



114<sup>th</sup> Season

Sunday, February 6, 2011 • 3 pm

At the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, Second & State Streets, Troy, NY.

Pre-concert talk at 2 pm, Rensselaer County Historical Soc., 57 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Troy.

## THE ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Andrew Watkinson, *violin* & guest leader  
Harvey de Souza, *violin*  
Jennifer Godson, *violin*  
Martin Burgess, *violin*

Robert Smissen, *viola*  
Duncan Ferguson, *viola*  
Stephen Orton, *cello*  
John Heley, *cello*

**SVENDSEN**  
(1840-1911)

String Octet in A-Major, Op. 3  
Allegro risoluto ben marcato  
Allegro scherzeroso – Lento –  
Piu mosso, quasi presto  
Andante sostenuto  
Finale. Moderato – Allegro assai con fuoco

**SHOSTAKOVICH** Prelude and Scherzo , Op. 11  
(1906-1975)

Adagio  
Allegro molto

### *INTERMISSION*

**MENDELSSOHN** Octet for Strings in E-flat major, Op. 20  
(1809-1847)

Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco  
Andante  
Scherzo (Allegro leggierissimo)  
Presto

Recordings available on Chandos, Philips and Hyperion labels.

The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists,  
[www.davidroweartists.com](http://www.davidroweartists.com).

Tickets & information: (518) 273-0038 • [www.troychromaticconcerts.org](http://www.troychromaticconcerts.org)  
All programs, dates and times are subject to change. All sales are final.



Our season is sponsored in part by a generous grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency, and by voluntary contributions.



## PROGRAM NOTES

### The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble



Andrew Watkinson, violin and guest leader  
Harvey de Souza violin  
Jennifer Godson violin  
Martin Burgess violin  
Robert Smissen viola  
Duncan Ferguson viola  
Stephen Orton cello  
John Heley cello

The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields was formed in 1959 by a group of eleven enthusiastic musicians with the aim of performing in public without a conductor. Their first three recordings led to a succession of long-term contracts, and the Academy quickly took their place among the most recorded ensembles in history. As the repertoire expanded from Baroque to Mozart, Bartok and Beethoven, so it became necessary for the principal violin, Neville Marriner, to conduct the larger orchestra.

The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble was created in 1967 to perform the larger chamber works—from quintets to octets—with players who customarily work together, instead of the usual string quartet with additional guests. Drawn from the principal players of the orchestra, the Chamber Ensemble tours as a string octet, string sextet, and in other configurations including winds. Its touring commitments are extensive, with annual visits to France, Germany, and Spain, and frequent tours to North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan.

The Ensemble's spring, 2011 North American tour brings them to 11 cities, including (among others) Rutland, VT, Troy, NY, Raleigh, NC, Houston, TX, Portland, OR, La Jolla, CA, and Tucson, AZ.

Contracts with Philips Classics, Hyperion, and Chandos have led to the release of over thirty CDs by the Chamber Ensemble.

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Andrew Watkinson** (violin, guest leader) hails from Glasgow. He studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School for four years, and also in Switzerland and Leningrad. His many teachers included Frederick Grinke, Joseph Szigeti, Franco Gulli and Yfrah Neaman. Andrew is first violinist of the renowned Endellion String Quartet, which is in residence at Cambridge University. In its 30 years the quartet has given well over 2,000 concerts worldwide, and its recording the Beethoven quartets Warner Classics has recently been released to critical acclaim. As a soloist he has appeared with many of the British orchestras and performed in Germany, Holland, Israel, France and South America. For many years he was leader and director of

the City of London Sinfonia, giving concerts in Britain and touring widely. He has also been a time a regular guest leader and director of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and continues to be invited to guest direct orchestras in Britain as well as in countries such as Italy, Denmark and Spain.

**Harvey de Souza** (violin) is a native of Bombay, India, and began musical studies at the age of four with his father. He was awarded a scholarship to attend the Yehudi Menuhin School in England, where he studied with Mr. Menuhin, Felix Andrievsky, and Margaret Norris. He subsequently studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Jascha Brodsky and Felix Galamir. He has performed extensively throughout Europe, the U.S., China, and India, and has participated in numerous festivals including Salzburg, Sienna, Gstaad, and Prussia Cove. He was a member of the Vellinger String Quartet from 1993-1999, and since 1993 has been a member of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

**Jennifer Godson** (violin) has been a member of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields since 1985. She is also principal second violin of the London Mozart Players and co-leader of John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique. much of her musical life has revolved around chamber music and she was a member of the Fairfield String Quartet from 1978-88, performing and broadcasting throughout the UK and Europe.

