

ArtPower
University of California San Diego

DOVER QUARTET & AVI AVITAL

February 17, 2017 at 8 pm

Department of Music's Conrad Prebys Concert Hall



ArtPower presents
**Dover Quartet
& Avi Avital**
February 17, 2017 at 8 pm
Department of Music's
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Joel Link, *violin*
Bryan Lee, *violin*
Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt,
viola
Camden Shaw, *cello*

Avi Avital, *mandolin*

Program

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Chaconne, from Partita No. 2 in D Minor for unaccompanied violin, BWV 1004 (arranged for mandolin)

Bedřich Smetana (1824–84)

Quartet No. 1 in E Minor, "From My Life" (1876)
Allegro vivo appassionato
Allegro moderato à la Polka
Largo sostenuto
Vivace

INTERMISSION

David Bruce (b. 1970)

Cymbeline for mandolin and string quartet (2012–13)

Sunrise
Noon
Sunset

Sulkhan Tsintsadze (1925–91) arr. Avi Avital

Six Miniatures on Georgian Folk Theme for string quartet and mandolin (1945–55)

Shepherd's Dance
Suliko
Indi-Mindi
Lied
Satchidao
Dance Tune

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About ArtPower at UC San Diego

ArtPower at UC San Diego builds creative experiences in music, dance, film, and food for our collective pleasure and inspiration. We engage diverse audiences through vibrant, challenging, multi-disciplinary performances by emerging and renowned international artists. Through extensive partnerships, ArtPower provides exciting opportunities for research, participation, and creation of new work, igniting powerful dialogue between artists, students, scholars, and the community.

About the Program

Chaconne from Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1004

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born March 21, 1685, Eisenach

Died July 28, 1750, Leipzig

This Chaconne is of course THE Chaconne, one of the most famous and difficult pieces ever written for the violin. Bach composed it around 1720 as the final movement of his Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Violin. The first four movements present the expected partita sequence—Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue—but then Bach springs a surprise: the last movement is a chaconne longer than the first four movements combined. The Chaconne offers some of the most intense music Bach ever wrote, and it has worked its spell on musicians everywhere for the last two-and-a-half centuries. Beyond the countless recordings for violin, it has been heard in transcriptions for guitar, cello, and viola, as well as in piano transcriptions by Brahms, Busoni, and Raff. At this performance Mr. Avital performs the Chaconne in a transcription for mandolin.

A chaconne is one of the most disciplined forms in music: it is built on a repeating ground bass in triple meter over which a melodic line is varied. A chaconne demands great skill from a performer under any circumstances, but it becomes unbelievably complex on the unaccompanied violin, which must simultaneously suggest the ground bass and project the melodic variations above it. Even with the curved bow of Bach's day, some of this music borders on the unplayable, and it is more difficult still on the modern violin, with its more rounded bridge and concave bow. Many have argued that the Chaconne sounds better on instruments that can more easily manage complex chording, such as the piano, guitar, or mandolin.

All this makes Bach's Chaconne sound like supremely cerebral music—and it is—but the wonder is that this music manages to be so expressive at the same time. The four-bar ground bass repeats 64 times during the quarter-hour span of the Chaconne, and over it Bach spins out gloriously varied music, all the while keeping these variations firmly anchored on the ground bass. At the center section, Bach moves into D major, and here the music relaxes a little, content to sing happily for awhile; after the calm nobility of this interlude, the quiet return to D minor sounds almost disconsolate. Bach drives the Chaconne to a great climax and a restatement of the ground bass at the close.

String Quartet No. 1 in E Minor "From My Life"

Bedřich Smetana

Born March 2, 1824, Litomyšl, Bohemia

Died May 12, 1884, Prague

Smetana's life is a story of triumph and tragedy. Though he is acclaimed by all as the father of Czech music, a composer whose operas and symphonic poems on Czech subjects blazed the way for Dvořák, Janáček, and generations of Czech composers to come, Smetana's personal life was full of tragedy, and his death was appalling. He had four daughters, and three of them died in early childhood. Her health undermined by these losses, Smetana's wife died while still a very young woman. Smetana himself became aware of frightening changes in his own health about age 50. He began to hear

a piercing noise inside his head, and this was soon followed by a rushing sound—he described it as the noise of standing under a waterfall—and later the sound of breaking sticks. He went completely deaf and began to suffer hallucinations; these symptoms—the result of syphilis—eventually gave way to insanity, and Smetana died in an asylum in Prague at age 60.

Late in life, and working with great difficulty, Smetana composed two string quartets. The first of these—written in 1876, shortly after he had resigned all of his musical positions because of his deafness—is autobiographical, as its subtitle "From My Life" makes explicit. Smetana supplied an elaborate program for this music, and it is clear that he intended that this quartet should tell the story of his life.

