartets were premiered on Christmas Day in Vienna, in the apartment of Grand Duke Paul's wife, Grand Duchess Maria Feodorovna, a piano pupil of Haydn. As for the quartet to be heard today, Op. 33 No. 2, if you pay attention through to the end: *The Joke* should require no explanation!

—Joseph Way

Ein Musikalischer Spass (A Musical Joke) K. 522
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

We know nothing about what occasioned the creation of this, perhaps Mozart's most unusual work. It was begun probably before the end of 1785 and was entered in his personal catalog of works some two years later, in June 1787. Clearly this was something Mozart's mind kept coming back to, because it is unlikely to have been undertaken for anything but his own pleasure. The butt of the joke seems to be many of the lesser composers among Mozart's contemporaries, for the piece is full of intentional compositional mistakes. Much of the fun is obvious to a casual listener even today, but many of the "jokes" are a little obscure to a modern ear, since many of the devices used by Mozart—such as whole tone

scales, polytonality, use of extreme registers and parallel perfect intervals—have since become ordinary parts of many composers' musical language.

The first movement begins with a conventional if vapid theme which immediately goes awry, turning back on itself by repeating its first measure and beginning again. Mercifully, Mozart only loops this twice (a video on YouTube extends it for 10 hours). Next we hear some filler material devoid of musical interest, followed by a failed attempt to modulate to the dominant key area, only to jump there instead. The rest of the movement hashes out the basics of sonata form, but entirely without meaningful content, topped off by a slightly ridiculous march-like coda and a fanfare-like extension of the final cadence by the horns, reminiscent of Handel's Water Music, and about fifty years out of fashion.

The second movement minuet, marked maestoso, begins ordinarily enough, until the entry of the horns gives us the first real pratfall of the piece. Horns in Mozart's day had no valves, and hornists were required to supplement the notes of the natural harmonic series, modifying adjacent notes by stopping up the bell with their hand. Marked "dolce"(!) the first horn part notates something Mozart must have been hearing his whole life, a lazy or incompetent hornist failing to correct the pitch of an ordinary written A and F instead producing just what Mozart notates, a discordant A flat and F sharp. This seems to distract the second horn player who forgets his hand technique and reverses the normal pattern of stopped and open notes, throwing the whole passage into disarray. The trio that follows, is not only considerably longer than the minuet, but also features ridiculous out of place forte notes in the strings, more vacuous filler material, and horn writing in a ridiculously high tessitura for a simple accompaniment.

The third movement is in many ways the highlight (lowlight?) of the work. It is an extended solo for the first violin, in what must have been to Mozart the poorest possible taste. The soloist begins the movement in the wrong key (G major) and gradually works around to the tonic key of C, all the while filling what is marked as *adagio cantabile* with a completely out of place show of virtuosic technique in the guise of ornamentation. In Mozart's time it was quite ordinary for soloists to ornament a part with extra trills, scales and grace notes, and Mozart gives us what must be an only slightly exaggerated version of what he must have had to endure on many occasions. After a bizarre unison passage we are treated to a long cadenza at the end of which the first violin climbs ever higher and ever more out of tune. Here Mozart carefully notates the "out of tune" notes that such a presumptuous and poor violinist would have been producing, ending with a whole tone scale, followed by a comical pizzicato and cadential trill to the wrong note! And watch out for the ending.

The last movement is a spirited presto which features a pathetic fugato which seems to have been based on an actual fugato written by one of Mozart's less gifted pupils, Thomas Atwood. Not only does the countersubject lack any substance, but the bass drops out before the last voice even enters. Also featured in this movement is a theme stolen from Mozart himself, a snippet of the Alleluia from his motet *Exultate Jubilate*. But alas, the thief has slightly misremembered the theme, condensing the first four measures into two. This is followed by a sort of "winding down" of the music, as if the musicians are dozing off. They keep repeating the same few notes, until suddenly they start in their sleep, awaken and resume their energetic playing. The fugato, "Alleluia" music and "winding down" all return, leading us to a last presentation of the theme, this time featuring some wonderful counterpoint "accidentally" created when the viola gets off by half a measure. At the very end Mozart gives us one of the earliest instances of polytonality, with each of the strings in a different key and only the horns persevering in the home key of F major. But Mozart was not that far ahead of his time. Here the meaning is obvious: just kidding!

