

Barry Shiffman, *artistic director*
Osvaldo Golijov, *composer-in-residence*

5
aug.

SUNDAY

5 PM

ZUKERMAN TRIO

Pinchas Zukerman, *violin*

Amanda Forsyth, *cello*

Angela Cheng, *piano*

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ALLEGRETTO IN B-FLAT MAJOR, WoO 39 (1812)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

PIANO TRIO NO. 1 IN D MINOR, OP. 32 (1894)

Anton Arensky (1861-1906)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Elegia: Adagio

Finale: Allegro non troppo

:: INTERMISSION ::

PIANO TRIO IN D MINOR, OP. 49 (1839)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Molto allegro e agitato

Andante con moto tranquillo

Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace

Finale: Allegro assai appassionato

ALLEGRETTO IN B-FLAT MAJOR, WoO 39

Ludwig van Beethoven (b. Bonn, Germany, December 15 or 16, 1770;
d. Vienna, Austria, March 26, 1827)

Composed 1812; 5 minutes

This amiable, single-movement trio shares the key of B-flat with the *Archduke* trio—virtuoso music written for virtuoso musicians. Indeed, it dates from 1812, the year after the *Archduke*, but Beethoven's aim in writing the Allegretto could not have been more different. Written in a neat hand (for Beethoven, at least) in the top right-hand corner of the original manuscript is a dedication to "my little friend Maximiliane Brentano, as encouragement in pianoforte playing." Maximiliane (1802-61) was the ten-year-old daughter of Antonie and Franz Brentano, who were in Vienna winding up the estate of Antonie's father, the diplomat, art collector and scholar Johann Melchior von Birkenstock. Antonie is believed by most scholars to have been Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved," to whom he wrote a passionate, confused and, above all, ambiguous letter. But the *Allegretto* he wrote for Antonie's daughter Maximiliane is clear, carefully thought-out and considerate of her accomplished, if modest keyboard skills, to the point of inserting fingering in several places that may have posed challenges. The writing for violin and cello supports and engages with the keyboard part, building a short trio that is tuneful, traditional in structure, pleasing to the ear, with an occasional surprising modulation to pique the interest.

WHAT'S A WoO?

Werke ohne Opuszahl – or Works without Opus number

Beethoven did not give his *Allegretto in B-flat* an opus number or offer it to a publisher. It was first published in 1830, two years after his death. Hence the WoO 39 catalog number.

In Beethoven's case, "WoOs" are usually early works or, more often, fragments.

The Bohemian pianist and composer Johann Nepomuk Kafka (1819-86) was a great collector of Beethoven manuscripts and sketches. Many of these were acquired by the British Museum. In the Kafka Sketch Miscellany alone, there are close to 600 unfinished fragments that can be viewed as ideas for works. If every scrap of music by Beethoven were to be tallied separately, many more unfinished works have come down to us than finished ones. A 19th century scholar estimated that Beethoven began work on more than fifty symphonies.

PIANO TRIO NO. 1 IN D MINOR, OP. 32

Anton Arensky (b. Novgorod, Russia, June 30 /July 12, 1861;
d. near Terioki, Finland [now Zelenogorsk, Russia], February 25, 1906)

Composed 1894; 30 minutes

The Russian composer Anton Arensky came from a musical family. His mother was a fine pianist who gave him his first music lessons; his father was an enthusiastic cellist. By age nine, he was composing songs and piano pieces. At just 21, he was appointed professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Moscow Conservatory and only left the position to succeed Mily Balakirev as director of the Imperial Chapel in St. Petersburg. On the surface, Arensky led a brilliant life as an accomplished composer, virtuoso pianist, gifted conductor and distinguished teacher—with Rachmaninoff, Scriabin and Glière as pupils. But his early death at 45 from tuberculosis suggests a darker side. From the beginning, Arensky was

addicted to drinking and gambling. When composing, he tended to burn the candle at both ends. His father was a doctor, but little of his father's medical expertise was passed on to the son. Rimsky-Korsakov, one of Arensky's teachers and early champions, had no time for what he called the "dissolute course" of Arensky's life. "Revels and card-playing led to galloping consumption," Rimsky-Korsakov sniffed, when Arensky eventually succumbed in Finland. "He will be quickly forgotten."

But Rimsky-Korsakov did not get it right. Even in his lifetime, Arensky found himself with several hits on his hands. His D-minor Piano Trio was one of them and remains the best-known of his chamber works. It stands tall in a notable tradition of Russian elegiac piano trio composition. In 1881, Tchaikovsky was the first to write an *Elegiac* Trio, dedicated "to the memory of a dear friend," the composer and pianist Nikolai Rubinstein. The young Rachmaninoff followed with two of his own, the second of which is dedicated to the memory of Tchaikovsky. Arensky composed his in 1894, as a memorial to the cellist Karl Davidov, who was the director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory while Arensky was a student there. Shostakovich, Alfred Schnittke and others have continued the tradition.

