



Cypress String Quartet

Call & Response 2011

Music With Exotic Influences

Glazunov, Schulhoff, Bloch, Debussy & Jeffery Cotton

Listener's Guide



Join us for a performance of music inspired by the Exotic

Call & Response 2011 Concert

May 5, 2011, Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

Details inside...

Call & Response 2011: Music with exotic influences

Concert

Thursday, May 5, 2011

Herbst Theatre at the San Francisco War Memorial

401 Van Ness Avenue at McAllister Street

San Francisco, CA

7:15pm Pre-Performance Lecture by composer Jeffery Cotton

8:00pm Performance

Buy tickets online at: www.cityboxoffice.com or by calling
City Box Office: 415-392-4400

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Call & Response: The Concept

Have you ever wondered how composers, modern **composers** at that, come up with their ideas? How do composers and other artists create new work? Our *Call & Response* program was born out of the Cypress String Quartet's commitment to sharing with you and your community this process in music and all kinds of other artwork. We present newly created music based on earlier composed pieces.

Why “Call & Response”?

We usually associate the term “call & response” with jazz and gospel music, the idea being that the musician plays a musical “call” to which another musician “responds,”—a way of creating a new sound relating in some way to the original. In this program, the “call” is that of Cypress String Quartet searching for connections across musical, historical, and social boundaries. The “response” is the creation of a new work by a living composer and an exciting new concert for the community!

Each year, the Cypress String Quartet selects a few pieces from older, traditional quartet music and asks a composer to write a piece based on his or her inspiration from the first two pieces. Through this process, we explore how new music develops out of older music.

The Music

This year the Cypress examines music based on inspiration from foreign lands and exotic cultures. Four older composers have been chosen who have created music that comes from beyond their experience or their native music. French composer Claude Debussy was responding to the Javanese Gamelan (a tuned percussion ensemble, playing by the whole village) that he heard at the Paris Exposition (1889). Swiss composer Ernest Bloch was responding to the craze of the time of "Nanook of the North", but also imagining the music of Tonga. Russian composer Alexander Glazunov takes us back in time to ancient Russian chant, but also to Spain and the Orient. And Czech composer Erwin Schulhoff explores dances from five different cultures.

The response? Jeffery Cotton's new quartet will address what it means to be ‘exotic’ in this world where so much is easily accessible. As Jeffery told us, “I really struggled with that, because in the modern world, what is really exotic when you can get on an airplane and be on the other side of the world in a few hours? And then it hit me...” Join us to hear what Jeffery Cotton was inspired to do.

The Concert

Join the Cypress String Quartet at Herbst Theatre in San Francisco on Thursday, May 5. Jeffery Cotton will give a pre-concert talk at 7:15 pm, and the performance begins at 8:00pm.

Program:

Glazunov: selections from Novelettes, op. 15 (1886)

Schulhoff: Five Pieces for String Quartet (1923)

World Premiere by Jeffery Cotton: Serenade for String Quartet (2011)

-Intermission-

Bloch: Landscapes (1923-24)

Debussy: String Quartet in G, Op. 10 (1893)

Buy tickets online at: www.cityboxoffice.com or by calling City Box Office: 415-392-4400. Begin your celebration by learning about the composers and their music through the materials we will be showing in this guide. Enjoy learning about these amazing people, their music, and how music styles have changed over time!

Music Responding to Exotic Influences

Serenade for String Quartet (String Quartet #2), World Premiere

Jeffery Cotton (1957-)



Interesting Fact: Jeffery used to work for Deutsche Bank in one of the Towers of the World Trade Center. On the morning of September 11, 2001, Jeffery was running late and missed his train from New Jersey to New York....

Biography:

Jeffery Cotton was the first composer-in-residence of St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble from 1992 through 1996, during which time he created *Second Helpings*, a "hosted" series of contemporary chamber music performances in the galleries of the Guggenheim Museum SoHo. The series, hailed by the New York Times as "something truly different", continues to this day. He was also composer-in-residence with the Boston-based Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra from 1999 through 2003. His first new work for Metamorphosen, *Lyra*, was praised by the Boston Globe as "a gentle, confessional hymn to music of great beauty."

