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# INTIMA III

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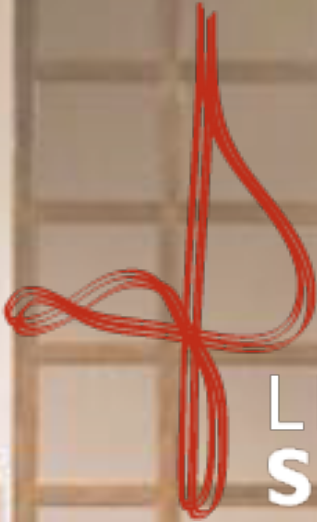
TRADITIONAL TUNES AND UNCOMMON FORMS FROM  
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MUSAEUS STRING QUARTET & MEGAN WITTIG, SOPRANO

**APRIL 20, 2024 – 7:30 PM**  
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# Programme Order

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- “Emperor” String Quartet Op. 76, No. 3 in C Major F.J. Haydn (1732-1809)
- I. Allegro
  - II. Poco Adagio; cantabile
  - III. Menuetto. Allegro
  - IV. Finale. Presto

## Selections from *The Lord of the Rings*

- *May it Be* Eithne Ní Bhraonáin (b. 1961)
- *Evenstar* Howard Shore (b. 1946)
- *Into the West* Annie Lennox (b. 1954)
- *Aníron* Eithne Ní Bhraonáin (b. 1961)
- *In Dreams* Howard Shore (b. 1946)

## INTERMISSION

*All thoughts Within My Heart That Dwell* Anonymous

*Lo! Now I Bid Farewell to Ventadorn* Bernard de Ventadour (1135-1194)

*Mercy I Cry, Who All Bewildered Stand* Châtelain de Coucy (1168-1203)

*Last Leaf Collection* Danish String Quartet

- Shore
- Polksa from Dorotea
- Tjønneblomen
- Menuet no. 60
- Æ Rømeser
- Intermezzo
- Shine You No More
- Drømte Mig En Drøm
- Stædelil
- Naja's Waltz
- Unst Boat Song
- Hur Var Du I Aftes Sa Sildig
- Now Found is the Fairest of Roses
- The Dromer

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## About the Special Guest

### Megan Wittig, soprano



Born and raised in Burstall, Saskatchewan, Megan Wittig is a freelance singer who has appeared in numerous productions, most notably *The Marriage of Figaro* (Susanna), *Madama Butterfly* (Suzuki), *The Magic Flute* (First Lady), and *A Hand of Bridge* (Sally and Geraldine). In addition to performing and working in the insurance industry, Megan teaches private voice lessons, specializing in classical, musical theatre, and CCM

instruction. Many of Megan's students have gone on to pursue careers in the arts. Megan received her Bachelor of Music with Distinction (2012) and Master of Music (2015) from the University of Lethbridge under the mentorship of Dr. Blaine Hendsbee. Together with Lisa Mulgrew, Megan is the co-founder and co-artistic director of Little Lethbridge Opera Theatre which strives to provide performing opportunities for emerging and professional artists in Southern Alberta. Megan is thrilled to collaborate with Musaeus on this program!

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## About the Musaeus String Quartet



Since Musaeus's foundation in 1982, the Lethbridge Symphony's resident professional string quartet has earned a reputation as one of Alberta's most versatile and accomplished classical performing groups. Composed of the Symphony's principal strings (violins Norbert Boehm and Airdrie Ignas; viola Gabriel Kastelic; and cello Mark Rodgers), their repertoire ranges from masterpieces of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras through to 20th century classics, as well as arrangements of jazz, popular, and contemporary music.

In addition to leading our strings sections for the Symphony Series, and other events that form part of each Season, like Kids Choir and our Symphony Soiree fundraising gala every spring, Musaeus String Quartet & Friends present the Musica Intima concerts. In addition, Musaeus performs at numerous private, public, and corporate events every season.

# Programme Notes

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## **Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) “Emperor” String Quartet Op. 76, No. 3**

The six String Quartets, Opus 76 are among Haydn's last masterpieces in the genre he had fathered and developed over most of his life. All were composed during the summer and fall of 1797 when the sixty-five year old composer was at the height of his powers. Together with the two Quartets Opus 77, they form the crown of Haydn's chamber music.

The third quartet, “Emperor” is perhaps the most famous of the set, largely due to Haydn's magnificent hymn to the Austrian emperor, “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser” (God save Francis the Emperor) which is used as the theme for the variations in the second movement. (It is said that Haydn had been deeply impressed by “God Save the King” during his time in England in the early 1790's and decided to create something as beautiful for the Emperor upon his return to Austria.)

The Quartet consists of four movements and features the intricately worked out dialogue between all four instruments that Haydn pioneered in his own works and that marked the Viennese string quartet, including those of Mozart and later composers such as Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms well into the nineteenth century. The first movement, Allegro, is a bright and sunny piece of music in which the opening idea of the main theme is developed in some of the most innovative and witty ways across the movement, including in the central development section, a wonderful transformation into a peasant dance in E major complete with bagpipe-like drones.

The second movement is the famous set of variations on the hymn to the Emperor. Here Haydn gives the tune, unaltered like a church hymn, to each member of the quartet in turn, while the other members weave countermelodies and accompaniments against it. A robust minuet and its trio serve as the third movement. This is followed by an unusual, innovative Finale which begins in a passionate and driven C minor featuring cascading triplets that infiltrate each voice of the quartet. Only towards its end do the clouds part in a glorious C major also involving some lively triplet runs bringing the quartet to a truly happy ending.

## **Three “Troubadour” Songs**

Tonight, we will be hearing a selection of troubadour songs arranged for string quartet and voice. The troubadours were poet composers who were active in southern France from the early eleven hundreds until the

# Programme Notes

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destruction of their rich culture in the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229) which brought these territories under the domination of northern France and the orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic Church.

