

Hermitage Piano Trio

Misha Keylin, violin
Sergey Antonov, cello
Ilya Kazantsev, piano

Trio in G minor, Op. 17

Clara Schumann
(1819-96)

Allegro moderato
Scherzo. Tempo di menuetto
Andante
Allegretto

Trio No. 2 in B minor, Op. 76

Joaquín Turina
(1882-1949)

Lento
Molto vivace
Lento

- INTERMISSION -

Trio No. 1 in G minor, "Élégiaque"

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Notturmo in E-flat major, D. 897

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Trio in C major

Gaspar Cassadó
(1897-1966)

Allegro risoluto
Tempo moderato e pesante
Recitativo. Moderato ed appassionato

Hermitage Trio is represented by MKI Artists; One Lawson Lane, Suite 320, Burlington, VT 05401.

Recordings: Reference Recordings

www.hermitagepianotrio.com

Program Notes

Trio in G minor, Op. 17

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Allegro moderato
Scherzo. Tempo di menuetto
Andante
Allegretto

Clara Schumann is probably best known as the forbearing and supportive wife of the great but deeply troubled mid-nineteenth century composer, Robert Schumann. Perhaps less known is the fact that she was a child prodigy who became one of the outstanding pianists of the period. She performed as well as edited Robert's extensive piano works, as well as the works of Brahms, with whom she was close friends.. Even less familiar is the fact that in her busy professional life she had time to bear eight children and that she herself composed a number of vocal and piano works. Clearly, Clara was one of those super women whom we are a little better at recognizing today.

All the more fortunate, then, that we have the rare opportunity of hearing one of her important compositions. Completed in 1847 when she was twenty-nine, the Piano Trio's lyric beauty exhibits the melodic and textural features of mid-nineteenth century European music. Each of its four movements has a distinctive character, never anonymous or mechanical, as so much Baroque music tends to be. This is a lovely work, well-written for the three instruments, its material fresh and never contrived or imitative. The writing shows remarkable mastery and is never trite nor predictable. (Note the fugal passage in the finale.) If the feminist movement has led to the recognition of a hidden work of such merit, we are all the beneficiaries.

Trio No. 2 in B minor, Op. 76

Joaquín Turina (1882-1949)

Lento
Molto vivace
Lento

Joaquin Turina carried on the nineteenth-century romantic tradition under the influence of impressionism. This lovely work, displaying little of Turina's Spanish origins, is cast in an unusual succession of three movements, slow-fast-slow, with rich melodic resources and dynamic variety. The two strings are rarely independent of each other and often paired in contrast with the piano, which provides a texture that is rich and full. Like the first work on our program, this Turina trio, not often heard, is a welcome presence in the chamber music repertory.

- INTERMISSION -

Trio No. 1 in G minor, "Élégiaque"

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a towering figure on the musical landscape in the middle decades of the twentieth century. In contrast with his compatriots Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and perhaps Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff, as pianist and composer, carried on the tradition of nineteenth century romanticism well into the twentieth. Unabashedly lyrical, his second and third piano concertos and his *Variations on a Theme of Paganini*, along with his Second Symphony, were staples of the concert repertory of the period. Some of their melodies were even appropriated as popular songs (e.g. "Full Moon and Empty Arms" from the Second Piano Concerto). In addition to four piano concertos, Rachmaninoff wrote many works for piano solo, as well as choral and vocal compositions.. This trio is one of his few chamber works.

Written in 1892 when the composer was eighteen, this Trio "Élégiaque," is the first of two with the same title and is in a single movement. The opening theme opens with a rising four-note motive that is true in character to the trio's name. This dominates the movement, undergoing many transformations in form and mood, including being played backward. Sometimes other melodic materials contrast briefly with this central motif, but it always re-emerges. Rising to high passion and then subsiding, this leading theme carries the movement, in the mood of a funeral march, to a tranquil conclusion.

Notturmo in E-flat major, D. 897

Franz Schubert

This brief, lyrical work was likely written during the final year of Schubert's short life. While its title was supplied by the publisher, *Notturmo* is quintessential Schubert in its melodic flow, its harmonic changes and transparent modulations, and his characteristic writing for the three instruments. The themes of its two alternating sections are reminiscent of other works by the composer, giving rise to speculation about the work's genesis. No matter, *Notturmo* stands as a rich evocation of the composer's musical sensibility.

Trio in C major

Gaspar Cassadó (1897-1966)

Allegro risoluto

Tempo moderato e pesante

Recitativo. Moderato ed appassionato

Cassadó was a cellist as well as a composer, who also transcribed a large body of music for the cello. Precocious as a child, he studied with Pablo Casals at the latter's invitation, and later concertized with some of the most illustrious musicians of the day. He also studied composition with Ravel who, with de Falla, exercised the strongest influence on Cassadó's own work. Most of this was for cello, with the exception of several pieces for guitar, three string quartets, and the piano trio on our program, which dates from 1926/29. While the *Trio* shows the influence of both impressionism and the Spanish idiom, the writing of Cassadó's *Trio* is not derivative or trite but confident and original --a fitting conclusion to an unusual and exciting program.

Program notes by Arnold Berleant.