A native of Los Angeles, Cotton began his musical studies at California State University at Northridge, where he studied clarinet with Charles Bay and composition with Frank Campo and Daniel Kessner. In 1983 Cotton received a Fulbright Scholarship to conduct a two-year course of study with Hans Werner Henze at the Academy of Music in Cologne, Germany. During this time Cotton traveled extensively with Henze, attending among other events the Santa Fe Opera and the Edinburgh Festival, where Henze conducted the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in the premiere of Cotton's *Abendland*. Returning to the United States in 1985, Cotton then studied with George Crumb, Jay Reise, Chinari Ung and Richard Wernick at the University of Pennsylvania as an Annenberg Fellow, receiving his M.A. and Ph.D. in 1989.

In 1990 Jeffery Cotton returned to Germany as a Guggenheim Fellow, and lived in Berlin during the German Reunification. During this time he began composing his ballet *Pyramus and Thisbe* (a work which was premiered some twelve years later in an orchestral suite version, April 2002). In 1991 he returned to the United States, settled in New York and began his long and productive relationship with St. Luke's. He composed the *Quartet for Low Strings*, *Trio*, *Five Runic Songs* and *Lydian Sonata* for the ensemble.

In 1995 a Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest consortium comprised of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestra commissioned Jeffery Cotton to compose *CityMusic* for narrator and orchestra, a theater piece for young audiences. The Cleveland Plain Dealer describes the work as "an affectionate and humorous urban tone painting." The work was premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra in October 1995, and has subsequently been performed over a dozen times by the Cleveland Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony, the Detroit Symphony and the Indianapolis Symphony.

Jeffery Cotton has been the recipient of many awards and honors, including most recently the 2004 Camargo Foundation Fellowship for a five-month residency at the Foundation's facilities in Cassis, France; a 2003 grant from the Fromm Foundation for a new trumpet concerto for Jeffrey Curnow, associate principal of the Philadelphia Orchestra; the 2003 Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship to work at the Liguria Study Center in Bogliasco, Italy; and the 2002 Aaron Copland Prize for a two-month residency at Aaron Copland's home in New York. Cotton was also a featured composer on the Tage für Neue Musik 2003 in Darmstadt, Germany. Recent projects include a new string quartet for the Cypress String Quartet in San Francisco and a new work for violin and percussion for the 2005 Tucson Chamber Music Festival.

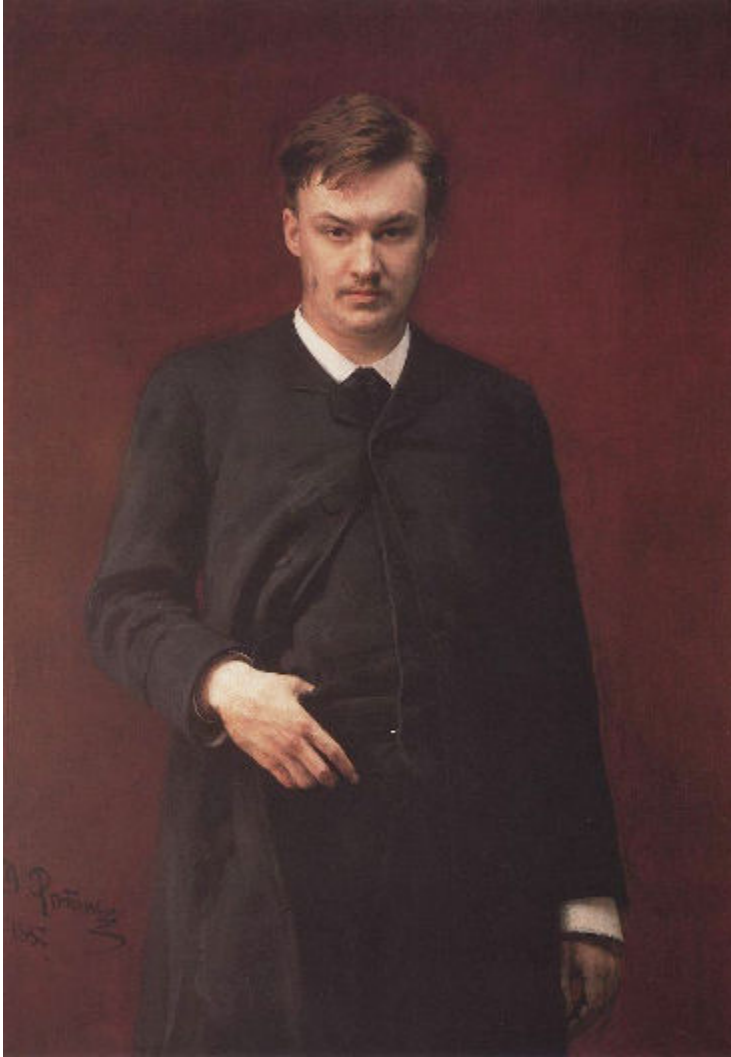
Jeffery is an experienced speaker about music, having presented pre-concert lectures for four years while with the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, four years with St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, and most recently to over two thousand school children (K through 12) over a two-week period while touring with the Cypress String Quartet. He is also president and founder of Wired Musician, Inc., a website design and hosting firm specializing in the needs of the professional musician.

