



PHOTO BY SARAH GARDNER

**SONIC ILLINOIS:
JUPITER STRING QUARTET
WITH TODD PALMER, CLARINET**

Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

PROGRAM

SONIC ILLINOIS:

JUPITER STRING QUARTET WITH TODD PALMER, CLARINET

Nelson Lee, violin

Megan Freivogel, violin

Liz Freivogel, viola

Daniel McDonough, cello

with

Todd Palmer, clarinet, bass clarinet, basset horn

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581 (1789)

Allegro

Larghetto

Menuetto

Allegretto con variazioni

Oswaldo Golijov
(b. 1960)

Yiddishbbuk, inscriptions for string quartet (1992)

Ia. D.W.(1932-1944, Ib. F.B. (1930-1944), Ic., T.K. (1934-1943)

I.B.S. (1904-1991)

L.B. (1918-1990)

20-minute intermission

Oswaldo Golijov
(b. 1960)

The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind, for clarinet and string quartet (1994)

Prelude: Calmo, sospeso

I. Agitato—Con Fuoco—Maestoso—Senza misura, oscillante

II. Teneramente—Ruvido—Presto

III. Calmo, Sospeso—Allegro pesante

Postlude: Lento, liberamente



This program is a Sonic Illinois event, a month-long celebration of the extraordinary diversity of today's vital contemporary music scene. Sonic Illinois is a collaboration of Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and the School of Music.

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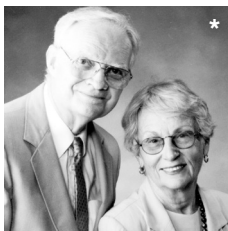
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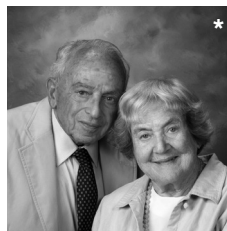
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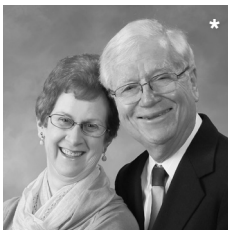
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PROGRAM NOTES

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria

Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria

Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581

Like Brahms a hundred years later, Mozart was inspired to compose for the clarinet by a gifted clarinetist. Arguably the crowning piece in Mozart's entire chamber music outpouring, the *Clarinet Quintet* was written in the autumn of 1789 for his friend Anton Stadler for whom he also wrote his great *Clarinet Concerto*.

From the gracious opening statement of the first movement *Allegro*, the clarinet dominates. The strings gracefully accept with beautiful obligato parts rather than simple accompaniment. In the second theme of the first movement we hear hints of *The Magic Flute*, soon to come in 1791. The famous *Larghetto* is a gorgeous song for the clarinet, which includes a dialogue with the first violin. The third movement *Minuetto* explores the virtuosic possibilities of the clarinet. While the following *Trio* section of the movement opens for strings alone, a simple country dance, a *ländler*, is later offered by the clarinet before the challenging variations of the final movement. These six variations are both complex ornamentations and developments. As Brahms would do in the variations of his *Clarinet Quintet*, Mozart explores the viola, giving the movement some dark moments before its happy ending.

The composition of the *Quintet* coincided with that of *Così fan tutte*, which explains much of its operatic quality. Interestingly, the last movement of the *Quintet* is reflected in Ferrando's aria, "Ah lo veggio," from Act II of *Così*. Operatic qualities in Mozart, however, are not confined to the *Clarinet Quintet* but pervade all of his work.

In 1983 the *Clarinet Quintet* famously entered popular culture in the final episode of the television series *M*A*S*H* when one of the main characters, Major Charles Winchester, was portrayed teaching the piece to a group of Chinese prisoners of war.

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OSVALDO GOLIJOV

Born December 5, 1960, in La Plata, Argentina

Yiddishbbuk, inscriptions for string quartet

The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind

Oswaldo Golijov grew up in an Eastern European Jewish household in La Plata, Argentina. Born to a piano teacher mother and physician father, Golijov was raised surrounded by classical chamber music, Jewish liturgical and klezmer music, and the new tango of Astor Piazzolla. After studying piano at the local conservatory and composition with Gerardo Gandini, he moved to Israel in 1983, where he studied with Mark Kopytman at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy and immersed himself in the colliding musical traditions of that city. In 1986 Golijov moved to the United States and earned his PhD at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied with George Crumb and was a fellow at Tanglewood, studying with Oliver Knussen.

