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The Shanghai Quartet Quartet-in-Residence

Weigang Li, *violin*
Honggang Li, *violin*
Zheng Wang, *viola*
James Wilson, *cello*

January 26, 1992, 3:00 PM

Camp Theatre

The Quartet Book

1. Very fast
2. Flowing
3. Lifting
4. Very fast
5. Very sustained, but not too slow
6. Heavily
7. Scurrying
8. Very icily
9. With much feeling, and continuous flexibility of the tempo
10. With clock-like precision
11. With rock-like energy and abandon
12. Turbulently
13. At once sadly and playfully
14. Very fast: like shattering glass
15. Decisively

The Quartet Book, my second string quartet, was completed in November of 1990, and was written for the Shanghai Quartet. The piece opens with a rich chord, containing seven notes, and is followed by a resolution to an incomplete C Major triad. During the second half of the work, this chord begins to make reappearances more and more frequently (in movements 7, 11, 14, 15), each time with a different resolution, until, in the finale, #15, it resolves to a now complete C Major chord, which leads to a jubilant coda ending in C Major.

In between each of the eight principal movements of the quartet (the odd-numbered ones - #1, #3, #5, etc.) there is a "linking movement," and each of these seven "links" consists of just a single pitch (with the exception of the last one, #14, which has a few introductory measures, which are a variation on the opening measures of the quartet), the seven "links" taken together spelling out the fundamental seven-note chord that opens the piece.

These single-pitch movements have nothing but rhythm, dynamics, articulation, etc., to "communicate" with. They are almost like a mime or "dumb" show, coming in between the scenes of a play. Sometimes they act out the gestures of the surrounding movements; the middle of #2, for example, hints at the rhythm of #3, and #6 strongly suggests the opening of upcoming #7, while #4 wistfully looks back at the gestures of the opening of #1.

Similar interrelationships abound between the eight principal movements themselves, creating a whole "book," as it were, of relationships, that swirl around the central "plot" - a plot that could most prosaically be reduced to the question "How is he going to resolve that chord?"

by Nathan Currier

P R O G R A M

Quartet in C minor, op. 18, no. 4

Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro, ma non tanto

(1770-1827)

Scherzo: Andante scherzoso, quasi Allegretto

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegro

The Quartet Book (Premiere Performance)

Nathan Currier

(20th Century)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Quartet in A minor, op. 41, no. 1

Robert Schumann

Andante espressivo; Allegro

(1810-1856)

Scherzo: Presto

Adagio

Presto

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Weigang Li began violin studies with his father Ke-Qiang Li at the age of five. He attended the Music Middle School at the Shanghai Conservatory, and graduated from the Conservatory in 1985. In 1981 he studied with Isadore Tinkleman at the San Francisco Conservatory through an exchange program between the sister cities of San Francisco and Shanghai. He has been a soloist with the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra, the Shanghai Symphony and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 1982 he was invited to perform with the BBC Scottish Orchestra, concert which was recorded for broadcast. Mr. Li was featured in the film *From Mao to Mozart* with Isaac Stern.

Honggang Li began his violin studies at the same time as his brother. When the Beijing Conservatory reopened in 1977 after the Cultural Revolution, Mr. Li was selected from a group of over five hundred applicants. He continued his training at the Shanghai Conservatory and remained there as a teaching assistant after his graduation in 1985. His teachers were Ke-Qiang Li and Li-Na Yu. Mr. Li has appeared as a soloist with the Shanghai Philharmonic and the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra.

Violist *Zheng Wang* was born in Shanghai in 1960, the son of professional musicians. He began studies with his mother at the age of ten, and changed to viola at the age of sixteen. He graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory as a student of Xi-Di Shen. Mr. Wang has been a soloist with the Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra. After coming to the United States, he studied with Richard Young of Northern Illinois University, and has been a guest artist with the Juilliard Quartet at the Library of Congress.

The newest member of the Quartet is cellist *James Wilson*. A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Mr. Wilson graduated from the University of Michigan where he studied with Jeffrey Solow and was awarded the Albert A. Stansley Medal, the highest honor given by the School of Music. He has recorded for Access Records and has participated twice in the Piatigorsky Seminar in Los Angeles, as well as in master classes of William Pleeth, Aldo Parisot, Eleanore Schoenfeld, and Yo-Yo Ma.

The works of composer *Nathan Currier* have been heard more and more recently. During the past two seasons, his pieces have been performed in many different countries, from Moscow and the Far East to Western Europe and the United States. He has also been the recipient of numerous awards. He has received a Fromm Foundation Grant, a Fulbright Grant, an American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Fellowship, the Leonard Bernstein Fellowship at Tanglewood, an International Barlow Competition Prize, two ASCAP Awards to Young Composers, and he was a finalist at the International Olympia Competition in Athens. He has held residency fellowships at the MacDowell, Yaddo, Millay and Virginia Center for the Creative Arts colonies.

Funding for his recent commissions has come from such sources as the Jerome Foundation, Concert Artists Guild, Chamber Music America, and the Readers Digest; and he has recently completed works for such groups as the Shanghai and Lark String Quartets, the Verdehr Trio, the Chelsea Ensemble and the Ravel Trio. He is currently working on a dramatic work for tenor Paul Sperry.

He holds a Doctorate in composition from the Juilliard School, and First Prize from the Royal Conservatory of Belgium. He is also a pianist, and a performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations won him the Silver Medal of the International Piano Recording Competition. He is currently serving on the extension division faculty of the Juilliard School, and is published by Theodore Presser Co.