Notes about the music:

Jeffery Cotton: Serenade for String Quartet (String Quartet No. 2)-WORLD PREMIERE

(Come early to hear Jeffery speak about his new work in a pre-concert talk at 7:15pm)

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936)



Interesting Fact: Glazunov wrote his First Symphony at age 16, and became well known shortly thereafter.

Biography:

Alexander Glazunov was born in St Petersburg, and lived a comfortable life as the son of a successful bookseller and publisher father. His mother was a good amateur pianist and his father played the violin. Glazunov studied with Balakirev, who encouraged him into a musical career, suggesting that the boy should study composition with his mother's teacher - a young musician, called Rimsky-Korsakov. Glazunov became his favorite pupil; in his teacher's words he improved "not from day to day but from hour to hour."

Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev encouraged the youth to compose and when, at just 16 years old, Glazunov produced his first symphony, they saw to it that it was performed. In Rimsky-Korsakov's words the work was a success, "The public was astounded when the composer came forwards in his high school uniform to acknowledge their applause." However, there were the inevitable gripes and rumor circulated that his wealthy parents had commissioned 'you know who' to write the piece for him.

At Rimsky's invitation, a wealthy timber merchant named Belayev was present at this concert of Glazunov's first symphony. He liked the work so much that he traveled to Moscow to hear it performed for a second time. Belayev and Glazunov developed a close friendship, and the timber merchant decided to form a music-publishing house, and to sponsor the Russian Symphony Concerts to bring the young Russian composers to the attention of the public. Glazunov found himself associated with the informal group of Russian nationalist composers, Borodin, Lyadov, Scriabin and Rimsky-Korsakov. Glazunov also earned the nickname "The little Glinka."

Glazunov's Second Symphony and a tone poem, *Stenka Razin*, were immediately successful, both with the public and critics, and attracted the attention of Franz Liszt, who conducted the First Symphony at Weimar in 1884. Glazunov conducted his Second Symphony, together with *Stenka Razin*, in a series of Russian concerts arranged by Belayev at the Paris Exhibition of 1899. In the same year, Glazunov was appointed professor at the St Petersburg Conservatory. After the student demonstrations of 1905 calmed down he was elected director, a position he retained in name until 1930, although after 1928 he remained abroad, chiefly in Paris.

Notes on the music:

Alexander Glazunov: selections from "Novelettes", Op. 15 (1886)

- Alla Spagnuola
- Interludium in modo antico
- Orientale

During his lifetime, Alexander Glazunov was regarded as a great Russian composer. He came to national attention at the age of 16 for the premiere of his First Symphony, and for much of his adult life he was the well-known and well-liked director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory (where he supported and influenced younger Russian composers such as Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov). Glazunov was a fine pianist, but also played the violin, cello and a number of woodwind instruments. Stories of his incredible musical memory rival those of Mozart or Mendelssohn; he was able to perform other composer's entire works from memory after only one hearing.

In terms of musical style, his own compositions are charming and filled with nationalistic touches including folk melodies and Russian songs. Glazunov wrote music in every genre except for opera. He is perhaps best known for his ballets and his concerti (one for violin, two for piano and one for saxophone), as well as his seven string quartets and eight symphonies (he was superstitious enough to not write a ninth symphony!).

Glazunov wrote a suite of five short pieces, called "Novelettes" (Op. 15) in 1886, when he was 21 years old. This was around the same time that he wrote his Second Symphony, dedicated to the memory of Franz Liszt. The "Novelettes" were composed for a party, given by Glazunov's patron, Belayev, a wealthy timber merchant who was present at the premiere of Glazunov's First Symphony and who became a great friend of the young composer. This friendship inspired Belayev to form a music-publishing house, which helped support the younger generation of Russian composers. The "Novelettes" display much of Glazunov's signature charm and melodic talent. The composer shows off his great use of the string instruments in combination and in impressionistic effects. He later returned to the pieces and set them for piano duet.

