An Evening of Poetry and Music
The Pegasus Physician Writers at Stanford
and
Members of the St. Lawrence String Quartet with Stephen Prutsman
Robert Schumann’s Piano Quartet, Opus 47

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Poems by
Randall Weingarten
Ira Batra Garde
Audrey Shafer
Diana Farid
Martin Bronk
Richard D Mamelok
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Introductory Remarks by Richard Mamelok

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Brief Q & A

Robert Schumann’s Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Opus 47

Tonight’s program is dedicated to the memory of
Hans Steiner and Geoff Nuttall
Hans Steiner, MD

The Pegasus Physician Writers at Stanford, founded in 2008, would not exist without the vision and drive of Hans Steiner, its co-founder and animating force. Hans believed that creative writing would make physicians better doctors. Creative writing forces one to explore new ways of seeing through both introspection and a greater awareness of the world external to one’s self. He wrote “From the age of 16 I have written creatively and maintained a journal. I find that writing for me is as necessary as food and sleep,” and “I find that my writing and my psychiatric practice mesh beautifully: as I help patients develop and reshape the narrative of their lives, I employ similar skills when I write about fictional and non-fictional characters. My practice and my creative writing stand in a constant, refreshing dialectic which invigorates both.”

Hans always saw the potential in people and encouraged all he came in contact with – colleagues, students, medical trainees and patients – to accomplish new things and to explore new possibilities. He and his wife, Judith, opened their home generously to host colleagues, students, trainees, and members of Pegasus. He frequently enlisted her financial savvy and his daughter’s artistic expertise to benefit Pegasus and its initiatives. He saw writing as a path to discovery. Among his many academic activities, he created and taught a popular class, Your Secret Mind, which eventually resulted in a book of the same title that he co-authored with Rebecca Hall. Anyone who came in contact with Hans emerged with a greater sense of wonder and achievement.

Hans grew up in Vienna, Austria in the years immediately following World War II. He became quite sensitive to the plight of those deprived of opportunity and dedicated himself to helping others. He received his medical degree and initial medical training from the Rudolphina at the University of Vienna. He then came to the United States for further training in medicine and psychiatry at SUNY, Syracuse, and the University of Michigan. He joined the department of Psychiatry and Behavior Sciences at Stanford in 1978. In Palo Alto, Hans and Judith raised three children who have given them four grandchildren. Hans made numerous contributions through teaching and publications in many areas including eating disorders, juvenile delinquency, trauma, sports psychology and forensic psychiatry.

Hans was a complex man of two worlds. He took great pride in his Austrian heritage, history and diversity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire noting that teaching is “a tool to bring forward in time the wisdom and knowledge of past generations.” He balanced his deep sense of the past with how he saw his adopted home in the United States: “I am in love with this society which takes the downtrodden, burdened of this world and turns them into gems like no other society has done before. I have come to love the spirit of adventure, entrepreneurship, optimism and openness which is not easily found in Europe . . . . Being a citizen of both these worlds has been a privilege, a source of
my inspiration and creativity.” He by no means thought the world was perfect but in his indefatigable way he always looked for ways to make things better.

Hans had many interests including his absolute love of music. His love of music, art, literature, creative writing and the potential of all people is what birthed this series of Concerts and Poetry, a collaboration of The Pegasus Physician Writers at Stanford and The St. Lawrence String Quartet. We owe Hans a great thanks for making our lives richer and better.

Geoff Nuttall

One of the string quartet world’s greatest musical personalities is notably absent from today’s Pegasus event: Geoff Nuttall, the first violinist of the St. Lawrence String Quartet throughout its 34-year history. Geoff’s untimely death came in October of 2022, almost exactly one year after he received a diagnosis of stage 4 pancreatic cancer. That year was a deeply emotional one for Geoff, his family, and the entire SLSQ community: Geoff, determined to live his life to the fullest, endured intensive chemotherapy treatments while continuing to rehearse with the quartet, perform concerts locally and across the country, and teach his Stanford violin and chamber music students. Geoff’s contributions to the art of chamber music cannot be overestimated; his unwavering and passionate commitment to the music he loved, to the creative people in his life, and to the wide range of worldly wonders he found fascinating, musical and otherwise, introduced us all to a richer, more imaginative, and brighter world. The unique positive musical energy Geoff brought to every note he played still inspires us to seek out and appreciate life’s greatest gifts.

