



**2007-2008 Season
Program II**

**Daniel Banner, violin
Jassen Todorov, violin
Christina King, viola
Barbara Andres, cello
Stevan Cavalier, piano**

**Grace Presbyterian Church
December 16, 2007 3pm**



Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732 - 1809)

Divertimento for String trio in G Major,
Hob.11, No.124

- I Moderato
- II Menuetto - allegretto
- III Finale - presto

Jassen Todorov, violin Christina King, viola
Barbara Andres, cello

Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873-1943)

Piano Trio No. 1 in G Minor Op. Posth.
(1892)

Daniel Banner, violin Barabara Andres, cello
Stevan Cavalier, piano

Intermission

Franz Schubert
(1797 - 1828)

String Quartet in D Minor, D.810
“Death and the Maiden” (1824)

- I Allegro
- II Andante con moto
- III Scherzo: Allegromolto
- V Presto

Daniel Banner, violin Jassen Todorov, violin
Christina King, viola Barbara Andres, cello



Music is the brandy of the damned.

G.B.Shaw

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

Divertimento for String trio in G Major, Hob.11, No.124

The string trio to be heard today is scored for violin, viola and cello though many of Haydn's string trios are scored for two violins and cello. However, this trio, or divertimento as it is called is actually a transcription of one of Haydn's many baryton trios, composed for Prince Nikolaus von Esterhazy.

I might mention that the baryton that the prince played upon was not a singer in the court opera, but rather a now extinct species of stringed instrument, also known as Viola Di Bordone (bordone is the Italian word for drone). It is described in Groves as "a bowed instrument with a body similar to that of a bass viola da gamba and with six gut strings: in addition there were sixteen (or more) thin wire strings close to the belly...The fingerboard was fretted, as in a viol, and the wire strings were carried behind the neck in such a way that they could be plucked by the thumb of the left hand." In addition to being plucked the sympathetic strings resonated when the gut strings were played. This was the Prince's instrument of choice; there is even a letter from Prince Nicky to Haydn reprimanding the composer for not composing enough works for him to perform on his baryton.

Haydn obliged with 126 trios; topping both his symphonies and string quartets in sheer number. And who knows, with 126 divertimentos to work at, this task might divert an aristocrat from raping the local peasant girls. The divertimento label refers to the short, simple tuneful style suited to the performing abilities of the patron.

And just to round things out in this definition rich divertimento article, Hob. refers to the catalog of Haydn's works compiled by the Dutch musicologist Anthony van Hoboken (1887 - 1983). In gratitude for this monumental task, Haydn enthusiasts in New Jersey named a city after him.

Some people achieve a kind of immortality just by the totality with which they do or do not possess some quality or characteristic. Rachmaninov's immortalizing totality was his scowl. He was a six-and-a-half-foot-tall scowl.

Igor Stravinsky

I am a Russian composer, and the land of my birth has inevitably influenced my temperament and outlook. My music is the product of my temperament, and so it is Russian music. I never consciously attempt to write Russian music, or any other kind of music, for that matter. I have been strongly influenced by Tchaikovsky and



Rimsky-Korsakov, but I have never consciously imitated anybody. I try to make my music speak simply and directly that which is in my heart at the time I am composing. If there is love there, or bitterness, or sadness, or religion, these moods become part of my music, and it becomes either beautiful or bitter or sad or religious. For composing music is as much a part of my living as breathing and eating. I compose music because I must give expression to my feelings, just as I talk because I must give utterance to my thoughts.

The New Book of Modern Composers
David Ewen. Knopf. 1961

Although certain of his works have enjoyed a phenomenal vogue with the public, Rachmaninov has no proper place in a book on contemporary music.
Introduction to Twentieth Century Music

Joseph Machlis. W.W. Norton. 1961

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)
Piano Trio No. 1 in G Minor Op. Posth. (1892)

Rachmaninov was undoubtedly one of this century's greatest pianists, his performances legendary. He excelled also as a conductor of both operatic and symphonic works. It was, however, as a composer that he fared less well, certainly with the critics. His own compositions were considered totally irrelevant. He lived in exile, in Beverly Hills, as did two of the titans of Twentieth Century music, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, yet as a composer he was viewed as a sad ghost of a bygone era.