The Allegro vivo appassionato opens with a long viola theme that Smetana identified with the "love of art in my youth, my romantic mood, the unspoken longing for something which I could not name or imagine clearly"; at another point, he called this figure "a warning as it were of my future misery." If the first movement is "about" the composer's love of music and art, the second, marked Allegro moderato à la Polka, tells of another of his loves—dancing. As a young man, Smetana had loved to dance (his wife-to-be had been one of his earliest partners) and for several years he wrote dance-music almost exclusively. Smetana said that the Largo sostenuto recalled "the happiness of my first love for the girl who later became my faithful wife." A long cello solo opens this movement, and the first violin announces the second theme of this moving love song, which seems at times like an extended lullaby.

The finale, marked Vivace, is astonishing. It sounds very "Czech"—full of folk-like tunes and high spirits—and at first it seems a conventional closing movement; Smetana identified this music with "knowledge of how to make use of the element of national music, joy at the outcome of following this path." But near the end, these high spirits come shuddering to a stop, and out of that silence comes the violin's screaming high E, the "piercing whistle" that to Smetana signaled the beginning of his deafness and deterioration. Over the next few moments, he brings back themes from the earlier movements, but these nostalgic reminiscences cannot take hold, and gradually they disintegrate, leaving the quartet to vanish on three quiet pizzicato strokes. It is a stunning conclusion to one of the most moving quartets ever written.

— Eric Bromberger

Cymbeline for mandolin and string quartet

David Bruce

Born 1970, Stamford, Connecticut

Cymbeline is a new work for mandolin and string quartet, written specially for mandolin virtuoso Avi Avital. The title is an old Celtic word meaning Lord of the Sun. I think the idea of the piece being about the sun emerged out of the colours of the string quartet and the mandolin together. Although I don't think of myself as a synaesthetic person, I kept having a strong sense of the colour gold in the early sketches for the piece. The mandolin itself has always seemed to me to create a 'golden' sound, and when combined with the warmth of the strings it seems now obvious that I should draw towards something warm and golden.

The sun was one of the first objects of worship and it has been surmised that the idea of a holy trinity (found not just in Christianity, but in numerous earlier religions) relates to the three distinct positions of the sun—sunrise (=father), noon (=son), and sunset (=spirit). Sunrise is ‘the father of the day’; midday represents the fullness of energy, the son; and sunset is a time for contemplation and reflection - the spirit. To me, these three states represent not just “father, son and spirit” but also perhaps, the reflection upon an action about to happen (sunrise), the action itself (noon), and the reflection on the action that happened (sunset).

Cymbeline accordingly is in three movements, with two contemplative outer movements surrounding an energetic central movement. I see the piece as a contemplation of our relationship with this fiery giver of life, whose significance to us is often overlooked in the modern world, but who still really does rule over us all.

—David Bruce

Six Miniatures on Georgian Folk Theme for string quartet and mandolin

Sulkhan Tsintsadze

Born August 23, 1925, Gori, Georgia

Died September 15, 1991, Tbilisi

Sulkhan Tsintsadze learned to play the cello as a boy, and at the end of World War II the twenty-year-old moved to Moscow, where he studied cello and composition at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1953 Tsintsadze returned to Georgia and embarked on a long career as performer, composer, and teacher. For twenty years he was rector of the Georgian State Conservatory, and he also served for a time as chairman of the Georgian Composers Union. At the core of his work are his twelve string quartets, which span nearly half a century: he wrote the first when he was 22 and the last in the year of his death.

Tsintsadze wrote many works in large forms—operas, ballets, symphonies, concertos, film scores—but he was especially attracted to the concept of the miniature: a tiny piece that tells its tale very quickly on a small canvas. Across the range of his long career he wrote a vast number of pieces that he titled “miniature”; most of these were for string quartet, but he also wrote miniatures for other ensembles. All are flavored with the colors and rhythms of Tsintsadze’s Georgian heritage, and they often take the form of dances, love songs, work songs—there can be a fierce energy to this music, which can just as quickly give way to a haunting lyricism. As the concluding work on this program, Avi Avital has arranged six of Tsintsadze’s miniatures for mandolin and string quartet. Some of these (Indi-Mindi and Satchidao) date from 1945, when Tsintsadze was only 22, but all are flavored with the accents and colors of Georgian folk music, and all give some sense of Tsintsadze’s skill at creating these miniature movements.

—Eric Bromberger

About the Artists

Dover Quartet

The Dover Quartet’s rise from up-and-coming young ensemble to occupying a spot at the top of their field has been “practically meteoric” (*Strings*). Catapulted to prominence after sweeping the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, the group has become a major presence on the international scene. With its burnished warmth, incisive rhythms, and natural phrasing, the Quartet’s distinctive sound has helped confirm its status as “the young American string quartet of the moment” (*New Yorker*).

In the 2016–17 season the Dover Quartet will release its all-Mozart debut recording, undertake complete Beethoven quartet cycles for the first time, and perform over 100 concerts around the world. During the 2015–16 season, the Dover Quartet performed more than 120 dates around the world, including debuts at Carnegie Hall, Yale University, the Lucerne Festival, and as part of the Lincoln Center “Great Performers” series.

