

16
june

SATURDAY

8 PM

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

MONTROSE TRIO

Jon Kimura Parker, *piano*

Martin Beaver, *violin*

Clive Greensmith, *cello*

WITH

BARRY SHIFFMAN, *viola*

Pre-concert talk, 7 PM

PIANO TRIO NO. 2, IN B MINOR, OP. 76 (1933)

Joaquín Turina (1882-1949)

Lento—Allegro molto moderato

Molto vivace

Lento—Andante mosso—Allegretto

PIANO TRIO NO. 2, IN C MINOR, OP. 66 (1845)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Allegro energico e con fuoco

Andante espressivo

Scherzo: Molto allegro, quasi presto

Allegro appassionato

:: INTERMISSION ::

PIANO QUARTET NO. 1, IN G MINOR, OP. 25 (1861)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro

Intermezzo. Allegro, ma non troppo

Andante con moto

Rondo alla Zingarese: Presto

GLOVSKY

Counselors-at-Law

*Festival
Corporate Partner*

This concert is sponsored in part by the generosity of William and Susan Wagner.

PIANO TRIO NO. 2, IN B MINOR, OP. 76

Joaquín Turina (b. Seville, Spain, December 9, 1882; d. Madrid, Spain, January 14, 1949)

Composed 1933; 15 minutes



Joaquín Turina

Two years after moving to Paris to study music, following a concert featuring the Paris premiere of his Piano Quintet, Joaquín Turina was taken to a café by two fellow Spanish composers, Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla. There, between champagne and pastries, the 25-year-old composer from Seville was preached the doctrine of Spanish music. “We were three Spaniards gathered together in a corner of Paris and it was our duty to fight bravely for the national music of our country,” Turina said, looking back on the occasion as “the most complete metamorphosis of my life.” When he returned to Spain to pursue a career as a pianist, conductor and composer, Turina wrote several distinctively Spanish works in a nationalist style and gained wide recognition. Of the three composers, Turina’s voice was to become the most cosmopolitan, particularly in his chamber music, which includes more than a dozen works.

Turina gained much of his technique at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, under the direction of its founder, Vincent d’Indy. From both d’Indy and César Franck, he acquired a taste for the then fashionable practice of developing and recycling musical themes throughout a composition, and it became a practice that was to stay with him throughout his life. It is a hallmark of the second of his three piano trios, composed in 1933, a piece that Turina says has “a more classical atmosphere than the First Trio.” The Spanish origins of the music color every movement of this immediately appealing work. The opening movement is based on two themes, the first restless and somewhat Brahms-like, the thematically related second, more Spanish in coloring and temperament. The concise middle movement is light and fleeting and its 5/8 rhythm is reminiscent of the Basque *zortico* dance. The finale is a more expansive and complex structure which recalls elements of the earlier movements. Turina described it, rather modestly, as a chorale interrupted by two episodes of ever-increasing energy.

MUSICAL EVOLUTION

The Spanish composer Joaquín Turina was unable to find his voice with the cosmopolitan musical style he brought to his early zarzuelas, or Spanish operas. His mentors encouraged him to dig deep into Spanish folksong for the answer. Turina’s musical language soon evolved to incorporate the color of Spanish melodies and rhythms.

Mendelssohn similarly absorbed the dazzling, if shallow, keyboard brilliance of a Hummel, Herz or Moscheles. From an early age, this evolved with his keen imagination into the distinctive, featherlight scherzo writing we find in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and tonight’s Piano Trio.

Brahms, another mainstream German composer who shared Mendelssohn’s acute awareness of tradition, was nonetheless keen to introduce the *style hongrois* into his musical paint box. He first heard this blending of Hungarian folk gestures with the Gypsy performing style from Hungarian political refugees passing through his home city, the port city of Hamburg, on their way to the United States. At the same time, his concert touring with the Hungarian expatriate violinist Ede Reményi further helped Brahms evolve this spirited style into his own Gypsy rondos, as we’ll hear in tonight’s closing work.

PIANO TRIO NO. 2, IN C MINOR, OP. 66

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

Composed 1845; 31 minutes

Although he was a renowned pianist, Mendelssohn found piano music difficult to write. He sometimes squirmed when confronted with his own immensely popular *Songs Without Words*. But he did warm to the idea of piano in combination with a chamber group. “There is a truly significant and personally far more appealing branch of piano music—trios, quartets and other things with piano parts—i.e. real chamber music, now pretty much forgotten, and the occasional urge to bring something new to it, is for me altogether too great.” The urge seems to have started back in 1832, when Mendelssohn wrote to his sister from Paris: “I would like to compose a couple of good piano trios.” Seven years and a good deal of work later, the first of the two Trios, in D minor, saw light of day. Schumann hailed it a masterpiece. But it was not until six years later that Mendelssohn turned his attention to a second trio, in C minor. The minor key was certainly his key of choice in chamber music with piano. It gives his music a vitality and inner energy that is not always present elsewhere. Composition on the new trio went well and, in a few months, it was ready for performance. Mendelssohn himself played the piano part, together with his favored violinist, Ferdinand David, concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and the cellist Karl Wittmann.