Golijov has received numerous commissions from major ensembles and institutions in the United States and Europe. He is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and the Vilcek Prize, among other awards. In January and February 2006, Lincoln Center presented a sold-out festival called *The Passion of Oswaldo Golijov*, featuring multiple performances of his major works. In

2007 he was named first composer-in-residence at the Mostly Mozart Festival. He has also been composer-in-residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Spoleto USA Festival; the Los Angeles Philharmonic's *Music Alive* series; Marlboro Music; and Ravinia, Ojai, Trondheim, and Holland festivals. For the 2012-13 season, Golijov held the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall in New York. Golijov is Loyola Professor of Music at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he has taught since 1991. He also taught for several years at Tanglewood, has led workshops at Carnegie Hall with Dawn Upshaw, and teaches in the summers at the Sundance Composers Lab.

Golijov has scored the soundtracks for Francis Ford Coppola's *Youth Without Youth*, *Tetro* (both released by Deutsche Grammophon), and *Twixt*; for Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu's *Darkness 9'11'* (with Gustavo Santaolalla); and for Laura Poitras' documentary *The Oath*. Other recent works include *Azul*, a cello concerto for Yo-Yo Ma and the Boston Symphony; *Rose of the Winds*, premiered by the Silk Road Ensemble and the Chicago Symphony under Miguel Harth-Bedoya; and *She Was Here*, a work based on Schubert's *Lieder* premiered by Dawn Upshaw and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

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YIDDISHBBUK, INSCRIPTIONS FOR STRING QUARTET

"A broken song played on a shattered cymbalon." Thus, writes Kafka, begins *Yiddishbbuk*, a collection of apocryphal psalms, which he read while living in Prague's street of the alchemists. The only remnants of the collection are a few

verses interspersed among the entries of his notebooks, and the last lines are also quoted in a letter to Milena: "No one sings as purely as those who are in the deepest hell. Theirs is the song which we confused with that of the angels." Written in Hebrew characters and surrounded with musical notation, marks similar to those of the genuine texts, the psalms' only other reference to their music is: "In the mode of the Babylonian Lamentations." Based on these vestiges, these inscriptions for string quartet are an attempt to reconstruct that music.

The movements of the piece bear the initials of persons commemorated in the work. The first movement commemorates three children interned by the Nazis at the Terezin: Doris Weiserova (1932-1944), Frantisek Bass (1930-1944), and Tomas Kauders (1934-1943). Their poems and drawings appear in the book, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, published by the United States Holocaust Museum. The second movement bears the initials of the writer Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991), and the last movement the initials of Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990).

© Osvaldo Golijov

THE DREAMS AND PRAYERS OF ISAAC THE BLIND

Eight centuries ago Isaac The Blind, the great kabbalist rabbi of Provence, dictated a manuscript in which he asserted that all things and events in the universe are products of combinations of the Hebrew alphabet's letters: "Their root is in a name, for the letters are like branches, which appear in the manner of flickering flames, mobile, and nevertheless linked to the coal." His conviction still resonates today:

don't we have scientists who believe that the clue to our life and fate is hidden in other codes?

Isaac's lifelong devotion to his art is as striking as that of string quartets and klezmer musicians. In their search for something that arises from tangible elements but transcends them, they are all reaching a state of communion. Gershom Scholem, the preeminent scholar of Jewish mysticism, says that "Isaac and his disciples do not speak of ecstasy, of a unique act of stepping outside oneself in which human consciousness abolishes itself. *Debhequth* (communion) is a constant state, nurtured and renewed through meditation." If communion is not the reason, how else would one explain the strange life that Isaac led, or the decades during which groups of four souls dissolve their individuality into single, higher organisms, called string quartets? How would one explain the chain of klezmer generations that, while blessing births, weddings, and burials, were trying to discover the melody that could be set free from itself and become only air, spirit, *ruakh*?

The movements of this work sound to me as if written in three of the different languages spoken by the Jewish people throughout our history. This somehow reflects the composition's epic nature. I hear the Prelude and the first movement, the most ancient, in Arameic; the second movement is in Yiddish, the rich and fragile language of a long exile; the third movement and Postlude are in sacred Hebrew.

