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Shanghai Quartet with Gilbert Kalish, piano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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MX 030115P



January 15, 2003, at 7:30 pm

Modlin Center for the Arts

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

Shanghai Quartet

Weigang Li, *violin* Honggang Li, *viola*
Yiwen Jiang, *violin* Nicholas Tzavaras, *cello*

with

Gilbert Kalish, *piano*

Tonight's concert is being recorded by MobilMaster for possible
future broadcast on National Public Radio.

*Modlin Center residency activities for 2002-2003
are underwritten by a grant from the Robins Foundation.*

Pro tools



Tonight's Program

4:45 24 Preludes, op. 34

several preludes: separate each one.

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-75)

6:30 Selections announced from stage

13:00

Gilbert Kalish, *piano*

8:00 14:10
9:40 16:07

11:46 String Quartet no. 3 in F major, op. 73

Shostakovich

22:40 I. Allegretto

28:00 II. Moderato con moto

33:00 III. Allegro non troppo

37:00 IV. Adagio

45 ± V. Moderato

Shanghai Quartet

—Intermission—

Piano Quintet in G minor, op. 57

Shostakovich

58:00 I. Prelude: Lento

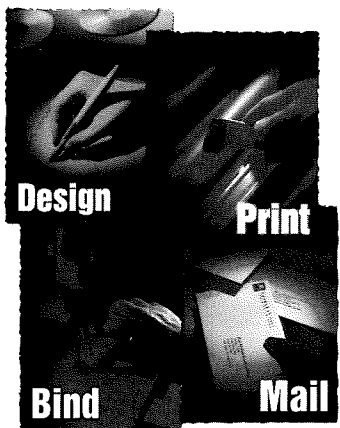
62:00 II. Fugue: Adagio

71:20 III. Scherzo: Allegretto

75:15 IV. Intermezzo: Lento

81:00 V. Finale: Allegretto

Shanghai Quartet with Gilbert Kalish, *piano*



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About the Artists

Shanghai Quartet

Weigang Li, *violin*

Yiwen Jiang, *violin*

Honggang Li, *viola*

Nicholas Tzavaras, *cello*

Since its New York debut at Town Hall in the spring of 1987, the **Shanghai Quartet** has been hailed by the press and the public alike as one of the leading quartets of its generation. It now performs annually to exceptional critical acclaim in major music centers throughout the United States and abroad.

Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, the quartet took second place representing its country at the Portsmouth International Quartet competition. In 1987 the ensemble won the prestigious Chicago Discovery Competition and embarked on an extensive touring career. It has been ensemble-in-residence at the Tanglewood and Ravinia Festivals and has appeared on three occasions at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival.

The quartet has played at Lincoln Center on the "Great Performers" series, in addition to appearing in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Detroit, Toronto and many other cities. Its annual appearances in New York City have included a sold-out three-concert series with pianist Ruth Laredo at the Metropolitan Museum. The quartet's other distinguished collaborators include pianists Peter Frankl and Lillian Kallir, guitarist Eliot Fisk, flutist Eugenia Zukerman, violist Arnold Steinhardt and cellist Carter Brey. The ensemble has also



made several tours of Europe, giving concerts throughout Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The Shanghai Quartet may be heard on Delos International compact discs. Its 1994 debut release, featuring works of Grieg and Mendelssohn, received exceptional critical acclaim. Recent releases feature quartets by Alan Hovanes and the "Song of the Ch'in" by Chinese composer Zhou Long, as well as works for strings and flute with Eugenia Zukerman. Since 1989, the Shanghai Quartet has been ensemble-in-residence at the University of Richmond.

A native of Shanghai, **Weigang Li** began violin studies with his parents at age 5 and went on to attend the Shanghai Conservatory at age 14. He came to the United States in 1981 to study at the San Francisco Conservatory. He has been a soloist with the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra, the Shanghai Symphony, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony. Upon graduating from the

Shanghai Conservatory in 1985, he was appointed assistant professor of violin there. Shortly thereafter he left China to continue his education at Northern Illinois University. From 1987-1989, Mr. Li studied and taught at the Julliard School as teaching assistant to the Julliard Quartet. His other teachers have included Shmuel Ashkenasi, Pierre Menard, Shu-Chen and Isadore Tinkleman.