Unlike Stravinsky or Schoenberg, his works were popular with the public. And his works were championed by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra as showpieces for the lush "Philadelphia sound." Ironically it may have been his popularity that contributed to the misunderstanding of his works. In order to be recorded, his works were, with his sanction, chopped to fit sides of long playing records. As a performer, Rachmaninov felt that his American audiences had a short attention span and advised against playing anything longer than 17 minutes in duration. The following letter to Nicholai Medtner (a composer Rachmaninov admired greatly and to whom he dedicated his Variations on a Theme by Corelli Op. 42) reveals his wry sense of humor. "I've played (the Op. 42 variations) about fifteen times, but of these fifteen performances, only one was good. The others were sloppy. I can't play my own compositions! And it's so boring! Not once have I played these all in continuity. I was guided by the coughing of the audience. Whenever the coughing would increase, I would skip the next variation. Whenever there was no coughing, I would play them in proper order. In one concert, I don't remember where, some small town, the coughing was so violent that I played only ten variations (out of twenty). My best record was set in New York, where I played 8 variations. However, I hope that you will play all of them, and won't 'cough'."



It was not until the 1970's that uncut versions of his works began to be performed. In addition, his choral works which had been neglected, but rumored to be among his best works, were resurrected. Today, there are numerous recordings of the choral symphony *The Bells*, as well as his liturgical masterworks *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* Op. 31 (1910) and the *All-Night Vigil* Op. 37 (1915). It was also in the seventies that the late British pianist John Ogdon revived Rachmaninov's two large Piano Sonatas, Op. 28 and Op 36, and it has been in Britain, not America (his adopted home) that a reevaluation of Rachmaninov the composer has taken place. It is interesting to note that the Fifth Edition of *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (Eric Blom, editor, 1954) contains a single two column page article about Rachmaninov, while the *New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (Stanley Sadie, editor, 1988) has a lengthier article that stretches over six, double columned pages, not counting the listing of works.

The Piano Trio No. 1 in G Minor was composed by the nineteen year old Rachmaninov in a few days in January 1892. This one movement work was first performed with the composer as pianist, David Krein violinist, and Anatole Brandukov as cellist in the Vostryakov Hall on January 30, 1892.

It is thanks to the kindness and generosity of Luba Edlina and Rostislav Dubinsky of the Borodin Trio that you will be able to hear this lovely work performed today. Having exhausted all possible sources for obtaining the score, the Sierra Chamber Society's General Director, Stevan Cavalier (who appears as pianist in today's performance of the Trio) wrote to Luba Edlina, pianist of the Borodin Trio (who had recorded the G Minor Trio, as well as the more familiar Trio Elegiaque Op. 9 for Chandos Records (Chan 8341); Luba Edlina, piano; Rostislav Dubinsky, violin; Yuli Turovsky, cello) asking where we could find the score. A short time later, the score arrived accompanied by this note:

R&L Dubinsky
VIII-15-1994
Dear Mr. Cavalier,

We're afraid you wouldn't be able to get Rachmaninoff's Trio, not anywhere now, even in Moscow. So, we made a copy for you. Say thank you and enjoy it!

Kindest regards,
Luba and Rosti Dubinsky (Two-thirds of the Borodin Trio)

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Dubinskys for enabling us to present this work.

We turn again to Stravinsky for the coda: "As I think about him, his silence looms as a noble contrast to the self-approrations which are the only conversation of all



performing and most other musicians. And, he was the only pianist I have ever seen who did not grimace. That is a great deal.”

The product of my genius and my misery, and that which I have written in my greatest distress, is that which the world seems to like best.

Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

String Quartet in D Minor, D.810 “Death and the Maiden” (1824)

This Quartet which now delights the whole world and is among the most superb creations in the medium, at first did not receive by any means unanimous enthusiasm. The first violinist Schuppanzigh (Ignaz Schuppanzigh - Beethoven’s “Milord Falstaff”, first violinist of the famed Schuppanzigh Quartet which premiered many of Beethoven’s Quartets), who was not up to such a task on account of his advanced age, said to the composer after the play through, ‘Brother, this is nothing at all, let well alone: stick to your Lieder’ - at which Schubert quietly gathered up the parts and locked them up in his desk forever.

Such is the tale told by one Franz Lachner (1803-1890), composer and conductor, regarding a performance of the D Minor Quartet in his home in February of 1826. This account of the event was published in the Vienna “Presse” in 1881, in an article in which Lachner recounted his memories of Beethoven and Schubert.

The evocative power of the phrase “Death and the Maiden” resonates deeply, from medieval woodcuts to contemporary cinema; and such is the power of this image that commentary on this Quartet is likely as not to be full of blather. The title comes from the fact that the melody used as the theme for the set of variations which constitute the Quartet’s Second Movement is taken from Schubert’s song *Der Tod und Das Madchen* (Death and the Maiden) where it appears in the piano introduction representing the approach of Death. It seems that this choice of material from the Quartet was perhaps prompted by a request by friends who loved the melody - rather than Schubert’s musings on mortality. (Such was also the genesis of the Trout Quintet, not Schubert’s interest in ichthyology).

The work is a powerful one, all of the four movements being in the minor mode, from the opening descending motif with insistent triplet figures in many guises that proceed throughout the movement propelling it forward. The second movement, as previously stated, is a theme; a melody from the song *Death and the Maiden* with five variations based upon it. The third movement juxtaposes a fiercely insistent syncopated rhythmic section (somewhat reminiscent of the motif Wagner would use years later to portray the enslaved Nibelungs hammering away in the mines in his opera *Das Rheingold*) with a warm long-lined melody as the trio. The final movement



(Presto) is a frenetic tarantella, a fast Neapolitan dance in 6/8 time. According to legend, the dance was supposed to cure a person of the bite of the tarantula. A more prosaic explanation of the dance has it named after the southern Italian city of Taranto.

The work had its first performance, actually an unrehearsed reading, on January 29, 1824, at the home of tenor Joseph Barth, with Karl Hacker and Josef Hauer, violinists, Josef Hacker, violist, and cellist from the court opera, Bauer. Schubert, who usually played viola on such occasions, was otherwise occupied, copying out and making corrections to the parts.

The work was not published until 1831, some years after Schubert's death. Perhaps, he did put it away in a drawer, after "Milord Falstaff's" negative comments.

Incidentally, for those who subscribe to the dictum "More is more", there are recordings of a transcription of this quartet for string orchestra, arranged by none other than Gustav Mahler, for use in his orchestral concerts. He was, during his lifetime, more renowned as a director and conductor of opera and symphonic works, than he was as a composer.

Program Notes by Joseph Way

The Musicians

Daniel Banner, violin, has been an acting member of the San Francisco Symphony since 1997. Before moving to San Francisco he was an acting member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and assistant concertmaster of the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra. He has performed as concertmaster of many Boston area groups including, Emmanuel Music, New Hampshire Symphony, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Company of Boston, Handel and Haydn Society, and Monadnock Music. He studied at Harvard University and MIT.

Jassen Todorov, violin, began his musical education in Bulgaria at the Schools of Music in Plovdiv and Sofia and furthered his studies in the United States at the Idyllwild Arts Academy in California. A top prize winner of several national and international competitions, he earned his bachelor's degree in violin performance from Harid Conservatory, Florida, and his master's degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. From 2000 to 2003, he served as the teaching assistant to Professor Oleh Krysa at the Eastman School and held a violin position at the University of Rochester. In 2002, he received the prestigious Eastman award for excellence in teaching. Currently, Mr. Todorov is a Professor of Violin at San Francisco State University. Visit Mr. Todorov on the web at www.jassentodorov.com.

