

The Department of Music  
at the  
University of Alberta  
presents the

# Purcell String Quartet

---

Sydney Humphreys

---

Bryan King

---

Philippe Eter

---

Ian Hampton

---

Convocation Hall  
Old Arts Building  
Tuesday, November 12, 1985  
8 p.m.

## PROGRAMME

Quartet for Strings, Op. 54, No. 2 (1788)

Franz Joseph Haydn  
(1732 - 1809)

Vivace  
Adagio  
Menuetto  
Finale, Adagio - Presto

Quartet No. 4 for Strings.  
(Commissioned by the Purcell Quartet with a  
grant from the Canada Council)

Wallace Berry  
(b. 1928)

Adagio con molta espressione  
Allegro vivace ma serio / Tempo primo - Adagio

\*\*\*\*\*

INTERMISSION

\*\*\*\*\*

String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 (1893)

Claude Debussy  
(1862 -1918 )

Animé et très décidé  
Assez vif et bien rythmé  
Andantino, doucement expressif  
Très modéré - très mouvementé et avec passion



The Purcell String Quartet operates with financial assistance of:  
The Canada Council.  
The Government of British Columbia through the British Columbia  
Cultural Fund and lottery revenues.  
The City of Vancouver.

## PROGRAMME NOTES

Quartet for Strings, Op. 54, No. 2 (1788)

Franz Joseph Haydn  
(1732 - 1809)

The opening C Major statement is dramatically throttled by silence which, on its return, Haydn impishly lengthens by a bar. The second subject resembles that of the previous quartet - Haydn had not quite got the rhythm out of his system. In the Adagio, the first violin introduces a chorale which the second violin takes over, allowing the former to weave a Hungarian Gypsy descant in a precisely notated rubato. This dissolves into a minuet whose coyness is offset by an impassioned trio featuring the augmented triad. The finale is a bit of a surprise, particularly to the cellist who is required to ascend the fingerboard into regions long dulled and cobwebbed from disuse.

Quartet No. 4 for Strings.

Wallace Berry  
(b. 1928)

Wallace Berry studied with Halsey Stevens and (at the Paris Conservatory) with Nadia Boulanger. He has taught at the Universities of Southern California and Michigan and is now Professor of Music at U.B.C. The principal publisher of his music (for orchestra, voice, piano, and various chamber ensembles) is Carl Fischer (New York), and a number of his works, including the String Quartet No. 2, are recorded, chiefly by CRI. Berry is President of the International Society for Music Theory and, as a music theorist, has published two important books and a large number of scholarly papers. His career as a pianist has included a number of performances of his piano concerto.

The citation for a 1978 achievement award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters characterizes Berry's music as, ". . . embracing the traditional values of expressive communicativeness and inquiring invention, reflecting in highly individual ways the universal creative impulse in which mind and heart are equally engaged." The Washington premiere of his piano trio (recorded: CRI SD 371) elicited Joseph McLellan's comment in the Washington Post that the work is ". . . as fine a demonstration of the expressive possibilities of contemporary music as I have heard in a long while. It is a concise work, . . . without a single routine passage or wasted gesture, fragmentary and angular in its phrases but as richly emotional . . . as anything in the romantic period . . ."

The "narrative" of the Fourth Quartet (1984) is of purely musical elements unfolding along traditional lines of exposition and development in a context which is significantly tonal - i.e., organized around particular notes of resolution (B, then E). An opening adagio embraces three distinct ideas: one is announced in the first violin's initiating three-note descent; another, a slowly wavering motive in doubling thirds, enters later in both violins; and the third is a simple chorale-like theme of several complementary phrases. All of these, redirected toward a final cadence, recur at the work's end, following (without interruption) a gradual dissolution of the vigorous, dramatic allegro of the second movement.

## PROGRAMME NOTES Continued

String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 (1893)

Claude Debussy  
(1862 - 1919)

Debussy, with his eclectic tastes and inquiring mind, did more to unfetter the twentieth century from the shackles of German dominance than any other composer. It is to be regretted that, with his emergent sense of instrumental color, particularly for strings, he did not write another quartet later in his career. Nevertheless, we have been given a masterpiece which, with the possible exception of Ravel's quartet (another youthful work), is stylishly unique in the repertoire.

