

ROCKPORT  
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BARRY SHIFFMAN, artistic director

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2019 | 8 PM

## Opening Night: The Roaring 20's

Parker Quartet | Cristina Zavalloni, *soprano*  
Blake Pouliot, *violin* | Stephen Prutsman, *piano*  
Vera Quartet

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 2 IN G MAJOR (1923-7)  
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)  
Allegretto  
Blues: Moderato  
Perpetuum mobile: Allegro

SECOND HAND ROSE (1921)  
James Frederick "Jimmy" Hanley (1892-1942)

STARDUST (1927)  
Hoagland Howard "Hoagy" Carmichael (1899-1981)

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' (1929)  
Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller (1904-1943)  
with Harry Brooks (1895-1970)

SUITE: LA CRÉATION DU MONDE, OP. 81B (1923)  
Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)  
Prélude: Modéré  
Fugue –  
Romance: Tendre et doux –  
Scherzo –  
Final: Modéré

:: INTERMISSION ::

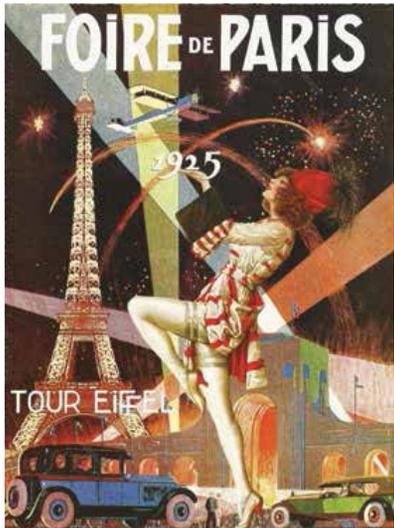
ORIGINAL SCORE TO BUSTER KEATON'S  
1927 SILENT FILM *COLLEGE*  
Stephen Prutsman (b. 1960)

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY SUSANNE GUYER AND THAD CARPEN

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Please join Rockport Music for an Opening Night reception at the Rockport Art Association and Museum immediately following the concert.





Jazz in early-1920s Paris and much of Europe reflected that change was in the air in the aftermath of the First World War. Then, jazz meant different things to different people. Ragtime appeared in Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (1918), played by a band with a similar makeup to the 1916 Original Dixieland Jazz Band. But Stravinsky hadn't yet heard a note of jazz, he'd only seen it in copies of sheet music. Eric Satie, on the other hand, heard some early 78s, and had fun playing and imitating the rags of Jelly Roll Morton for his friends in the Paris cafés. He'd already included a ragtime section in his ballet *Parade* (1917) in a scene headed *The Little American Girl*, where the ballet recreates silent movies by imitating Charlie Chaplin. The music hall, too, brought jazz to the French, notably with a star like Gaby Deslys, whose ostrich feathers and sequins Darius Milhaud doubtless feasted upon even while analyzing the jazz played by the band—all described in his 1923 *Memoir*. In it, he speaks of these newly imported American sounds: a soloist's syncopation against the heartbeat-like basic pulse of the music; the grouping of all the percussion around a single drum set; the piano with the dryness and precision of a drum and banjo; the "resurrection" of the saxophone (invented in Paris 80 years earlier); the expressive melodic use of trombone and trumpet; the presence and attack of the clarinet; and the introduction

of the banjo—"drier, more nervy and with more body than the harp or string quartet." It was all very new, and French composers and their public were hungry to explore these new innovations.

#### VIOLIN SONATA NO. 2 IN G MAJOR (1923-7)

**Maurice Ravel** (b. Ciboure, France, March 7, 1875; d. Paris, December 28, 1937)

*Composed 1923-7; 18 minutes*

On May 12, 1921, Maurice Ravel wrote to a friend saying how he was impressed with jazz played in Paris nightclubs by African-American musicians with what he called "nerve-wracking virtuosity." It was here that Ravel found inspiration for the slow *Blues* movement of the Violin Sonata in G he was writing. The sonata was premièred by violinist (and composer) George Enescu on May 30, 1927 and was ready to be packed in Ravel's travel trunk for performances in the United States and Canada when he set sail later that year. "To my mind, the blues is one of your greatest musical assets," Ravel told an American reporter during the tour. "It's truly American, despite earlier contributory influences from Africa and Spain." Ravel's *Blues* is the centerpiece of his sonata. In it, the violin frequently echoes the wailing saxophone and both instruments recreate the sounds of the strummed banjo. One critic has even found echoes and borrowings from Jelly Roll Morton's "Black Bottom Stomp". Ravel, nevertheless, maintains that the spirit of the music is Gallic to the core. "While I adopted this popular form," he said to that same Chicago reporter, "nevertheless it is French music—Ravel's music—that I have written."

