

Chamber Music Program Notes

String Sextet No. 1 in B-flat major op. 18, mvt. 2, by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) – Brahms finished this piece in 1860 at the age of 27, and it was premiered by a group including famed violinist Joseph Joachim. Brahms transcribed this particular movement for solo piano, which he then dedicated to Clara Schumann.

Souvenir de Florence op. 70, mvt. 1, by Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) – This piece was composed in 1890, just three years before Tchaikovsky's death. The work serves as a memory of Tchaikovsky's winters in Florence; in fact, it was during one of these visits that he sketched one the sextet's principal themes.

Notes by Henry Lin-David

PROGRAM NOTES

Violin Sonata in A Major, Mvt. 1: *Allegretto ben moderato*

César Franck, 1886

César Franck's Violin Sonata in A Major was a wedding gift to violinist Eugène Ysaÿe and Louise Bourdeau. The lyrical violin lines and sweeping melodies in the piano certainly evoke feelings of romantic passion. A 19th century composer, Franck (1822-1890) was primarily a pianist and organist who worked in France for most of his adult life. He wrote his famous four-movement Sonata in 1886, and it was publicly premiered on December 16 that year in the Musée Moderne de Peinture in Brussels.

Violin Sonata No. 24 in F major, K. 376, Mvt. 1: *Allegro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1781

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart published the Violin Sonata No. 24 in F major, K. 376 as part of a series of six sonatas in the Viennese summer of 1781. These were dedicated to Josepha von Auernhammer, a student of Mozart's who fell in love with him. This love was unrequited, though two other of Mozart's piano sonatas were also dedicated to her. The sonata takes on a typical three movement form: *Allegro*, *Andante*, and *Rondo*.

Program notes by Julia Kan and Nicholas Parker

Duo No. 1 in G major for violin and viola, K. 423, I. Allegro, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart wrote both of his duets for violin and viola (K. 423 and K. 424) in the summer of 1783 for Michael Haydn, Joseph Haydn's younger brother. When Mozart was visiting Salzburg, he found that Michael Haydn was too ill to complete the last two of the six duos for violin and viola commissioned by Archbishop Colloredo. In order to meet the commission date and make sure Haydn received his salary, Mozart composed the duos in two days, and Haydn presented them to the Archbishop as his own. Even though Mozart's duos were written in a much more advanced style, the Archbishop believed that all six duos were written by Haydn. The first movement of K. 423, Allegro, is written in sonata form, and the development section begins with an elaboration on a secondary passage of the exposition instead of an elaboration on the main theme.

Program note by Kate Hausladen

Bohuslav Martinů was an influential 20th century composer. Born December 8, 1890, Martinů grew up in the Czech Republic. He studied at the conservatory in Prague, but he was never a very good student, and eventually was forced to leave for “incorrigible negligence.” During World War II, he fled to the United States. In 1946, he fell, leaving him injured and unable to return to Europe as he had planned. During his period of recovery, he wrote much chamber music, including the Madrigals for Violin and Viola. Eventually he did return to Europe, where he died on August 28, 1959.

The Madrigals were composed in 1947 and dedicated to violinist Joseph Fuchs and his violist sister, Lillian. Martinů wrote another duo for violin and viola in 1950 dedicated to the two as well. The Madrigals were inspired by a performance by the Fuchs siblings of the Mozart duos. The title *Madrigals* is inspired by a musical and poetic form dating back to the Italian renaissance. Originally, madrigals were unaccompanied vocal pieces, written for anywhere from 2 to 8 parts. In contrast from other forms of the time, madrigals were through-composed, which means every stanza had unique music, rather than repeating the same verse with different lyrics. Much of Martinů’s music is inspired by these kinds of traditional forms and folk music.

The third madrigal opens with a brilliant solo in the violin, followed soon after by the viola taking over this melody. The fast tempo and agile trills make for an exhilarating opening to the finale of the suite. Syncopated rhythms, folk music influence, and rapid alternation between dissonance and consonance are

signatures of Martinů, and this piece demonstrates them well. This madrigal is renowned for its balance; the viola does not take a subservient role to violin like it does in much string music. Instead, the melody often alternates between the two instruments, creating a powerful back-and-forth motion, interspersed with sections of rhythmic unison that become all the more powerful in the contrast. Eventually the piece slows down into a somewhat somber, moderato section. This brief interlude prepares for the return of the original theme, eventually leading to a brilliant climax and finale.