

65th Concert Series 2018-2019



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is pleased to present

Trio Solisti

Maria Bachmann, violin

Alexis Pia Gerlach, cello

Fabio Bidini, piano

Saturday, May 4, 2019

Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York



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Who We Are

Friends of Music Concerts, Inc. is an award-winning, non-profit, volunteer organization now celebrating its 65th season of showcasing, right here in Westchester, artists chosen from among the finest in today's diverse world of chamber music. Additionally, our Partners in Education program in the public schools and free student admission to our concerts give young people enhanced exposure to and appreciation of classical music.

In order to help sustain what one of our artists called this “legendary series,” we need people who can join the volunteers listed above, either as Board members or equally valued off-Board committee members. Specifics we are looking for include, but are not limited to, people with networking, editorial, business development, and/or fund-raising skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the range together.

Acknowledgments

Our concerts are made possible, in part, by an ArtsWestchester Program Support grant made with funds received from Westchester County Government. Additional support is received from many friends of Friends of Music who include subscribers and other ticket holders listed in this program.* (They include the generous donor who this year, in celebration of our 65th, matched all new and increased contributions up to a total of \$5,000.) If you, too, can contribute, please send your gifts to Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546.

Program

Notturmo in E-flat Major, Op. Posth. 148, D. 897

Adagio

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 99, D.898

Allegro moderato

Andante un poco mosso

Scherzo. Allegro - Trio

Rondo. Allegro vivace

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Intermission

Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major, Op. 87

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Presto

Finale: Allegro giocoso

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Trio Solisti appears by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc., 130 West 57th Street, Suite 6A, New York, NY 10019

Discography: Marquis Classics, Endeavor Classics, Bridge, and Naxos

Piano by Steinway

Next concert

Saturday, October 12, 2019, 8:00 pm at **Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York**
Emerson String Quartet

Program: Mozart: String Quartet in D Major, K. 575; Dvořák: String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 51; Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 5 in B-flat Major, Op. 92.

Program notes

Notturmo for Piano Trio in E-flat, Op. Posth. 148, D.897

Franz Schubert

Aside from a single movement known as the **Sonatensatz**, D.28, which was composed during the summer of 1812, Schubert did not write anything for piano trio until just a year before his death. Then he wrote two great trios, D.898 and D.929. Probably while working on the first of those, the one in B-flat Major, he composed this single movement in E-flat Major. When the Austrian music publisher Anton Diabelli published this one-movement work in 1845, almost 20 years after Schubert's death, he arbitrarily entitled it **Notturmo**, or Nocturne, and it still is occasionally encountered with that title. Most likely, Schubert originally had plans to use this Adagio movement as the slow movement of his **Piano Trio in B-flat Major**; when that did not happen, the movement never was incorporated into another work.

The charming **Notturmo** is an agreeable piece in familiar and simple three-part form, with the last much like the first and the center set in contrast. The primary theme has an unusual rhythmic character that, at least according to legend, has been attributed to a folk tune Schubert heard while he was on vacation in the countryside east of Salzburg. It is driven ahead either by the *pizzicati* of the strings or the arpeggio-like rolled chords of the piano. The music becomes exuberant in the quick, contrasting sections.

Piano Trio No. 1 in B-Flat Major, Op. 99, D.898

Franz Schubert

Schubert's great Piano Trios, one in B-Flat Major and the other in E-Flat Major, were written when improvements in the quality of the piano as an instrument could make it an equal partner with the two stringed instruments. Both trios were posthumously published, eight years apart, as Opp. 99 and 100. The second has a well-documented history of composition, early performance, and publication, but Op. 99 has none, and its original manuscript has disappeared. We do know that it received a private performance in January 1828 at the engagement party for Schubert's beloved boyhood friend Joseph Spaun.

In the melodically radiant **Op. 99 Trio**, Schubert creates themes of great beauty, finding wonderfully varied ways to set them for the three instruments. Robert Schumann, who as a young man was a profoundly perceptive (although perhaps a tad romantic) critic, wrote, "A glance at Schubert's Trio, and all the troubles of human existence vanish and the world shines bright again."

Schumann found the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, to be "graceful and virginal." Alfred Einstein claimed to find in it a musical reference to the composer's 1825 song *Des Sängers Habe* ("The Singer's Possessions") whose verses say, "Take all my worldly goods and destroy my happiness, but leave me my zither and I will stay rich and content." It is a big sonata-form movement whose first theme is characterized by firm rhythm and boldly swinging triplets. The melody appears in octaves sounded by the

violin and cello, with the piano playing a facile accompaniment. The second theme, in contrast, is a model of subdued but expressive lyricism stated first by the cello alone, then by the violin and cello together, and finally by the piano. For it, Schubert weaves one of his most inspired melodic threads. In the development, the two subjects are sometimes combined and sometimes varied; the recapitulation takes us back to the initial exposition.

Next comes a kind of serenade, *Andante un poco mosso*, that Schumann called “a dream of bliss, a pulsing flow of human emotion.” The cello often is in the forefront in this movement, playing in its highest range and announcing the expressive theme. A contrasting middle section features a melancholy piano theme with a syncopated string accompaniment. After the strings take up the theme, the initial subject, transformed, returns.

The third movement, a buoyant *Scherzo. Allegro*, has a quiet and intimate contrasting trio. The carefree finale, *Rondo. Allegro vivace*, opens with the violin, then the piano, stating the main subject. The second theme soon follows, with all three instruments initiating it. After the violin adds a relaxed dance rhythm, Schubert brings the work to an exciting, effective end.

Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major, Op. 87

Johannes Brahms

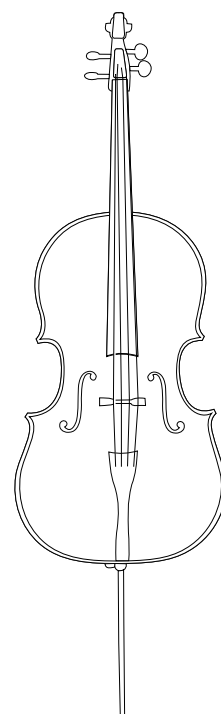
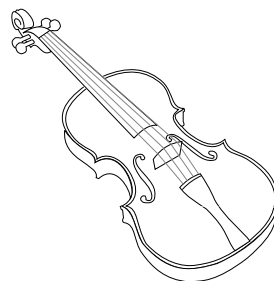
In 1882, Brahms spent his second summer season at the spa of Bad Ischl, which Emperor Franz Joseph and his court had made fashionable. The composer’s friends wondered why he bothered leaving the capital when half of Vienna was at Ischl, but Brahms replied he didn’t mind as long as half of Berlin and Leipzig weren’t there, too. Other musicians were at the spa, among them Johann Strauss, whose special gifts Brahms admired greatly. (Responding to the request for an autograph by one of Strauss’s daughters, he wrote out the first measures of the great Blue Danube Waltz, adding “unfortunately not by Johannes Brahms.”) That summer at Ischl was a productive one for Brahms. He composed two choral pieces, the String Quintet, Op. 88, and this piano trio.

Brahms initially had sketched the first movement of this Trio in 1880 but put it aside until going back to it at Ischl. We are fortunate that he did so. By June 1882 the Trio was complete; when Clara Schumann took an advance look at the score in July, she marveled at its fluency, calling it “a real musical tonic” for her. A try-out in August went well and, although Brahms habitually belittled his newly completed works, he actually boasted about this one to his publisher. On December 29, 1882, in Frankfurt, he and two local string players gave the **Trio’s** first public performance.

The opening *Allegro* provides the model for the manner of the entire work. This piece is not relaxed and concise; it is terse but pithy, and the composer makes all his points directly and economically. A noteworthy feature of the instrumental writing is the frequent distinct separation of the strings from the piano and a characteristic formal touch in the use of a lovely, sadly lyrical melody as the second theme. The

second movement, *Andante con moto*, is a set of five variations on a simple melody that resembles a Hungarian folk song. Strings and piano are features in alternation. There follows a hushed, dark-toned *Scherzo: Presto*, with a contrasting central trio section. The good-humored *Finale: Allegro giocoso*, is a compact, energetic movement brought to its end by a huge coda.

- notes provided by Susan Halpern



About the Artists

Founded in 2001, Trio Solisti has become what *The New Yorker* calls “the most exciting piano trio in America,” performing in major venues and series across the United States. This season has included the group’s return to Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall for a three-concert series called Masterworks. Additional appearances have included those at New York’s Peoples Symphony Concerts at Town Hall, The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, Music at Kohn Mansion in San Francisco, Arizona Musicfest in Scottsdale, and Ensemble Music Society of Indianapolis.

Trio Solisti’s collaborations with many preeminent composers of our time have produced such works as Jennifer Higdon’s Piano Trio No. 2 (2017), Paul Moravec’s Tempest Fantasy that won the Pulitzer in 2004, Lowell Liebermann’s Trio No. 3 (2019), and Pulitzer Prize-winner Kevin Puts’s Living Frescoes (2012).

Trio Solisti is the founding ensemble of Telluride Musicfest, an annual summer chamber music festival in Telluride, CO. This summer the festival celebrates the music of Antonín Dvořák. The Trio is in its 14th year as ensemble-in-residence in Garden City, New York.

In addition to her work with Trio Solisti, **violinist Maria Bachmann** has forged a unique profile as a solo artist and a proponent of new music. Of Hungarian descent, she was invited by the Library of Congress to recreate the legendary Bartok/Szigeti recital of 1920 for a national broadcast performance. She has premiered and recorded works by Philip Glass, Lowell Liebermann, Paul Moravec, George Rochberg, and Leon Kirchner, among others. A graduate of Curtis Institute, she performs on a 1782 violin by Niccolò Gagliano.

Cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach is a sought-after chamber musician and soloist who has appeared in recitals, concerts, and festivals around the world. She is a founding member of Concertante, a string sextet based in New York City. A frequent collaborator with dancers, Gerlach has performed as on-stage cellist with the Paul Taylor Dance Company on tour in India and at New York’s City Center, and as a duo with New York City Ballet principal dancer Damian Woetzel. She is a graduate of the Yale School of Music and the Juilliard School.

Fabio Bidini is recognized as one of the foremost **pianists** to have emerged from Italy since the days of Arturo Benedetti Michaelangeli. After prize-winning successes at both the Busoni and Van Cliburn International Piano Competitions, he made glowing debuts in London with the London Symphony Orchestra and Michael Tilson Thomas and in the United States with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Joel Levi.

Since then he has been the guest of major orchestras around the world and collaborated with leading conductors of our time. He also is in great demand as a chamber music partner. In 2009 he was appointed to one of the major chairs for piano in Germany, at the Hochschule für Musik Hannu Eisler Berlin. In 2015 he joined the faculty of the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

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