An elegiac tone is present from the outset, as the first theme is heard on violin over piano murmurings. A second theme, on the cello, is no less lyrical. A crisp, decisive concluding idea from the piano adds the necessary energy and vitality to the textbook sonata structure. A buoyant, feather-light Scherzo follows, spun out of a repeated-note figure from the violin. The music is reminiscent of Mendelssohn and encloses a robust waltz. *The Elegia* is the emotional heart of this deeply felt trio. It opens and closes with a somber dialogue between darkly colored, muted strings, with dotted rhythm commentary from the piano in the manner of a funeral march. In the finale, Arensky reviews several themes. He reworks the rhythm of the funeral march into the opening heroic melody. He also brings back the melancholy string melody of the slow movement. These two ideas alternate before he casts a glance backwards, first on the music of the gentle, middle section of the *Elegia*, then on the elegiac opening theme with which the Trio begins. The more heroic melody prevails.

PIANO TRIO IN D MINOR, OP. 49

Felix Mendelssohn (b. Hamburg, Germany, February 3, 1809;
d. Leipzig, Germany, November 4, 1847)

Composed 1839; 29 minutes

Mendelssohn wrote his earliest piano trio, which remains unpublished, before he was eleven. It was one of the works that recommended the young prodigy to Goethe, who remained a mentor for the rest of his life. His D-minor Piano Trio is the first of two mature trios and was premiered at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, February 1, 1840. He wrote it the previous year, at the same time as a large number of other chamber works. They included the three string quartets, Op. 44, the B-flat Cello Sonata, songs for solo and mixed voices, organ fugues and, as Mendelssohn himself put it in a letter, "half a Psalm." At this time, he regularly conducted the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and had recently married the beautiful Cécile Jeanrenaud.



"Arensky was friendly, interested, and helpful to me," Stravinsky, a generation younger than Arensky, said. "I always liked him and at least one of his works—the famous Piano Trio in D minor. He meant something to me also by the mere fact of his being a direct personal link with Tchaikovsky."

Something of the intensity of his lifestyle at this time comes through in the vitality of the D-minor Trio. The piano writing in the opening movement is of great brilliance. Its concerto-like virtuosity adds to the urgency of the music. The themes are shared equally between the instruments and lie comfortably for the musicians. Unusually, both themes of the opening movement are first heard on the cello.



Recognizing the brilliance of Mendelssohn's D-minor Piano Trio led Robert Schumann (right) to proclaim his exact contemporary "The Mozart of the 19th century." Mendelssohn (left), Schumann explained, "is the one who has most clearly recognized the contradictions of the time and the first to reconcile them."

The piano is more to the fore in the slow movement. This is a typically Mendelssohnian mix of gentle sentiment and nostalgia and recalls the composer's *Songs without Words*. In both, the outer sections of a slow movement share a theme and frame a more restless minor-key central episode. The third movement is again immediately recognizable as the music of Mendelssohn. It is a featherweight scherzo after the manner of those in the Octet and the incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This whirlwind, graceful movement is one of the best from a master of the genre. The momentum continues in the finale, where an insistent rhythmic pattern underlines two of the three themes.

– Program notes © 2018 Keith Horner. Comments welcomed: khnotes@sympatico.ca

About the Artists



ZUKERMAN TRIO

Formed in 2013, the Zukerman Trio developed out of the violinist's acclaimed Zukerman ChamberPlayers, and has since graced the world's greatest stages and many of the globe's major festivals. For his lauded Trio, Zukerman is joined by the cellist Amanda Forsyth and pianist Angela Cheng, two of the finest chamber musicians performing today.

Born in Tel Aviv, **Pinchas Zukerman** came to America in 1962, where he studied at The Juilliard School with Ivan Galamian. He has been awarded a Medal of Arts and the Isaac Stern Award for Artistic Excellence, and was appointed as the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative's first instrumentalist mentor in the music

discipline. A devoted and innovative pedagogue, Mr. Zukerman chairs the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music, where he has pioneered the use of distance-learning technology in the arts. He currently serves as Conductor Emeritus of the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada, as well as Artistic Director of its Young Artist Program.

Canadian Juno Award-winning **Amanda Forsyth** is considered one of North America's most dynamic cellists. From 1999 to 2015, Ms. Forsyth was principal cellist of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, where she appeared regularly as soloist and in chamber ensembles. She has appeared with leading orchestras in Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia. As a recording artist she appears on the Fanfare, Marquis, Pro Arte and CBC labels.

The Canadian pianist **Angela Cheng** performs regularly throughout North America as a recitalist and orchestral soloist. She has been Gold Medalist of the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition, as well as the first Canadian to win the prestigious Montreal International Piano Competition. Other awards include the Canada Council's coveted Career Development Grant and the Medal of Excellence for outstanding interpretations of Mozart from the Mozarteum in Salzburg.