

**The Corpus Christi Chamber Music Society
presents**

Viano String Quartet

Lucy Wang, Violin

Hao Zhou, Violin

Aiden Kane, Viola

Tate Zawadiuk, Cello



Friday, March 26, 2021

7:30 p.m.

Richardson Performance Hall

101 Baldwin Blvd.

Corpus Christi, Texas 78404

Program

Strum

Montgomery
b. 1981

**Andante Moderato from
String Quartet in G major**

Price
1887-1953

The Evergreen (2020)

Shaw
b. 1982

String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10

Animé et très décidé

Assez vif et bien rythmé

Andantino, doucement expressif

Très modéré; Très mouvementé

Claude Debussy
1862-1918

Viano String Quartet is represented by Colburn Artists

Biography

Praised for their “huge range of dynamics, massive sound and spontaneity,” (American Record Guide), the Viano String Quartet are first prize winners of the 2019 Banff International String Quartet Competition. Formed in 2015 at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles, where they are the Ensemble in Residence through the 2020-21 season, the quartet has performed in venues such as Wigmore Hall, Segerstrom Center for the Arts, SOKA Performing Arts Center, and the Cerritos Center for Performing Arts. During the 2019-20 season, the Viano performed on three continents making debuts in Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, New York City, and Vancouver, among other cities. The quartet records for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

In addition to their top prize in Banff, the quartet received the Grand Prize at the 2019 ENKOR International Music Competition and they have been prize winners at the Yellow Springs Chamber Music Competition, the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, and the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition.

The name “Viano” was created to describe the four individual instruments in a string quartet interacting as one. Each of the four instruments begins with the letter “v”, and like a piano, all of the strings working together as a string quartet, play both harmony and melody, creating a unified instrument, called the “Viano.”

Program Notes

Montgomery

Strum

Program notes by the composer....

Strum is the culminating result of several versions of a string quintet I wrote in 2006. It was originally written for the Providence String Quartet and guests of Community MusicWorks Players, then arranged for string quartet in 2008 with several small revisions. In 2012 the piece underwent its final revisions with a rewrite of both the introduction and the ending for the Catalyst Quartet in a performance celebrating the 15th annual Sphinx Competition.

Originally conceived for the formation of a cello quintet, the voicing is often spread wide over the ensemble, giving the music an expansive quality of sound. Within *Strum* I utilized texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a *texture motive* and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.

— *Jessie Montgomery*

Price

“Andante Moderato” from String Quartet in G major

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1887, Florence Price graduated from the New England Conservatory with degrees in piano teaching and organ performance. In 1932 she was awarded two first-place Rodman Wanamaker Music Awards for her Piano Sonata in E minor and her Symphony in E minor, which led to the premiere of her symphony by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra the next year. Over the course of her career Price composed over 300 works including piano solos, instrumental chamber music, vocal works, concertos, and symphonies. Her music combines classical European traditions with elements of black spirituals, American folk songs, and African rhythms, particularly the *juba* rhythm. The Andante moderato movement from Price’s G Major String Quartet, opening with a folk inspired theme in lush pentatonic harmonies, is an excellent example of her compositional style. The movement continues at an allegretto pace making frequent use of pizzicato and more blues and folk inspired themes. There is an energetic dance segment in the middle before a final return to the opening material.

Program notes by Susan Sturman

Shaw

The Evergreen (2020)

From the composer’s website...

