

BROYHILL CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

The *Reflections* Concert Series, Gil Morgenstern Artistic Director

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1

8 PM, ROSEN CONCERT HALL

REFLECTIONS:
"1795-1825: WHAT A DIFFERENCE
30 YEARS MAKE"

String Trio in G Major, Hob XV:25 (Gypsy Rondo) Franz Joseph Haydn
Jennifer Koh, violin; Wilhelmina Smith, cello; Benjamin Hochman, piano

String Trio in G Major, Op. 9, No. 1 Ludwig van Beethoven
Adagio – Allegro con brio
Adagio, ma non tanto e cantabile
Scherzo, Allegro
Presto
Gil Morgenstern, violin; Kathryn Lockwood, viola; Wilhelmina Smith, cello

INTERMISSION

Piano Quartet No. 3 Felix Mendelssohn
*Jennifer Koh, violin; Kathryn Lockwood, viola; Wilhelmina Smith, cello
Benjamin Hochman, piano*

The Broyhill Chamber Ensemble Concert Series is sponsored by the Broyhill Family Foundation (in memory of Faye Broyhill), the R.Y. and Eileen L. Sharpe Foundation, and the Muriel and Arnold Rosen Endowment for the Arts. This program has also been underwritten in part through the generous support of Allene Broyhill Stevens, Budd and Nanette Mayer, McDonalds of Boone/Venda Lerch, Peter and Joni Petschauer, Neil and Nancy Schaffel, and Shirley Stein Spector.

Refreshments during intermission this evening have been generously provided by Linville Ridge Country Club.

PROGRAM NOTES:

*Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello, in G Major, "Gypsy Rondo" H. XV: 25...
Joseph Haydn*

*(Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau;
died May 31, 1809, in Vienna)*

In the 1790s, Haydn wrote 17 splendid piano trios, 12 of which were published in four sets of three, each set dedicated to a woman whose talents are probably reflected in the piano parts. (The "Gypsy Rondo" Trio he dedicated to Rebecca Schroeter.) Even this late in the 18th century, the distinctive quality of what we call chamber music was not necessarily in the writing, nor in an obligatory equality among the parts. The important defining characteristic was functional, perhaps social, and not musical. Almost all chamber music was written for private performance and for the pleasure of the performers. It was private, not public, music. Composers tailored their works to the tastes and skills of specific players, and the elaborate dedications that often accompanied them were not meaningful testaments to patrons or friends.

Haydn devoted considerable energy during his visits to London to trios, although they were overshadowed by his popular "London" Symphonies, Nos. 93-104. The Haydn scholar H.C. Robbins Landon commented "in many ways, these trios are the most neglected works of the period, and probably of Haydn's entire output." This trio, perhaps the most popular of his trios, was first published in 1795; Haydn wrote it, one of the two that he composed for piano, flute and cello, during the final weeks of his second visit to England in 1795 for John Bland's series *Le Tout Ensemble*. Its first edition was very successful. In it, Haydn had begun to liberate the strings from their conventional function of "accompanying" the keyboard instrument. Instead of the violin, Haydn wrote for the flute as the descant instrument, yet the substitution of a violin instead of a wind instrument was possible since Haydn, a good businessman, was willing for the violin to be used as an alternate. Yet, because Haydn adjusted himself to writing for the flute, some commentators feel the flute best captures the character of the music.

The cello, in a role inherited from the trio sonata of the Baroque era, basically concentrates on a harmonic bass line. It plays along with the piano left hand, a

gesture perhaps necessary because of the relatively weak bass register of the pianos of the time. The work was scored originally for fortepiano, a forerunner of the piano, although when Haydn composed it, the part was generally played on a harpsichord. The trio was later republished in piano-trio form.

There are three movements with the opening movement, *Andante*, begins with a straightforward theme introduced by the violin and continues in a cross between a rondo and a set of variations with much ornamentation for the solo piano. Most of the variations include repeated sections. Here, as elsewhere in the trio, there is a clear shifting of relationships between strings and piano.

The second movement is slow, *Poco Adagio*, in three-part form, with the piano at first carrying the theme with string accompaniment, and then the violin taking the lead with the subject. Throughout, the cello remains as support. When the first theme returns, the piano again carries the melody.

The final movement, which gives the trio its nickname, is a lively *Rondo all' ungarese*. Since Haydn had spent the majority of his adult working life employed at Eszterháza, in Hungary, he regularly was exposed to both gypsy and Hungarian folk music and was one of the first composers to incorporate popular folk music into his own work, as he did in this trio. The spirited dance melody on which the movement is based, typical of a Maygar gypsy folk theme, resembles the kind of theme Haydn often used. Haydn also includes *verbunkos*, recruiting dances, originating when army officials hired gypsies to perform dance music with the specific purpose of attracting peasants to

the recruiting posts. This final movement is also unusual because it is the only Rondo finale in any of Haydn's piano trios of this period. Although the trio conclude in the major tonality, the rondo has many minor episodes.

***Trio for Violin, Viola and Cello,
in G Major, Op. 9, No. 1...***
Ludwig van Beethoven

(Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn;
died March 26, 1827, in Vienna)

Among Beethoven's noble friends and supporters when he was a young musician in Vienna were the Count and Countess von Browne-Camus. The Count, whose family was Irish in origin, was only three years older than the composer, and he was in the Russian Imperial Service in Vienna, as a Brigadier and acting as Governor General of most of what is now Lithuania and Estonia. His immense properties in the Baltic region, then called Livonia, gave the Count a huge income that he spent freely in Vienna. In 1796, he married a German baroness, and the two of them rewarded Beethoven generously with gifts when he dedicated compositions to them. One of those presents was a riding horse, which Beethoven received in April 1797, when he inscribed a set of variations on a Russian dance to the Countess. Beethoven dedicated his three *String Trios*, Op. 9, to the Count and the three *Piano Sonatas*, Op. 10, to the Countess.

