

THE AMHERST COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
PRESENTS

# **Jean Jeffries, Horn**

*Works for Horn and String Quartet*

*with the*

**Wistaria String Quartet**

Sarah Briggs and Kaila Graef, violins

Gregory Diehl, viola

Wayne Smith, cello

Friday, February 18, 2022 at 7 PM

Buckley Recital Hall

# Program

*Horn Quintet in E-flat major* K. 407                      W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

I Allegro

II Andante

III Rondo (Allegro)

*Quintet for Horn and Strings*                      Geoffrey Hudson (b.1967)

I Any fool can feel it

II Objects in motion

III The long and short of it

IV Cycles of violence

V Uncorroborated truths

VI Driven to destruction

VII In other words

*Lyric for Strings*    George Walker (1922-2018)

*Quintet for Horn and Strings*                      Eric Sawyer (b. 1962)

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*Please silence your mobile phone, pager, watch, or any other electronic noise-makers during the concert. Please refrain from using electronic devices with light-producing screens, as they are distracting to your fellow audience members.*

**Cameras and recording devices are strictly prohibited.**

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

### ***Horn Quintet in E-flat major, K. 407 by W. A. Mozart***

Because the Mozart Horn Quintet K. 407, is written for one violin, two violas and cello, one violinist must defect to the viola section for this piece. The timbre of the viola-heavy string quartet lends a honeyed depth to the horn quintet's accompaniment, and leaves the lone violin to act as a duet partner for the horn; the two toss lines back and forth with wit and humor, sometimes interrupting each other as if competing for attention. The quintet is thought to have been written in either 1781 or 1782, though the autograph of the quintet was lost during Mozart's lifetime, so no one is certain. We do know it was written for the horn virtuoso, cheesemonger, and Mozart family friend, Joseph Ignaz Leutgeb. (In her correspondence, Constanze Mozart refers to it as the "Leitgebische Quintett.") The quintet is a miniature horn concerto: the playful opening Allegro gives way to a gentle and tender middle movement (Andante), and ends joyfully in an energetic, shape shifting rondo (Allegro), a delicious romp from start to finish.

-Jean Jeffries

### ***Quintet for Horn and Strings by Geoffrey Hudson***

The sound of horn and strings is a delicious sonic combination, so I was thrilled when Jean Jeffries contacted me about the possibility of writing a quintet for her and the Wistarias. Jean and I agreed to score some of the movements for smaller subsets of the quintet. In doing so, I chose the permutations which offered maximum color contrast. The resulting quintet offers five short trio movements sandwiched between two longer movements for all five players.

The title of the first movement comes from a line of Mary Oliver's: "Nobody can prove it, but any fool can feel it." The strings begin with a shimmering harmonic stasis; the horn's expanding melodic line propels the music forward, and the strings take up the idea. After an arrival, the music takes an introspective turn, ruminating on a motive of three pick-ups to a longer note (short-short-short-long).

The (very brief) second movement offers a sustained line in the horn, over which the two strings dance.

At some point during the pandemic, I felt that my music was repeating the same rhythmic gestures. To get out of that rut, I tried using Morse code to derive new rhythms. This technique has questionable value as a compositional tool, but it did the trick of getting me unstuck. The third, fourth, and fifth movements are all based on rhythms derived from those experiments. For Morse code enthusiasts, this is most audible at the beginning of "Cycles of violence", where the violins repeatedly spell out the word "violence". This movement also prominently features a repeated three note motif using the intervals re-fa-sol.

After a (very brief) and frenetic sixth movement, “In other words” brings all five players back together to revisit ideas heard earlier in the piece. Two motifs are much in evidence: the three pick-up theme (short-short-short long) and the re-fa-sol motif. It’s not important that listeners recognize the return of specific themes. It’s enough to be aware that “In other words” recasts the earlier movements in new form.

– Geoffrey Hudson

### ***Lyric for Strings by George Walker***

George Walker (1922-2018) wrote *Lyric for Strings* at the beginning of a multi-faceted career that included a number of firsts: Walker was the first person of color to receive a Doctorate from Eastman School of Music, the first African-American soloist to perform with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the first African-American to receive a Pulitzer Prize for music. Walker toured extensively as a concert pianist, although he suffered from the racism of the time that made it difficult for black performers to find bookings. He taught at Smith College and the Peabody Institute of Music, among other institutions. During his lifetime, his works were performed by many orchestras in the USA and abroad, and he received commissions from the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. *Lyric for Strings* has become one of Walker’s best-known works, and one of the more often performed works in the repertoire of twentieth century American music. By the time of his death in August 2018, Walker was one of the most decorated and revered composers in American history.

