**Arditti Quartet**

*Irvine Arditti, violin*

*Ashot Sarkissjan, violin*

*Ralf Ehlers, viola*

*Lucas Fels, cello*

PROGRAM

Quartet No. 2, “Cuerdas del destino” (2007-08) Hilda Paredes

(b. 1957)

The Tree of Strings (2007) Harrison Birtwistle

(b. 1934)

Intermission

Quartet No. 3 in 3 movements (1987) Conlon Nancarrow

(1912-1997)

String Quartet No. 2 (1968) György Ligeti

*Allegro nervoso* (1923-2006)

*Sostenuto, molto calmo*

*Come un meccanismo di precisione*

*Presto furioso, brutale, tumultuoso*

*Allegro con delicatezza*

**Meet the Artists**

The **Arditti Quartet** enjoys a world-wide reputation for their spirited and technically refined interpretations of contemporary and earlier 20th century music. Many hundreds of string quartets and other chamber works have been written for the ensemble since its foundation by first violinist Irvine Arditti in 1974. Many of these works have left a permanent mark on 20th century repertoire and have given the Arditti Quartet a firm place in music history. World premieres of quartets by composers such as Ades, Andriessen, Aperghis, Birtwistle, Britten, Cage, Carter, Denisov, Dillon, Dufourt, Dusapin, Fedele, Ferneyhough, Francesconi, Gubaidulina, Guerrero, Harvey, Hosokawa, Kagel, Kurtag, Lachenmann, Ligeti, Maderna, Manoury, Nancarrow, Reynolds, Rihm, Scelsi, Sciarrino, Stockhausen and Xenakis and hundreds more show the wide range of music in the Arditti Quartet’s repertoire.

The ensemble believes that close collaboration with composers is vital to the process of interpreting modern music and therefore attempts to work with every composer it plays.  
The players’ commitment to educational work is indicated by their masterclasses and workshops for young performers and composers all over the world.

The Arditti Quartet’s extensive discography now features over 190 CDs.

42 CD's were released as part of the ensemble's series on Naive Montaigne. This series set the trend, by presenting numerous contemporary composer features, recorded in their presence as well as the first digital recordings of the complete Second Viennese School's chamber music for strings. The quartet has recorded for more than 20 other CD labels and together this CD collection is the most extensive available of quartet literature in the last 40 years. To name just a few, Berio, Cage, Carter, Lachenmann, Ligeti, Nono, Rihm, the complete chamber music of Xenakis and Stockhausen's infamous Helicopter Quartet. Some of the most recent releases are with the French company Aeon and include profiles of Harvey, Dusapin, Birtwistle and Gerhard. For 2014, Ferneyhough's complete quartets and trios will also be released on this label.

Over the past 30 years, the ensemble has received many prizes for its work. They have won the Deutsche Schallplatten Preis several times and the Gramophone Award for the best recording of contemporary music in 1999 (Elliott Carter) and 2002 (Harrison Birtwistle). In 2004 they were awarded the 'Coup de Coeur' prize by the Academie Charles Cros in France for their exceptional contribution to the dissemination of contemporary music. The prestigious Ernst von Siemens Music Prize was awarded to them in 1999 for ‘lifetime achievement’ in music. They remain to this day, the only ensemble ever to receive it.

The complete archive of the Arditti quartet is housed in the Sacher Foundation in Basle, Switzerland

In addition to his legendary career as first violinist of the Arditti Quartet, **Irvine Arditti** has also given life to many solo works. Born in London in 1953, Irvine Arditti began his studies at the Royal Academy of Music at the age of 16. He joined the London Symphony Orchestra in 1976 and after two years, at the age of 25, became its Co-Concert Master. He left the orchestra in 1980 in order to devote more time to the Arditti Quartet which he had formed while still a student.

Irvine Arditti has given the world premières of a plethora of large scale works especially written for him. These include Xenakis' Dox Orkh and Hosokawa's Landscape III , both for violin and orchestra, as well as Ferneyhough's Terrain , Francesconi's Riti Neurali and Body Electric , Dillon's Vernal Showers and Harvey's Scena , Pauset's Vita Nova, Reynolds Aspiration and Sciarrino's Le Stagioni Artificiali all for violin and ensemble.

