

VCC Valley Classical Concerts

Presents

The Ulysses String Quartet



Sunday, March 30, 2025, at 3:00 PM
Sweeney Concert Hall / Sage Hall
Smith College, Northampton, MA

The Ulysses String Quartet

Christina Bouey and Rhiannon Banerdt, violins
Peter Dudek, viola, and Grace Ho, cello

PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

String Quartet in C Major, Op. 76, No. 3 ("Emperor," 1797)

- I. Allegro
- II. Poco adagio, cantabile
- III. Menuetto: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Presto

Lera Auerbach (b.1973)

String Quartet No. 3, Cetera desunt (2006)

- I. Dicis et non es *[You speak, yet you are not there]*
- II. Sic ego non sine te ... (nec tecum vivere possum)*[Thus I am nothing without you (but I can't live with you)]*
- III. Dicis et non facis *[You speak, yet you do nothing]*
- IV. Nec tecum vivere possum ... (sic ego non sine te)*[Thus I cannot live with you (but I'm nothing without you)]*
- V. Adventatis asinus, pulcher et fortissimus
[Enter a jackass, handsome and very strong]
- VI. Si vis pacem, para bellum
[If you want peace, prepare for war]
- VII. Non omnia moriar *[Let me not wholly die]*
- VIII. Cetera desunt *[The rest are missing]*
[Translations by Wayne Millan and Richard Teller]

INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvořák (1841 - 1904)

String Quartet No. 14 in A-Flat Major, Op. 105 (1895)

- I. Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro appassionato
- II. Molto vivace
- III. Lento e molto cantabile
- IV. Allegro non tanto

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About Today's Concert

John Montanari, Artistic Director

Along with the two Quartets, Op. 77, *Joseph Haydn's* six Quartets, Op. 76 are the culmination of a lifetime of quartet composition that elevated the form from lighthearted music suited for amateurs to serious music for serious virtuosos. They were composed in 1797, two years after Haydn's return to Vienna, following his second historic visit to London. By this time he enjoyed a level of fame throughout Europe greater than that of any other composer in history – not bad for a man of humble rural origin who wore the livery of a servant during most of his career.

The best-known Quartet of Op. 76 takes its nickname from its second movement variations on the “Emperor’s Hymn,” composed by Haydn in honor of the Emperor Franz II. Under the title “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser” (“God save Emperor Franz”), the melody became the national anthem of Austria-Hungary. For an interesting history of its many and varied subsequent uses, including as the German anthem from 1922 to the present day (setting different stanzas from the poet Heinrich von Fallersleben’s “Deutschlandlied” before and after World War II), check out the Wikipedia entry on the “Emperor’s Hymn.” Note how the melody, in an unusual spin on variation form, is performed successively and virtually without alteration by each instrument in the quartet over the course of the movement.

From her website: “A renaissance artist for modern times, *Lera Auerbach* is a widely recognized conductor, pianist, and composer. She is also an award-winning poet and an exhibited visual artist. All of her work is interconnected as part of a cohesive and comprehensive artistic worldview.” Born in the Soviet Union, Auerbach studied with pianist Joseph Kalichstein and composers Robert Beaser and Milton Babbitt at Juilliard, with further studies in the U.S. and Germany.

About Today's Concert (cont.)

Her vast worklist includes six symphonies, ten string quartets, several piano trios, numerous ballets, a couple of operas, lots of piano pieces, all sorts of songs and choral works – and that’s just her musical output.

Yet for all her literary accomplishment, Auerbach is circumspect when it comes to describing her own music. From the page devoted to the Quartet No. 3 on the website of her publisher, Boosey & Hawkes: “When I was younger, I enjoyed writing program notes for my music – I felt it was a way for me to protect it from possible misunderstanding – one last service that a composer could do for his child before it’s fully on its own. I no longer like writing about my music. Even being interviewed about it becomes an inner burden. What I realized is that you can’t protect your “child” and should just let it be without any attempts to explain or defend it. Sometimes letting go is the hardest thing to do. The music is out there on its own – whether you like it or not, it is no longer under your control, and frankly, it never was.” Thus, while we have provided translations of Auerbach's Latin inscriptions, she remains resolutely silent on what they mean.

In 1895, shortly after returning to his Czech homeland from his stint as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York, during which he had composed such popular works as the “American” Quartet and the “New World” Symphony, *Antonín Dvořák* started a Quartet in A-flat Major, based on ideas he came up with while in the U.S. When, uncharacteristically, he found the new work to be tough going, he broke off from it and began an entirely new Quartet in G Major. After finishing the new work in short order, he went back and wrapped up the A-flat Quartet. Taken together, the final two quartets provide a magnificent conclusion to one of the great bodies of chamber music to emerge from a single composer.

Artist Information

THE ULYSSES STRING QUARTET

Founded in 2015, the Ulysses Quartet members hail from Canada, the United States and Taiwan. They quickly established themselves as prize winners – 1st prize in the Vietnam International Competition in 2019, to name but one. The group's name pays homage to Homer's hero Odysseus and his arduous homeward voyage, signifying the constant pursuit of artistic and personal ideals.