The Violin Sonata is his final chamber work. Ravel joked that it took him four years (1923-27) to get rid of all the unnecessary notes. A large part of the problem lay in the nature of the instruments themselves. "In writing my Sonata for violin and piano, two fundamentally incompatible instruments, I assumed the task... of emphasizing their irreconcilability," he said. Still, like Debussy 20 years earlier, Ravel must have sensed deep down that opposites can attract. Despite their initial reluctance, both composers produced works that rapidly became classics of the violin repertoire and are quintessentially representative of their respective composers. The opening *Allegretto* main theme of the Ravel is graceful and lyrical when heard on violin, more angular on the piano. It is contrasted with a persistent quirky "tapping" figure which assumes more importance as this pastoral opening movement progresses. The musical material is shared between the instruments equally and fluently, with never an extraneous note. After the *Blues* movement, the finale is a driving *perpetuum mobile*, led by the violin, with simple piano accompaniment. It brings back themes from the two earlier movements. The demanding violin writing is reminiscent of Ravel's virtuoso violin showpiece *Tzigane*, which Ravel also wrote while this sonata was being composed.

#### SUITE: LA CRÉATION DU MONDE, OP. 81B

**Darius Milhaud** (b. Marseilles, September 4, 1892; d. Geneva, June 22, 1974)

*Composed in 1923; 18 minutes*

French composer Darius Milhaud first came across jazz when he heard the Billy Arnold Jazz Band, recently arrived from New York in 1920, in a Hammersmith dance hall in London. The next year in New York, he heard the Leo Reisman Band and the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and was struck by their timbres and subtlety. In Harlem, he particularly loved the rhythmic energy of the strident New Orleans-type jazz. Soon, back in Paris, he received a commission to write music for Rolf de Maré's Swedish ballet. His collaborators were the poet Blaise Cendrars (who had just put together a book of African folk tales), set designer Fernand Léger and choreographer Jean Borlin. Their subject was a ballet portraying the creation of the world seen through African creation beliefs. "At last in *La création du monde*, I had the opportunity I had been waiting for," Milhaud wrote in his autobiography. "I could now use all those elements of jazz I had been studying so hard. I adopted the same orchestra as used in Harlem—17 solo instruments—and I made wholesale use of the jazz style to convey a purely classical feeling."

The action portrays a dark mass of entwined dancers chanting magical incantations on a dark stage. Trees and animals gradually evolve; then an arm, a leg and the torso of a complete human being. A man and woman perform a dance of fertility and are left alone onstage to welcome the first springtime. The ballet premièred in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, October 25, 1923. There was the desired *scandale*. People pronounced the ballet frivolous and its music better suited to the dance hall than the theater. But, as Milhaud wryly noted: "Ten years later, the selfsame critics were discussing the philosophy of jazz and learnedly demonstrating that *La création* was the best of my works." Milhaud's groundbreaking work is performed in its composer's arrangement for piano quintet.



*I'm wearing second hand hats  
Second hand clothes  
That's why they call me Second Hand Rose  
Written by Jimmy Hanley, with lyrics by  
Grant Clarke for the Broadway production  
My Man for the Ziegfeld Follies in 1921.*



Among the greatest of American standards, "Stardust" was composed in 1927 by Hoagy Carmichael, with lyrics added two years later by Mitchell Parish.



