FRANCE’S AWARD-WINNING EBÈNE QUARTET BRINGS AFTERNOON OF HAYDN, DEBUSSY, AND BEETHOVEN TO JORGENSEN
Sun, Mar 6, 2016 at 3:00 pm / Concert Talk at 2:15 pm

Lauded as one of the most versatile and inventive string ensembles on today’s chamber music scene, the charismatic Paris-based Ebène Quartet will take the Jorgensen stage on Sunday, March 6th to perform selected works for string quartet by European composers Joseph Haydn, Claude Debussy, and Ludwig van Beethoven. The highly anticipated concert, which takes place in the chamber setting at UConn’s Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, begins at 3:00 pm and will be preceded by a Concert Talk at 2:15 pm. Doors open at 2:00 pm.

Comprising violinists Pierre Colombet and Gabriel Le Magadure, violist Adrien Boisseau, and cellist Raphaël Merlin, the energetic and talented French foursome has drawn international recognition and praise from critics and audiences alike for their ability to move seamlessly between classical and other musical genres, enriching performances of each with the magic of the other. “A string quartet that can easily morph into a jazz band,” wrote the New York Times after a 2009 performance by the quartet. The ensemble opened with Debussy and Haydn and then improvised on a film music theme - with exactly the same enthusiasm and passion.

For their March 6th appearance at Jorgensen the quartet has selected a strictly classical program and will perform Haydn’s Quartet in C Major, Op. 20, no. 2, Debussy’s Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10, and Beethoven’s Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130 with Grosse Fuge, op. 133.

What began in 1999 as a distraction in the university’s practice rooms for the four young French musicians has become a trademark of the Ebène Quartet, and has generated lasting reverberations in the music scene. The four breathe new life into chamber music through their consistently direct, open-minded perspective on the works. Regardless of the genre, they approach the music with humility and respect. They change styles with gusto, and yet remain themselves: with all the passion that they experience for each piece, and which they bring to the stage and to their audiences directly and authentically.

There is no single word that describes their style: they’ve created their own. Their traditional repertoire does not suffer from their engagement with other genres; rather, their free association with diverse styles brings a productive excitement to their music. From the beginning, the complexity of their oeuvre has been greeted enthusiastically by audiences and critics.

After studies with the Quatuor Ysaïe in Paris and with Gábor Takács, Eberhard Feltz, and György Kurtág, the quartet had an unprecedented victory at the ARD Music Competition in 2004. This marked the beginning of their rise, which has culminated in numerous prizes and awards. The Ebène Quartet’s concerts are marked by a special élan. With their charismatic playing, their fresh approach to tradition and their open engagement with new forms, the musicians have been successful in reaching a wide audience of young listeners; they

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EBÈNE QUARTET, continued

communicate their knowledge in regular master classes at the Conservatoire Paris and at the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

In 2005, the ensemble won the Belmont Prize of the Forberg-Schneider Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has worked closely with the musicians, making it possible for them to play priceless old Italian instruments from private collections.

The Ebène Quartet's debut CD, featuring works by Haydn, was praised unanimously by critics. Further recordings of music by Bartók, Debussy, Mozart, Fauré, and the Mendelssohn siblings have won numerous awards, including the Gramophone Award, the ECHO Klassik, the BBC Music Magazine Award, and the Midern Classic Award. Their 2010 album Fiction and the accompanying DVD, a live recording of jazz arrangements, has only solidified their unique position in the chamber music scene. Their second crossover CD Brazil, a collaboration with Stacey Kent, appeared early in 2014. In the same year, Erato released A 90th Birthday Celebration, a live recording (on CD and DVD) of Menahem Pressler's birthday celebration concert with the Ebène Quartet in Paris.

In 2015-2016, the quartet performs in London's Wigmore Hall, the LG Arts Center in Seoul, at the Berlin Philharmonic, and in New York’s Carnegie, to name just a few. An additional highlight of the season is their three-part concert cycle in Brussels.

The fundamental classical repertoire for string quartet remains a cornerstone: this season, the Ebène Quartet will focus on Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quartets Op. 95 and Op. 127.

Ebène Quartet was the Prize Winner in Residence at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival in the summer of 2015.

This year the University of Connecticut’s Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts proudly celebrates its 60th anniversary. Established in December of 1955, Jorgensen has grown to become the largest college-based presenting program in New England. Each season Jorgensen enriches the lives of students, faculty, staff, and area residents with 30 to 35 diverse performances from nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and ensembles ranging from classical music to world music and dance, classical ballet and contemporary dance, comedy, family programming, and contemporary entertainment. Dedicated to University of Connecticut president Albert N. Jorgensen, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts continues to follow his vision of the University as the state's educational and cultural leader.

Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts is located at 2132 Hillside Road on the UConn campus in Storrs. Tickets are available now online. Prices are: Floor seats - $36, Mezzanine - $32.

For tickets and information, call the Box Office at 860.486.4226, Monday through Friday, 10 am - 5 pm, and 90 minutes prior to events, or order online at jorgensen.uconn.edu. Convenient $5 event parking is available in the North Garage. Free parking is available in Lots 9, F, and L. For a detailed parking map, go to park.uconn.edu.

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