The Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation in the Library of Congress

MIVOS QUARTET

Thursday, June 2, 2022 ~ 8:00pm
The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium
In 1935 Gertrude Clarke Whittall gave the Library of Congress five Stradivari instruments and three years later built the Whittall Pavilion in which to house them. The GERTRUDE CLARKE WHITTALL FOUNDATION was established to provide for the maintenance of the instruments, to support concerts (especially those that feature her donated instruments), and to add to the collection of rare manuscripts that she had additionally given to the Library.

**Conversation with the Artists**
Join us at 6:30pm in the Whittall Pavilion for a conversation with the artists and Jeffrey Mumford, or catch it later this summer online at https://loc.gov/concerts/mivos-quartet-june2.html.

**How to Watch Concerts from the Library of Congress Virtual Events**
1) See each individual event page at loc.gov/concerts
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The Library of Congress
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Foundation in the Library of Congress

MIVOS QUARTET

OLIVIA DE PRATO & MAYA BENNARDO, VIOLIN
VICTOR LOWRIE TAFoya, VIOLA
TYLER J. BORDEN, CELLO
PROGRAM

HANNAH KENDALL (b. 1984)
Glances/I Don’t Belong Here (2019)

ANTON WEBERN (1883-1945)
Six Bagatelles, op.9 (1910, 1913)
   I. Mäßig
   II. Leicht Bewegt
   III. Ziemlich Fliessend
   IV. Sehr Langsam
   V. Äußerst Langsam
   VI. Fließend

REBECCA SAUNDERS (b. 1967)
Unbreathed (2017)
Commissioned by the Wigmore Hall with the support of
André Hoffmann, president of the Fondation Hoffmann, a Swiss
grant-making foundation; the Dina Koston and Roger Shapiro
Fund in the Library of Congress; ECLAT Festival Stuttgart; Festi-
val Musica Strasbourg; Philharmonie Luxembourg; Klangspuren
Schwaz; November Music

ELLIOT CARTER (1908 - 2012)
Fragments
   Fragment no. 1 (1994)
   Fragment no. 2 (1999)

JEFFREY MUMFORD (b. 1955)
...amid still and floating depths (2019), world premiere
Co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association
and the Carolyn Royall Just Fund in the Library of Congress
About the Program

Hannah Kendall, *Glances/I Don’t Belong Here*

No program note was provided.

Anton Webern, *Six Bagatelles*

Between 1909 and 1913, Webern wrote three sets of pieces for string quartet, with five, four, and three movements each. He had originally planned for these to form a single large group to be published as his third opus. At some point, however, he abandoned this concept, and the pieces, save one with voice, became his *Five Movements*, op. 5, and *Six Bagatelles*, op. 9. Four of the latter were composed in 1911, and the remaining two date from two years later. In 1924, Webern gave his friend Alban Berg a copy of the score of his *Bagatelles* upon which he had written “Non multa sed multum” (“Not much in quantity, but much in content”). When Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg abandoned tonality during the first decade of the century, they left behind an important means of channeling musical tension over large spans of time. Consequently, early atonal works tended to be brief. This tendency was stronger in Webern than in his two Viennese colleagues, and nowhere is it more manifest than in *Six Bagatelles*. Most of the movements usually last less than a minute in performance, and numbers two and three typically clock in at less than 30 seconds. Schoenberg praised Webern’s *Bagatelles* as the epitome of tautness and discipline in a preface he wrote for the published score: “Consider what moderation is required to express oneself so briefly. Every glance can be expanded into a poem, every sigh into a novel. But to express a novel in a single gesture, joy in a single breath—such concentration can only be present when there is a corresponding absence of self-indulgence.”

Kazem Abdullah
Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division
Rebecca Saunders, *Unbreathed*

Composer Rebecca Saunders was born in London in 1967 into a family of professional musicians. Initially she studied violin and composition at Edinburgh University; after a period of study with composer Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe, Germany at the Musikhochschule, she earned a Ph.D. in composition from Edinburgh University under Nigel Osborne. She has since lived and worked in Berlin, where there is a notably vibrant and adventurous musical community of composers and musicians.

