

# Bard College Conservatory of Music

*presents*

## **The Condo Concerts: Program Three**

**Sunday, April 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM**

### **Fred Sherry String Quartet**

Leila Josefowicz, *violin*

Jesse Mills, *violin*

Hsin-Yun Huang, *viola*

Fred Sherry, *cello*

**Selections from German Dances**

**Franz Schubert**  
(1797-1828)

**String Quartet No. 15 in G Major, D. 887**

**Franz Schubert**

Allegro molto moderato

Andante un poco moto

Scherzo

Allegro assai

**THE CONDO CONCERTS is a series of free concerts streamed from the Bard College Conservatory of Music with the generous support of artist George Condo.**

**Featured musicians for the next concert on May 2 are clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Anna Polonsky.**

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## About the Artists

**Leila Josefowicz's** passionate advocacy of contemporary music for the violin is reflected in her diverse programs and enthusiasm for performing new works. In recognition of her outstanding achievement and excellence in music, she won the 2018 Avery Fisher Prize and was awarded a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2008, joining prominent scientists, writers and musicians who have made unique contributions to contemporary life.

Highlights of Josefowicz's 2019/20 season included opening the London Symphony Orchestra's season with Sir Simon Rattle and returning to San Francisco Symphony with the incoming Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen to perform his Violin Concerto. Further engagements include concerts with Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, where she will be working with conductors at the highest level, including Susanna Mälkki, Matthias Pintscher and John Adams.

A favourite of living composers, Josefowicz has premiered many concertos, including those by Colin Matthews, Steven Mackey and Esa-Pekka Salonen, all written specially for her. This season, she will perform the UK premiere of Helen Grime's Violin Concerto with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Dalia Stasevska. Other recent premieres include John Adams' Scheherazade.2 (Dramatic Symphony for Violin and Orchestra) in 2015 with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert, and Luca Francesconi's Duende – The Dark Notes in 2014 with Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Susanna Mälkki. Josefowicz enjoyed a close working relationship with the late Oliver Knussen, performing various concerti, including his violin concerto, together over 30 times.

Alongside pianist John Novacek, with whom she has enjoyed a close collaboration since 1985, Josefowicz has performed recitals at world-renowned venues such as New York's Zankel Hall, Washington DC's Kennedy Center and London's Wigmore Hall, as well as in Reykjavik, Chicago, San Francisco and Santa Barbara. This season, they appear together at Washington DC's Library of Congress, New York's Park Avenue Armory and Amherst College. She will also join Thomas Adès in recital to perform the world premiere of his new violin and piano work at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris and the Japanese premiere at the Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation.

Recent highlights include engagements with the Berliner Philharmoniker, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and Boston and Finnish Radio symphony orchestras. In summer 2019, Josefowicz took part in a special collaboration between Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Ballet, and Company Wayne McGregor featuring the music of composer-conductor Thomas Adès. Josefowicz has released several recordings, notably for Deutsche Grammophon, Philips/Universal and Warner Classics and was featured on Touch Press's acclaimed iPad app, The Orchestra. Her latest recording, released in 2019, features Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Violin Concerto with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hannu Lintu. She has previously received nominations for Grammy Awards for her recordings of Scheherazade.2 with the St Louis Symphony conducted

by David Robertson, and Esa-Pekka Salonen's Violin Concerto with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer.

Two-time Grammy nominated violinist **Jesse Mills** performs music of many genres, from classical to contemporary, as well as composed and improvised music of his own. Since his concerto debut at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, Mr. Mills has performed throughout the U.S. and Canada. He has been a soloist with the Phoenix Symphony, the Colorado Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony, the Green Bay Symphony, Juilliard Chamber Orchestra, the Denver Philharmonic, the Teatro Argentino Orchestra (in Buenos Aires, Argentina), and the Aspen Music Festival's Sinfonia Orchestra.