The poetry of the troubadours stands as one of the first great bodies of European literature in the vernacular—the language of the ordinary people of the time—as opposed to the Latin of the highly educated and clergy. Here the troubadours wrote and sang in their native tongue, the langue d’oc or Occitan, a derivative of which is still spoken in parts of southern France, Spain and Italy. The troubadours and their art flourished at the courts of the nobility where these poet musicians were lionized. In fact, romanticized biographies or *vidas* of the foremost troubadours sprang up in these court circles and have survived the centuries giving a colourful glimpse into the world they lived in. Their songs initiated a revolution in poetry in which rhyme and accent marked the poetic rhythm of the text as in English poetry today, something not found in previous Classical Latin poetry.

Luckily a substantial portion of the troubadour melodies were also preserved along with the poetry in a notation, based on that of Gregorian chant, that can still be read and performed, although there are some controversies about the rhythm of the music. The troubadour with the most melodies that have come down to us is Bernart de Ventadorn. His songs are considered some of the finest in the troubadour repertoire. According to his *vida*, he was born to a servant couple in the castle of the Viscount of Ventadorn, whom he also served until migrating to the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, a major patron of troubadour culture and Queen first of France with Louis VII, then England as consort to Henry II.

The love of troubadour culture was also very strong in Eleanor’s daughter by Louis VII, Marie, Countess of Champagne, who encouraged the transmission of this culture into that of northern France, where the equivalent of the troubadours arose in the *trouvères*, poet composers now working in the langue d’oil, the ancestor of modern French. Here a leading *trouvère* of the early period was the *Châtelain de Coucy*, a member of one of the most powerful noble families of northern France, although his exact identification is still debated.

All three of the songs on tonight’s program deal with a major theme originating in troubadour poetry and transferred to that of the *trouvères*. This is “courtly love” (*fin’ amors* or “refined” love in Occitan). Such unrequited love was expressed by the poet for a woman beyond his reach socially, but whom he nevertheless served with selfless devotion, although

# Programme Notes

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at times he could also reproach her for her lack of receptiveness and tell of his despair over this hopeless love, as can be seen in the texts on tonight's program.

All of the extant troubadour melodies and a large portion of the melodies of the trouvères are monophonic, consisting of a single, unharmonized melodic line. Tonight, we will be hearing three settings of the original melodies by the American organist and composer Clarence Dickinson (1873-1969) from his Anthology *Troubadour Songs* published in 1920. In this collection all of the melodies have been harmonized in a late nineteenth-century style with an added keyboard accompaniment. The three settings on this program have then been arranged for voice and string quartet by our own Mark Rodgers.

## **Selections from “Lord of the Rings”**

The second vocal segment on tonight's concert presents some of the more popular orchestral numbers and songs from the Peter Jackson's blockbuster movie trilogy of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*—*The Fellowship of the Ring* from 2001, *The Two Towers*, from 2002 and *The Return of the King* from 2003. The music for these films was written mainly by Howard Shore, a Canadian composer, orchestrator and conductor, known above all for his film scores. His highly successful career has been marked by a long association with the Canadian director David Cronenberg, beginning as early as *The Brood* 1979 and *Scanners* 1981 and continuing all the way up to *Crimes of the Future* 2022. He has also worked extensively with Martin Scorsese.

With the exception of a few separate songs, Shore composed the complete scores for all three films in the trilogy, generating up to one hundred and eighty-five Leitmotives or identifying musical ideas for the characters and various events, the largest number of such motives in any film to this date. Shore's success in this music may be gauged by his winning three Academy Awards, two for best original score (*The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Return of the King*) and one for best original song, shared with co-creator Annie Lennox for “Into the West.” The quality of his work can be heard in the two excerpts on tonight's program, “Evenstar” from *The Two Towers* and “In Dreams” from *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Tonight we will also be hearing two contributions to the film by the Irish singer and composer, Enya: her haunting “Aniron” a song in elvish accompanying the meeting of Aragorn and Arwen from *The Fellowship of the Ring* and “May it Be” for the closing credits of the same film.



# Programme Notes

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## ***Last Leaf Collection - Danish String Quartet***

The Danish String Quartet is one of the newer, up-and-coming professional quartets in today's classical music world. It consists of three Danes (Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, violin, Frederik Øland, violin and Asbjørn Nørgaard viola) and one Norwegian (Fredrik Schøyen Sjølin, cello). Since its debut in 2002, the Quartet has expanded its repertoire from the standard classics to Nordic folk music, beginning with their album *Wood Works* from 2014. This recording was so successful that they followed it up in 2017 with a second album of their Nordic folk-song arrangements titled *Last Leaf*. The scores of these arrangements, published in 2018, have become extremely popular with both professional and amateur string quartets from around the world, and we will be hearing the obvious reason for this popularity tonight.

The *Last Leaf* collection consists of fourteen pieces. Twelve of them are settings by the Danish String Quartet of folk tunes spanning the fourteenth to twentieth centuries mainly from Denmark, but also from Sweden, Norway and even Scotland's Shetland Islands. The remaining two pieces, "Shore" and "Intermezzo," are folk-inspired compositions by the cellist Fredrik Sjølin. The sensitivity of these quartet settings is reflected in the comment by the violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: "You have this very simple melody, and you have to make it interesting, and you also have to find its soul in some way." The Quartet's ability to capture the soul of this precious folk heritage is reflected in the great diversity of the music, from the dizzying excitement of "Shine You no More" to the deeply affecting intensity of "Now Found is the Fairest of Roses."

***Programme notes courtesy of Dr. Brian Black***

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