In his notes for the Elgin Symphony, Daniel Maki describes *Lyric for Strings* as follows: “The music begins with a serene, long-breathed melody that is skillfully imitated in the inner voices, creating a rich texture in which the multiple voices beautifully intertwine. A more agitated middle section features more intense minor key harmonies and builds to a passionate climax, punctuated by starkly articulated chords that interrupt the rhythmic flow. The more serene mood of the opening then returns and eventually tapers off to a peaceful conclusion.” Often compared to Samuel Barber’s *Adagio for Strings*, Walker’s *Lyric for Strings* stands on its own, a lyrical masterpiece of poignant, enduring sweetness and sorrow.

### ***Quintet for Horn and Strings by Eric Sawyer***

When Jean Jeffries asked me to write a piece for horn and string quartet, I thought hard about how to deploy the riches contained in this combination, written for surprisingly infrequently. Perhaps Mozart’s choice of a second viola in his horn quintet was made toward spotlighting the horn. Having a second violin does make for a crowded treble register, but then the tenor range of the horn is no less glorious. I conceived the quintet

with the horn's center of gravity right in the middle of the quartet ensemble, and springing from a short-long repeated note idea around which faster motion evolves. The groupings of these impulses in five beats gives an urgency of forward motion and a sense of an elided eighth note each bar, with quintuple meter baked into the expression of the piece. The instruments are equal partners, each with a unique role. The quintet is in a single movement punctuated by contrasting tempos and moods, with the suspense of the opening providing a through line gradually responded to across the work's fifteen minutes.

-Eric Sawyer

## ABOUT THE MUSICIANS



Eric Sawyer is the composer of an extensive catalog ranging from chamber music to orchestral music to opera. His operas *Our American Cousin*, *The Garden of Martyrs*, and *The Scarlet Professor* have received New England premieres in recent years, the last two with librettos by Harley Erdman. *The Scarlet Professor* received The American Prize for best opera in 2019. A new opera, *The Onion*, is in process, and a cabaret musical, *My Evil Twin*, is

slated for performance in 2022. Sawyer's musical vocabulary integrates a variety of traditions in American music, with an emphasis on rich and expressive harmonies. His *Fantasy Concerto: Concord Conversations*, a triple concerto based on the American Transcendentalists, was performed in recently by Boston Modern Orchestra Project and the Claremont Trio. A recipient of the Joseph Beurns Prize and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Mr. Sawyer is on the music faculty of Amherst College. His music is available on the Albany Records and BMOP/sound labels.



Composer Geoffrey Hudson's music has been performed across the United States and in Europe. Selections from *The Quartet Project*, his six-volume collection of string quartets, have been recorded by leading American ensembles including the Brooklyn Rider, Jupiter, Parker, Miró, Chiara, and Lark quartets. Hudson's 2019 oratorio *A Passion for the Planet* explores the subject of climate change, tracing an arc from beauty and gratitude into

darkness and out again into hope. His work has been supported by grants from the American Composers Forum, New Music USA, Meet the Composer, the International Music and Art Foundation, the Argosy Foundation, the Alice M. Ditson Fund, and others.



Jean Jeffries performs, records and lectures on modern, classical and baroque horns. A graduate of Harvard College committed to liberal arts education and creative approaches to learning, Jean teaches horn and coaches chamber music at Amherst and Mount Holyoke Colleges. Working with bright, enthusiastic students inspires Jean's ever-evolving musical perspective. Jean appears as a modern horn player with Juno, Barrington Stage, Opera

North, Pioneer Valley Symphony, Fanfare Brass, Eclectic Arts Trio, and in rock 'n' roll performances of The Complete Tommy Album with The Collective.

She has played natural horn with period ensembles including ACRONYM, Arcadia Players, Connecticut Early Music Festival, Foundling, Handel and Haydn Society and La Dona Musicale. Over the years, Jean has commissioned several works, including pieces by composers Clifton J. Noble, David Kidwell and Lewis Spratlan. Her most recent commissions are the two Quintets for Horn and Strings featured on this recital. Jean thanks composers Eric Sawyer and Geoffrey Hudson for their vision, creative energy and compositional skill. Working with them both has been an education and a pleasure. When not playing and teaching horn, Jean is often outdoors, gardening, swimming, hiking, or, most recently, skate skiing.