As a chamber musician Jesse Mills has performed throughout the U.S. and Canada, including concerts at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, the 92nd Street Y, the Metropolitan Museum, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Boston's Gardner Museum, Chicago's Ravinia Festival, and the Marlboro Music Festival. He has also appeared at prestigious venues in Europe, such as the Barbican Centre of London, La Cité de la Musique in Paris, Amsterdam's Royal Carré Theatre, Teatro Arcimboldi in Milan, and the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels. Mills is co-founder of Horszowski Trio and Duo Prism, a violin-piano duo with Rieko Aizawa, which earned 1st Prize at the Zinetti International Competition in Italy in 2006.

Mills is also known as a pioneer of contemporary works, a renowned improvisational artist, as well as a composer. He earned Grammy nominations for his performances of Arnold Schoenberg's music, released by NAXOS in 2005 and 2010. He can also be heard on the Koch, Centaur, Tzadik, Max Jazz and Verve labels for various compositions of Webern, Schoenberg, Zorn, Wuorinen, and others. As a member of the FLUX Quartet from 2001-2003, Mills performed music composed during the last 50 years, in addition to frequent world premieres. As a composer and arranger, Mills has been commissioned by venues including Columbia University's Miller Theater, the Chamber Music Northwest festival in Portland, OR and the Bargemusic in NYC.

Jesse Mills began violin studies at the age of three. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from The Juilliard School in 2001. He studied with Dorothy DeLay, Robert Mann and Itzhak Perlman. Mr. Mills lives in New York City, and he is on the faculty at Longy School of Music of Bard College and at Brooklyn College.

Violist **Hsin-Yun Huang** has forged a career by performing on international concert stages, commissioning and recording new works, and nurturing young musicians. Highlights of her 2017–2018 season included performances as soloist under the batons of David Robertson, Osmo Vänskä, Xian Zhang, and Max Valdés in Beijing, Taipei, and Bogota. She is also the first solo violist to be presented in the National Performance Center of the Arts in Beijing and was featured as a faculty member with Yo-Yo Ma and his new initiative in Guangzhou. She has commissioned compositions from Steven Mackey, Shih-Hui Chen, and Poul Ruders. Her 2012 recording for Bridge Records, titled *Viola Viola*, won accolades from *Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine*. Her next recording will be the complete unaccompanied sonatas and partitas of J. S. Bach, in partnership her husband, violist Misha Amory.

Ms. Huang regularly appears at festivals, including Marlboro, Spoleto, Ravinia, Santa Fe, and Music@Menlo, among many others. Huang first came to international attention as the gold medalist in the 1988 Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition. In 1993, she was the top-prize winner in the ARD International Competition in Munich and was awarded the highly prestigious Bunkamura Orchard Hall Award. A native of Taiwan, she received degrees from the Yehudi Menuhin School, the Curtis Institute of Music, and The Juilliard School. She now serves on the faculties of Juilliard and Curtis and lives in New York City.

**Fred Sherry** has introduced audiences on five continents and all fifty United States to the music of our time for over five decades. He was a founding member of TASHI and Speculum Musicae, Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and has been a member of the Group for Contemporary Music, Berio's Juilliard Ensemble and the Galimir String Quartet. He has also enjoyed a close collaboration with jazz pianist and composer Chick Corea. Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, Steve Mackey, David Rakowski, Somei Satoh, Charles Wuorinen and John Zorn have written concertos for Sherry, and he has premiered solo and chamber works dedicated to him by Milton Babbitt, Derek Bermel, Jason Eckardt, Lukas Foss, Oliver Knussen, Peter Lieberson, Donald Martino and Toru Takemitsu among others.

Fred Sherry's vast discography encompasses a wide range of classic and modern repertoire; he has been soloist and "sideman" on hundreds of commercial and esoteric recordings. Mr. Sherry was the organizer for Robert Craft's New York recording sessions from 1995-2012. Their longstanding collaboration produced celebrated performances of the Schoenberg Cello Concerto, all four String Quartets and the String Quartet Concerto as well as major works by Stravinsky and Webern.