Erwin Schulhoff (1884-1942)



Interesting Fact: Schulhoff loved jazz and became a very fine jazz pianist.

Biography:

It was only 60 years after his death in the Wülzburg concentration camp that Czech composer **Erwin Schulhoff** began to be recognized. One of many composers whose works the Nazi regime labeled as "Entartete Musik" (degenerate music), he was effectively silenced by the stark political and social workings of fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. Schulhoff was indeed possessed of radical ideas, both political and musical, and was a founding member of the Dresden-based Werkstatt der Zeit (Workshop of the Time), but he is now known to be a composer of remarkable variety and invention whose works spanned the aesthetic void between the late romanticism of Max Reger and Scriabin and the experimental modernism of John Cage. During the 30 years of his active career he wrote sonatas, quartets, sextets, jazz piano pieces, stage music, an opera, eight symphonies, and at least one oratorio.

Schulhoff's works divide roughly into four periods that manifest wildly different stylistic and ideological principles. His early works, composed after his studies at the Prague Conservatory, betray a great debt to Reger, Dvorák, and Brahms, and are in a generally serious vein. Following his service in World War I, he found new resonance in the ideas of the Second Viennese School (Arnold Schoenberg and his pupils), but soon embraced the emerging trend of dadaism as more representative of his philosophies. This "second period" in his creative development shows a dual allegiance to these two schools of thought, resulting in rather austere serial works as well as more vigorously anti-establishment works that included experimental notation systems and an emerging sense of musical humor.

By 1923 Schulhoff had moved into yet a third creative phase that was partly inspired by his exposure (in Dresden via recordings) to American jazz. This new influence was incorporated into a maturing synthesis of European trends, combined with a renewed interest in the music of his native Czechoslovakia. During this time many of his works took on a straightforward, almost Neo-classical sound that left the complexity of serialism behind.

Schulhoff's final creative phase was precipitated by a visit to the Soviet Union in 1933, and his resulting political conversion to Stalinism. His late works betray a concerted effort to communicate in plain, unpretentious ways and to glorify the ideals of communism through the use of greatly simplified musical means. Ultimately these cannot be judged his most successful experiments. The German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939 resulted in Schulhoff's arrest and imprisonment in 1941. He died only months later of tuberculosis.

Notes on the music:

Erwin Schulhoff: Five Pieces for String Quartet (1923)

- Alla Valse Viennese
- Alla Serenata
- Alla Czeca
- Alla Tango milonga
- Alla Tarantella

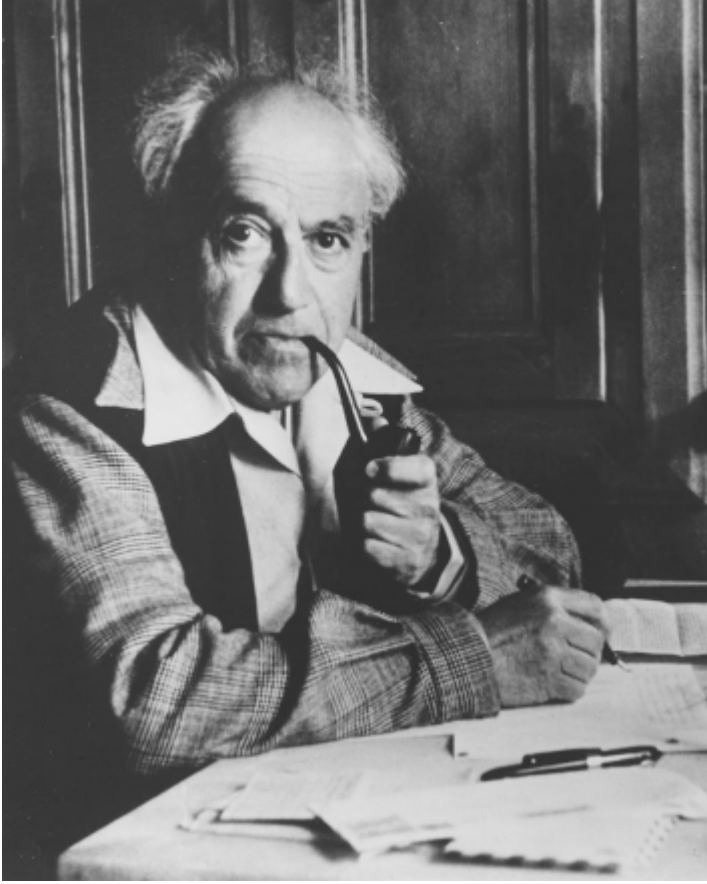
Ervin Schulhoff was born in Prague on June 8, 1894. Although his parents were not musicians, they supported both his piano and composition studies. At Dvorak's urging, they sent the boy to Prague Conservatory and later to Vienna and Leipzig. Schulhoff's most influential composition teachers were Max Reger and Claude Debussy. A pianist of unusual technical range, Schulhoff won the Mendelssohn Prize for piano in 1913, and for composition in 1918.