Born in Beijing, **Yiwen Jiang** began his violin studies with his father at age 6. In 1981 he was accepted into the class of Professor Han Li at the Central Conservatory of Music. In 1985 he came to the United States where his teachers have included Taras Gabora, Jaime Laredo, Michael Tree, Pinchas Zukerman, and Arnold Steinhardt of the Guarneri Quartet. A prize winner at the Mae M. Whitaker and Montreal competitions, he has appeared at many international music festivals. He also appeared with the Central Opera House Orchestra in China, the Victoria Symphony and the Montreal Symphony. Mr. Jiang has performed for NBC and PBS television specials, National Public Radio, CPB in Beijing, WQXR in New York and KFUO in St. Louis. He has recorded for the Record Corporation of China.

Honggang Li began his musical training studying violin with his parents at the same time as his brother, Weigang. When the Beijing Conservatory reopened in 1977 after the Cultural Revolution, Mr. Li was selected to attend from a group of over 500 applicants. He continued his training at the Shanghai Conservatory and was appointed a faculty member there in 1984. He has also served as a teaching assistant at the Julliard School. Mr. Li has appeared as soloist with the Shanghai Philharmonic

and the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra. In 1987, he won a violin as a special prize given by Elisa Pegreffi of the Quartetto Italiano at the Paolo Borciani competition in Italy. Mr. Li joined the Shanghai Quartet as a violinist and became its violist with the addition of Yiwen Jiang in the summer of 1994.

Cellist **Nicholas Tzavaras** has been an active soloist and chamber musician performing throughout the United States. Recent solo appearances have included concerto performances with the National Repertory Orchestra, Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, SUNY Stony Brook Symphony and at the Tonnhalle in Zurich. Mr. Tzavaras has previously appeared at the Isaac Stern International Chamber Music Encounters in Jerusalem, as well as the Marlboro, Tanglewood and Musicorda music festivals. He served as principal cellist for groups including the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, National Repertory Orchestra and the Stony Brook Symphony. His primary teachers and coaches have included Laurence Lesser, Timothy Eddy, Felix Galimir and Alexander Schneider. Mr. Tzavaras holds a bachelor of music degree from the New England Conservatory and a master of music degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. In addition to his performing, Mr. Tzavaras is also active in music outreach and education, having taught at the Thurnauer School of Music in New Jersey and the Hudson River School of Music in Westchester, N.Y., as well as starting a cello program with his mother, Roberta Guaspari, who is the artistic director and founder of the Opus 118 Music Center in East Harlem.



Gilbert Kalish leads a musical life of unusual variety and breadth. His profound influence on the musical community as educator, and as pianist in myriad performances and recordings, has established him as a major figure in American music making.

A native New Yorker and graduate of Columbia College, Mr. Kalish studied with Leonard Shure, Julius Hereford and Isabella Vengerova. He has been the pianist of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players since 1969 and was a founding member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, a group devoted to new music that flourished during the 1960s and 70s. He is a frequent

guest artist with many of the world's most distinguished chamber ensembles. His 30-year partnership with the great mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani was universally recognized as one of the most remarkable artistic collaborations of our time. He maintains long-standing duos with the cellists Timothy Eddy and Joel Krosnick, and he appears frequently with soprano Dawn Upshaw.

As an educator he is leading professor and head of performance activities at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. From 1968-1997 he was a faculty member of the Tanglewood Music Center and served as the "Chairman of the Faculty" at Tanglewood from 1985 to 1997. He often serves as a guest faculty member at distinguished music institutions such as the Banff Centre and the Steans Institute at Ravinia and is renowned for his master class presentations.

Mr. Kalish's discography of some 100 recordings encompasses classical repertory, 20th century master-works and new compositions. Of special note are his solo recordings of Charles Ives' Concord Sonata and Sonatas of Joseph Haydn, an immense discography of vocal music with Jan DeGaetani and landmarks of the 20th century by composers such as Carter, Crumb, Shapey and Schoenberg. In 1995 he was presented with the Paul Fromm Award by the University of Chicago Music Department for distinguished service to the music of our time.

