



HOPKINS CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS

*presents*

Music Department Residency  
**VILLIERS QUARTET**  
with **SALLY PINKAS** *piano*

**Post-Performance Discussion**

You are invited to remain in the theater immediately following the performance for an informal discussion with the artists.

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*Funded in part by the Arthur J. 1903 and Nellie Z. Cohen Foundation and by the Nathan W. Pearson 1932 and Sons Fund.*

*The Music Department at Dartmouth College thanks Mrs. Selma Bornstein for her generous gift of Rollins Chapel's Petrof Concert Grand Piano, given in loving memory of Dr. Murray Bornstein.*

**Saturday, November 12, 2016 • 8 pm**

Rollins Chapel • Dartmouth College

# PROGRAM

Fantasias

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

- I. Fantasia - 11 Juni 1680
- II. Fantasia - 19 Juni 1680
- III. Fantasia - 23 Juni 1680

“Voces Intimae” Quartet in D minor, Op. 56

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

- I. Andante - Allegro molto moderato
- II. Vivace
- III. Adagio di molto
- IV. Allegretto (ma pesante)
- V. Allegro

• INTERMISSION •

Fantazia for String Quartet

Robert Saxton (b. 1953)

*Three movements played without pause*

Piano Quintet in D minor, H49a

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

- I. Adagio - Allegro moderato
- II. Adagio ma non troppo
- III. Allegro energico

## VILLIERS QUARTET

James Dickenson *violin*  
Tamaki Higashi *violin*  
Carmen Flores '00 *viola*  
Nick Stringfellow *cello*

with  
Sally Pinkas *piano*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## *Fantasias*

### **Henry Purcell (1659-1695)**

With the restoration of the Stewart kings to the English throne in 1660, a long period of cultural devastation came to an end and composers like Henry Purcell, born the previous year, brought about a musical renaissance. So beloved was Purcell in his own day that he was immortalized as *Orpheus Britannicus* in a collection of his music published shortly after his death; and Charles II's poet laureate, John Dryden, eulogized him in a famous ode, writing, "The Heav'nly Quire, who heard his Notes from high,/Let down the Scale of Musick from the Sky:/ They handed him along,/ And all the way He taught, and all the way they Sung." Purcell was born and died in the precinct of Westminster, and is buried in the Abbey. His career began as a chorister in the Chapel Royal, and he remained a court and abbey musician his entire life, serving both as organist and as court composer under Charles II.

Among Purcell's duties at the court was the composition of pieces for the Twenty-four Violins of the King, a string band that played for public functions, as well as for the king's Private Musick, small consorts of strings that played in the intimacy of the monarch's apartments. In the summer of 1680 Purcell produced nine fantasias for four-part strings that would have formed part of the private repertory. While today these works hold a significant place in the literature for viol consort, they did not circulate outside of Purcell's own circle in his lifetime, and were possibly conceived primarily as exercises in the more subtle techniques of counterpoint. In Purcell's manuscript each "fantazia" is dated; the fantasia in B flat was apparently completed on June 11, 1680, that in C minor on June 19, and the one in A minor followed on June 23. Purcell's writing for strings is supple and idiomatic, and the lyrical gift that served him so well in writing for the voice is applied with equal skill to the independent

string parts. All three fantasias explore the diverse pairings and imitations possible within a four-part texture; all juxtapose dense, tightly knit sonorities with the freedom of fleet fugal writing; and all feature piercing dissonances that make the moments of resolution particularly sweet.

### ***"Voces Intimae" Quartet in D minor, Op. 56*** **Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)**

At the time Jean Sibelius produced his D-minor quartet he was Finland's most celebrated composer. Born in 1865 in a small town north of Helsinki, Sibelius grew up in a country that was divided between an educated, elite Swedish-speaking population (of which his family was part), and a rising tide of Finnish speakers; Sibelius would find himself at the crux of the creation of a new national identity, in which his music would play a surprisingly important role. As a youth Sibelius studied the violin and played chamber music; he began to compose around the age of twenty. Even at this early stage he was intrigued by Nordic themes and worked them into his compositions. He trained at the Helsinki Music Institute and then travelled with a government stipend to Berlin and Vienna in order to continue his studies; it was in Vienna that he discovered his true vocation, writing for orchestra. Sibelius also immersed himself in Finnish language and literature, and when he finally returned to his homeland he was fully committed to a musical style steeped in Finnish folk idioms and informed by a nationalist political outlook.