**Martin Burgess** (violin) has Played with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields since 1992, and recently made his debut as guest director. He studied with Emanuel Hurwitz and the Amadeus Quartet. Away from the Academy, Martin leads the Emperor String Quartet, which won 1st Prize at the 1995 Evian International String Quartet Competition and was recently nominated for a Grammy Award in the USA for their CD of the Quartets of William Walton.

**Robert Smissen** (viola) won a scholarship to Chethams School of Music at the age of 14, and went on to study at the Guildhall School of Music with David Takeno. While there he won prizes for chamber music and solo playing. After college he was appointed principal viola with the Northern Sinfonia, a post he held until 1986. He currently plays with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, as well as other London chamber orchestras.

**Duncan Ferguson** (viola) was born in Scotland, and won a scholarship for post-graduate study at the Royal Academy of Music after receiving his diploma from the Royal Scottish Academy in 1992. Primarily known as a chamber musician he is a multiple prize-winner for both solo performance and with the celebrated Medea Quartet with whom he played for five years. Duncan has been playing with the Academy since 1996 and acts as guest principal for many other orchestras including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the English Chamber Orchestra.

**Stephen Orton** (cello) was born in Ripon, Yorkshire. He won a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music to study with William Pleeth. He has been

principal cello in the Bournemouth Sinfonietta and assistant principal in the English Chamber Orchestra, and has performed as soloist with both ensembles. He was a member of the Delme Quartet for 10 years, and joined the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields as principal cellist in 1986.

**John Heley** (cello) was born in London, and began playing cello at the age of six. He was awarded a scholarship to study with William Pleeth, and continued studies with Mr. Pleeth at the Guildhall School of Music where he won numerous prizes. In 1980 he left the post of associate principal cellist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to concentrate on freelance work, which included recordings with guitarist John Williams. In 1986 he became associate principal cellist with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

## NOTES

**JOHAN SVENDSEN** (b. Sep. 30, 1840, Oslo; d. June 14, 1911, Copenhagen)

Svensden's father was a music teacher and he learned both the violin and clarinet from him. By the time he finished school, he was working as an orchestral musician, and occasionally made short concert tours as a violinist. In Lübeck, on one of his tours, he came to the attention of a wealthy merchant who made it possible for him to study, from 1863-67, at the Leipzig Conservatory. He began his studies there with Ferdinand David (who premiered Mendelssohn's violin concerto). But problems with his hand forced him to switch to composition, which he studied with Carl Reinecke - who also taught Svensden's noted countryman, Edvard Grieg.

Svensden's first published work, the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 1, achieved great popular success. He quickly followed this with the String Octet in A Major, Op. 3 (composed in 1866 and published in 1867) plus the String Quintet, Op. 5, both of which added considerably to his early fame. All of Svensden's chamber music was written while he was at the Leipzig Conservatory, yet these compositions are not considered student works by any means. By general consensus, Svensden was regarded as one of the most talented students then at the Conservatory. His compositions won prizes and received public performances to much acclaim.

--by Paul Sulzmann

**DMITRI SHOSTAKOVITCH** (b. Sep. 25, 1906, St. Petersburg; d. Aug. 9, 1975, Moscow)

### Two pieces for String Octet Op 11

These two pieces for String Octet were written when Shostakovich was a student and shows an abundance of technical skill. The Scherzo has a satirical edge, the texture shot through with nose-thumbing glissandi and grinding dissonances which give a savage twist to apparently cheerful material. The second movement has a slow ascending theme on the cello which has to be played on one string and is then followed by a manic Presto with many percussive effects.

--by Stephen Orton

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN** (b. Feb. 3, 1809, Hamburg; d. Nov. 4, 1847, Leipzig)

**Octet in E Flat, Op. 20**

Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1809 into a wealthy banking family and enjoyed an education encompassing many subjects taking piano lessons whilst his family were in Paris in 1816. He returned to Berlin and made his debut as a pianist at the age of nine and began to compose prolifically for various instruments and voices.

The Octet was written when he was sixteen and begins with a magnificent first movement with a soaring opening theme on the first violin with a shimmering semiquaver accompaniment and syncopations. The second subject is a much calmer beautiful melody which passes through various instruments before returning to the turbulent *con fuoco* first subject. The first movement is a delight to play for all instruments but particularly features a wonderful solo for the fourth violin in the second half which then sets up the mood for the return to the first subject in snake like semiquavers weaving us back into E flat major.

The second movement is an *Andante* which has a haunting melody on cello and viola that quickly blossoms into a beautiful melody in the upper strings and then develops into a descending melody accompanied by a weaving triplet figure which then continues through the movement.

We then have a miracle of a movement in the Scherzo which is mostly played *pianissimo* and echoes the atmosphere of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" finishing with a breathtaking scale on the first violin.

The last movement is a Fugal *Presto* which passes from second cello to the top of the violins, and is more orchestral with many *tutti* passages and excerpts from the Scherzo finishing very triumphantly.

--by Stephen Orton