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Notes on the Program

Notes written by Bonlyn Hall

Dmitri Shostakovich

Born in Czarist Russia and growing up during the Communist Revolution, Shostakovich experienced a lifetime of political upheaval, blacklisting, purges, and threats. How the political realities of his time influenced his work is debatable, but they could hardly have failed to have an effect. Although trained in strong compositional discipline at the Petrograd Conservatory, the young Shostakovich showed an early interest in avant-garde experimentation coming from the West. This was tolerated in the early years of the Soviet Union, but state control soon became more rigid, and the young composer lost friends and mentors in the Stalinist purges of 1929-1938. He turned to more conventional musical values at that time. He developed an individual style that uses traditional models, but with twists that seem to alter or even contradict the surface ideas. His use of chromatically extended tonality maintains a contemporary flavor without losing contact with his listener. His music—original, challenging and accessible—has made him one of the most loved composers of the 20th century.

24 Preludes, op. 34 (Selections)

The prelude, originally a short instrumental piece that introduces another work or works, was established as an independent piano piece in the 19th century. Chopin wrote a set of 24 preludes, one in each key, organized around an ascending circle of 5ths, with each major key followed by its relative minor. Shostakovich followed Chopin's model.

Shostakovich wrote his set of preludes between December 1932 and March 1933 and premiered them himself in 1933. He had just finished the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtensk District*, and perhaps the preludes represented to the composer an opportunity to retreat into the simplicity and relative safety of piano music after his self-described "tragic-satiric" opera, which would prove to be a political powder-keg.

Each prelude is very short—most lasting a minute or less. While they are abstract works, without any designated extra-musical references, they convey a variety of impressions: some are poetic and lyrical, reminiscent of Chopin; some are raucously satirical; some are suffused with nervous energy; others are wildly virtuosic; one has an ominous spirit that seems to invite interpretation. They are full of originality. Some even do an inventive about-turn in a very small space. Although each diverges from its home key, it always returns, relieving tension.



String Quartet no. 3 in F major, op. 73

This string quartet dates from 1946 and, in fact, is the only piece completed by Shostakovich in that post-war year. After the work's completion, but before its first performance, Shostakovich attached descriptive titles to each of the five movements: "Calm unawareness of the future cataclysm"; "Rumblings of unrest and anticipation"; "The forces of war unleashed"; "Homage to the dead"; "The eternal question—Why? And for what?" The titles, which may have been an attempt to disguise the quartet as a piece about World War II, were later dropped. Although it was censured in the Soviet press as "formalist" (abstract, obscure, non-heroic), Shostakovich had written soon after its completion, "It seems to me that I have never been so pleased with one of my works as with this quartet."

The first movement sets off with light-hearted themes alternating, playing against each other, and combining into a complex fugue. It ends with a fast-paced codetta. The second movement introduces a ponderous bass line accompanying an oriental-sounding violin theme. A soft, insistent pizzicato works against a long legato line, producing an ominous effect, before the movement dies away. The third movement is a stormy *scherzo* with a constant sense of urgency and conflict coming from a march-like but irregular pulse (alternating two- and three-beat sections). The short fourth movement, *Adagio*, begins with the instruments playing a dramatic recitative in octaves. This movement's tragic character may stem from the fact that it was written during a visit to the composer's hometown, Leningrad, where he saw the war's devastation. The cello carries this without pause into the last movement, where it starts a lyrical dance in 6/8 rhythm. The sorrowful theme from the previous movement recurs here. Restless energy is set against silences, one hears a hint of sardonic optimism, and the piece ends softly.

Piano Quintet in G minor, op. 57

The composer and the Beethoven Quartet premiered the piano quintet in 1940. It was immediately acclaimed and received many performances and recordings in the West. It is considered to be one of Shostakovich's strongest chamber works. One writer praises it for its "beguiling clarity, melodic charm, and vitality, indelibly suffused with the imprint of Shostakovich's individuality" (Laurel E. Fay). The composer devised a five-movement form with this piece and used the form in many in later works.

The first movement fulfills the traditional role of a prelude, serving as a short introduction to what is to come. It sets up the dialogue among the five instruments, with a light middle section in triple meter set between dramatic duple-meter statements. The *Fugue* that follows is a strict example of that complex form. It begins with each muted string entering alone, followed by the piano in octaves. The form is thoughtfully and thoroughly worked out, in expressive Baroque style. The strings return to full voice for the third movement, the *Scherzo*. This peasant dance is a heavy-handed joke in which some hear mocking reference to Soviet anti-intellectualism. The fourth movement, the *Intermezzo*, provides strong contrast with singing strings over staccato piano chords. This leads without pause into the *Finale*, where a serious sonata form combines with a bright G major to finish the piece. It ends simply and quietly, without drama.