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Paul Haas
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SEASON 59.5

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December 4, 2020 – 8:30 p.m.

Hilldale Lutheran Church

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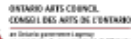
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Marvels of Eastern Europe

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Wind Quintet No. 1

Endre Szervánszky
(1911-1977)

Adagio – Allegro moderato
Allegro scherzando – Trio
Andante
Allegro vivace

Penelope Clarke, flute; Colleen Kennedy, oboe; Peter Shackleton, clarinet;
Janelle Wiebe, horn; Kristy Tucker, bassoon

String Quartet No. 4

Grażyna Bacewicz
(1909-1969)

Allegro molto
Andante
Allegro giocoso

Stéphanie Caplette, Lindsey Herle, violins; Marlena Pellegrino, viola;
Daniel Parker, cello

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Programme Notes

Wind Quintet No. 1

Composer: *Endre Szervánszky (1911-1977)*

Written: 1953

Length: *Approximately 20 minutes*

Hungarian composer Endre Szervánszky began his musical career as a clarinetist. After spending some time performing with various orchestras, he returned to the Budapest Academy of Music to study composition. His published work spans almost 40 years across the middle of the 20th century and stylistically ranges from Hungarian folk-influenced music to pure serialism. He is one of the few musicians to be awarded "Righteous among the Nations", an award given by the State of Israel to non-Jews for risking their own lives to help Jews escape from the Nazis during World War II. In writing Quintet No. 1, Szervánszky was greatly influenced by fellow Hungarian composers Bartók and Kodály and included references to folk music and folk-dance idioms.

The first movement begins with a slow, quiet introduction before the main theme is stated by the oboe. Throughout the first movement Szervánszky uses the inverted dotted rhythm (a short note followed by a long note) that is often associated with Hungarian music. A range of moods are explored in this movement, from the slow and serene to the slightly faster and more biting, with interlocking lines that require a high level of communication and ensemble to pull off. This opening movement concludes with a revisit to the opening theme – now fully realised.

The second movement, a scherzo and trio, opens with a fast, virtuosic dance characterized by energetic swirls of sixteenth notes and percussive accompaniment. A softer, smoother Trio section in triple time provides a vibrant contrast before the opening material returns to finish the movement.

Some of the most beautiful writing for the woodwind quintet is found in the third movement, which opens with a warm clarinet solo. This movement showcases elongated solo lines from all of the members of the ensemble, building to a passionate climax before relaxing and returning to the opening mood.

The final movement, *Allegro vivace*, is another dance movement. It is full of energy with driving eighth notes throughout, Hungarian folk tunes, and characteristic flourishes – all coming to a rousing finish.

String Quartet No. 4

Composer: *Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969)*

Written: 1950

First Performed: *September 21, 1951 in Liège, Belgium*

Length: *Approximately 23 min.*

Grażyna Bacewicz studied violin, piano, and composition at the Warsaw Conservatory, then went on to Paris, where she studied composition with Nadia Boulanger and violin with Carl Flesch. Bacewicz quickly developed into an outstanding violinist: she gave concerts throughout Europe, was a prizewinner at the 1935 Wieniawski Competition, and served for three years in the 1930s as concertmaster of the Polish Radio Orchestra. In 1954, Bacewicz was so seriously injured in an automobile accident that she had to give up performing, and she devoted the rest of her career to composing and to teaching composition at the Lodz and Warsaw conservatories. Her skill as a violinist is reflected in her writing for strings, which forms a substantial part of her catalogue.

In 1950, the Polish Composers Union commissioned a string quartet from Bacewicz that would be entered in the International String Quartet Competition the following year in Liège. Bacewicz composed her quartet as a three-movement work, neoclassical in style with influences of Polish folk music and the premiere was so successful that the quartet was awarded first prize. The success acquired an almost political significance, received a lot of press coverage and earned Bacewicz an award from the Polish State.

The music opens with a darkly coloured, reflective introduction led by the cello that evolves into the main theme presented by the two violins in strict imitation. It has a joyful, if somewhat restrained, folk-dance like simplicity. Strident chords, starkly contrasting in mood, form a disrupting second idea and the cello introduces a melancholy third theme, plaintively enveloped by the other strings. A brief section of development is followed by a revisit of the main ideas, with the viola leading the melancholy third, and a vigorous coda to finish.

The central *Andante*, in a general three-part form, is expressive and sometimes quite intense; Bacewicz takes some of the material through brief fugal, more vigorous passages before the movement comes to a quiet close.

Any underlying restraint in the quartet is immediately cast aside in the exuberant finale, aptly marked *Allegro giocoso* ("happy"). This rondo-finale does indeed dance happily, its progress interrupted by differing episodes, one played entirely *pizzicato*, another based on Polish folk music. But the rondo theme always makes an agreeable return, and at the end it propels the music to a most emphatic conclusion. Ever since that 1951 competition, Bacewicz's Fourth has remained one of her most popular quartets and one of her most frequently performed compositions.

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