Christina King, viola, joined the San Francisco Symphony's viola section in the Fall of 1996. She has been a member of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, was



principal violist in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, (training orchestra of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra), and has also played with Lyric Opera of Chicago and various orchestras in Mexico City. She received a Master's in Music from Northwestern University, and an A.B. in English from Barnard College/Columbia University.

Barbara Andres, cello, is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with Lynn Harrell and Stephen Geber. She has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony since 1977. She was cello performance coach for the San Francisco Youth Orchestra for four years and since 1999 has performed the same role as mentor and coach for young performers at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She is active as a recitalist and chamber musician throughout the Bay Area, and has appeared as Principal Cellist of the Sierra Chamber Society for the last thirteen seasons.

Stevan Cavalier, piano, studied with Maryan Filar, himself a pupil of Walter Giesecking, at the Settlement School in Philadelphia, as well as with harpsichordist Lori Wollfisch and pianist Robert Miller. He has attended the Interlochen Summer Music Festival, and appeared in chamber ensembles in many Bay Area venues, including Davies Symphony Hall. Dr. Cavalier is Director of the Sierra Chamber Society.

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Note from the Bit Bucket

I was asked to say a few words about myself and how I got involved in the Sierra Chamber Society, but was *not* warned not to be too “crusty” (unlike my esteemed colleague Joe “Day Old Bread” Way). Long ago, before the Industrial Revolution, Stevan Cavalier was my daughters’ pediatrician, and he and I accidentally discovered that we had a mutual interest in chamber music. He invited me over to his house in early 1990 for a Civic Arts Chamber Society meeting and I suddenly found myself drafted into helping out with programming and putting together the printed programs for the SCS concerts, eventually designing a web site (I am no webmaster by trade), and recording the concerts, moving chairs and fiddling with the state of the art air conditioning in the church when patrons get too hot or too cold (which mostly happens at the same time).

As years passed we became good pals and his kids and my kids grew up together. Now they are all adults, how did that happen? But the SCS and the friendship is still in place. Hooray!

There are occasionally times when I am wise enough to realize what a unique experience it is to be here with you all five times a season listening to our excellent musicians play all the “greatest hits from the chamber music world”. How many other people get to be in the best seat in the house (headphones) for every show? There have been moments of bliss that match up with many other musical experiences I have had over the years (in varied genres), and some that have surpassed any expectation that I could cook up on my own (in any genre).

As far as what I do in the world outside the SCS, I am a Information Technology specialist for Advent Software in San Francisco. My main responsibility is keeping the email flowing for our company across offices also located in New York, Boston, and London. That’s how I make a living. My amateur interests (the root word for amateur is from the Latin word, *amo*, love) are in photography and poetry (and I do them both for the *love* of it.) You can see an extensive collection of my photo galleries at www.fuguemasters.com/GalleryMainPage.htm. Photography, for me, is a way of seeing things in the present moment, and making the ordinary, extraordinary.

I need music as much as I need food, I listen constantly, not just to classical, but to jazz, progressive rock, electronic ambient and even a little Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys now and then. I read persistently in history, science fiction, poetry and literature. I talk too much and spend most of my time wandering through the world with a sense of wonder and surprise, occasionally bumping into walls and then heading in a different direction. Discovering things that way seems to more productive than any other process I have tried so far.

Richard A. Gylgayton



Sierra Chamber Society 2007 - 2008 Season

Sunday, January 20, 2008

Shostakovich – String Quartet No 1.
Debussy – Cello Sonata
Mozart String Quartet “Dissonant”

Sunday, April 6, 2008

Haydn – Piano Trio
Stravinsky – Suite Italienne for violin and piano
Debussy - String Quartet

Sunday, June 1, 2008

Jean Francaix – Divertimento for Flute and Piano
Samuel Barber – Summer Music for Wind Quintet
Beethoven – Quintet for Piano and Winds

Programs are subject to change.

The Sierra Chamber Society:
Stevan Cavalier, General Director
Greg Mazmanian, Executive Director
Joseph Way, Artistic Director
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