Their concert schedule has taken them both near and far: Jordan Hall in Boston, Sociaedad Filharmonica in Bilbao, Spain and a debut in Mexico City in the past year. In the fall of 2023, the Ulysses Quartet became GBH Music's first-ever quartet in residence, a season-long partnership made possible by a generous contribution from the Mattina R. Proctor Foundation. Ulysses recently released their debut album, *Shades of Romani Folklore* on the Navona label. The quartet also has two new collaborative albums out: *Sea Change Quartets* by Grammy-nominated composer Joseph Summer, and *A Giant Beside You* with guitarist Benjamin Verdery.

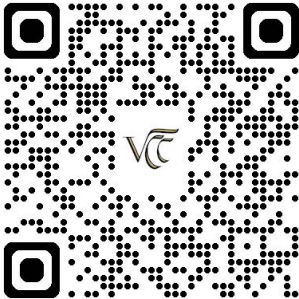
The Ulysses Quartet believes intensely in the power of music to inspire, enlighten and bring people together. This is the guiding principle of the Ulysses Quartet Foundation, dedicated to the performance and promotion of classical music of the past and present day, to benefit the broadest possible audience of music lovers and potential music lovers by expanding their understanding and appreciation of the musical arts. Ulysses aims to use this platform to raise the voices of underrepresented BIPOC and female composers. The quartet also offers interactive programs and workshops for all ages that serve to demystify the traditional repertoire while introducing audiences to diverse programming.

THE ULYSSES QUARTET

The members of Ulysses hold degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, Boston Conservatory, the Juilliard School, and the University of North Texas. The musicians perform on instruments and bows graciously on loan from the Maestro Foundation and private donors.

The Ulysses Quartet is the 2024-25 season's most "youthful" ensemble and the resultant energy, adventurousness and avidity is unmistakable. They are not afraid to color outside the lines, so to speak, and explore uncharted territory for string ensembles. Check out the media QR or web link below to Ulysses videos including "Sycorax the Witch: A Horror Music Short Film" for a glimpse into the Ulysses Quartet's derring-do. Individual artist biographies are available through the artist QR link below.

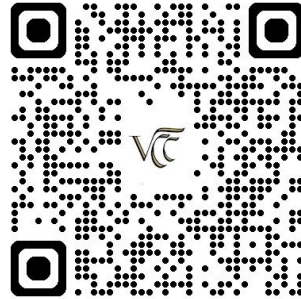
QR and WEB LINKS TO MORE ULYSSES INFORMATION



Ulysses Video Page

(please don't open during the performance!)

[www.ulyssesquartet.com/
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A promotional poster for the Springfield Symphony Orchestra. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with faint architectural drawings of a concert hall. In the top left corner is the orchestra's logo, a stylized white 'S' inside a red square. Below the logo, the text "Springfield Symphony Orchestra" is written in white on a dark red horizontal band. The main title "Something New" is written in a large, white, cursive font. Below the title, there are three photographs: a man on the left holding a violin, a man in the center playing a trumpet, and a woman on the right in a teal jacket. A black rectangular box in the center contains the date and time "APR 19 3:00PM" in white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text "TICKETS AT SPRINGFIELDSYMPHONY.ORG OR CALL 413-733-2291" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

From the Valley Classical Concerts President

On behalf of the Board of Valley Classical Concerts, I would like to welcome you to the final concert of the 2024-25 season. Founded as Music in Deerfield, VCC is now celebrating its 45th year of presenting internationally known classical chamber music ensembles for the enjoyment of music lovers in the Pioneer Valley and beyond.

We hope you have been as excited as we are to hear these fabulous artists, from young prizewinners to musicians who have played together for decades. Many of them are returning simply because they appreciate the enthusiasm of our audience, and the marvelous acoustics of Sweeney Concert Hall.

Turning to the next season, it is with great anticipation and not a little pride that we announce:

The Valley Classical Concerts 2025-2026 Season

Sunday, October 12, 2025, 3:00 PM
The Harlem String Quartet

Sunday, October 26, 2025, 3:00 PM
Quartetto di Cremona, with David Shifrin, clarinet

Sunday, November 16, 2025, 3:00 PM
Symphony Winds of Boston, with Jiayan Sun, piano

Sunday, February 1, 2026, 3:00 PM
The Isidore String Quartet

Saturday, March 7, 3:00 PM
Camille Thomas, cello, with Julien Brocal, piano

Saturday, March 21, 3:00 PM
"A Far Cry" Chamber Orchestra

(Programs subject to change.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued)

I would like to thank and to gratefully acknowledge our many generous corporate sponsors, individual and board donors, and Smith College, who have helped make this season possible and who have supported VCC over the years. They are all listed in the playbill.

Enjoy the music, encourage friends and family and younger adults and students to come to the concerts, and please consider donating to Valley Classical Concerts! Without continued financial support from our loyal patrons and lovers of chamber music, Valley Classical Concerts would not exist.

Dr. William Harbison, Board President

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