

HOUSTON FRIENDS OF MUSIC THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Present

FLORESTAN TRIO

Tuesday, March 11, 2008, 8:00 P. M.

BELCEA QUARTET

Tuesday, April 8, 2008, 8:00 P. M.

EMERSON STRING QUARTET

Tuesday, April 29, 2008, 8:00 P.M.

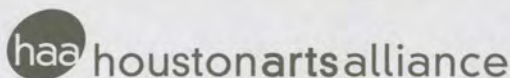
STUDE CONCERT HALL

ALICE PRATT BROWN HALL

RICE UNIVERSITY



With our final set of chamber music concerts this year, we honor the memory of William Paul Beard, who died last July 30, 2007. Although he did not make his presence known to the Houston Friends of Music, he announced his love for the music that we present by a very generous gift from his estate. Mr. Beard was a person of many interests, trained as a musician and worked in other fields. We regret that we did not know him in life but are deeply grateful that he knew us and cared about our future.



HOUSTON FRIENDS OF MUSIC IS FUNDED IN PART BY GRANTS FROM THE
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FLORESTAN TRIO

SUSAN TOMES – PIANO
ANTHONY MARWOOD – VIOLIN
RICHARD LESTER – CELLO

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

~ PROGRAM ~

Piano Trio in D Major, Hob. XV: 24 (1795)

FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN (1732-1809)

Allegro

Andante

Allegro, ma dolce

Trio for Piano, Violin, and Violoncello (1911)

CHARLES IVES (1874-1954)

Andante moderato

TSIAJ: Presto

Moderato con moto

~ INTERMISSION ~

Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 ("Ghost") (1809)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Allegro vivace e con brio

Largo

Presto

Florestan Trio is exclusively represented by:

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37 West 26th St., Suite 403

New York, NY 10010

FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN (1732-1809)
Piano Trio in D Major, Hob. XV: 24 (1795)

In September of 1790, Haydn's employer of 30 years Prince Esterházy died, preceded only a few months by the Princess, his wife. Both had been devout music lovers. Their son and heir, however, was not, and he therefore gave Haydn leave to employ his time elsewhere, albeit on full pay. Haydn headed for Vienna, eager to take up life in the music capitol of the world. No sooner had Haydn begun to settle in, when the English impresario Solomon knocked at his door with the famous words "I am Solomon from London, and I have come to fetch you!" This was the culmination of seven years' effort on the part of the London music establishment. After obtaining a substantial financial agreement, Haydn departed Vienna for his first London sojourn – and his first voyage by ship – which was to last two years.

The following ironic conversation took place on Haydn's last day, which he spent with Mozart. Haydn recorded their conversation. Mozart was worried about his friend because the 58-year old Haydn had led such a provincial life. He said "Oh, Papa, you have had no education for the wide world, and you speak so few languages." Haydn replied, "My language is understood all over the world." Little could either imagine that it would be Mozart who would fall ill and die barely two months later.

Haydn found lodgings in a good part of town, and although he had come to compose, he found he was also asked to give piano lessons. One of his students was Mrs. Rebecca Schroeter, a neighbor, the widow of London's most import piano teacher, and herself a fine pianist. They formed a warm friendship, and it is clear from her letters that she fell in love with him. Haydn later told one of his biographers that, had he been free, they would probably have married.

It was after Haydn's second trip to London in 1794, that he composed his last set of piano trios, sending them to England with a dedication to Madame Schroeter. It is the first of these post-London piano trios that we will hear tonight.

In almost every Haydn work, there is a musical joke or witticism, something even bordering on the outrageous or at least unexpected. This little work seems to be an exception. Except for oddly placed *sforzandos* in the opening theme of the first movement, this is a rather sober and well-behaved composition. True, there is no real sonata form in the first movement – the second theme is a variation of the first and the development really starts in the exposition, but by now this level of toying with form is to be expected. There are other formal oddities. The *Andante* remains in

the same key like old-style divertimentos, now in its minor mode. It is a melancholy, gentle minuet, lacking a trio section but making up for that in part by substituting a single variation on the theme before, without a repeat, slipping seamlessly into the last movement, which he designated *Allegro, ma dolce*. This too remains in the same key, again in the brighter, major mode of the first movement. It starts out as a bucolic reverie, enters a thematically related stormy section and then returns to the opening, and ever so gently, with a descending line of hanging dissonances, rather unexpectedly slips away.