—Patrick Kennelly

About the Artists

Letitia Quante studied as a child at Hartt Music School and performed in Australia, Japan, Belgium, France, and Alice Tully and Carnegie Halls in New York. At age 11 she entered Juilliard pre-college and also minored in conducting, graduating at age 15. She worked as a violinist, was apprentice conductor to the NY Youth Symphony, completed her Suzuki teacher training at School for Strings, and earned a BMA at Peabody Conservatory. She played principal with Mid-Atlantic Symphony and assistant concertmaster with Lancaster Symphony, and concertized both as a soloist and chamber musician with other ensembles in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. She has performed with diverse musicians such as Mikhail Kopelman, Leon Fleisher, Eugene Drucker, Phil Setzer, Sarah Chang, Kanye West, Bajofondo, and Natalia Lafourcade. She has also performed with Singapore Symphony, New World Symphony, Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas, and the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra.

Since moving to Vermont in 2012, Quante performs with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, as concertmaster for Vermont Philharmonic Orchestra, Burlington Chamber Orchestra, Middlebury Opera, Vermont Virtuosi, the piano trio Stellaria (with Claire Black and John Dunlop), and new string quartet Arka (with Brooke Quiggins, Stefanie Taylor and John Dunlop). Letitia is playing on an 1840 Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume on generous loan from Vermont Violins.

David Horak is a native of Vermont. He has performed as a soloist on both violin and piano, collaborating with the Windham Orchestra, University of Vermont Orchestra and the Burlington Chamber Orchestra. He has participated in summer festivals, including Opera North (NH), the National Youth Orchestra (USA), Decoda Chamber Music Institute, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Kinhaven Music School and Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music. He has played with the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra since the Fall of 2013. He is the concertmaster of the International Center for Music's orchestra at Park University, where he is majoring in violin performance, studying with Ben Sayevich.

Marcia Cassidy is a chamber music recitalist, teacher and freelance violist. As a member of the faculty of Dartmouth College, she teaches violin and viola, coordinates and coaches chamber music, and leads sectionals for the Dartmouth Symphony. She is a member of the Musicians of the Old Post Road (a Boston-area period-instrument chamber music ensemble), frequently performs with the Vermont Symphony, and is principal violist of Opera North (NH). As the violist of the Franciscan String Quartet, she performed extensively in the United States, Europe, Canada and Japan to critical acclaim. The quartet was honored with many awards and honors including first prize in the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Press and City of Evian Prizes at the Evian International String Quartet Competition. She has participated in numerous summer music festivals including Aspen, Banff, Blossom, Norfolk, and Tanglewood. Raised near San Antonio, Cassidy pursued her musical training at the University of Texas, University of New Mexico, New England Conservatory and San Francisco Conservatory, and with the Tokyo String Quartet at the Yale School of Music.

John Dunlop has been playing and teaching cello in Vermont for over 30 years. Raised in Burlington, he received degrees from Oberlin College and the San Francisco Conservatory before returning to join the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, where he has played as principal cellist for almost twenty years. As a founding member of both the VSO Jukebox Quartet and the TURN ensemble, he has been an advocate for new music and performs both classical and contemporary music in unconventional venues, reaching out to both veteran music lovers and younger audiences. He has performed with such popular entertainers as Bernadette Peters, Lyle Lovett, Trey Anastasio and Lucius. In addition, he has scored and performed several award-winning short films, performing on cello, guitar and bouzouki. Dunlop has also performed extensively as principal cellist with the Burlington Chamber Orchestra, Eleva Chamber Players, Opera North, Opera Company of Middlebury and the Green Mountain Opera. He teaches cello at Dartmouth College as well as maintaining a private studio in Richmond, Vermont, where he has trained several generations of conservatory-bound students.

About the Artists *continued*

Patrick Kennelly was born in Denton, Texas, and began playing the horn at age 11. He studied at the University of North Texas and was a freelance musician in the Dallas area before serving as principal horn for Symphony of the State of Mexico. He subsequently worked as third horn and later associate principal horn for the Mexico City Philharmonic. He also was a member of the Mexico City Woodwind Quintet with whom he maintained an active performing, recording and teaching schedule, and he was a member of the Mineria Symphony Orchestra for several summers. He has taught horn and chamber music at the Conservatory of the State of Mexico, the Ollin Yolitzli Music School, the National Arts Center (Mexico) and Radford University. Since moving to New England he has performed with the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra, the Handel Society and Opera North and is horn instructor at Dartmouth College. He lives in Lebanon, NH.

Michael Huang '20 is from Hershey, PA and is currently a senior at Dartmouth. He first picked up the French horn at age 10 and has loved it ever since, currently playing with the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra and studying under Patrick Kennelly. In addition to music, he enjoys cooking, learning about genetics as a biology major, and skiing during the winters. Next year, Huang will be in an even colder place (Minneapolis) working as a healthcare consultant, and is planning on applying to medical school.