About The St. Lawrence String Quartet

The St. Lawrence String Quartet was founded in Toronto in 1989. Shortly thereafter, the quartet gained international acclaim after winning both the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York and the Banff International String Quartet Competition, leading to major concert debuts and an active global touring career that spanned three decades. The quartet became the Ensemble in Residence at Stanford University in 1998 and continues to fulfill that role to this day. The SLSQ remains a strong force in the chamber music world through its extensive recorded legacy, expanded recently by the release of two new recordings, one featuring two late Haydn quartets and the other highlighting a collaboration with tonight’s pianist, Stephen Prutsman; both recordings are available on the new and exciting San Francisco-based Phenotypic record label. Stephen Prutsman, Visiting Artist at Stanford, has enjoyed a remarkably varied and active career as both a classical and jazz pianist. He is in great demand as a composer and arranger, and in recent years he has composed original scores for a number of classic silent films, including several groundbreaking Buster Keaton features. Stephen and the St. Lawrence String quartet have enjoyed a
productive collaborative musical relationship for over 30 years. The members of the quartet performing tonight are: Lesley Robertson, viola; Christopher Costanza, cello; and Owen Dalby, violin.

Acknowledgements

The Pegasus Physician Writers at Stanford and the St Lawrence String Quartet express gratitude to the Department of Music, Stanford Medicine and the Muse, and the many donors and benefactors who support the Arts at Stanford, enabling a vibrant, creative environment for collaboration, expression, and community.
Randall Weingarten is a retired Adjunct Clinical Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. Since retirement he has recently begun Chaplaincy training, including volunteering at Lucille Packard Children’s Hospital with the Spiritual Care Service, headed by Rev. Allison Draper. He says “I am increasingly aware of the value of existential & spiritual awareness in Medical & Psychiatric education and Clinical care.”
Eccentricities

Such a splendid word for all the
Forms of our human variation
That may at times present in ways
Unusual, peculiar, magical
Even, one might say, ‘musical’.

So many poets, painters,
Dancers, even musicians
Each in the manner of they’re
Own eccentricity
Have walked a lobster
Down the streets of Paris
As the poet Mallarme’ was wont to do.

Listen now to Robert Schumann’s
Andante Cantabile
A loving song, within his
Piano Quartet in E, the Opus 47.

Such melodic virtuosity in this Quartet
That even Clara Schumann with
Her own inspired pianissimo
Could only pause and sigh
Knowing her husband’s
Sacred self was woven into song.

But Time may tell
How eccentricity can sometimes
Turn against the self
As talent, genius even one’s own
Well-being can spill into adversity.

So many forms were Schumann’s
Ways of being just himself
His composing, piano playing,
Conducting, teaching,
Until that maverick Soul
Could hardly bear the torment of
His mind- gone wild, gone astray.

Listening to his music now,
Imagine Schumann sweeping
Leaf by leaf, along the pathways of
The Asylum, he came to live within
Humming to himself his
Songs of childhood
While new sonatas kept taking form
Inside that harried, wondrous,
Eccentric mind of his.
Ira Batra Garde, M.D., M.P.H. graduated from the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. She completed her Residency in Psychiatry at the Stanford University Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Her poems have appeared in Nonviolence magazine, The Exeter Bulletin, and in the anthology Walking With the Shadows, Leaving Them Behind: Selected Poems by the Pegasus Physician Writers at Stanford which features poetry by physicians and medical students. Dr. Ira Batra Garde is currently at work on a novel about an Indian military surgeon during the tumultuous reckoning that encompasses both World Wars.
Rising, After Robert Schumann’s Piano Quartet in E-Flat, Opus 47

Come:
Aloft, with the breeze we’ll rise
Like eagles and herons
Accomplish what neither of us could
Alone

