

Strum along with James Pataki

The Brunswick String Quartet, resident musicians at the University of New Brunswick, will be heard in concert Tuesday, December 10, at 8:15 in Memorial Hall, UNB Fredericton. The ensemble will perform

Quartet in F Minor, Opus 95, by Beethoven and Quartet in G Major, D. 887, by Schubert. Admission to the concert is free of charge.

James Pataki is the group's tall and distinguished violist who explains his choice of the viola as a

musical instrument by saying he grew too big for the violin.

"Actually, I love the deeper tone color and resonance of the viola." He adds with a bit of humor, "I am quite content to let violinists get nosebleeds while climbing into the musical stratosphere."

Jim was born in a region of Hungary which was once Transylvania, but was taken to Toronto by his parents at one-year-old. His violin and viola studies with Elie Spivak and Kathleen Parlow coincided with those of Joseph Pach, first violinist of the Brunswick String Quartet. They first played chamber music together as students.

Desiring to further his education after completing his studies in Toronto, he travelled to Hungary and applied for admission to the prestigious Franz Liszt Academy. Four years later Jim was awarded the honor of being the only violist to graduate from the academy. Jim makes light of this.

"There were other violists but if they were really good they got job offers before they finished their studies. But I went there to learn as much as I could, and so I finished my studies through to the end."

Following graduation Jim joined the Budapest Opera Orchestra.

"I led a wonderful life of intense discussions into the night about art and aesthetics. I took up sculpting, I became interested in cinematography, and then the revolution."

"I was in China with the orchestra when the revolution broke out. Of course we had to go back. We were stuck in Moscow for a while but eventually we got back to Budapest. The next day I left. I couldn't live under those conditions."

He and many other Hungarian musicians found themselves in Austria where they established the Philharmonia Hungarica Orchestra with Jim playing principal

viola. Under the baton of Anatole Dorati they made the Grand Prix du Disque, winning recordings of the complete Haydn Symphonies.

His busy life encompassed playing with the Schaeffer Quartet and during his last two years in Austria, he travelled to Fredericton to join his old colleagues, the Pachs, in the summer music festivals at UNB.

"I was delighted to come back to Canada when I was asked to join the quartet which Joe Pach was forming, and even more, I was happy to devote my life exclusively to chamber music. I like Fredericton, it is a charming place to live."



James Pataki performs with Brunswick String Quartet.

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