



*presents the*

AMERICAN STRING  
QUARTET

*Tuesday, February 26, 1985  
8:00 p.m. in Hamman Hall*

RICE UNIVERSITY

the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music



## PROGRAM

### Quartet No. 5

*Allegro*  
*Adagio molto*  
*Scherzo*  
*Andante*  
*Allegro vivace*

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

### Quartet No. 3 ("...child of uranus, father of zeus.")

Thomas Oboe Lee

*played without pause*

## INTERMISSION

### String Quartet (1974)

#### Prima Parte

*Lento tranquillo*  
*Allegro inquieto*  
*Largo dolorose*

Claus Adam  
(b. 1917)

#### Seconda Parte

*Moderato statico, pizzicato*  
*Veloce e vivace*

Photographing and sound recording are prohibited. We further request that audible paging devices not be used during the performance. Paging arrangements may be made with the ushers.



## AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

*Since its founding at the Juilliard School in 1974, the American String Quartet has been acclaimed as one of the great ensembles of our time. In its first year, the Quartet won two of the most coveted awards in chamber music: the Coleman Chamber Music Competition and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award. Highlights of recent seasons have included appearances at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Kennedy Center, the Aspen Music Festival, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the Taos Chamber Music Festival, as well as annual European tours. The ensemble has taught at the Peabody Conservatory, and is currently the Affiliate Quartet at the Sheperd School of Music, Rice University, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Taos Chamber Music Festival.*

*Mitchel Stern, violin, made his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra at the age of fifteen. Top award and prize winner of the Leventritt and Washington International Competitions, Mr. Stern has been heard in recitals and as guest soloist with orchestras throughout the United States and has toured twice as featured artist with Music from Marlboro. He has studied with Margaret Randall, Arnold Steinhardt at the Curtis Institute, and Dorothy DeLay at Juilliard. Mr. Stern plays the Guadagnini violin, formerly owned by Efrem Zimbalist. Laurie Carney, violin, was the youngest student ever admitted to the Juilliard School, where she was a student of Dorothy DeLay. A frequent recitalist on the East Coast, Ms. Carney is often joined in performance by her husband, cellist William Grubb, Daniel Avshalomov, viola, was principal violist of the Juilliard Orchestra, and was the first violist in the school's history to be awarded the Loeb Memorial Prize. Mr. Avshalomov has studied with William Lincer and has served as principal violist for the orchestras of the Tanglewood and Spoleto Festivals. David Geber, cello, studied at the Eastman School of Music and Juilliard, where he was recipient of the Felix Salmond and Werter cello awards. His teachers have included Ronald Leonard, Claus Adam, and Lynn Harrell. Mr. Geber has appeared as soloist at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood.*

# Forthcoming Shepherd School of Music Events

*Unless otherwise noted, concerts are free and are held in Hamman Hall at 8:00 p.m.*

*\*Thursday, February 28      Rice Concert Band and  
Jazz Ensemble  
Ken Dye, conductor*

*\*Admission charged, call 527-4933 for further information.*



## PROGRAM NOTES

### QUARTET NO. 5

Notes by Susan Wickman

Bela Bartok

The string quartets occupy a central position in Bartok's works. They represent the essence of Bartok's creative thought and demonstrate his development and growth as a composer.

Barok began writing the Fifth Quartet on August 6, 1934 and completed it exactly one month later. Commissioned by an American patroness, Elizabeth Sprague-Coolidge, it was first performed in Washington at the Viennese Kolisch Quartet concert in April, 1935.

Like the Fourth Quartet, the Fifth is constructed in a five part 'arch' form, A B C B' A'. Unlike the Fourth Quartet which contains two scherzos on either side of a central slow movement, the Fifth contains two slow movements on either side of a central scherzo. Movements four and five are thematically related to one and two, yet movements four and five are not simply thematic variations of one and two. The formal balance of this arch-form is not static; the end movements do not merely return to their origin. They are transformed, their outcome is cathartic, conclusive.

In the Fifth Quartet, movements one and two are expository; movement three is the central-axis with no counterpart; movement four an expanded development of two; and movement five, an extended Finale, balances the whole with a transformed fugal theme derived from movement one.

### QUARTET NO. 3 ("...child of uranus, father of zeus.")

Notes by Gunther Schuller

Thomas Oboe Lee

The Third String Quartet was commissioned by the Kronos Quartet in 1982 and plays on the Quartet's given name in that Kronos is the Greek name for Saturn. Hence the Quartet's subtitle, "child of uranus, father of zeus." The work has no program as such, but it was conceived and written with regard to the many myths associated with the god Saturn. Its opening, marked "barbarous, wild...almost chaotic" deals with Saturn's war-like character, but is quickly juxtaposed with more lyrical episodes, resulting in a kind of sonata-form use of contrasting themes. A long (very long) trill in the second violin subtly, almost imperceptibly, inserts itself into the discourse, but soon takes on prominence as a stabilizing, consonant factor. It becomes the fulcrum around which the rest of the music rotates. Eventually the semitone trill opens up into a minor third and is ultimately re-absorbed into the full quartet texture as the opening "chaotic" material rises up around it, bringing the single movement work to its climax. This high point, bringing back the idea of conflict and juxtaposition, is at the same time a recapitulation of the opening material of the Quartet, inverted, transposed, subtly altered. A quiet coda - a reflective peroration - brings the Quartet to a moving and beautiful close.

In 1983, the American String Quartet performed this work at the Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards in Washington, D.C. The Quartet received first prize for the best new chamber music work by an American composer.

(OVER)



STRING QUARTET (1974)  
Notes by the composer

Claus Adam

The String Quartet (1974) is actually my second quartet, the other one being an early attempt performed by the Juilliard Quartet in 1949 for the ISCM long before I had become the cellist of the ensemble. This one was commissioned by the Naumburg Foundation for the American String Quartet. The work is clearly divided into two parts. The second part being in scordatura (discussed below) needs a few minutes of some complicated tuning. The short 'Lento tranquillo' introduces numerous harmonic and melodic ideas for the 'Prima parte'. The mood suddenly changes and sweeps into the 'Allegro inquieto', a movement in free sonata form which ends quietly to prepare for the 'Largo doloroso', forming a large arc.

The 'Seconda parte' employs a device called "scordatura", quite commonly used in the 17th and 18th centuries. Some other examples can be found in the music of Biber, Tartini, Bach, Paganini and Mahler, in Kodaly's solo cello sonata, and in Shapely's Quartet No. 2. By "Mistuning" (scordatura) two strings on every instrument in the quartet, I had the possibility of all chromatic tones played without pressing down the string, plus new double-stopping and combinations of harmonics. In the 'Moderato statico-Presto misterioso', pizzicatos and natural harmonics are employed but fingered without ever pressing the string down to the fingerboard. Melodic and harmonic materials from the first part are repeated and developed in the second part. In the last section 'veloce e vivace' which is almost a perpetual motion at times, all the devices of the previous sections are employed plus fingering or pressing the strings down to the fingerboard to get various pitches.

The American String Quartet's CRI recording of the Claus Adam String Quartet is available.