The Prelude and the first movement simultaneously explore two prayers in different ways. The quartet plays the first part of the central prayer of the High Holidays, "We will observe the mighty holiness of this day...", while the clarinet dreams the motifs from "Our Father,

Our King." The second movement is based on "The Old Klezmer Band," a traditional dance tune, which is surrounded here by contrasting manifestations of its own halo. The third movement was written before all the others. It is an instrumental version of *K'Vakar*, a work that I wrote a few years ago for Kronos and Cantor Misha Alexandrovich. The meaning of the word *klezmer* (instrument of song), becomes clear when one hears David Krakauer's interpretation of the cantor's line. This movement, together with the Postlude, bring to conclusion the prayer left open in the first movement: "...Thou pass and record, count and visit, every living soul, appointing the measure of every creature's life and decreeing its destiny."

But blindness is as important in this work as dreaming and praying. I had always the intuition that, in order to achieve the highest possible intensity in a performance, musicians should play, metaphorically speaking, "blind." That is why, I think, all legendary bards in cultures around the world, starting with Homer, are said to be blind. Blindness is probably the secret of great string quartets whose members don't need their eyes to communicate among themselves, with the music, or with the audience. My homage to all of them and Isaac of Provence is this work for blind musicians so they can play it by heart. Blindness, then, reminded me of how to compose music as it was in the beginning: an art that springs from and relies on our ability to sing and hear with the power to build castles of sound in our memories.

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PROFILES

The **JUPITER STRING QUARTET** stands at the forefront of the younger generation of classical chamber music ensembles. Formed in 2002, they concertize across the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and South America performing in the world's finest halls, including New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center; the Kennedy Center, Corcoran Gallery, and Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; Boston's Jordan Hall; London's Wigmore Hall; Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes; the Esterházy Palace in Austria; and Seoul's National Arts Center and Sejong Chamber Hall. Recent concerts include performances in Aspen, Buffalo, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Middlebury, Montreal, Napa, New Haven, New Orleans, Portland, San Diego, San Jose, Seoul, and Washington, D.C., to name just a few.

They have been enthusiastically welcomed at major music festivals in North America, including Aspen, Bowdoin, Caramoor, Rockport, Yellow Barn, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Madeline Island, Skaneateles, Honest Brook, the Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, Banff, and Lanaudiere Festival, and abroad at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in Ireland and the Seoul Spring Festival, among many others.

The Jupiter String Quartet feels a particular connection to the core string quartet repertoire. They have presented the complete Beethoven string quartets at the Aspen Music Festival and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Another complete cycle is in progress at the Lanaudiere Festival in Quebec. Last year, they performed the complete Bartók string quartets at the University of Illinois. Their commitment to new music is demonstrated through a series of commissioned works, including string quartets

from Sid Hodkinson, Hannah Lash, and Dan Visconti, as well as Mark Adamo's *Aristotle*, with baritone Thomas Hampson, and a forthcoming quintet by Pierre Jalbert. The quartet can be heard on nine recordings on various labels including Azica Records, Marquis Classics, and Deutsche Grammophon. Their most recent CD, *Rootsongs*, features Dvořák's "*American*" *String Quartet* with Stephen Andrew Taylor's arrangements of four African-American spirituals, sung by Ollie Watts Davis, and Dan Visconti's *Ramshackle Songs*, a work inspired by the music of Tin Pan Alley and commissioned by the ensemble.

The quartet has received several musical distinctions: an Avery Fisher Career Grant (2008), Grand Prize in the Banff International String Quartet Competition (2004), Grand Prize in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition (2004), membership in Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society Two (2007-2010), and Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award (2007), which "honors and promotes a rising young string quartet whose artistry demonstrates that it is in the process of establishing a major career." They also won the 2005 Young Concert Artists International auditions. The Jupiter String Quartet is a particularly intimate group, consisting of violinists Nelson Lee and Meg Freivogel, violist Liz Freivogel (Meg's sister), and cellist Daniel McDonough (Meg's husband). Daniel, Nelson, and Meg met at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and when they were searching for a violist Meg suggested her sister Liz, who was at nearby Oberlin College. The four finished their schooling together at the New England Conservatory of Music in the Professional String Quartet Training Program.