Program note © Nora Avins Klein, February, 2008.

CHARLES IVES (1874-1954)

Trio for Piano, Violin and Violoncello (1904-1911)

Charles Ives' music is living proof that music is not, after all, a universal language. The great European musicians, who made their way to America in the first half of the 20th Century and became the mainstay of the American music scene, didn't like his music. Except for Arnold Schoenberg, they saw it as amateurish cacophony. This was only in part because of its astounding originality and independence from the European tradition. It was mostly because they were completely ignorant of, and therefore utterly deaf to, the underpinning of familiar and beloved American songs from the popular repertoire of his day – show tunes, songs of Stephen Foster, campfire and college ditties, folk tunes, children's songs, cherished Protestant hymns from his years as a church organist, and Negro spirituals – which hovered just beneath the atonal surface of his music. These tunes simply did not register in European ears. It was not until 1947, when he was close to 70 years old, that perhaps our greatest American composer was recognized with a Pulitzer Prize, and not until an American-born conductor, Leonard Bernstein, finally took over the New York Philharmonic, that one of his symphonies got a performance. Tonight's piano trio – his only such work – was not performed until 1948, 47 years after its completion, and was first published in 1955. For all that personal neglect, Ives was a generous, life-long supporter of contemporary American music, regularly using his own funds, earned during a highly successful career as an insurance agent, to enable other American composers to have their music published and performed in America and abroad.

The Trio took its inspiration from a class reunion at Yale University.

He titled it "Trio, Yalensia et Americana (fancy names) Real Name: Yankee jaws at Mr. Yale's School for nice bad boys!!" The first movement *Andante Moderato* has a dreamy, romantic quality, lyrical at times, densely contrapuntal, and mysterious at others. Despite his thorough, conventional training in composition as a student at Yale, Ives was passionately intent on avoiding conventional forms and harmonies in his own music. He dearly loved to shake up the 20th Century ear - thus the movement's freedom from the constraints of sonata form or any other recognizable construct, and from tonality.

The second movement is marked *TSIG - Presto*. Translation: "This Scherzo Is A Joke - Fast." Here we have a wonderful, wild jumble of favorite American tunes, piled upon each other with frantic enthusiasm, like old friends at a reunion all talking at once. Amidst this amusingly contorted Americana, we hear *Tah-rah-rah Boom Der-é*, a raucous and very popular 1890's cabaret song of European derivation.

The final movement, *Moderato con moto*, is again rhapsodic in quality. It slowly works its way to an unforgettably haunting setting of the 18th Century American hymn "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee." Thus this early work combines all the abiding strains of Ives's musical output: a love of America, a devotion to its history and its defining old tunes, a mischievous wit and an insistence on a new musical language for the new nation.

Program Note, © Nora Avins Klein, Houston, August, 2006.
Thanks to Professor Kenneth Goldsmith for reference material.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 ("Ghost") (1809)

"Indisputably the vanguard of musical civilization," is what Berlioz wrote about Beethoven's chamber music for piano. He had "the astounding ability to be constantly original without ever straying from truth and beauty."

With his very first published opus in 1795 (Three Trios for Piano forte, Violin and Cello, Opus 1) Beethoven announced his intention to elevate the piano trio from a charming amusement to a vehicle of major importance. There were practical, social and economic reasons for writing piano trios. Three was an easy number to assemble for musicales in the homes of the aristocracy, who played a major role of the musical life of Vienna, these

gatherings becoming popular as a safe vehicle for getting together in what had become a tense atmosphere filled with spies and informers in the years following the French Revolution.