The work *Unbreathed* was commissioned by Wigmore Hall with the support of André Hoffmann, president of the Fondation Hoffmann, a Swiss grant-making foundation; the Dina Koston and Roger Shapiro Fund in the Library of Congress; ECLAT Festival Stuttgart; Festival Musical Strasbourg; Philharmonie Luxembourg; Klangspuren Schwaz; and November Music; and is dedicated to Quatuor Diotima. The first performance, by Quatuor Diotima, took place at Wigmore Hall on January 18, 2018, and the American premiere took place at the Library of Congress on March 1, 2018. *Unbreathed* for string quartet uses a substantial amount of colorful string techniques, such as harmonics, bowing with the wooden side of the bow, playing over the bridge, *glissando*, distorted overtones, unusual trills, specific use of *non-vibrato* tone, *tremolando*, *detaché* strokes, and double and triple string crossings. The composer’s notes to the musicians include general remarks explaining the wide range of timbres and extremes of articulation, color, and dynamics. The composer asks for both soft, lyrical sounds and loud, distorted sounds in this work. The tempo indications are only guidelines, and much of this element will be determined by the performers in each individual performance venue. The score shows that almost every note carries specific performance instructions for the player. Saunders herself says about her music, “When composing I imagine holding the sounds and noises in my hands, feeling their potential between my palms, weighing them. Skeletal textures and musical gestures develop out of this. Then, like pictures placed in a large white room, I set them in silence, next to, above, beneath and against each other.”

From the description of her process, it seems the act of composition for Saunders has a visual aspect and her main focus seems to be on the pure properties of the sounds. That is, she is concerned with sound for sound’s sake, instead of for any type of associated meaning that might be assigned to these sounds. Musicologist Robert Adlington explains further that “Saunders is concerned not only with sounds, but also with the space that contains them. Carefully measured silence features prom-

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inent in this music, separating out concise sonic gestures.”² He also clarifies that the “intrusion of percussive, pulsing material upon textures that otherwise generally lack rhythmic regimentation has become a familiar gesture”³ and “elements of conventional ‘expressivity’ are admitted into this music. For all that Saunders appears single-mindedly concerned with music’s materiality, there is no dogmatic exclusion of its history as a vehicle for the emotions.”⁴ In an interview with Bálint Varga, Saunders explained that “composing traces a process of thinking, a deeply explorative means of creating new virtual spaces, acoustic structures, and models, but it’s also a process of asking questions and seeking answers, and it is definitely about creating these acutely necessary moments of ‘in-between,’ suspended outside of the normally experienced flow of everyday life; it’s about creating environments where an otherness is given space to breathe and to unfold, to explode, and to mutate.”⁵

Verse and quotes from the composer’s preface:

Inside, withheld, unbreathe,
Nether, undisclosed.

Souffle, vapour, ghost,
hauch and dust.

Absent, silent, void,
Naught beside.

Either, neither, sole,
Unified.

“The skull is enveloped in a profound silence that seems nothingness itself. The silence does not reside on the surface, but is held like smoke within. It is unfathomable, eternal, a disembodied vision cast upon a point in the void.”

~ Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World, Haruki Murakami

“...I'll never know, which is perhaps merely the inside of my distant skull where once I wandered...”

~ The Unnamable, Samuel Beckett

² Ibid., 52.
³ Ibid., 54.
⁴ Ibid., 55.
“...one day to be here, where there are no days, which is no place, born of the impossible voice the unmakable, and a gleam of light, still all would be silent and empty and dark, and dark, as now, as soon now, when all will be ended, all said, it says, it murmurs.”

~ XIII, Texts For Nothing, Samuel Beckett

“This corporal revenge. A genuine, concerted and systematic undoing of grace. Every promise discovered too late to be a... lie told badly. The promise of intimacy and the promise of beauty ripped away to reveal a gawping, hyperreal brute...”

~ US DEAD TOLD LOVE, A primer for cadavers, Ed Atkins

~ RS, December 2017

Laura Yust
Senior Cataloging Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division

Elliot Carter, Fragments

Fragment for string quartet was composed on August 30, 1994 in Southbury, Connecticut in memory of my good friend and colleague, David Huntley. This short work uses harmonics for the strings throughout, which, I hope, give a poignant character to my musical message. It had its premiere by the Kronos Quartet in New York at a concert dedicated to the memory of David on October 13, 1994.

Fragment no. 2 for string quartet is a tribute to the Arditti String Quartet that has so wonderfully championed my music. It was first performed when that quartet was awarded the Von Siemens Musikpreis in Munich on June 23, 1999.

~ Elliot Carter

Jeffrey Mumford, ... amid still and floating depths

...amid still and floating depths was co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, Gustavo Dudamel Music Director, and the Library of Congress, for the Mivos Quartet.
The title for me suggests the image of a still place, resonant with varying intensities of light, which interact with one another on many levels. Often, as these relationships evolve, there are multiple layers of unfolding modes of expression, sometimes juxtaposing and superimposing more explosive and figurative material with that which is more lyrical and sparse.

