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The Chamber Music Society of Logan: Morgenstern Trio

Chamber Music Society of Logan

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The Chamber Music Society of Logan

Camille Weber

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SETTING



36th Season 2016-2017

MANON CAINE RUSSELL KATHRYN CAINE WANLASS
PERFORMANCE HALL

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36th Season 2016-2017

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MORGENSTERN TRIO

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

ENSO QUARTET

Thursday, March 23, 2017

Camille
Weber

The Chamber Music
Society *of Logan*

PRESENTS
THE
MORGENSTERN TRIO

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 28, 2017
7:30 P.M.

MANON CAINE RUSSELL KATHRYN CAINE WANLASS
PERFORMANCE HALL
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
LOGAN, UTAH

MORGENSTERN TRIO

Catherine Klipfel, piano
Stefan Hempel, violin
Emanuel Wehse, cello

Piano Trio in D Major Hob XV:24

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro ma dolce

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Piano Trio No. 2

- I. Mysterious, nocturnal, desolate
- II. Agitated, relentless

Pierre Jalbert
(b. 1967)

Phantasie for Piano Trio in C minor, H.79

- I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
- II. Andante con molta espressione
- III. Allegro scherzoso
- IV. Andante
- V. Allegro moderato
- VI. Con anima

Frank Bridge
(1879-1941)

~ INTERMISSION ~

Piano Trio in A Minor

- I. Modéré
- II. Pantoum (Assez vif)
- III. Passacaille (Trés large)
- IV. Final (Animé)

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

The Morgenstern Trio is represented by
Marianne Schmocker Artists International
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www.marianneschmockerartists.com

Please turn off cell phones, alarm watches, and other noise making devices during the performance.

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Trio in D Major Hob XV:24

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Allegro ma dolce

Joseph Haydn

(1732-1809)

Following the death of his employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, Haydn was free to accept an invitation to visit London for the first time in 1791, where he and his music were rapturously received. While he was in London he gave music lessons to Rebecca Schroeter, the widow of a composer. They developed an intimate relationship, and touching letters from Mrs Schroeter to Haydn survive. On one occasion she wrote: 'No language can express half the Love and affection I feel for you, you are Dearer to me every Day of my life.' Haydn kept her letters into his old age, admitting to one of his biographers that she was 'a beautiful and lovable woman, whom I would very readily have married if I had been free then' (Haydn, a warm and passionate man, had been locked in a cold and loveless marriage for thirty years). During his second visit to London in 1794-5, Haydn dedicated to Rebecca Schroeter three trios, Hob XV:24-26.

Among Haydn's later trios, the Piano Trio in D major Hob XV:24 is unusual in being consistently serious in tone, with almost Beethoven-like earnestness. The first movement is on quite a large scale, full of pauses and surprises, sudden offbeat accents and bursts of energy—just the effects that Beethoven was beginning to exploit. The writing for piano makes full use of the English grand pianos Haydn had got to know, with rich chords, bold octaves in the bass and much brilliant elaboration above. The brief second movement is built from an anxious little dotted-rhythm figure, which has the air of a solemn dance. It leads without a break into the finale. This looks, on paper, somewhat like a minuet. But the triple-time is continually disguised and subverted by the interplay between the instruments, and by successions of phrases two beats long. The overall impression is less of a dance and more of a rather worried conversation, which finally comes to an unexpected end as if the speakers had walked off through the door, still talking.

note by Robert Philip © 2009

www.hyperion-records.co.uk

Piano Trio No. 2

- I. Mysterious, nocturnal, desolate
- II. Agitated, relentless

Pierre Jalbert

(b. 1967)