The last, and only published chamber work of Sibelius, the D-minor quartet entitled "*Voces intimae*," dates from 1909. Though in his youth Sibelius played the violin and wrote a fair amount of chamber music, he later turned to orchestral writing and his current reputation rests largely on his symphonies and symphonic poems. He wrote the D-minor quartet during a time when he suffered from a throat ailment; convinced it was

# PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

cancer, Sibelius dreaded dying and leaving his young family unprotected. His anguish may perhaps be reflected in the *Adagio* movement of this work. Formally, the quartet suggests a five-movement orchestral suite, with each movement dominated by a single affect, and frequent doubling among the string parts. The dark *Adagio* is the structural and emotional heart of the work; early in the piece all motion is arrested and three hushed chords are uttered. Here Sibelius wrote the mysterious words “*voces intimae*” (“inner voices”), but left no other clue to explain the disturbing eloquence of this movement.

## ***Fantazia for String Quartet***

**Robert Saxton (b. 1953)**

Born in London in 1953, Robert Saxton has enjoyed a distinguished career as composer and educator. After early studies with Benjamin Britten and Elisabeth Lutyens, he pursued his training at Cambridge and Oxford Universities, and a Fulbright Arts Fellowship granted him a period of study in the United States. He taught composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music, and has held a position at Worcester College, Oxford, since 1999. Saxton has written numerous orchestral works for the BBC Orchestra and other leading ensembles, as well as concertos and chamber music. In 1993 the London International String Quartet Competition commissioned him to write a new quartet that could be used as a test piece in the competition; thus in 1994 his *Fantazia for String Quartet* received its premiere by twelve young ensembles.

England’s splendid seventeenth-century repertoire for viol consort, which culminated in Purcell’s music, proved a potent inspiration for Saxton. He writes, “I have always loved this music, and when asked to write a short piece for strings, I decided to pay tribute to this underrated tradition. Most fantazias consisted of short, joined sections, and I

have expanded this to create an eight-minute piece in three larger sections, the essence being contrapuntal interplay and equality of part-writing. (Any idea of stylistic reference would be absurd in the late twentieth century.) The first section is a lyrical *allegro moderato* which leads into a sustained and intense slow movement; this, in turn, gives way to a final quick section of a dancing character, a feature frequently encountered in Purcell’s own consort pieces.”

## ***Piano Quintet in D minor, H49a***

**Frank Bridge (1879-1941)**

Born in Brighton in 1879, English composer Frank Bridge entered the Royal College of Music at age seventeen. He studied under the distinguished teacher Charles Villiers Stanford, whose conservative influence on Bridge may be heard in his early works; only later did his compositions become freer and more experimental. As both violinist and violist Bridge played with several professional ensembles, including the English String Quartet, and had the good fortune to perform in the 1904 British première of Debussy’s String Quartet. Later he would become an important conductor of opera at both the Savoy Theatre and Covent Garden, and the primary teacher of Benjamin Britten, who remained his only composition pupil. As a composer Bridge established his reputation chiefly in the realm of chamber music. Although he did write a number of reasonably successful orchestral works, his pieces for quartet and trio, his sonatas for various instruments, and his songs have proved most durable in the modern repertoire.

Early in 1905 Bridge composed a sprawling four-movement piano quintet in D minor, which received two performances in 1907 that left him feeling discontented. He thus shelved it for some years, returned to it in 1912 with fresh ideas, and submitted the work to a substantial revision. Its first movement was shortened, and the two inner

# PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

movements—formerly a traditional slow movement and scherzo—were fused into a B-major *Adagio* that frames the A-minor scherzo material. In the finale he devised a new climax that brings back two themes from the first movement. Throughout the work Bridge achieves satisfyingly lush Romantic string textures, underpinned and

occasionally dominated by a vigorous and challenging piano part. His gift for stirring, lyrical melody is also in full evidence, perhaps most vividly in the *Adagio*, but featured in beautifully crafted, memorable themes from the work's beginning to its formidable end.

Kathryn L. Libin © 2016

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The **Villiers Quartet** is winner of the 2015 Radcliffe Chamber Music Competition, and holds the position of Quartet-in-Residence at Oxford University's Faculty of Music. Named after Villiers Street in London's colourful musical epicenter, the Villiers Quartet encompasses the grand and iconic spirit of the extraordinary music tradition in London.