The quartet chose Jupiter as its namesake; it was the most prominent planet in the night sky at the time of its formation. Its astrological symbol resembles the number four and numerous musical references emphasize connotations of happiness and strength associated with the Roman god. The quartet owes much of its musical philosophy to the influences of the original Cleveland Quartet and the current Takács Quartet, in which all four members form a dynamic and democratic union. The Jupiters spent their formative years under the instruction of these eminent chamber musicians, and continue to adhere to many of their central principles today.

The Jupiter String Quartet is in its fifth year as Artists-In-Residence at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where each member maintains a private studio as well as responsibility for running the chamber music program. In addition to its formal concert and teaching schedule, the Jupiter String Quartet places a strong emphasis on developing relationships with future classical music audiences through outreach work in the schools and other educational performances. They believe that chamber music, because of the intensity of its interplay and communication, is one of the most effective ways of spreading an enthusiasm for “classical” music to new audiences.

TODD PALMER (clarinet) is a three-time Grammy-nominated clarinetist. Having been involved in an array of creative and diverse artistic presentations throughout his career, he has appeared as performance artist, concerto soloist, recitalist, chamber music collaborator, educator, arranger, and presenter in a variety of musical endeavors around the world. He has appeared as soloist with many symphony and chamber orchestras including those of Houston, Atlanta, St. Paul, Cincinnati, Montréal, and BBC Scotland, and has

shared the stage with a variety of the world’s most renowned artists and ensembles such as sopranos Kathleen Battle, Renée Fleming, Elizabeth Futral, Heidi Grant Murphy, and Dawn Upshaw; and the St. Lawrence, Brentano, Borromeo, Chiara, Daedelus, Lark, Pacifica, and Ying string quartets.

Palmer has collaborated with numerous composers including Thomas Adès, David Bruce, Ricky Ian Gordon, Christopher Rouse, Mason Bates, Ned Rorem, George Tsontakis, and Osvaldo Golijov. He commissioned Ricky Ian Gordon’s theatre work *Orpheus and Euridice*, which has been presented by numerous organizations including Great Performers at Lincoln Center, Chicago Opera Theater, Long Beach Opera, Roanoke Opera, Long Leaf Opera, and Urban Arias of Washington, D.C. He has also gone on to champion Osvaldo Golijov’s klezmer clarinet quintet *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind* and gave the world premiere of David Bruce’s *Gumboots* at Carnegie Hall with the St. Lawrence Quartet.

He was the first wind player to be awarded the grand prize in the Ima Hogg Young Artist Auditions and later went on to win the Young Concert Artist International Auditions in New York City. Palmer has appeared as recitalist and lecturer at major performing arts centers and universities in 48 states. His appearances abroad have included concerto, recital, and chamber music performances in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, England, Canada, Mexico, Columbia, Brazil, the Caribbean, Japan, Taiwan, and China. He has been a participant for 22 years at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina, and was a member of the highly popular touring group Spoleto Chamber Music USA, which was heard around the U.S. for 10 years and on annual NPR broadcasts. He has

attended many other summer music festivals in the United States and Canada over the years including Ravinia, Music@Menlo, Banff, La Jolla SummerFest, Bravo!, the Caramoor, Cartagena, Bridgehampton, Portland, Rockport, Halifax, and Vancouver Chamber Music Festivals. He also participated for five summers at the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont, as well as the Tanglewood Music Festival, where he received the Leonard Bernstein Fellowship. In addition to a wealth of chamber music performances, he has also held principal clarinet positions in the Minnesota Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Gotham Opera of New York City, the Grand Teton Festival, and in Lincoln Center's revivals of *South Pacific* and *The King & I*. Moreover, Palmer has also collaborated with director Robert La Page in *The Nightingale and Other Fables* at BAM, and choreographers Doug Varone, Lar Lubovitch, and Mark Morris, for whom he gave the world premiere of *Crosswalk*, a new work for clarinet and dance especially created for him in 2013.

Also an arranger for a variety of mixed ensembles, Palmer has had many of his works performed at various festivals and venues throughout the country and on many annual broadcasts on NPR's *Performance Today*—these most notably being his *Première Rhapsodie* of Debussy (published by Boosey & Hawkes); chamber nonets of Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*, and a suite from André Messager's ballet *The Two Pigeons*. Palmer has also been featured on recordings for EMI, DG, Koch, Naxos, and Ghostlight.