Caroline Shaw is a New York-based musician—vocalist, violinist, composer, and producer—who performs in solo and collaborative projects. She was the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013 for *Partita for 8 Voices*, written for the Grammy-winning Roomful of Teeth, of which she is a member. Recent commissions include new works for Renée Fleming with Inon Barnatan, Dawn Upshaw with Sō Percussion and Gil Kalish, Seattle Symphony, Anne Sofie von Otter with Philharmonia Baroque, the LA Philharmonic, Juilliard 415, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s with John Lithgow, the Dover Quartet, TENET, The Crossing, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, the Baltimore Symphony, and Roomful of Teeth with A Far Cry. Caroline’s film scores include Erica Fae’s *To Keep the Light* and Josephine Decker’s *Madeline’s Madeline* as well as the upcoming short *8th Year of the Emergency* by Maureen Towey. She has produced for Kanye West (*The Life of Pablo; Ye*) and Nas (*NASIR*), and has contributed to records by The National, and by Arcade Fire’s Richard Reed Parry. Once she got to sing in three-part harmony with Sara Bareilles and Ben Folds at the Kennedy Center, and that was pretty much the bees’ knees and elbows. Caroline has studied at Rice, Yale, and Princeton, currently teaches at NYU, and is a Creative Associate at the Juilliard School.

The Evergreen, completed in 2020, was commissioned by Third Angle New Music, Bravo! Vail Music Festival, the Ragazze Quartet, and Coretet. The Viano Quartet will speak from the stage about this work.

Claude Debussy

String Quartet in G minor

The period around 1890 was a crucial time in Debussy's life. The composer had just returned to Paris after a two-year Prix de Rome residency in Italy and was eager to rid himself of the restraints of the academicians. One of the first works in which he struck a new artistic direction was the Quartet in G minor, which, along with "*L'Après-midi d'un faune*" from the same time, established what is called the Impressionist style in music. Its varied tonal effects, soulful beauty, and freedom of form and structure provide an excellent musical counterpart to the Impressionist paintings and Symbolist poetry of the time.

The opening notes of the first movement are of overriding importance. They make up the germ, the melodic cell, from which the entire quartet unfolds and grows. This germinal motif is a rather rough-sounding motto; rhythmically complex and melodically convoluted, it zigzags back and forth within a comparatively limited tessitura. A distinguishing feature is the rapid three-note ornamental filip as the central turning point.

Following the short motif and its repetition, three other melodies are heard. They come between restatements of the motif, each time, though, in a slightly different form. The various themes, and especially the opening motto, are then heard in an imaginative procession of transformed shapes and guises – now surging with great passion, now stated in stentorian splendor, now stretched and drawn out in length, now plaintively sung – until the movement races to its climactic resolution.

The second movement offers a profusion of sparkling tonal effects, led by the viola playing an obstinately repeated, quickened version of the motif. Above, beneath, and all around this *ostinato* figure, the other instruments furnish brilliant pizzicato flourishes and scintillating cross-rhythms. The cello brings this section to a close and establishes the murmuring accompaniment for the first violin playing the opening motif in leisurely augmentation. Sections of new and derived melodic material follow, including a rhythmically attractive pizzicato passage in which the original motto is transformed into five-beat meter. Then, just as the cello seems to be starting the murmuring accompaniment again, the movement fades away.

After false starts by the second violin and viola, the third movement starts with the first violin softly singing a languid melody that rocks gently back and forth in pitch. The viola next seizes one fragment of the melody and expands it into a slightly faster theme. Another theme, also introduced by the viola, includes the three-note figure of the opening motto. It is worked up to an impassioned climax before a return of the quiet rocking theme brings the movement to a subdued conclusion.

The introduction to the final movement, also heard on the original motif, continues the quiet mood. The music grows somewhat more animated as the cello starts a fuguelike passage, using a further transformation of the germinal motif. The fast part of the last movement then starts with a rapid, cluster-of-notes theme in the viola. From the final notes of this theme, Debussy spins out another melody. The shared notes of both themes become the accompaniment for the motif, this time in grandiose elongation. A reminder of the opening theme of this movement leads to a

coda and conclusion that provides a final, exciting glimpse of the considerably altered germinal motto.

Completed early in 1893, the quartet was dedicated to the Ysaye Quartet which gave the first performance in Paris on December 29, 1893

Program notes by Melvin Berger

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- April 10, 2021 – Solo Piano Recital
- May 8, 2021 – Pipe Organ Spectacular
- July 24, 2021 – Christmas in July



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