

PROGRAM NOTES

Ives' Piano Trio

A reflection of his days at Yale University, Ives began composing his Trio around 1896 and completed it in 1910. Charles did not write any program notes himself, though in 1948, Mrs. Harmony Ives, Charles' wife wrote:

...The Trio was, in a general way . . . a reflection or impression of . . . college days on the Campus, now 50 years ago. The first movement recalled a rather short but serious talk, to those on the Yale fence, by an old professor of Philosophy; the second, the games and antics by the students . . . on a Holiday afternoon; and some of the tunes and songs of those days were . . . suggested in this movement, sometimes in a rough way. The last movement was partly a remembrance of a Sunday Service on the Campus . . . which ended near the "Rock of Ages."

The conversation of which Mrs. Ives speaks is clearly heard in the first movement, where a dialogue first takes place between the piano and cello, followed by a dialogue between violin and piano, and ending with all three instruments in discussion together. In the second movement, TSIAJ (This Scherzo is a Joke), much of the borrowed material appears. Through an interesting "medley" of pop and folk tunes, Ives clearly shares the humor and playfulness he is capable of in his writing. Some of the tunes quoted in it are "Marching Through Georgia," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Sweet By and By," and "Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay." The third movement takes a more serious and sincere tone, with expressive reverence, and a final musical quotation of "Rock of Ages." The Piano Trio was premiered in May 1948 at the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory of Music in Berea, Ohio. The Baldwin-Wallace College Faculty Trio performed the work.

Britten's Phantasy

British composer, Benjamin Britten composed this work at the age of 19 while enrolled at the Royal College of Music. The Phantasy Quartet for oboe and strings was written for a competition for single-movement chamber works established in 1905 by Walter Wilson Cobbett, a wealthy amateur musician and professional writer on chamber music. *Phantasy* borrows its form, structure, and style from the fantasies for viols that were a prominent part of English music in the 1600s. The distinguishing feature of the old fantasies, in Cobbett's eye if not always in reality, was that they included sections in different rhythms in a single continuous movement. To the early 20th century, they looked like a condensation of several sonata movements into one. In July 1932, Britten won the Cobbett Prize for his Phantasy string quintet from the previous year. That fall, he composed the Phantasy quartet for oboe and strings. It did not however win another Cobbett but it did get performed in a BBC radio broadcast in August 1933 by leading English oboist Leon Goossens. The Quartet has a formal intricacy, much like clockwork, that intrigues analysts but can remain completely lost on the ordinary listener. It has been characterized as an "arch," as two sonatas superimposed on each other and as a sonata with a slow movement interpolated between the development and recapitulation. In the introduction marked *Andante alla Marcia*, the oboe evades the strings, singing in a cantabile style while the strings march along. A quicker section follows in which themes are introduced and developed. Where the recapitulation would traditionally arrive to reestablish familiar material, Britten provides the listener with something uncharacteristic, a slow, oboe-less section. When it finally gets around to recapitulation, the music returns in a mirror image of its initial introduction- first the determined exposition, then the opening slow march. Finally, solo cello repeats the first seven bars of the piece, in reverse order.

Schumann's Spanisches Liederspiel

The texts for Op. 74 were compiled by Emanuel Geibel and are mostly adaptations of anonymous poems borrowed from Spanish culture. However, we do know that "Intermezzo" was taken from the writings of Gil Vicente. These songs are full of melodic invention, and their Spanish elements, such as bolero rhythms, give them a lively charm. All of the songs exhibit Schumann's trademark lyricism and his acute sense of poetic mood. The fourth piece in the cycle, "In der Nacht" (duet for soprano and tenor), is notable for its gently dissonant melancholy and elegiac melody; it is often excerpted from the cycle, perhaps more so than any other piece.

Schumann often experimented with new forms of music drama. In this work, one of his earliest such experiments, he wrote a liederspiel -- a combination of song cycle (Liederkreis) and singspiel -- in which the poems are organized to create a semblance of a plot (Schumann also added titles to some of them to further this) and the different singers take on roles. Though not performed in its entirety here, one can still hear distinctly dramatic elements through the vocal writing and structure, using solos and duets for the exposition of the main characters, and part songs as choruses.