Hailed as one of the most charismatic and "adventurous" quartets of the European chamber music scene (*The Strad*), the Villiers Quartet has developed an international reputation for its performances of English composers including Elgar, Britten and Delius. The Quartet has been praised for its "exquisite ensemble playing" (*Seen & Heard International*), and its performances of Shostakovich and Tischenko have been hailed as "masterful." (*Classical Source*)

The Villiers Quartet has been featured in numerous festivals including the North York Moors Chamber Music Festival, the Brit Jazz Fest, the Hungerford Arts Festival and the British Music Society. The Quartet's internationally acclaimed VQ New Works Competition encourages audiences to interact with contemporary music performance online, and supports the creation of new works for string quartet.

Known for championing the works of English

composers, the VQ has presented master classes at Dartmouth College, the University of Nottingham, Syracuse University, Goshen College and Indiana University South Bend. The VQ is also Quartet-in-Residence at Nottingham High School, where they direct an extensive chamber music programme for young students. Its debut CD for Naxos, *The Complete Quartets of Robert Still*, was praised for its "sublimely articulate and concentrated readings," (*Gramophone*) and received 5-stars in *Classical Music Magazine*. The VQ was the featured quartet on the soundtrack to the BBC One film, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and has been featured on BBC Radio both in live performance and on the classical music program In Tune. Upcoming highlights include its Netherlands debut at the Festival Kamermuziek aan de Berkel, and the release of its CD of the Delius and Elgar quartets, and the first complete recording of the quartets by English composer Peter Racine Fricker. This is the Villiers Quartet's first engagement at the Hopkins Center.

**Sally Pinkas piano**, since her London debut at Wigmore Hall, has been heard as soloist and chamber musician throughout the world. Among career highlights are performances with the Boston Pops, the Aspen Philharmonia, Jupiter Symphony and the Bulgarian Chamber Orchestra, and appearances at the festivals of Marlboro, Tanglewood, Aspen and Rockport, as

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS CONTINUED

well as Kfar Blum in Israel, Officina Scotese in Italy, and Masters de Pontlevoy in France.

Pinkas' extensive solo discography includes works by Schumann, Debussy, Rochberg, Ileana Perez-Velazquez and Christian Wolff for the MSR, Centaur, Naxos, Albany and Mode labels. Long drawn to the music of Gabriel Fauré, she followed her critically acclaimed release of Fauré's 13 Nocturnes (on Musica Omnia) with a recording of Fauré's Piano Quartets and his 13 Barcarolles, earning the title "A Fauré Master Returns" on an enthusiastic review by *Classics Today*. *The Wall Street Journal* noted her "exquisite performance" in her "superlatively well-played" recording of Harold Shapero's *Piano Music*, released on the UK label Toccata Classics.

Praised for her radiant tone and driving energy, Pinkas commands a wide range of repertoire and continues to explore little-heard musical realms. In 2015 she made her debut in the Philippines, performing and recording rarely heard Filipino salon music for the University of the Philippines'

centennial celebrations. The Philippines' *Daily Inquirer* noted "her eloquent tone... essayed with brilliant projection" adding that "her sense of balance was impeccable, and the voicing well etched." With her husband Evan Hirsch (The Hirsch-Pinkas Piano Duo) she has toured extensively, and has premiered and recorded works by Rochberg, Pinkham, Peter Child, Kui Dong and Thomas Oboe Lee. She is a member of Ensemble Schumann, an Oboe-Viola-Piano Trio, and of the Boston-based Trio Tremonti. Other current collaborations include the Villiers Quartet in London, the Adaskin String Trio and the Apple Hill Quartet.

Pinkas holds performance degrees from Indiana University and the New England Conservatory of Music, and a Ph.D. in Composition from Brandeis University. Her principal teachers were Russell Sherman, George Sebok, Luise Vosgerchian and Genia Bar-Niv (piano), Sergiu Natra (composition) and Robert Koff (chamber music). Pianist-in-residence at the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, she is Professor of Music at Dartmouth's Music Department.

## CONNECTING ARTISTS TO THE COMMUNITY

*While at Dartmouth, the Villiers Quartet and Sally Pinkas visited classes in the departments of Music, Film and Media Studies, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; joined students and faculty at a residential House Community for a mini-concert, dinner and discussion; performed in the School Matinee Series; met with students from the Music Department FSP; and participate in a post-performance discussion. For more information on Hop Outreach & Arts Education, call 603.646.2010 or visit [hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach).*

## FREE ONLINE STUDY GUIDE

*In conjunction with its School Matinee Series, the Hop prepares study guides to enhance student learning prior to and following performances. The Villiers Quartet study guide can be found on its performance page at [hop.dartmouth.edu/online/](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/online/) and on the Outreach and Arts Education section of the Hop's website.*



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