In 1798, the Viennese publisher Johann Traeg published the trios, with Beethoven's overly formal dedication of gratitude to the "Maecenas of my Muse." Beethoven thought the trios were his best and most successful works until that time and mentioned that fact in his dedicatory message to Count and Countess

Browne-Camus. Most of his contemporary critics, as well as those of today, have agreed with that judgment.

Beethoven's composition of chamber music for strings, (trios, string quartets and quintets) was initiated with the Op. 9 set of three trios. They mark his musical development in a new direction, his gradual loosening of reliance on the piano as the anchor of his compositional style. Perhaps this set of works functioned for Beethoven as a stepping-stone to the quartet, as he did not return to writing string trios in subsequent years. This fact can perhaps be accounted for by his involvement in the expressiveness he could draw from the string quartet, the chamber music genre that, in the end, became dominant for him. Barry Cooper, the editor of the *Beethoven Companion*, does not accept this reasoning and feels strongly that Beethoven turned to the medium of the string trio to "avoid" the quartet. Regardless, the richly textured music Beethoven elicits from three instruments demonstrates his incomparably inventive imagination and the technical mastery he already possessed at the age of twenty-eight.

Each of the three trios in Beethoven's set of Op. 9 trios, like his earlier piano trios, Op. 1, are structured in four movements analogous to the form of the contemporary Haydn symphony. This expansive and luxuriant trio begins innovatively with a slow introduction, something Beethoven had possibly transferred from what he learned from Haydn about symphonic form, and it ends with a sonata form movement rather than in the characteristic and traditional rondo form. The first movement, *Adagio*, starts in simple open octaves and seems almost to be in b minor, so that when the

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intricately written main section of the movement begins, *Allegro con brio*, in G Major, it comes as a surprise. There are hints in the introduction of the broad main theme with its own inner contrasts between a brief and quiet repeated four-note figure and a broader, powerful, leaping one. The slow movement, *Adagio, ma non tanto e cantabile*, a fervent yet songlike structure, in the surprisingly distant key of E Major (the submediant Major), has a calm, lyrical flow. Next comes an energetic *Scherzo, Allegro*, colorfully written and graceful, including hints of the minuet form. It is followed with a whirlwind, perpetual motion *Finale, Presto*, a virtuosic finale in classical sonata form in which the musical themes are brilliantly developed and then recapitulated before a coda sweeps the work to its end.

Piano Quartet No. 3, in b minor, Op. 3... Felix Mendelssohn

(Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg; died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig)

Felix Mendelssohn's father was a wealthy banker who loved music and art, but he was not certain that it would be wise for his son to attempt a career as a musician, even though the boy had been playing the piano and composing since early childhood. He had written symphonies, concertos, chamber music, choral works, even short operas, before he arrived at Op. 1, the first of his three piano quartets, in 1822. In 1823, he wrote another, and in the winter of 1824 and 1825, when he turned 16, this third one.

That spring, his father took him along on a trip to Paris to get an appraisal of the boy's gifts from the head of the Conservatoire, Luigi Cherubini, a severe

classicist who was one of the most influential musicians in Europe. When the master heard a performance of this Quartet by the young composer and three distinguished string players, he made a somewhat cryptic pronouncement, in French, in an ironic metaphor whose ambiguities are particularly appropriate to the circumstances (but have resulted in frequent mistranslation). What he said may be accurately rendered into English as, "This boy is rich. He will do well. He is even doing well already, but he is spending too much, cutting too much cloth." Mendelssohn called Cherubini "an extinct volcano, still throwing out occasional sparks, though completely covered with ash," but it was thanks to his counsel that the father allowed the young composer to continue his musical studies, and in later years, Mendelssohn expressed his gratitude by frequently performing the music of Cherubini at his concerts in Germany.

On the way home from Paris to Berlin, the father and son stopped in Weimar to see the great poet and sage Goethe, who was a close friend of the boy's principal music teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter. Goethe loved music, though he was somewhat deficient in taste and valued Zelter's settings of his poems above Beethoven's and Schubert's. Nevertheless he was very much interested in the progress of his friend's pupil, whom he had first met in 1821. He listened to the quartet with some pleasure and allowed Mendelssohn to dedicate it to him. However in the letter with which he later acknowledged receipt of a published copy of it, his expressions of admiration were devoted principally to the design, printing and binding of the music. Only a few months later, as we know from a letter

that Goethe received from Zelter, Mendelssohn wrote the work that is his first indisputable masterpiece, the *String Octet*.

The quartet found so "rich" by the laconic Cherubini would have done credit to a composer of any age, for it is more refined in conception, more sure and more fluent than much of the music by the famous composers of the time. The exuberant piano part is written to be played in the way that later made the composer so popular a performer: it was to be light fingered, fleet as a bird in flight, yet rich enough in tone, even when soft, that it would have been able to balance the sonority of an orchestra.

Other characteristic elements are here, too. In the first movement, *Allegro molto*, a wealth of musical ideas is presented and carried forward with great imagination. The sweetly chromatic *Andante* foretells the late *Songs without Words*; and the *Allegro molto*, his brilliant and very characteristic elfin scherzos. This movement is so difficult that even the great violin virtuoso, Pierre Baillot, had problems with it when he played it with the boy in Paris, and insisted on repeating it in order to have a second chance to get it right. The *Finale, Allegro vivace*, is a brilliant *tour de force* carrying forward the spirit of the scherzo. Near its end there is a musical reference back to the first movement. For many aspects of his three youthful piano quartets, Mendelssohn's models were the two by Mozart, who had more or less invented this medium of performance, almost 40 years earlier.

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