He has appeared with many distinguished orchestras and ensembles including the Bayerische Rundfunk, BBC Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Paris, Het Residentie den Hague, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Asko Ensemble, Ensemble Contrechamps , London Sinfonietta , Nieuw Ensemble, Nouvel Ensemble Modern, Oslo Sinfonietta, Schoenberg Ensemble. His performances of many concertos have won acclaim by their composers, in particular Ligeti and Dutilleux.

On 12th May 2012 at Miller Theatre, New York, Irvine gave the premiere of a new work by Hilda Paredes, Senales for violin and ensemble with Signal, the New York based ensemble and their conductor Brad Lubman. There were several performances planned of Cage's Freeman Etudes in 2012 , to coincide with the centenery of the composer's birth. These took place in Darmstadt (17th July), Washington (6th September), Tokyo (25th September), Venice (10th October) and Huddersfield (20th November). From 11th-14th March 2013 Irvine was in residence at McGill University Montreal where he coached performers and composers,and gave a recital with music by Xenakis, Reynolds, Dillon, Ferneyhough, Paredes and Sciarrino . In June Irvine was in residence at June in Buffalo where he performed Ferneyhough's Intermedio and Terrain with Ensemble Signal and Brad Lubman. Both these works were written for him. Later in June he performed Hou for violin ensemble by Jukka Tiensuu with Avanti and Ulrich Pöhl as well as Antheil's 1st Sonate with Emil Holmstrom at the Summer Sounds festival in Porvoo, Finland. Recitals will take place in Mexico City in July with repertoire by Cage, Donatoni, Dillon, Ferneyhough, Hosokawa, Lavista, Paredes, Reynolds, Sciarrino, Scodanibbio, Traversa and Xenakis. In August he will participate in the 5th Forum for composers in Nuevo Leon, Monterrey where he will work with young composers and play a recital. James Clarke has just completed his work 2013-V for violin and ensemble which will receive its premiere at the Huddersfield festival in November with Ensemble LInea.

As well as having recorded over 190 CDs with the Arditti Quartet, Irvine Arditti has built an impressive catalogue of solo recordings. His CD of solo violin works by composers such as Carter, Estrada, Ferneyhough and Donatoni, as well as his recording of Nono's La Lontananza , both on the label Mon taigne Auvidis, have been awarded numerous prizes. His recording of Cage's Freeman Etudes for solo violin, as part of his complete Cage violin music series for American label Mode, has made musical history. The series is now complete. The violin concertos by Berio, Xenakis and Mira, recorded in Moscow with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, are featured on a disc by Swedish label Bis.

Irvine Arditti's arrangement for Quartet of Cage's 44 Harmonies from Apartment House can be found on Mode Records and is published by Edition Peters in New York The complete Mode recordings of Berio's Sequenza's, on which Irvine has recorded the violin sequenza has won the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis for 2007, and was awarded best contemporary music release by the Italian music magazine Amadeus in 2008.

In July 2013, The Techniques of Violin Playing, a book by Arditti and the composer Robert Platz was release by Barenreiter Edition.

**Ashot Sarkissjan** was born on the 26th of February 1977 in Yerevan,   
Armenia. He studied with Ara Bogdanian at the Tchaikovsky Music College in his home town, at the Musikhochschule Lübeck, where his principal teachers were Maria Egelhof, violin, and  Walter Levin, string quartet, and with Mihaela Martin at the Hochschule für Musik Cologne. He is laureate of the international competitions in Lublin and Mainz. Since his student years, contemporary music has been a domain of  major importance for him. As co-founder of the Ensemble Neue Musik Lübeck, he worked regularly with students from the composition classes, premiering new pieces written for violin or string quartet. He participated in the Academie du 20e  Siecle, an annual summer course, organized in Paris by Ensemble   
Intercontemporain.   
  
Since 2002 Ashot Sarkissjan has been a member of Ensemble ntercontemporain (EIC) in Paris, where he worked with many composers including Pierre Boulez, Gyorgy Kurtag and Brian Ferneyhough. He has appeared as soloist with the EIC, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Stavanger Symfoniorkester (Norway) under conductors such as Sakari Oramo and Jonathan Nott, and also worked, on many occasions, with Ensemble Modern Frankfurt.