*No one to talk with  
All by myself  
No one to walk with  
But I'm happy on the shelf  
Ain't misbehavin'  
I'm savin' my love for you  
Written by Fats Waller and Harry Brooks,  
with lyrics by Andy Razaf for the Broadway  
musical comedy play Connie's Hot Chocolates.*



*A Nickelodeon theater in Toronto, Canada  
ca. 1910*

#### ORIGINAL SCORE TO BUSTER KEATON'S 1927 SILENT FILM COLLEGE

**Stephen Prutsman** (b. Los Angeles, CA. 1960)

*Composed 2018; 50 minutes*

#### MUSIC AND THE SILENT SCREEN

- For the first 40 years, silent moving pictures are accompanied by music—mechanical instruments to drown out projection noise at first, but, before long, live music begins to add a human component to the monochrome, speechless, silent screen.
- In 1909, Edison Pictures begins distributing cue sheets with their movies, suggesting appropriate musical selections.

- Film scores for silent movies from major composers are rare. French composer Camille Saint-Saëns writes the first—*L'Assasinat du duc de Guise* (1908). Others include Darius Milhaud's *L'Inhumaine* (1924), Arthur Honegger's *La Roue* (1923) and *Napoleon* (1927), Joseph Weiss' *Der Student von Prag* (1913), Friedrich Hollaender's *Nosferatu* (1922), and Gottfried Huppertz's *Metropolis* (1926).

- In the U.S., notable scores include Victor Herbert's *The Fall of a Nation* (1916), Mortimer Wilson's *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), and Hugo Riesenfeld's *Beau Geste* (1926).

- In October 1924, an impoverished Dmitri Shostakovich, then a student in Leningrad, living with his recently widowed mother and sister, begins playing piano for silent movies at the Barricade Theater. In 1929, his 90-minute score for the silent movie *The New Babylon* brings in 2000 rubles.

- Between 1905 and 1910, the success of the first nickelodeon in Pittsburgh, explodes to 10,000 five-cent theaters in the U.S., showing single-reel episodes or shorts.

- By 1916 there are more than 21,000 movie theaters in the U.S., with multiple-reel "feature" films now rapidly replacing the shorts. The "dream palace" is born. The 3,300-seat Strand (1914) on Broadway is among the earliest and grandest of the "dream palaces."

- Musical accompaniments also grow more elaborate. Resident house bands and theater organs, notably the "Mighty Wurlitzer," become more commonplace. At its peak, in 1926, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company is shipping a theater organ every day.

- In 1926, the New York Philharmonic orchestra records the William Axt/David Mendoza score to *Don Juan* on the Vitaphone disc system. It's the first major film replacing live music with a pre-recorded disc synchronized with the projector.

- In 1926, Richard Strauss conducts a silent movie version of his opera *Der Rosenkavalier* with "live" orchestra in Dresden, Vienna and London. The film's projection speed is adjusted to sync with the music.

- In 1926, Joseph Frank "Buster" Keaton (1895-1966) directs and stars in *The General*, the silent film generally viewed as his greatest.

- In 1927, Buster Keaton releases *College*.

- In 1927, the curtain now begins to fall on the silent screen with the first feature-length "talkie" with recorded dialogue, *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson. A smash hit, the movie earns Warner Brothers a total of \$2.625 million. Further rapid technological advances quickly bring in the era of sound production, with movie theaters newly wired for sound.

- In 1927, the average cost of a movie ticket is 25 cents.

— Program notes © 2019 Keith Horner. Comments welcomed: [khnotes@sympatico.ca](mailto:khnotes@sympatico.ca)



## PARKER QUARTET



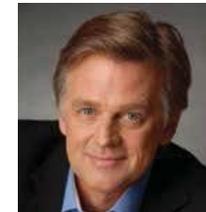
Inspiring performances, luminous sound, and exceptional musicianship are the hallmarks of the Grammy Award-winning Parker Quartet. Renowned for its dynamic interpretations and polished, expansive colors, the group has rapidly distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation. Founded and currently based in Boston, the Parker Quartet's numerous honors include winning the Concert Artists Guild Competition, the Grand Prix and Mozart Prize at France's Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, and *Chamber Music America's* prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award. Now Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University's Department of Music, and also in-residence at USC School of Music, the Quartet has held numerous prestigious residencies over its history. The Parker Quartet's members hold graduate degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music and the Juilliard School.

