



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The St. Lawrence String Quartet Returns

Bay Chamber presents the "Anniversaries & Premiere" and "Beethoven the Master"

The St. Lawrence String Quartet, Bay Chamber Concerts' quartet-in-residence, returns to the Midcoast after a year of touring throughout the world. This week, the St. Lawrence will perform "Anniversaries & Premiere" to celebrate the Quartet's 20th Anniversary on Wednesday, July 29 at 8:00 p.m. at the Strand Theatre in Rockland. The concert will feature the first New England performance of John Adams' string quartet, written for the group. On Thursday, July 30 at 8:00 p.m. they will perform "Beethoven the Master" at the Rockport Opera House.

According to Thomas Wolf, artistic director of Bay Chamber Concerts, "The St. Lawrence String Quartet is considered one of the greats in the world and somehow it seemed inevitable when I first heard them over ten years ago that they would come to Bay Chamber Concerts. The pianist Leonard Hokanson told me about them, commenting: 'I just played with the young quartet. They are fantastic.' I followed up immediately and invited them to perform, and they were an immediate success. How fortunate for us that despite their growing fame, they love to return to our venues."

The St. Lawrence String Quartet first performed at Bay Chamber Concerts on January 14, 1996. Now, thirteen years later, the St. Lawrence celebrates the 20th Anniversary of its founding. Members of the St. Lawrence String Quartet include violinists Geoff Nuttall and Scott St. John, violist Lesley Robertson and cellist Christopher Costanza.

Alex Ross of the "New Yorker" Magazine describes the St. Lawrence as "remarkable not simply for the quality of their music making. . . but for the joy they take in the act of connection." Grammy nominated, they are the resident quartet at Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in Charleston, South Carolina and since 1998 they have been the ensemble in residence at Stanford University.

On Wednesday night, to celebrate the kick-off of their Anniversary series at Bay Chamber Concerts, the St. Lawrence Quartet will perform three exciting works – including the New England Premiere of John Adams' "String Quartet" commissioned by the St. Lawrence for their Anniversary. The St. Lawrence will also play Bach's "Excerpts from the Art of Fugue, BWV 1080," reputed to be the pinnacle of fugal

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excellence, and Mendelssohn's "String Quartet in F minor, Op.80," an emotionally riveting piece, which Mendelssohn wrote following the death of his beloved sister, Fanny. The concert is sponsored by Planet Toys.

Thursday night, the St. Lawrence pays tribute to "Beethoven the Master" with an entire concert devoted to the composer's works. They will perform the "String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 18, No. 6," one of Beethoven's earliest string quartets, and the "String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132," written two years before his death in 1827. The two pieces demonstrate the full range of Beethoven's genius as a composer, from his early compositions – that more than hint at the masterpieces to come – to his final works, written at the pinnacle of his achievement in the realm of chamber music. The concert is co-sponsored by Elizabeth E. Biddle, Esq.

The St. Lawrence String Quartet's 20th Anniversary celebration continues next week with "20th Anniversary: Reunion" on Wednesday, August 5 and "20th Anniversary: Celebration" on Thursday, August 6, when the St. Lawrence String Quartet becomes a Sextet as the Quartet is joined by former members Barry Shiffman, violin; and Marina Hoover, cello.

Bay Chamber Concerts will present a concert every Wednesday and Thursday throughout July and August. Wednesday night events will be at the Strand Theatre in Rockland and Thursday night events will be held at the Rockport Opera House. Before all Thursday night concerts there will be a pre-concert talk with Thomas Wolf, co-founder and artistic director of Bay Chamber, and visiting musicians. After all concerts there will be a free post-concert reception with the artists and complimentary refreshments.

Tickets to "Anniversaries & Premiere" and "Beethoven the Master" are \$25 to \$35 for adults, \$8 for youth ages 18 and under. Discounts are available for subscribers and groups of 8 or more. Bay Chamber Concerts is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization. The media sponsor is VillageSoup.com. For more information, or to purchase tickets, contact Bay Chamber Concerts at (207) 236-2823, toll free at (888) 707-2770 or online at www.baychamberconcerts.org.

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Calendar Listings:

Date: Wednesday, July 29, 8:00 p.m.

Location: The Strand Theatre, 345 Main Street, Rockland, ME 04841

Title: Anniversaries & Premiere

Sponsors: Sponsor: Planet Toys

Performers: St. Lawrence String Quartet – Geoff Nuttal and Scott St. John, violins; Lesley Robertson, viola; and Christopher Costanza, cello.

Program: excerpts from Bach: The Art of the Fugue; John Adams: A new String Quartet (NE Premiere); and Mendelssohn: String Quartet in F minor, Op.80, No.6.

Description: Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the St. Lawrence String Quartet, Bay Chamber Concerts' Quartet-in-Residence. The St. Lawrence returns to Bay Chamber Concerts with the New England Premiere of "A New String Quartet" by John Adams, a new piece commissioned by the St. Lawrence for their anniversary season.

Price: \$25-\$35 for adults, \$8 for ages 25 and under. Discounts available for subscribers and groups of 8 or more.

Date: Thursday, July 30, 8:00 p.m.

Location: Rockport Opera House, 6 Central Street, Rockport, ME 04856

Title: Beethoven the Master

Sponsors: Co-Sponsor: Elizabeth Biddle, Esq.

Performers: St. Lawrence String Quartet – Geoff Nuttal and Scott St. John, violins; Lesley Robertson, viola; and Christopher Costanza, cello.

Program: Beethoven: String Quartet in B flat major, Op.18, No.6 and Beethoven: String Quartet in A minor, Op.132, No.15.

Description: An evening highlighting the brilliance of Beethoven performed by Bay Chamber Concerts' Quartet-in-Residence: the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

Price: \$25-\$35 for adults, \$8 for ages 25 and under. Discounts available for subscribers and groups of 8 or more.

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