My second piano trio was written for the Morgenstern Trio (from Germany) for the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music. The work is in two movements of contrasting character. A couple of ideas served as starting points for each movement: the first was the thought of a desert landscape at night, desolate and calm; the second came from an incident driving home in the city of Houston. I was driving through downtown late at night on an elevated highway, which runs through the center of town. There were just enough cars on the road to feel like it was busy, but there were no traffic jams so everyone was going at a high rate of speed, some cars weaving in and out of lanes. Coming around a large curve, I looked over at the downtown skyline as I passed very near the buildings. Since this was an elevated highway, I was looking at the 4th or 5th floors of most buildings, and as I glanced at the buildings, they seemed to be going by in slow motion, even though our cars were moving at very high speed. This provided the impetus for the second movement. The music is not meant to be pictorial – it is absolute music. These were simply starting points and the music itself eventually developed on its own terms. The first movement, marked mysterious, nocturnal, and desolate, begins with high, ethereal harmonics in the strings, slowly building a long line. The movement eventually builds and accelerates directly into a scherzo-like Presto agitato section, only to dissipate back into the opening materials. The second movement, marked agitated and relentless, contains frenetic motion, only occasionally interrupted by slower, non-synchronized segments of music. The fast paced motion always returns, and after several segments where each instrument takes on the main role, the instruments join together, racing to the end.

Pierre Jalbert

www.pierrejalbert.com

Phantasie for Piano Trio in C minor, H.79

Frank Bridge

(1879-1941)

- I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
- II. Andante con molta espressione
- III. Allegro scherzoso
- IV. Andante
- V. Allegro moderato
- VI. Con anima

The British composer Frank Bridge is apt to be unknown to most, his greatest claim to fame being the mention of his name in the work title "Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge" written by Benjamin Britten, Bridge's star pupil. Bridge was part of a generation that included more well-known British composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams, Bax and Ireland who, for the first time since the early Baroque, helped create noteworthy music in a national English style. Bridge's own music underwent significant stylistic change during his lifetime: he began writing in an accessible late Romantic style but, following the end of WWI, shifted towards a more dissonant expressionistic style eventually skirting the boundaries of atonality and twelve-tone music. His later music tended to alienate the more conservative British audiences, and, eclipsed by his contemporaries of greater fame, Bridge fell into relative obscurity. Nonetheless, Bridge left a well-crafted body of work featuring all of his stylistic periods. Perhaps owing to his career as a violinist and violist who performed with a number of professional quartets, Bridge was a particularly fine composer of chamber music including two piano trios and four string quartets among numerous other works for small ensemble.

Walter Willson Cobbett was an English amateur musician who devoted considerable time, money and scholarship to the art of chamber music. He established a competition to help promote the composition of new English chamber music. In a series of competitions and commissions, Cobbett called upon composers to create new works in a unique genre he named the "Phantasy" (or "Phantasie") in modern homage to the 16th Century "Fancy" (or "fantasy") representing a high-water mark of English chamber music from the late Renaissance. Bridge submitted entries to Cobbett's competitions winning a prize at least four separate times. In 1907 when Cobbett's second competition specifically requested a Phantasy for piano trio, Bridge won first prize for his Phantasy in C minor.

While Cobbett later defined the Phantasy genre quite generally as single movement work of moderate length (around 12-15 minutes) with multiple

sections differentiated by changes of tempo and rhythm (as with the Renaissance Fancy), some composers tended to imbue the single-movement Phantasy with many characteristics of the multi-movement classical sonata including a sonata form (e.g. with multiple themes, development and recapitulation) as well as references to the slow movement and scherzo. Bridge's wonderful Phantasie demonstrates this precise ingenuity in a rather lush late Romantic style typical of his first period. The Phantasie begins with stormy flourish out of which grows a brooding, melancholic first theme over a mesmerizing piano ostinato. Once he brings the theme to its full expression, Bridge guides the music into a second, rather euphoric theme. A central "slow movement" section follows featuring an exploratory development section interrupted in the very middle by a sprightly scherzo in vivid contrast. The remainder of the Phantasie works back through the broadly paced slow-movement and into the faster sonata signaled by the initial stormy flourish and the two-themed recapitulation. As Bridge would return to the piano trio some twenty years later (and in a much different style), this early Phantasie is also sometimes known as his Piano Trio No. 1.

www.earsense.org

Piano Trio in A Minor

- I. Modéré
- II. Pantoum (Assez vif)
- III. Passacaille (Trés large)
- IV. Final (Animé)

Maurice Ravel

(1875-1937)

From an early age, Ravel was marked to succeed Debussy as the poet laureate of French music. The two men shared a poetic sensibility and a fondness for sensuous, impressionistic timbres and textures. But while Debussy—who proudly styled himself *musicien français*—cast loose from the moorings of traditional forms and harmonies, Ravel remained a classicist at heart. Many of his works pay homage to composers and styles of the past, even as they incorporate ultramodern harmonies and compositional styles. The Baroque-inspired slow movement of the A-Minor Piano Trio, built on a repeating melodic and harmonic pattern known as a passacaglia, is a typical example of his creative recycling.