Soaring to the heavens
To the skies, soaring
Aloft, trust in flight

Come with me
I’ll lead where we daren’t go
Alone

Sadness sings
So I am
Alone

In my heart, chambers of sadness
Tenderly felt, sweet strains of
Love and loss, life shifting through
The sieve of time

Your music, it’s dearness felt
Your music replaces
What I’ve lost

Listen, each note
It sings
My companion it has become

So dear, your strains for me
Ring near to me
Never alone
Your love calls

We rise now, this spring
From the torment of autumn and winter
Those seasons passed, near
No longer

In spring’s frailty
We rise, touched
By the quiet of meadows sweet
Gentle the breezes blow, ever so

Come to me
With you, I’m not alone
My sadness lifts, slowly
Carefully, gently, patiently

If you play, I can live
Play for me
Your song elevates

Thanks given
To the god of strings
Music for our heart composed
Each piano note, lilting

A barcarolle, in stormy seas
Rescues me
Joy Joy Love
Love again

I will rise to the morning
Dress each day
Meet the morning
It can be done

Delicately, slowly, kindly, happily
I’ll lift the day
Meet the morn
Sing its song

Its cadence rising
With each note
My heart lifts
To meet the day

No longer melancholy
I greet each day
Meet every day
I hold this day—

Its joy too fleeting—
In my hands.
Audrey Shafer, MD is Professor Emeritum of Anesthesiology, Perioperative and Pain Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine / Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System; founder, Stanford Medicine & the Muse Program, Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics; founder, Biomedical Ethics and Medical Humanities Scholarly Concentration; co-founder of Pegasus Physician Writers, and co-founder of the new Stanford undergraduate minor in Medical Humanities. She is the author of The Mailbox, a children’s novel on posttraumatic stress disorder in veterans. Her poetry has been published in journals and anthologies.
Under the Fig Tree

Piano quartet in E-flat major, opus 47, movement 3 Andante cantabile, Robert Schumann

Below a smokeless dome of blue
I watch sunlight on the fig tree’s lobed leaves
the trunk mottles grey with folds and sinews

My therapist says do things that make me happy, and

Happiness seeps in
like a glaze of confectioners’ sugar and lemon
into a stabbed pound cake

An inner life of anguish inharmonious
with the gifts around me

I hear, in the slowing, notes of pierced beauty
a yearning beyond sorrow
whispers of gratitude, of grace
the fig tree talks with the madrone, the plum, and the rose

I imagine a peopled concert hall
millefleurs of dreams, heartaches, memories
no listener hears the same, yet still the music finds its way
the lives of others comfort me

Even a bruised fig feeds the house finch.
Diana Farid MD, MPH is a physician, filmmaker, poet, and award-winning author. She is an assistant professor in the Stanford Department of Medicine, a co-creator of the first Stanford School of Medicine’s Health and Film Working Group, and served as the Assistant Director of the Program in Bioethics and Film at Stanford. Her groundbreaking debut picture book, WHEN YOU BREATHE (Abrams, 2020) is a National Council of Teachers of English 2021 Notable Poetry Book and a 2021 EUREKA! Gold Award winner for nonfiction. Her debut novel in verse, WAVE, called “Rich, layered, and heart-rending” — Kirkus, was just nominated for a Northern California Book Award. WAVE melds family, medicine, culture, and poetry and is a School Library Journal 2022 Best Middle Grade Book, Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection, 2022 Cybils Award Winner for Poetry Novel, and a 2022 Golden Poppy Award Finalist for both Middle Grade and Mirrors & Windows. Her poetry has been featured in gallery exhibits, live story telling events, anthologies, and journals. She has two books forthcoming in 2024, Where Water Meets the Sky (Scholastic) and Already, All the Love (Little Bee Books).
Moving Day

In between the cardboard boxes of everything, there was one box with my paint and a fish, the one you carved and gave to me as a gift, a practice piece you said. And I kept asking myself “where does one display a wooden fish?” while I squeezed a tube of Golden cyan. I left the unpacking to later and made myself into a shore laced horizon with birds diving to the water, a seagull that stands on a twisted branch, or is it a searching root, cutting through a cliff? Hard sand holds all kinds of tangles against the waves, cliffs of tan skin ridges and crevices wind chiseled. I colored the Pacific with green-blue and a point of you—aligned in the first movement.