After military service in World War I, Schulhoff remained in Germany, where he was attracted to the avant-garde music and art of the Dadaist movement, which led him to his discovery of jazz. Schulhoff became an excellent jazz pianist and infused jazz rhythms and harmonies throughout his compositions. In 1923, Schulhoff returned to Prague, and began a prolific period of composition, combining jazz ideas and the folklorism of his slavonic heritage with German and French modernism. Schulhoff became a communist in the 1930s. Due to his left-wing political views and Jewish origins, he was interned by the Nazis during the German occupation and died in the Wulzburg concentration camp in 1942.

Schulhoff composed his *Five Pieces for String Quartet* in 1923, shortly after his return to Prague. The pieces were dedicated to Darius Milhaud and were premiered in 1924 at the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Salzburg, and met with great critical acclaim. The *Five Pieces* are delightful dances, some humorous and some satirical in character. With his vast repertoire of sounds, Schulhoff has created miniature pictures of popular dances, including a spoof of a Viennese Waltz, and uneven Arabic-like dance, a pulsing Czech folk dance, an evocative tango and a rollicking Tarantella.

Note: You can watch the Cypress String Quartet perform the "Alla Tango milonga" movement on their YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/cypressquartet>

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959)



Interesting Fact: Bloch lived in San Francisco for a number of years and was the director of the San Francisco Conservatory.

Biography:

Ernest Bloch was so admired in his heyday that many considered him the fourth ‘B’ after Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. He was one of the most original composers of the 20th century whose music, whilst intellectually challenging, was accessible to a wide audience. His works were regularly performed from the 1920s to the 1950s, particularly in the USA, UK and Italy.

Bloch has often been referred to as a ‘Jewish composer’ because of the substantial number of his works that carry Jewish titles. Yet his repertoire incorporates a variety of influences such as Renaissance, neo-Classical, neo-Romantic, Swiss, Native American, Chinese, and Gregorian chant. Although he never founded a ‘school’ of composition, many of the most prominent American composers of the 20th century were his students.

He visited Britain in the 1930s, where concerts of his chamber music were presented. In 1949 his *Concerto Symphonique* for piano and orchestra was premiered at the Edinburgh Festival; he also conducted a major concert at the Royal Albert Hall, including *Schelomo* with cellist Zara Nelsova and *The Sacred Service* with baritone Aron Rothmüller and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus. Following the founding of the American Ernest Bloch society, an Ernest Bloch Society was founded in London in 1937 with Albert Einstein, Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Arthur Bliss, Sir Arnold

Bax, and Sir John Barbirolli, among others, as honorary officers. Amongst his many other attributes, Bloch was an accomplished photographer, a lover of mushrooms, a collector and polisher of agates, and a prolific letter writer.

Notes on the music:

Ernest Bloch: Landscapes (1923-24)

- North
- Alpestre
- Tongataboo

Ernest Bloch was born in Switzerland of Jewish parents and became an American citizen in 1924. He wrote his First String Quartet in 1916 in Geneva, but waited until 1923 to revisit the form. In 1923-24 he wrote two short pieces, “Prelude” and “Night” for Quartet and also two sets of short pieces for Quartet, “Paysages” and “In the Mountains”.

“Paysages” (Landscapes) were written between December 8-13, 1923 in Cleveland, Ohio, and were dedicated to “My dear friend Carl Engel”. Engel was a pianist and composer who also served as the Chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress.