Mr. Sherry's book *25 Bach Duets from the Cantatas* was published by Boosey & Hawkes in 2011, the revised edition was released in 2019. C.F. Peters unveiled his treatise on contemporary string playing, *A Grand Tour of Cello Technique* in 2018. He is a member of the cello faculty of The Juilliard School, The Mannes School of Music and The Manhattan School of Music.

### **Note on the Program**

#### **String Quartet No. 15 in G major, D. 887 (1826)**

Franz Schubert (Born in Himmelfortgrund [now part of Vienna] in 1797. Died in Vienna, 1828)

Schubert's final quartet is a truly visionary work. Just like the late Beethoven quartets, written at about the same time, it opens doors to the 20<sup>th</sup> century—but different ones. Whereas Beethoven experimented with structure, changing the number and the character of movements, Schubert's boldest innovations in this work lay in the area of harmony and texture—his famously abrupt juxtapositions of major and minor chords and an almost obsessive use of tremolo. Together, these innovations produced one of the most gripping works in the classic quartet literature.

The quite unprecedented G major - G minor sequence at the opening of the quartet establishes the half step between B natural and B flat as one of the work's generating ideas. These two tones, that normally would not belong together, are combined in a startling fashion, and from this initial move follow many other surprising instances where Schubert simply "jumps" from one key to another without the intermediary "pivot" chords that harmony textbooks call for. And the tremolos invest these revolutionary harmonic practices with an added sense of urgency.

Yet there are some islands of calm and stability amidst all the turmoil. The lilting second theme is based on the repetitions of a single rhythm and is repeated in its entirety no fewer than four times, resulting in a true "theme-and-variations" embedded in the movement. Even here, however, two of the variations involve sharp accents and melodic imitation, again raising the level of excitement. The development section is a study in extremes; soft and eerie at first, the music becomes highly dramatic without any warning. In the recapitulation, the themes are completely "re-orchestrated." The first theme is embellished in the first violin and provided with a new accompaniment figure that changes its entire character, and the second theme, likewise, introduces new variations on its theme. In the astonishing coda, the cello descends an octave and a half in chromatic half-steps as the other instruments add harmonies touching on many different keys. The duality between major and minor persists to the very end.

The second movement begins with a wistful cello melody that has some harmonic peculiarities of its own. As in many Schubertian slow movements from the Unfinished Symphony to the Cello Quintet, a quiet opening statement is followed by a turbulent B section. The form of the quartet movement is ABABA; the "turbulence" involves fast upward scales in the first violin, wild tremolos in all four instruments, as well as juxtapositions of completely unrelated key areas. It is a frighteningly "modern" moment whose violence cannot be entirely assuaged even when the opening melody returns.

The third-movement scherzo has been said to anticipate Mendelssohn's "elfin" scherzo movements; the minor key, the soft dynamics, and the fast repeated eighth-notes all contribute to this impression. But the trio section, where the melody is once again in the cello part, is a quintessentially Schubertian "Ländler" dance, with another startling "jump" into a new key in its second half.

Schubert wrote several finales in the fast 6/8 meter of the tarantella dance, such as the closing movements of the D-minor Quartet ("Death and the Maiden") or the C-minor piano sonata. The finale of the G-major Quartet is the longest and most complex of these tarantellas, both harmonically (with major and minor alternating again in close succession) and structurally: there are a rather large number of themes in this sonata-rondo, all varied and developed in quite unusual ways. The fast eighth-notes of the tarantella are present throughout *almost* without interruption; the only respite is a majestic, chordal episode that is heard twice. Both times, it is

quickly brushed aside by the returning tarantella. The final return of the opening theme is followed by a gigantic crescendo in which the harmonic ambiguities underlying the entire work are restated one last time. Yet the concluding measures of the work are fashioned from one of the movement's gentler, more graceful themes.

--Peter Laki, *Visiting Associate Professor of Music*