## BLAKE POULIOT, violin



Establishing himself as one of Canada's most promising young artists, twenty-four-year-old violinist Blake Pouliot won the Grand Prize at the 2016 Orchestra Symphonique de Montréal Manulife Competition as well as the Canada Council for the Arts' Michael Measure Prize in 2013. Mr. Pouliot is currently a Professional Studies Certificate candidate at the Colburn School Conservatory of Music, where he studies with Robert Lipsett, the Jascha Heifetz Distinguished Violin Chair. At Colburn, Mr. Pouliot has been a member of the Colburn Artists program for students readying to launch solo or chamber-music careers.

## STEPHEN PRUTSMAN, piano



A pianist, composer and conductor, Stephen Prutsman explores music of all cultures and languages. Mr. Prutsman has served as Artistic Partner with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra as well as Artistic Director of the Cartagena International Festival of Music. In the

early 90's, he was a medal winner at the Tchaikovsky and Queen Elisabeth Piano competitions, and received the Avery Fisher Career Grant. Since then Prutsman has performed as soloist with the world's leading orchestras and has an extensive, critically-acclaimed classical discography. A former student of Aube Tzerko, Leon Fleisher, and Jack Wilson, he studied at the University of California at Los Angeles and the Peabody Conservatory of Music. Passionate about the value of music for all, Prutsman actively promotes music and arts education, especially projects that create enjoyable artistic environments for autistic children and their families.

## VERA QUARTET



Winners of the 2018 Astral Artists National Auditions, the Vera Quartet has been named the String Quartet-in-Residence at the Curtis Institute of Music. The Quartet also received Grand Prizes at recent Plowman and Yellow Springs competitions as well as top prizes from the M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition and the Wigmore Hall String Quartet Competition. With members from Spain, Cuba, and the USA, the ensemble shares a deep commitment to exploring and programming the music of their roots, in juxtaposition with the great masterworks of the string quartet repertoire. Formed in 2015, the Vera Quartet has been in residence at the Beethovenhaus in Germany and at the Jacobs School of Music, as well as participated in residency programs at the Banff Centre in Canada and Aspen Music Festival.

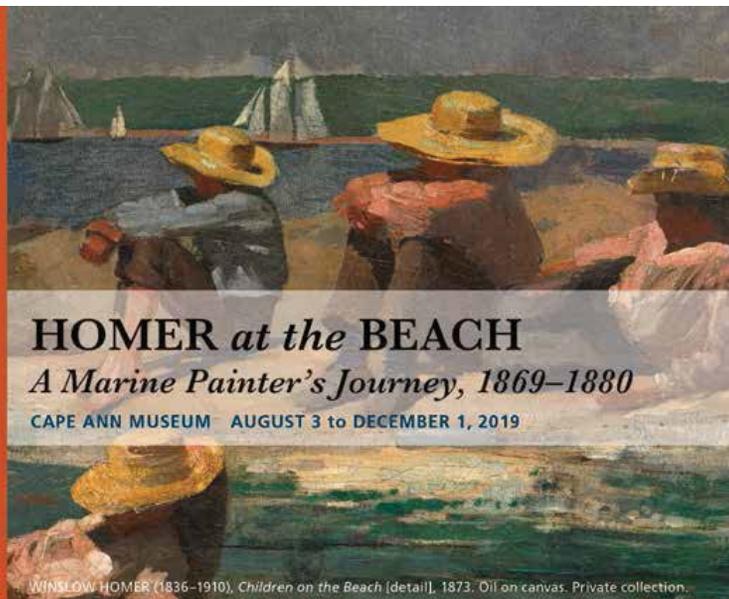
CRISTINA ZAVALLONI, *soprano*



© Barbara Rippon

Born in Bologna, Italy, Cristina Zavalloni's musical background is steeped in jazz, bel canto, and composition. She attended the Conservatorio di Musica "Giovanni Battista Martini" and also studied classical and modern dance for several years. Ms. Zavalloni has appeared at the world's most prestigious jazz festivals and concert halls. Her repertoire today ranges from Monteverdi to Mozart, and from twentieth century music to contemporaries including James MacMillan, Michael Nyman, among others. As a composer and a jazz bandleader, Ms. Zavalloni has conceived several programs. She is currently signed with Italian label EGEE, for which she recorded *IDEA* and *Solidago*.

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WINSLOW HOMER (1836–1910), *Children on the Beach* [detail], 1873. Oil on canvas. Private collection.