But again the question of placement pecked for this wooden fish? Does it go alone on a wall or with the heirloom vase? Baba Bozorg\(^1\) once wrapped his fingers around the narrow part of it as he lifted the vessel out of a suitcase or a chest full of the objects he decided were worth packing for the flight, a narrow escape from revolution in the name of a god no God would recognize the shape of.

Handmade, silver images of flowers next to men on horses, this delicate fluted vase time traveled from 1979’s Day Avenue, Tehran to a 2023 Stanford street named after a Spanish explorer. An heirloom of another Iran when a girl could sing in public, and get away. I unpack the feminine shape and place it on the highest shelf, too precious to abide by wooden fish

\(^1\) grandfather in Farsi
and I love yous that cannot move.

But some things had to be left behind,
like Maman Bozorg\textsuperscript{2} who died just before
I was born. I wear her ring.
A burst of turquoise beads, our repeated
ornament refrains, Maman packed
so they wouldn’t steal it too.
I saw a piece like it in the Louvre:
“cloisonne beads, from Susa, 350 BC,
inlaid with lapis lazuli, turquoise,
and carnelian” derived from the Latin carno: flesh
derived from the city of Sardis
derived from the Persian sered:
meaning yellowish red. I dive
into its heat, That’s where it goes!
My brush figures your fish into the scene,
slides carnelian beneath the branch, finds
the bird and breaths color under its wings.
We unwrap from between the fibers of water
a movement of I love yous saved,
ancient treasures I flare on a canvas,
a bird eats a fish into a finished piece
of flight.

\textsuperscript{2} grandmother in Farsi
Marty Bronk is a music lover and sometime mindfulness practitioner who uses simple poetry to help him better understand his place in the world. He has been a general surgeon and medical educator for many years and is grateful for the wisdom that has come to him from patients and students alike.
TEMPUS FUGIT

Gently approach

Perhaps we shall
Spend a moment
Together

But you rush so
My Dear
As though
The starting gun
Has sounded
An exhortation to move
As quickly as
Bones and sinew
Will allow

But somewhere
It might be right
To stop flat-footed
And wonder where
The race is headed
Or even what it was
That allowed entry
To the Event

Then as softness
Emerges
And brushes gently
Across the cheek
A timeless moment
Stands upright
Between infinities

And declares
Itself
To be
Meaning
Breathe in that
Spirit
Let it resonate
And dance
And then evaporate
Leaving only
The faintest
Trace of Being
Richard Mamelok is an internist and clinical pharmacologist. After a brief academic career at UCSF and Stanford he has spent his medical life in the pharmaceutical and biotech world and for the past two decades has had an international consulting business for such companies. He has been an active poet since his days in high school, having published one short volume of poetry entitled *What Grace* and his poems have appeared in several publications. He is the poetry editor of The Pegasus Review. His poetry has been described as eclectic, associative, synthetic and jazz-like. Aside from medicine and poetry he enjoys cooking for family and friends, dining out, cycling, wine tasting, traveling, listening to music, going to art museums and playing with the family dog. Richard is a transplanted New Yorker and has lived in Palo Alto for 44 years.
Through Schumann’s Opus 47

I
First the hymn—
then dancing daffodils scatter in a wide field of green
children hop madly to their own breezy rhythms
others sail toy schooners in the fountain nearby.

Brief reflection on the Mass.

Myriad minds in one wander—
peccadilloes behind the altar
wrecked marriages but oh
what fun.

II
Running—
a forest
staggering trees
path strewn with pebbles, twisted roots
balance kept
mad dash to the meadow below.

III
Sanctuary of thought—
quiet talk, introspection
trees are calmed
something vague stirs in the brush
Diana and witless Actaeon come to mind.

IV
I’m all over the place
everything at once before me
future and past
unity of time.