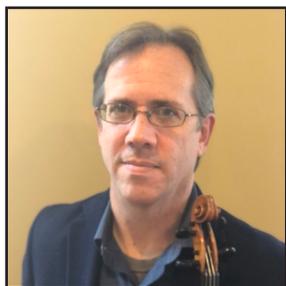
Sarah Briggs teaches violin at Amherst and Smith Colleges, plays in the Wistaria String Quartet, and performs with the Berkshire and Springfield Symphonies and groups throughout western MA and VT. She was tenured in the Colorado and Charlotte Symphonies, played with Chicago and Utah Symphonies, and has soloed with Colorado Philharmonic, Anchorage and Holyoke Civic Symphonies. Summer work has varied:

teaching at Brevard, principal second violin at Central City Opera Festival, a fellow at Tanglewood, contractor and violinist for Williamstown Theater Festival. Sarah holds a Bachelor's in Violin Performance from the Eastman School of Music, and Master's degree from UT, Austin. When not making music, she is probably doing yoga, biking, or cooking.



Kaila Graef has performed with a diverse range of groups, including Vermont's Juno Orchestra, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Springfield Symphony. Kaila holds a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance from Peabody Conservatory, where she was a student of Shirley Givens and studied chamber music with Earl Carlyss of the Juilliard Quartet. She completed her masters at UMass

Amherst, where she was a member of the Graduate String Quartet and studied with Marylou Speaker Churchill. A dedicated teacher, Kaila has served on the faculties of the Vermont Youth Orchestra's summer festival, Strings at Amherst, and Northampton Community Music Center. Kaila currently teaches at her private studio in Amherst, MA.



Gregory Diehl lives in Florence, MA and teaches violin and chamber music at the Northampton Community Music Center, the Community Music School of Springfield, and the Northfield Mount Hermon School. He studied violin and viola at the Eastman and Manhattan Schools of Music and pedagogy at the Hartt School. He spent several years teaching in Japan and holds an M.A. in Japanese Language and

Literature from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He performs frequently with ensembles in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Western Massachusetts.



Cellist, Wayne Smith, gave his recital debut at the Kennedy Center in 1996 to critical acclaim. As soloist and chamber musician, he has performed through out the United States, Italy, Germany, Romania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, and China. He is a member of the Wistaria String Quartet, the Portland Piano Trio and 1200 Horsehairs, a contemporary cello quartet. He is also a frequent performer at Bargemusic and a

core member of the Harlem Chamber Players. He has also appeared with the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, the Manhattan Chamber Players and the National Chamber Orchestra. Wayne is currently serving on the faculties of Amherst College, the Deerfield Academy, and the Williston Northampton School. He did his undergraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music and graduate studies at UMass Amherst. His principle teachers include Ardyth Alton, Steven Doane and Astrid Schween.

## Amherst College Music Department Upcoming Events

### February 2022

- 19 Adjunct Recital: Stephen Page Quartet.**  
Buckley Recital Hall. 7 PM.

### March 2022

- 3 Jazz@Friedmann Room.** Keefe. 9:30 PM.
- 5 Amherst Symphony Orchestra Concert: “Drama & Dance: Sibelius & Beethoven”.** Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM.
- 9 M@A, the CHI, and Amherst Cinema Co-present: Heartbeat Opera’s “Breathing Free, a visual album” Screening and Talkback.** Amherst Cinema. 4:30 PM. \$
- 10 Jazz@Friedmann Room.** Keefe Campus Center. 9:30 PM.
- 24 M@A, Bombyx, and Valley Jazz Shares Co-present: “Upper West Side Love Story, A Song Cycle by Freddie Bryant”** Bombyx Center for Arts and Equity, Florence, MA. Tickets at [www.bombyx.live](http://www.bombyx.live). 7 PM \$
- 25 M@A Presents: Stewart Goodyear, Piano.**  
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM. FREE. General seating.
- 26 M@A Goodyear piano masterclass.**  
Buckley Recital Hall. 10 AM.
- 31 Jazz@ Friedmann Room.** Keefe. 9:30 PM.

All events are free and held in Buckley Recital Hall unless otherwise noted.  
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