

# IPO Summer @ Socially Distanced Olympia Fields Country Club 2020

## William Grant Still & Dvořák String Quartet Dedicated to COVID-19 Patients and First Responders

**William Grant Still**  
(1895-1978)

*Lyric Quartette* (1960)

The Sentimental One

The Quiet One

The Jovial One

**Antonín Dvořák**  
(1841-1904)

**String Quartet No. 12, *American Quartet*** (1893)

Allegro ma non troppo

Lento

Molto vivace

Finale: vivace ma non troppo

### Musicians

**Azusa Tashiro** is originally from Chiba, Japan. She started playing violin at the age of 4 and continued her studies at the Toho School of Music and DePaul University, where she studied with the renowned violinist Ilya Kaler.

Azusa is currently IPO's concertmaster. She was the former concertmaster of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and is a guest concertmaster of the Orchestra Iowa. She has also performed with various ensembles such as the Minnesota Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Joffrey Ballet. Azusa is also enthusiastic about performing a non-traditional form of music; she has been a member of the Peter Jankovic Ensemble (Classical guitar/String Quartet), and has frequently performed with the Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues and the Fifth House Ensemble,

Since the pandemic started, Azusa became a making-everything-from-scratch chef, motivated eater, and a full-time loyal servant of her tuxedo cat, Gabriel von Eisenstein.

**Elizabeth Huffman** joined the IPO as Assistant Concertmaster in 2005. An active freelance musician, Elizabeth has performed with multiple artists and orchestras across the country. In addition to performing with the IPO, she is a member of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra and the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra. When she is not performing, Elizabeth maintains a studio of approximately 20 violin students. She is the Assistant Director at the Oak Park String Academy, where her students range in age from 5-17 years old. In her work with such young musicians, Elizabeth is passionate about building character and appreciation for music at an early age. She hopes to build a legacy of future musicians and future audience members for both the IPO and all live music.

Violinist and violist, **Amanda Grimm** enjoys a versatile career as a freelance artist in the greater Chicago area. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory and Carnegie Mellon University, she has performed as a soloist, recitalist, and concertmaster in both the United States and abroad. The current Principal Violist of the Elgin Symphony, Ms. Grimm, has performed as a violinist and violist with the Milwaukee, Northwest Indiana, and Wheeling Symphonies, as well as the Illinois Philharmonic, Chicago Philharmonic, and Chicago Chamber Orchestras. As an instructor, Ms. Grimm has maintained a private studio for fifteen years. She has been on the faculty at the Merit School of Music, Chicago Opera Theater Education Division, Chicago School of Music, and Lincoln Park Performing Arts High School (PA). Dedicated to music education, she also regularly performs outreach concerts and programs in the Chicago Public Schools and at various schools, colleges, and universities throughout the country.

**Jake Hanegan** joined IPO as the principal cellist in April of 2019. Along with his Chicagoland performances, Jake regularly performs with the Sarasota Orchestra, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, and the Seattle Symphony. He holds a Bachelor of Music from the Eastman School of Music, a Master of Music from Rice University, and was a New World Symphony fellow from 2016 to 2019.

## Program Notes

### *Lyric Quartette* (1960)

William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)

The "Lyric String Quartette" was written at the request of Joachim Chassman, for his string quartet group. However, when the group tried it out, my Father said there was something wrong with it, and he threw it in the wastebasket. My mother took it out and saved it, and I published it after fixing a mistake in the viola part. It was an immediate hit when played, and audiences gave ovations to the "Quiet One" movement. (Everyone wanted to know who among our friends was "The Quiet One," but I have no idea. It certainly wasn't yours truly.) The Quartette stands now alongside the "Danzas" as one of the most performed American string quartets. "The Quiet One" may have been about my mother, a fine, quiet, but powerful lady, who had tremendous talent on her own.

- Judith Still, 2020

### *String Quartet No. 12, American Quartet* (1893)

Antonín Dvořák  
(1841-1904)

Antonín Dvořák was the most prolific chamber music composer of the late nineteenth century. His natural and seemingly effortless proclivity for the genre resulted in a body of work that was unusual for a composer of the Romantic period, a time in which the exploration of large forces and expansive forms had little to do with this intimate type of music most associated with the Classical era.

One of Dvořák's best-known chamber music compositions is his String Quartet in F major composed in 1893. At this time he held the position of Director of the National Conservatory in New York; after an exhaustive season during which he continued to compose as well as fulfill his many obligations as a visiting celebrity, he was delighted to accept an invitation to spend the summer in the Midwest town of Spillville, Iowa. This tiny farming community of Czech immigrants who preserved the language, culture, and customs of their native land provided Dvořák with an environment he loved best. So after many months working in the hectic atmosphere of the big city, he was now once more in the company of all his children, who had come to America for the holidays and surrounded by nature which he loved. He set to work immediately and, within a very short time, completed the quartet, which has become one of

Dvořák's most loved chamber music compositions, acquiring along the way the popular nickname, the "American."

Quiet string 'tremolandi' provides the foundation for the viola's opening theme—its rising-and-falling shape and sharp syncopations will provide much of the substance of the first movement. A cloud of darker emotion draws briefly across the music for the presentation of the complementary subject, a more restrained theme presented by the violin. Dvořák bases both themes on the five-tone pentatonic scale. This arrangement of notes is a common feature of folk songs around the world; it omits the semitones found at the 4th and the 7th degrees of the more common classical scale yielding a specific quality of broadness, stability, and a lack of tension (even in a minor key). Whatever influences or expressive intentions lay behind this choice, it imbues the quartet with a personality and a continuity that is distinctive and strongly evocative. The development section concerns itself first with permutations of the main subject and then with an imitative treatment of a motive derived from the dark-hued complementary theme. The fugato based on the second subject acts as a transition to the restatement of both themes, which brings balance, formal closure, and fulfillment to this most satisfying movement.

The Lento is one of Dvořák's most evocative slow movements. Its flowing, melancholic melody moves, without interruption and significant contrasts, in a single, sweeping arc against a background of an 'ostinato' figure. Starting quietly, it builds gradually to an intense climax before fading to a subdued close, as the cello nostalgically plays the melody for the last time, accompanied by alternate bowed and plucked notes.

The third movement, a cheerful scherzo, provides sufficient contrast to the second movement. It is constructed exclusively from a single, rhythmical theme. It comprises two contrasting segments – a lively section in F major and the second section in F minor, which is an augmentation of the main theme. The movement also contains a further variant of the main subject, which is heard several times high up in the top register of the first violin. It is a stylization of the song of a bird that Dvořák heard while out walking in the countryside around Spillville. (Musicological and ornithological researchers have identified the bird as the scarlet tanager.)

The Finale immediately establishes a rhythmic pattern that may be an adaptation of native Indian drumming. The first violin dances its joyful tune in and around the continuing beat. Other melodies follow, all with the same high-spirited good humor. In the middle of the movement, the tempo slows, and Dvořák introduces a chorale, probably derived from one of the hymns that he enjoyed playing on the organ for services at Saint Wenceslas church in Spillville. Following the chorale is a shortened restatement of the main theme, leading to a resolutely happy ending.

Opinions vary as to whether the themes in this quartet were derived from Negro spirituals and American Indian music, or whether they simply resemble both American and Bohemian folk

traditions in their melodic and rhythmic structure. What is incontrovertible is the fact that this joyful piece of music has maintained its status as a string quartet of universal appeal.

-Elizabeth Dalton, 2018

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