Ravel produced his lone contribution to the piano-trio genre in a burst of white-hot inspiration. "I have never worked with more insane, more heroic intensity," he wrote to a friend in the late summer of 1914. To another, he confided that he was "working with the assurance and clarity of a madman." As Europe's armies mobilized for war, Ravel holed up in seclusion at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, his

beloved hideaway on the Basque coast. There, composing at what for him was a feverish pace, he accomplished “five months’ worth of work” in five exhilarating weeks. Ravel completed the trio at the end of that fateful August, then hurried to Bayonne to enlist in the French army, only to be rejected when examiners ruled that he was four pounds underweight. Swallowing his disappointment, he volunteered for service as a hospital orderly instead. In his next work, three limpidly beautiful songs for unaccompanied chorus modeled on the Renaissance chanson, both the madness of war and the manic urgency of the Piano Trio seem far away.

In light of its contracted genesis, the Piano Trio’s vibrant intensity is not surprising. But the character of the music is more elegiac than heroic. It opens with a billowing, Basque-flavored melody that glides wistfully above the piano’s gently rocking bass. An asymmetrical eighth-note pulse—three plus two plus three beats—conveys a sense of restless instability that carries over into the frenzied, scherzo-like second movement. (The latter’s title, *Pantoum*, refers obscurely to a Malayan verse form that French artists discovered in the late 19th century.) Next comes a majestic passacaglia, its tender eight-bar theme rising from the piano’s lowest register. After a series of elegantly simple variations, the music falls back into the murky deep, but the tranquil mood is shattered by a scintillating finale, whose shifting meters and pyrotechnical acrobatics test the virtuosity of all three players.

Harry Haskell

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MORGENSTERN TRIO

Catherine Klipfel, piano
Stefan Hempel, violin
Emanuel Wehse, cello

To name a piano trio after the popular nineteenth century German poet Christian Morgenstern was the inspiration of Catherine Klipfel, piano, Stefan Hempel, violin, and Emanuel Wehse, cellist, who met during their studies at the Folkwang Conservatory in Essen, Germany.

After only two short years of working together, the Morgenstern Trio emerged on the German Music Scene by being awarded top prizes and awards,

such as the prestigious US Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio Award in 2010. For the twenty prize concerts, the Morgenstern Trio has received superlative reviews and immediate re-invitations for following seasons. This prize catapulted them onto the scene in the USA with performances in Washington, DC's Kennedy Center and at Carnegie Hall and other venues in NY, followed by concerts in such cities as Chicago, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Carmel, Louisville, Lexington, to Palm Beach. The Washington Post wrote: "the group displayed a unanimity, polished technique and musical imagination that I thought had vanished from the scene with the demise of the Beaux Arts Trio".

A few years earlier, the trio took First Prize at the International Joseph Haydn Competition in Vienna, followed by two second prizes: the "Fifth Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition" and the prestigious "ARD Competition in Munich", where they also received the audience prize. In the previous year they had already won the competitive scholarship of the "German Music Competition" and most recently, the Morgenstern Trio was selected by the ECHO (the European Concert Hall Organization) for the "Rising Star Series" granting debut concerts on all the European important stages in Paris, Vienna, Amsterdam, Cologne, Brussels, Birmingham and Stockholm to name a few and was named "ensemble in residence" at their alma mater, the Folkwang Conservatory. The Germany's national program for young musicians and the "Best of NRW" Concert Series has provided the Morgenstern Trio a noticeable platform with numerous concerts across Germany and live radio appearances to showcase their already consummate musicianship.

The summer 2014 marked their inauguration of their own Morgenstern Festival in Germany offering eclectic programs with guest artists. Other festival appearances include the Pablo Casals Festival in Prades/France, the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Heidelberger Fruehling, the WDR Musikfest and the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in Finland.

The debut LIVE CD released in 2008 which features works by Beethoven and Brahms has captivated presenters and critics alike.

Mentors, such as the Alban Berg Quartet and Menahem Pressler have given the Morgenstern Trio invaluable coaching and musical insight.

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The Chamber Music Society of Logan

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