

January 20, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET  
LETS THE SPARKS FLY WHEN  
HAYDN AND RAVEL MEET GOLIJOV**

On Friday, February 20, at 8 p.m. in Mandel Hall, the University of Chicago Presents Chamber Music Series will present the **St. Lawrence String Quartet** and **clarinetist Todd Palmer**. The program features works by Haydn and Ravel, as well as “The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind” by contemporary composer and MacArthur fellow, Osvaldo Golijov. A pre-concert conversation with members of the quartet moderated by cellist Michael Kannen will begin at 7 p.m. in Mandel Hall.

**PROGRAM:**

Franz Josef Haydn	Quartet in B Minor, Op. 64, No.2
Maurice Ravel	Quartet in F major
Osvaldo Golijov	<i>The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind</i>

**ABOUT THE PROGRAM:**

The St. Lawrence String Quartet has been playing together for almost 15 years, but they refuse to “gel” into complacency. They remain dedicated to musical exploration and innovation and to a quality they call “craziness.” The program they will play in Mandel Hall reflects their belief that old and new music inform and excite each other. The venerable early quartet of Haydn becomes both reflecting pool and spark chamber for Ravel’s romantic gem and Golijov’s spiritual dreamscape. “The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind” is based on the writings of a 13<sup>th</sup> century kabbalist rabbi from Provence who believed that all creation springs from God’s combining the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Golijov sees the relationship of musicians in a small ensemble as another manifestation of a

similar creative fusion. Making little distinction between the sacred and the profane, the quintet pairs prayers from the High Holy Days with klezmer dance band tunes. The work is from the St. Lawrence/Todd Palmer recording of Golijov's *Yiddishbbuk*, released by EMI, which sets apocryphal psalms to music.

### **ABOUT THE ST. LAWRENCE**

The St. Lawrence String Quartet founded in 1989 in Toronto, Canada, estimates that they have played over 1500 concerts over the last 14 years. In 1992, they won the Banff International String Quartet Competition and Young Concert Artists Auditions, launching them on the international stage. They recently completed a 15 city European tour and made their debut appearances for The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. They have been Resident Quartet to the Spoleto Festival for the last nine years. Attributing their passion for teaching to the fine coaching they received from the Emerson, Tokyo and Juilliard String Quartets, the group is currently Ensemble-in-Residence at Stanford University where they strive to take classical music beyond the classroom and the concert hall. The Quartet regularly delivers traditional concert repertoire but is also committed to performing the work of new composers. Preeminent among them is Osvaldo Golijov who describes their meeting as a life-defining experience. This concert will mark the first time that the St. Lawrence will perform at Mandel Hall with their new cellist, Christopher Costanza, formerly of the Chicago String Quartet.

### **ABOUT TODD PALMER**

Clarinetist Todd Palmer began his musical life as a trumpet player, but changed to clarinet at the age of 16. He attended Mannes College of Music in New York City where he studied with Gervase de Peyer. In 1990 he won the Young Concert Artist International Auditions and began his career as an international recitalist, soloist and clinician. He has performed extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, the Caribbean and Japan. He enjoys a close relationship with composer Osvaldo Golijov, who named him editor-in-chief for publication of his "Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind." In November 2001 Mr. Palmer received a \$20,000 award from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture for the recording of the chamber music of Osvaldo Golijov with the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

### **ABOUT OSVALDO GOLIJOV**

Osvaldo Golijov, 43, grew up in an Eastern-European Jewish family in La Plata, Argentina. His physician father and piano teacher mother filled their home with chamber, Jewish liturgical and klezmer music. In his youth he was also introduced to the new tango music of Astor Piazzolla. Osvaldo studied piano at the local conservatory until he moved to Israel in 1983 where he became the student of Mark Kopytman at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy. In 1986 he moved to the United States where he worked with George Crumb and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1999 he received Tanglewood's Fromm Commission, which

resulted in *Yiddishbbuk*, from which “The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind” is taken. In 2000 his “St. Mark’s Passion,” written to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bach’s death, took the musical world by storm. In 2003 he was named a MacArthur fellow. Golijov has collaborated with artists as diverse as long-time associate the Kronos Quartet, a gypsy band, a Mexican rock band, a klezmer master, a tabla virtuoso and Argentinian and Mexican film producers, including Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, director of *Amores Perros*. He recently completed a chamber opera, *Ainadamar*, for the Tanglewood Music Center. He is at work on a set of folk songs for Dawn Upshaw that will receive their premiere this spring as part of the inaugural season of Carnegie’s new Zankel Concert Hall. He is currently on the faculty of College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts; Boston University and Tanglewood Music Center.

### THE FACTS AND FIGURES

- TICKETS:** By phone with credit card at (773) 702-8068 or in person with cash, check or credit card at the Concert Office, 5720 S. Woodlawn, or at the Box Office after 5 p.m. on concert night, or by email at [concert-office@uchicago.edu](mailto:concert-office@uchicago.edu)
- PRICE:** \$30 general public  
\$11 students with valid ID
- DATE/TIME:** Friday, February 13, 8 p.m.
- PLACE:** Mandel Hall  
1131 East 57<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago, IL 60637
- PARKING:** Street or after 5 p.m. free in lot at 55<sup>th</sup> and Ellis
- HANDICAP:** Persons with disabilities or who otherwise need assistance may call the Concert Office at (702) 773-8068 prior to the concert, but no later than 4 p.m. on concert day.
- ONLINE:** At <http://chicagopresents.uchicago.edu> or by email to [concert-office@uchicago.edu](mailto:concert-office@uchicago.edu)

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