A comparison with the late piano trios of his teacher, Franz Josef Haydn – delightful and inventive as they are – with that first set which Beethoven presented to the Viennese, shows how enormous a leap forward in purpose, complexity, sonority and emotional expressiveness the young composer had taken. By the time tonight's trio was written, Beethoven had entered his next phase of composition in which everything was more complex, more difficult, and ever more dramatic. A highly skilled pianist himself (Czerny wrote: "Nobody equaled him in the rapidity of his scales, double trills, skips, etc..."), he thought nothing of the technical difficulties of this piece, which are shared by all. You will hear many important passages for the cello and always exploring new possibilities, increased demands on the violinist. The piano has the lion's share of the composition. The Ghost Trio is one of Beethoven's most important compositions—a powerful, dramatic and virtuoso work on a grand scale, light years beyond the 1790s. It was Czerny, Beethoven's student and assistant for several years, who gave the trio its subtitle, writing of the middle movement that it reminded him of the first appearance of the Ghost in Hamlet.

Several authors have noted that the first movement, *Allegro vivace e con brio*, is notably compact, employing only two contrasting themes: the energy-packed opening outburst, followed soon by a lyrical and loving melody appearing in mellow tones of the cello. The length of each of the two themes and the entire exposition is unusually short. It is the development which takes up almost all of the remaining movement, consisting of a highly fragmented, abstract treatment of the musical motifs, blending almost imperceptibly into the brief recapitulation.

In the second movement, which gives the Trio its name, the performers' instructions are *Largo assai ed espressivo*. It is the longest movement in the composition, and a work of utter originality, nothing remotely like it having been heard before. With Beethoven, one is forced to use superlatives; yet how else to describe the penetrating range of emotion, the rich handling of what are, after all, minimal musical constructs, the new sound universe which Beethoven coaxes from his instruments, and the sense of communication from the beyond, other than to call it "miraculous."

The mood of the last movement is contrastingly down-to-earth. Always imbued with the forceful, rhythmic vigor, which characterizes the fast movements of this work, the *Presto* is straightforward and dramatic. Again, the presentation of the two main ideas in this sonata-form, movement

is terse, and following the short presentation of the themes, their inventive and musically economical development by each of the three instruments occupies most of the rest of the movement. Beethoven lets us know, by the length of that middle movement, that therein resides the heart of this work.

Program note © Nora Avins Klein, October, 2006.

Florestan Trio

"The Florestan Trio defines great chamber music playing."

—San Francisco Chronicle

In honoring the Florestan Trio with its award for chamber music in 2000, the Royal Philharmonic Society recognized their achievements in a repertoire in which long-standing, dedicated ensembles have always been rare. The Florestan Trio has now successfully pursued this path for twelve years.

The Trio's recordings on Hyperion have received outstanding reviews. All their discs have been nominated for *Gramophone* Awards and are recommended in major collectors' guides. Their Schumann disc won a 1999 *Gramophone* Award and a host of other accolades. Their CD of French piano trios is one of Hyperion's best-sellers in the chamber music field, and their two discs of Schubert captured several critics' votes as the best versions now available. In 2005 they were short-listed for BBC Radio 3's Listeners' Award, and in both 2005 and 2006 they were short-listed for *Gramophone* Awards. Their recordings of trios by Mendelssohn and Saint-Saens gathered extraordinary reviews, and their complete recording of Mozart trios has been welcomed as the new benchmark recording of these works.

They celebrated their tenth anniversary season with the completion of their Beethoven recording cycle for Hyperion, and with three sold-out performances of the Beethoven Trios in London's Wigmore Hall. The recordings were called: "Perhaps the finest contemporary exponents of this repertoire performing on modern instruments today." (*Sunday Times*) "Everything about this release is distinguished." (*Fanfare*, USA)

In addition to a busy touring schedule all over the world, the Trio conducts its own festival in Peasmarsh, East Sussex. Each June they present four days of concerts centered on the Trio, but also welcoming guest artists of international stature. Perhaps uniquely, they each appear during the festival

as concerto soloists with orchestras such as the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the Florestan Festival Orchestra. The Trio has founded a charitable company, The Florestan Trust, which aims to develop public awareness and knowledge of music through the presentation of concerts, educational work and commissioning new works.

Visit Florestan Trio on the web at www.florestantrio.com.



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