-- from Anne Feeny at allmusic.com

Mozart's Clarinet Quintet

Mozart's Clarinet Quintet in A op. 581 was conceived during a time of financial hardship (1789/1790) where in which Mozart found his fame in Vienna waning and a dramatic decline in produced works. Late in the summer of 1789 Emperor Joseph II commissioned Mozart to write a new opera, *Così fan tutte*. It is speculated that during this time Mozart began working on his wildly popular Clarinet Quintet, which revels in the same "golden warmth and mellowness" that characterizes *Così*. A sketch for its finale became "Ah lo veggio," one of Ferrando's arias from Act Two of the opera. Like his later concerto, this work was composed for clarinet virtuoso Anton Stadler (1753-1812), a member of the court orchestra in Vienna and a friend of Mozart's from the time the latter first settled in Vienna in 1781. Not only a virtuoso on the clarinet, Stadler was also a master of the basset horn, a cousin to the clarinet with a greatly extended register. He was so celebrated for his masterful control of the lower range of the clarinet, the chalumeau range, that he created an extension for the traditional clarinet, creating the basset clarinet. It was for this modified instrument that Mozart composed both the Clarinet Quintet and the famous Clarinet Concerto in A, K. 622 -- one of his last works. "The quintet is scored for clarinet, two violins, viola, and cello, and is cast in four movements. The opening Allegro, a discourse between all five instruments, is tinged with sadness; the exquisitely lovely Larghetto that follows brings the clarinet more into the limelight, its rapturous lines supported throughout by muted strings. The Minuetto is particularly notable for the first of its two trios. The final movement is a set of variations based on one of those innocent, almost childish-sounding themes Mozart so often employed in his finales. But, as is also typical of Mozart, the manner in which the composer develops a wide variety of moods and musical textures rings enormous richness from the material, and allows the clarinetist to display great virtuosity." Mozart's Clarinet Quintet has served to inform Brahms's Clarinet Quintet which borrows the opening gesture in the first movement, the colorful arabesques of the 2nd, and the theme and variation form from the fourth in his respective Quintet's movements.

-- from Brian Robins at allmusic.com

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PROGRAM

Trio

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

- i. Moderato
- ii. "TSIAJ" — Presto (aka. "This Scherzo is a Joke")
- iii. Moderato con moto

Julia Wilcox, piano | Yu-Ting Wu, violin | Frances Borowsky, violoncello

Phantasy Op. 2

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Elliot Czaplowski, oboe | Martiros Shakhzadyan, violin
Sarah Lowenstein, viola | Sara Gabalawi, violoncello

PAUSE

Selections from

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Spanisches Liederspiel, Op.74

- Erste Begegnung
Intermezzo
In der Nacht
Es ist verraten
Ich bin geliebt

Lydia Beasley, soprano | Megan Ihnen, mezzo-soprano
Jorge Toro, tenor | Alan Naylor, baritone | Julia Wilcox, piano

Quintet K. 581

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

- I. Allegro
- II. Larghetto
- III. Menuetto
- IV. Allegretto con variazioni

Berginald Rash, clarinet | Kathryn Kilian, violin | Martiros Shakhzadyan, violin
Sarah Lowenstein, viola | Sara Gabalawi, violoncello

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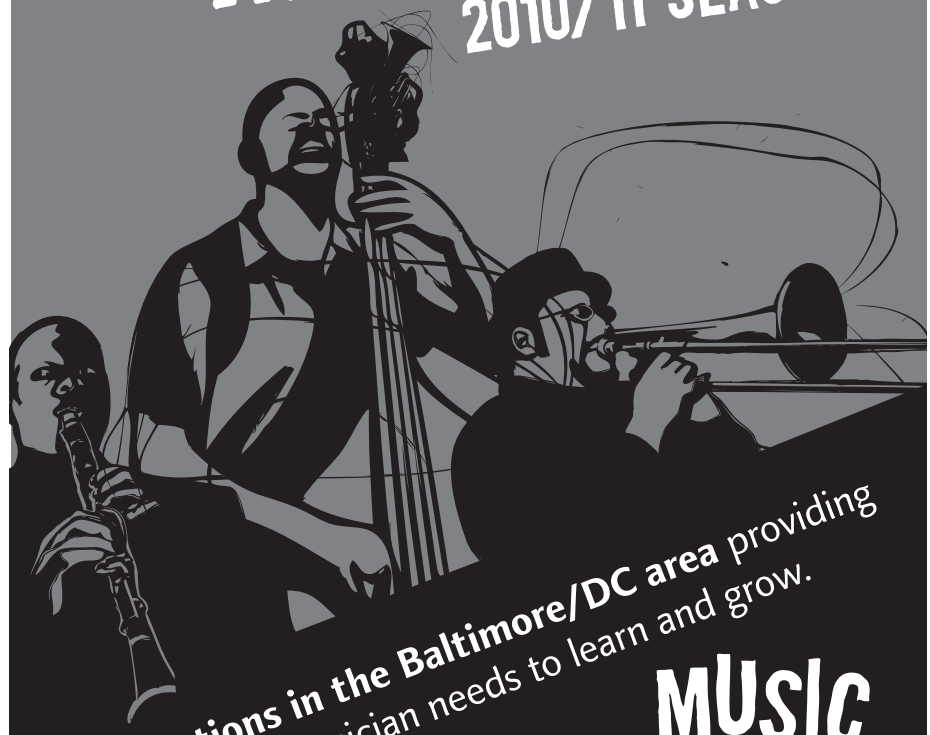
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