Hailed as “the next Guarneri Quartet” (*Chicago Tribune*), the Dover Quartet draws from the lineage of that distinguished ensemble, as well that of the Cleveland and Vermeer Quartets; its members studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where they were mentored extensively by Shmuel Ashkenasi, James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, Joseph Silverstein, Arnold Steinhardt, Michael Tree, and Peter Wiley. It was at Curtis that the Quartet first formed, and its name pays tribute to Dover Beach by fellow Curtis alumnus Samuel Barber. The group has since returned for residencies: to Rice in 2011–13, and to Curtis, where it became the conservatory’s first Quartet-in-Residence, in 2013–14.

Avi Avital

Acknowledged by the *New York Times* for his “exquisitely sensitive playing” and “stunning agility”, Grammy-nominated mandolinist Avi Avital is one of the world’s most exciting and adventurous musicians. He is deeply committed to building a fresh legacy for the mandolin through virtuosic performance in a range of genres and commissioning new works for mandolin.

Avital is internationally regarded for his performances at venues including Carnegie Hall (Weill Hall), Lincoln Center, Berlin Philharmonie, KKL Luzern, Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, and the Wigmore Hall. He has appeared as soloist with the Berliner Symphoniker, Orchestre National de Montpellier, Oxford Philomusica, Sczzecin Philharmonic, Potsdam Kammerakademie, Philharmonischer Kammerorchester Berlin, Metropolis Ensemble NY, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Geneva Camerata, Israel Philharmonic, I Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. He has collaborated extensively with artists such as Giora Feidman, Dawn Upshaw, and Richard Galliano and has also been featured at the Tanglewood, Luzern, Spoleto, and Ravenna summer festivals.

He is the first mandolin player to receive a Grammy nomination in the category “Best Instrumental Soloist” (2010) for his recording of Avner Dorman’s *Mandolin Concerto* (Metropolis Ensemble/Andrew Cyr). He has won numerous competitions and awards including Germany’s ECHO Prize for his 2008 recording with the David Orlowsky Trio and the AVIV Competition (2007), the preeminent national competition for Israeli soloists.

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*Donor list as of February 2, 2017.
List reflects giving from February 2, 2016.*



Dublin Guitar Quartet

Friday, March 3, 2017, at 8 pm

Department of Music's Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Tickets: \$23-30

They might play traditional Spanish-style classical guitars, but they're not your standard guitar ensemble. Described as a "quartet with a difference" by the *Irish Times*, the Dublin Guitar Quartet is the first classical guitar quartet entirely devoted to new music. Since their formation, the quartet has worked to expand the genre's limited repertoire by commissioning new works and adapting modern masterpieces. With the help of 8- and 11-string guitars, the quartet has created an original catalogue of arrangements by composers such as Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Arvo Pärt, and György Ligeti. Expect a dynamic, entertaining, and completely novel concert experience at their San Diego debut with ArtPower.

PROGRAM Bryce Dessner: *Aheym*; Philip Glass: *Saxophone Quartet*; Rachel Grimes: *Book of Leaves*; William Kanengiser: *Gongan*; Nikita Koshkin: *Changing the Guard*; György Ligeti: *Inaktelki Nóták* and *Mátraszentimrei Dalok*; Marc Mellits: *Quartet*; Urmas Sisask: *Songs in Honour of the Virgin Mary*



St. Lawrence String Quartet

Friday, May 5, 2017, at 8 pm

Department of Music's Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Tickets: \$40-54

Back by popular demand, the "witty, buoyant, and widely attentive" (*The Gazette*, Montreal) St. Lawrence String Quartet has developed an undisputed reputation as a truly world-class chamber ensemble. Serving as ensemble-in-residence at Stanford University since 1998, the quartet continues to build their reputation for imaginative and spontaneous music making through an energetic commitment to the established quartet literature, as well as the championing of new works by such composers as John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Ezequiel Viñao, and Jonathan Berger.

PROGRAM

John Adams: *Second Quartet*; Ludwig van Beethoven: *String Quartet No. 16 in F Major, Op. 135*; Camille Saint-Saëns: *String Quartet No. 1, Op. 112*



Ariel Quartet

Friday, April 21, 2017, at 8 pm

Department of Music's Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Tickets: \$40-54

Characterized by their youth, brilliant playing, and soulful interpretations, the Ariel Quartet has quickly earned a glowing international reputation. Formed in Israel 16 years ago, when the members were young students, the quartet was recently awarded the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award. They currently serve as the faculty quartet-in-residence at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, where they direct the chamber music program and perform their own annual series of concerts—a remarkable achievement for an ensemble so young. This award-winning quartet has performed widely in North America, Europe, and Israel, and will be making their San Diego debut at ArtPower.

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven: Quartet in A Major, Op. 18, No. 5; Mahammed Fairouz:
New Commission; Robert Schumann: Quartet in A Major, Op. 41, No. 3