The work celebrates the many sonic possibilities of the string quartet medium, and in particular, the individual and collective brilliance and vision of the members of the Mivos Quartet.

~ Jeffrey Mumford

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Mivos Quartet, “one of America’s most daring and ferocious new-music ensembles” (The Chicago Reader), is devoted to performing works of contemporary composers and presenting new music to diverse audiences. Since the quartet’s beginning in 2008, it has performed and closely collaborated with an ever-expanding group of international composers representing a wide aesthetic range of contemporary composition. Recent engagements during the 2020/21 season have included performances and residencies at the Festival for New American Music, Asphalt Festival, the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, and Boston University premiering newly commissioned works by Michaela Catranis and Benjamin Sabey.

Mivos is invested in commissioning, premiering, and growing the repertoire of new music for the string quartet, striving for rich collaborations with composers over extended periods of time. Recently, Mivos has collaborated on new works with Michaela Catranis (Fondation Royaumont), Chikako Morishita (rainy days festival), George Lewis (ECLAT Festival Commission), Sam Pluta (Lucerne Festival Commission), Eric Wubbels (CMA Commission), Kate Soper, Scott Wollschleger, Patrick Higgins (Zs), and poet/musician Saul Williams.

Beyond expanding the string quartet repertoire, Mivos is committed to working with guest artists exploring multi-media projects and performing improvised music. Mivos has worked closely with Cécile McLorin Salvant (Ogresse), Ambrose Akinmusire (Origami Harvest), Ned Rothenberg, Timucin Sahin, and Nate Wooley. In the upcoming season, Mivos will begin a new project working with guitarist, composer, and 2019 MacArthur Fellow Mary Halvorson.

Mivos has performed to critical acclaim on prestigious series such as Noon to Midnight (USA), Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), Jazz at Lincoln Center (USA),
the New York Phil Biennial (USA), Wien Modern (Austria), the Darmstadt Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (Germany), rainy days festival (Luxembourg), Asphalt Festival (Germany), HellHOT! New Music Festival (Hong Kong), Shanghai New Music Week (Shanghai, China), Música de Agora na Bahia (Brazil), Aldeburgh Music (UK), and Lo Spirito della musica di Venezia (Italy).

In addition to their performance season, Mivos is committed to educating young composers and string players and is regularly the quartet in residence at the Creative Musicians Retreat at the Walden School (USA) and the Valenciana International Performance Academy and Festival (Spain). The quartet has conducted workshops at Columbia University, Harvard University, Boston University, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, Duke University, Royal Northern College of Music (UK), Shanghai Conservatory (China), University Malaya (Malaysia), Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (Singapore), the Hong Kong Arts Centre, and MIAM University in Istanbul (Turkey) among others. Along with their work at educational institutions, Mivos grants the Mivos/Kanter String Quartet Composition Prize, a yearly award to support the work of emerging and mid-career composers residing in the USA, and the I-Creation prize, a competition for composers of Chinese descent worldwide.

The members of Mivos are violinists Olivia De Prato and Maya Bennardo, violist Victor Lowrie Tafoya, and cellist Tyler J. Borden. Mivos operates as a non-profit organization dedicated to performing, commissioning, and collaborating on music being written today.

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UPCOMING EVENTS
Visit loc.gov/concerts for more information

Saturday, June 4, 2022 at 8:00 pm [Coolidge Auditorium]
Ritz Chamber Players
Music by Perkinson, James Lee III, Farrenc, Still, Debussy, Hailstork & Ravel
Preconcert Conversation at 6:30 pm [Whittall Pavilion]
Learn more at:
https://loc.gov/concerts/ritz-chamber-players-june4.html

Thursday, June 16, 2022 at 8:00 pm [Coolidge Auditorium]
Ranky Tanky
Learn more at:
Library of Congress Stringed Instrument Collection

Instrument collecting at the Library of Congress began with the generosity of Mrs. Gertrude Clarke Whittall, who donated five stringed instruments made by Antonio Stradivari to the Library of Congress in 1935. Since that time, the Library’s Music Division has acquired five additional stringed instruments through generous donations. These additional violins were made by Stradivari, Nicolò Amati, Jean Baptiste Vuillaume, and Giuseppe Guarneri (two violins) in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The “Tuscan-Medici” viola is on loan to the Library of Congress from the Tuscan Corporation.