Debussy makes the musicians work for their supper but, where in Beethoven the prodigious amount of notes would demand intensity of interpretation, here they make for a diaphanous effect. The principal motive heard directly at the opening is the idée fixe for the entire piece. It is used as an ostinato for the scherzo, is alluded to in the slow movement and makes mischievous appearances in the finale. Debussy pays some lip service to Cesar Frank's cyclic form but the refreshing sound of this quartet has obscured the originality of Debussy's writing to our post Bartok ears.

(Chalmers Guthrie)

## THE PURCELL STRING QUARTET

The Purcell String Quartet was founded in 1969 and quickly established an enviable reputation as a Canadian string quartet of the highest quality. They are noted for their fresh, vital performances of the great masters of the past and are especially fluent in the music of the twentieth century. They are at home on the 'cutting edge' of Canadian music and have commissioned and continue to commission many excellent new works from Canadian composers.

The musicians of the Purcell String Quartet live in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia. In spite of the demands of a full schedule of national and international commitments, they yet manage to make, each year, extensive local tours to bring incomparable music to the remote corners of their vast native province.

## BIOGRAPHIES

Sydney Humphreys, violin, was born in Chilliwack, B.C. He won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in England. He studied with Kathleen Parlow in Toronto, Spencer Dyke, Thomas Matthews and Frederick Grinke in England, and with George Enesco in Paris where he won a medal at the International Concours de Geneve. He led the University of South Wales Quartet and was awarded an Honorary Master of Fine Arts degree from Newcastle University for his work with the Aeolian Quartet. Humphreys was associated with Yehudi Menuhin and the Bath Festival Orchestra and was a Fellow and

## BIOGRAPHIES Continued

Professor at the Royal Academy of Music. In 1972 he became Concertmaster of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and, in 1974, Concertmaster of the Bournemouth Sinfonetta. In 1975 he returned to the Victoria Conservatory and joined Trio Victoria. In August, 1979, he joined the Purcell String Quartet.

Mr. Humphreys plays a Petrus Guarnerius of Mantua violin (made in 1695) with a Vuillaume bow.

Bryan King, violin, was born in England and was graduated from Bristol University with a B.A. in Music. Further studies included one year of postgraduate instrumental work at the Royal College of Music in London and one year in the BBC Training Orchestra. In 1973 he came to Canada and played for two seasons with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra - one year as principal viola - and both years as a member of the Symphony String Quartet. King returned to England for a short period in 1975 to play for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the English Sinfonia. Since returning to Vancouver in 1976, he has studied with Gwen Thompson and has free-lanced with the Vancouver Opera Orchestra, the CBC Chamber Orchestra and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. He joined the Purcell String Quartet in August of 1979.

Mr. King plays a Ruggieri violin (made ca. 1700) with an unnamed French bow, made ca. 1860.

Philippe Etter, viola, was born in London, England, of Swiss parents and was a violin scholarship student at Trinity College of Music. In 1957 he became a member of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, later changing to viola to join the Element String Quartet. He has since played principal viola with the Sadler Wells Opera House, the London Soloists Ensemble, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the CBC Radio Orchestra. A frequent broadcaster, soloist and chamber musician, he now teaches at the Vancouver Academy of Music and at the University of British Columbia. He has been with the Purcell String Quartet since 1969.

Mr. Etter plays an Italian viola by Vincenzo Tarlo (made ca. 1750 and measuring 17-1/4 inches) with a James Tubbs bow.

Ian Hampton, cello, was born in London, England and grew up in Edinburgh, Scotland. He studied with Joan Dickson, William Pleeth and, in Paris, with Paul Tortelier. Hampton was a member of the London Symphony Orchestra, cellist with the Edinburgh String Quartet and was a founding member of the Academy of St. Martins. He played principal cello with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and has been principal cellist with the CBC Radio Orchestra since 1967. Hampton has taught at Sacramento State College, the University of California at Davis, the Banff School of Fine Arts and the University of British Columbia. He is presently a faculty member at the Vancouver Academy of Music and is Director of the Langley Music School. He has been with the Purcell String Quartet since 1969.

Mr. Hampton plays a Vincenzo Panorma cello (made in 1794) with a bow by Francois Tourte (ca. 1810).