The first of the pieces, “North”, is based on the silent film documentary of Robert Flaherty called *Nanook of the North*. This 56-minute long, 35-mm film was enormously popular when it was released in 1922, and follows the family of Nanook, an Inuit hunter from the Hudson Bay through the everyday struggles of the Eskimo. The film shows the austere, unblemished landscape of ice and snow that make up the setting for the story. The second piece, “Alpestre” is an homage to Bloch’s own “dear mountains of the Alps”. The final piece in the set, “Tongataboo” is based on the South Pacific Island. The pieces were premiered in February 1924 in Florida by the Flonzaley Quartet.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)



Debussy quotes:

“There are no rules; pleasure is the law” Debussy was a musical rebel, and by doing so, he opened the door to 20th century music.

“I love painting as much as I love music.”

Interesting Fact: Debussy wrote as a music critic under the pen name “Monsieur Croche” (which means “Mr. Quarter-Note”).

Biography:

"The primary aim of French music," **Claude Debussy** wrote in 1904, "is to give pleasure." Debussy, more than anything, was interested in the sensuous quality of music. Even as a student he let his concept of sound override many of the rules he was so assiduously taught by his teachers (much to their

consternation). From this he developed a style that was wholly his own, but that also owed much to a wide variety of disparate influences. He also was a passionate champion of a purely French style, and he proudly referred to himself as "Claude Debussy, musicien français."

Debussy was educated at the Paris Conservatory, and in 1885 he won the coveted Prix de Rome. His period in Rome, however, was not pleasant for Debussy and he longed to return to Paris. His early works show his desire to break the constraints of Western harmony and form (he especially disliked sonata-allegro form, which he came to see as overly Germanic and not fitting for a French composer). His *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun"* departs from any sense of development, relying instead on a series of free repetitions and variations of the basic themes.

As a student and a young composer, Debussy was also an ardent Wagnerite, seeing in the German composer the future of music, specifically musical drama. He later turned away from Wagner, describing him as "a beautiful sunset mistaken for a dawn." Yet his one completed opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, owes much of its conception to this influence, even if the musical language is markedly different. The other strong influences on Debussy at this time were the symbolist and decadent movements in poetry, with their concern for sound and abstract meaning. While *Pelléas* was his only opera, he worked on various subjects by Edgar Allan Poe, one of his favorite writers and a strong influence on the symbolist writers.

Debussy's interest in the exquisite and sensual also led him to an appreciation of the music of other cultures, and his use of various scales beyond the traditional major and minor ones shows the influence of Oriental and Russian music. A decisive influence was the Paris Exhibition of 1889, where he first encountered the music of the Indonesian gamelan orchestra. The different scales, as well as the floating qualities of form and rhythm, would find their way into his work, especially his piano music.

Notes on the music:

Claude Debussy: String Quartet in G minor, Op.10 (1893)

1. Animé et très décidé
2. Assez vif et bien rythmé
3. Andantino, doucement expressif
4. Très modéré - En animant peu à peu - Très mouvementé et avec passion

One of the most influential composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, French composer Claude Debussy's chamber music pushed the contemporary standards of harmony and form while preserving wonderful stylistic nuances. In his string quartet in G minor, Op.10, Debussy explores a subtle yet ultimately powerful combination of cyclic and variation forms, using the simple 4-note motif – G-F-D-F#.

One of the most astonishing aspects of the entire four-movement work is that it is based solely on these 4 pitches and their relation to one another. The genius of Debussy's work is that one hardly notices on listening that the entire piece is based on so little material. The motive is constantly being transformed in rhythm, mode and harmony creating tremendous drama and a variety of color and emotional expression.

In 1889 Debussy attended the Paris Exhibition, a gathering of cultures from all over the world. It was a unique opportunity for Debussy and others of his time to experience the exotic music, food and other cultural characteristics of places that were otherwise completely inaccessible. Debussy was particularly

fascinated by the music of the Javanese gamelan ensemble. A feature of this music that had particular appeal to Debussy was development through repetition. Debussy's second movement imitates this aspect of gamelan music as well as its exotic sounds, and driving rhythms. In a letter to his friend Pierre Louys several years after the exhibition, Debussy wrote

“But my dear good fellow! Remember the music of Java, which contained every nuance, even the ones we no longer have names for. There tonic and dominant had become empty shadows of use only to stupid children.”

Note: You can watch the Cypress String Quartet perform the First Movement of the Debussy on their YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/cypressquartet>