For more information about the Library’s Stringed Instrument Collection, visit www.loc.gov/performingarts.

Instruments Featured In This Performance

**VIOLIN BY ANTONIO STRADIVARI, CREMONA, 1700, “WARD”**

*Played by Olivia De Prato*

The “Ward” acquired its name from J. Ward of London. Ward owned the violin for over 40 years; on his death it passed to the Hills. The violin next was Swiss-owned, before being returned to England, where it came into the possession of Nathan Posner. Posner sold both the “Ward” and the “Castelbarco” violins to Mrs. Whittall. The “Ward” is especially beautifully preserved and shows Stradivari’s transition from the long pattern seen in the “Castelbarco” to the later, widened pattern of the “Betts.” The scroll varies from the majority of Stradivari’s work because the quarter-cut direction of the grain is found in the front and back as opposed to the sides. The instrument has a grafted neck, by A. F. Moglie of Washington, D.C., in the 1950s and identified by an “A. F. MOGLIE” brand on the neck that was observed when the fingerboard was removed.

**VIOLIN BY ANTONIO STRADIVARI, CREMONA, 1704, “BETTS”**

*Played by Maya Bennardo*

The “Betts” is among the most legendary violins to have come from Stradivari’s workshop. Part of that status comes from the fabulous bargain that John Betts made in its acquisition. In about 1820, an individual entered his shop at the Royal Exchange in London and offered the violin, in a pristine state. A deal was made and the instrument changed hands for the sum of only one guinea. It remained a treasured part of Betts’ collection, but after the death of his son in 1852, the violin came into the hands of W. E. Hill & Sons of London followed by a variety of distinguished owners. By 1920, the “Betts” was owned by R. D. Waddell of Glasgow. In 1923, Jay C. Freeman of Wurlitzer’s approached Waddell in Scotland and came away with the “Betts” as well as the “Leduc” Guarneri. Wurlitzer’s sold the “Betts” to John T. Roberts of Hartford, Connecticut, who later acted as an intermediary in its sale to Mrs. Whittall.
Viola by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1690, “Tuscan-Medici”

Played by Victor Lowrie Tafoya

Originally part of an ensemble made for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando de Medici, this 1690 viola eventually was separated from its brethren and sold in 1803 to an Englishman in Florence. Over the next 100 years, the viola landed in France, returned to England, and eventually made its way to New York City through the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company. In 1925 it was sold to Herbert N. Straus, a German whose family had founded the Macy’s department store empire. The “Tuscan-Medici” was purchased in 1957 by Cameron and Jane Baird. The Bairds were instrumental in bringing the Buffalo Philharmonic to prominence in the 1940s and 1950s. The couple sponsored chamber music concerts in Buffalo and were friends of the Budapest String Quartet. Since the Budapest String Quartet disbanded in 1967, the viola has been on loan to the Library for use by the Library in its service to the public.

Violoncello by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1699, “Castelbarco”

Played by Tyler J. Borden

The known history of this magnificent cello begins with Count Cesare Castelbarco of Milan. Today the violoncello is united in a quartet of Stradivaris, as it was in Castelbarco’s collection; one of its musical partners was the 1699 violin also in the Library’s collection. After the count’s death, the instrument passed to Egidio Fabbri of Rome, who first acquired it from Vuillaume. It later came into the possession of his son-in-law, the Marchese de Piccolellis, and then went into obscurity. In How Many Strads? (1945), Ernest N. Doring recounts his experience in advising a family in New York on their cello. He was confronted with the “Castelbarco,” which had been in New York—unknown—for a number of years. It later passed to Hills in London and next to Wurlitzer in New York, which included an illustration of the cello in their 1931 catalog. In 1934 the “Castelbarco” came into the possession of Mrs. Whittall. The “Castelbarco” is significant for a number of reasons, not least in that it is one of a handful of Stradivari cellos of the large form that still retain their original, large, uncut dimensions. This cello is one of several uncut Stradivari cellos-along with the 1690 “Medici,” the 1696 “Aylesford,” and the 1701 “Servais”-which retain its original body outline and size.
Concerts from the Library of Congress

The Coolidge Auditorium, constructed in 1925 through a generous gift from Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, has been the venue for countless world-class performers and performances. Gertrude Clarke Whittall presented to the Library a gift of five Stradivari instruments which were first heard here during a concert on January 10, 1936. These parallel but separate donations serve as the pillars that now support a full season of concerts made possible by gift trusts and foundations that followed those established by Mrs. Coolidge and Mrs. Whittall.

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