Ashot has appeared as soloist together with the soprano Laura Aikin in “Le Sacrifice”, an oratorio for violin, soprano and ensemble by the Finnish composer Kimmo Hakola. He has performed in many European countries, but also in Russia and the US, and took part in such festivals as Lucerne and Lincoln Center in New York. In his concerts in Armenia, he has introduced many major works of the 20th Century, many never performed there before. He has also given master-classes in Paris and Cologne.

Ashot joined the Arditti Quartet in June 2005.  
  
His violin is by Stephan von Baehr, 2002.

**Ralf Ehlers** started playing the viola at age 12, in his home town of São Paulo, Brazil. Six years later he won the 1989 international competition Sul América and went on to give recitals across South America and to play concertos with some Brazil's leading orchestras.

Ralf continued his studies in Detmold, Germany, with Nobuko Imai, and at the Salzburg Mozarteum in Austria with Thomas Riebl, where he discovered his passion for chamber music. A founding member of the Pulcinella Quartet, Ralf later moved to England, where he was a member of groups as diverse as the Raphael Ensemble, the Solomon Ensemble, and Configure8. Other chamber music partners have included Steven Isserlis, Gabor Takacs, the Emperor String Quartet and the New Zealand String Quartet.

Ralf has cultivated a particular interest in the works of living composers. In 1997, he gave the European premiere of George Benjamin's Viola Viola with Garth Knox. He has also worked with many contemporary ensembles including the Austrian Ensemble for New Music, the London Sinfonietta, Musikfabrik, and Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt, with whom he performed Brian Ferneyhough's Incipits for viola and ensemble at the Salzburg Festival in 2005.

In 2003, Ralf was given the opportunity to combine his two passions - chamber music and contemporary music – by joining the Arditti Quartet. He has since performed with his quartet in most of the world's major concert halls, and with many of the leading orchestras of today.

The Quartet's schedule permitting, Ralf also enjoys playing within different musical frameworks. More recently, he featured as a soloist with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra for some performances of ‘Harold in Italy' by Berlioz, and taught master classes which culminated in a recital of solo works - some of which were written for him - in the ‘International Symposium for Contemporary Music' in Curitiba, Brazil.

Ralf plays on a viola which he made himself in 2005.

**Lucas Fels** is one of the most distinguished cellists for music of our time. His close collaborations with composers such as Klaus Huber, Helmut Lachenmann, Wolfgang Rihm, Salvatore Sciarrino or Beat Furrer led to numerous works dedicated to him. At the Donaueschinger Musiktage, in which Lucas Fels has regularly taken part since 1993, he has premiered the cello concertos by Wolfgang Rihm (Styx und Lethe, 1998) and Walter Zimmermann (Subrisio Saltat, 2003) amongst others. In 2002, he premiered Sebastian Claren's cello concerto After Blinky Palermo at the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik Darmstadt.

Born in Lörrach in 1962, Lucas Fels received his first cello lessons from Rolf Looser in Basle and Zurich. He subsequently studied in Freiburg with Christoph Henkel, in Amsterdam with Anner Bijlsma and in Fiesole/Florence with Amadeo Baldovino. He participated in master classes by Antonio Janigro, Siegfried Palm and Bruno Canino amongst others.

As founding member of the highly renowned Ensemble Recherche, which specialises in new Music, Lucas Fels has been actively involved in the development of contemporary chamber and ensemble music. Ensemble Recherche has premiered around four hundred works since its foundation in 1985.

Lucas Fels has taught regularly at different conservatories (Lucerne, Essen, Brno, Lviv) and has lectured at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse since 1998. Together with Ensemble Recherche and the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, he founded the Ensemble Academy Freiburg in 2004, which offers courses in the performance of Ancient and New Music to professional musicians and advanced students. In July 2005, he participated in the Centre Acanthes Metz as soloist and teacher.

More than 30 CDs with solo and chamber music works document the wide range of Lucas Fels's repertoire. His recent recordings include Bernd Alois Zimmermann Märchensuite / Canto di speranza / Impromptu / Alagoana. Caprichos Brasileiros were released on Wergo, Beat Furrer Gaspra on Kairos and Sebastian Claren After Blinky Palermo on col legno.

The premiere of a new cello concerto by Mathias Spahlinger is planned for season 2007/08 as part of the Musica Viva series of Bayerischer Rundfunk Munich.