Its first movement is brilliantly constructed. The opening theme, in running octaves on the piano (marked “with fire and energy”) is expanded into themes for the violin and cello. Before long, the roles of strings and piano are reversed. The entire movement unfolds organically. Passages of great energy and quiet lyricism alternate, always bound together by the unity of their themes. After a tender *Andante espressivo*, Mendelssohn gives us one of his inimitable, minor-key scherzos, which bubbles with energy and vitality. This is music that looks quite black on the page, but which is calculated to sound light and airy, calling for a fine balance between virtuosity and ensemble. “The trio is a bit slippery under the fingers,” Mendelssohn wrote to his sister, Fanny, with wonderful understatement, “but even so, it’s not really difficult.” The finale begins with an exuberant theme, constantly surging forward. It reaches its climax with a broad chorale-like theme, which provides one of the most stirring moments in Mendelssohn’s music. Its melody, of Mendelssohn’s invention, alludes to traditional Lutheran hymns, which Bach used as the basis for two of his cantatas (*Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ* and *Herr Gott dich alle loben wir*). This C-minor trio is one of the most successful works of Mendelssohn’s maturity, coming one year before the oratorio *Elijah* and two before his premature death at the age of 38.

PIANO QUARTET NO. 1, IN G MINOR, OP. 25

Johannes Brahms (b. Hamburg, Germany, May 7, 1833; d. Vienna, Austria, April 3, 1897)

Composed 1861; 41 minutes

With its popular Gypsy rondo finale, broad, thematically linked opening movement, thoughtful Intermezzo, and expansive slow movement, Johannes Brahms said that his youthful, energetic G-minor Piano Quartet is the easiest of his chamber works to “hear at sight.” The dark and sonorous opening movement is rich in musical inventiveness; many of its abundant themes are intricately connected. The somber octaves with which the piano opens the quartet are



Felix Mendelssohn, 1847
Portrait by his brother-in-law, Wilhelm Hensel



Johannes Brahms and Reményi, 1853. The duo toured a good deal, 1850 to 1853. Reményi’s playing of Magyar and Zigeuner melodies was to permanently color Brahms’s music style.

repeated, inverted and shifted around harmonically from one instrument to another, all within the opening few bars. Brahms shows how rich in potential his themes can be. And so it goes throughout the expansive first movement, where the music constantly surges towards ever increasing sonority and texture. One theme evolves into another, cumulatively building a vast structure, traveling from lean textures to symphonic opulence, from darkness to light, austerity to radiance.

The second movement comes as a perfect foil to the *Sturm und Drang* of the opening. After originally giving it the title "Scherzo," Brahms was persuaded to change this understated, muted movement, full of dark murmurs and veiled suggestions, to "Intermezzo." Brahms told Clara Schumann that he thought of her in every bar while writing this movement. Clara, for her part, wrote: "It is a piece after my own heart... I can dream so gently. It is as if my soul were rocked to sleep on its sounds." In the finale, the emotions become ever more unbuttoned in a movement that has been an audience favorite from the outset. Here, Brahms adopts the idea of a Gypsy rondo finale, a tradition begun by Haydn in the G-major Piano Trio. Brahms develops boisterous, Magyar-flavored three-bar phrases and contrasts them with slower, sentimental episodes, in thirds. His friend, the great Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim, who had considerable success at the time with his own *Concerto in Hungarian Style*, praised the North German Brahms for his skill in writing music with a Hungarian flavor: "You have outstripped me on my own turf by a considerable track," he wrote.

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

ROCKPORT FELLOWS

The Rockport Chamber Music Festival will feature two free performances by rising young artists invited to be part of the Festival's first "Fellows" program. Please join and experience the next generation's great artists!

ROCKPORT FELLOWSHIP QUARTET & TONY YIKE YANG, *piano*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 7 PM: Young Artist Spotlight

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 10 AM: Family Concert





MONTROSE TRIO

Formed in 2013, the Montrose Trio is a collaboration stemming from a long relationship between the pianist Jon Kimura Parker and the Tokyo String Quartet. Mr. Parker was the quartet's final guest pianist, and a backstage conversation with the violinist Martin Beaver and cellist Clive Greensmith led to the Montrose Trio's creation. Named after Chateau Montrose, a storied Bordeaux wine long favored after concerts, with a nod to the Montrose Arts District of Houston, the Montrose Trio has quickly established a reputation for performances of the highest distinction. The Montrose Trio gave their debut performance for the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, with subsequent performances at Wolftrap, in Montreal and at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. The pianist **Jon Kimura Parker** performs with major North American orchestras on a regular basis, as well as with Off the Score, an experimental group with the legendary Police drummer Stewart Copeland. He is Artistic Advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival and Professor of Piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. A top prizewinner at the international violin competitions of Indianapolis and Montreal, violinist **Martin Beaver** has appeared as soloist with major orchestras around the world. As a chamber musician, he was a founding member of the Toronto String Quartet and Triskelion and was the first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet for eleven years. He is currently on faculty at the Colburn School in Los Angeles. Cellist **Clive Greensmith** has performed as soloist with major orchestras around the world, collaborated with distinguished musicians such as András Schiff and Steven Isserlis, and won prizes in the Premio Stradivari held in Cremona, Italy. Mr. Greensmith was the cellist in the Tokyo String Quartet for fourteen years and is currently on faculty at the Colburn School.

BARRY SHIFFMAN, *viola*



Artistic Director of the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, violinist and violist Barry Shiffman is also Associate Dean and Director of Chamber Music at the Glenn Gould School and Dean of the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists at The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. A co-founder

of the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ), he appeared in more than 2,000 concerts around the globe, and recorded several critically acclaimed discs under an exclusive contract with EMI Classics during his seventeen years with the SLSQ. While in SLSQ, Mr. Shiffman served as artist-in-residence at Stanford University and as visiting artist at the University of Toronto. He has also served in numerous roles at the Banff Centre, including Director of Music Programs, Artistic Director of the Centre's Summer Music Programs, and Executive Director of the Banff International String Quartet Competition, which he continues to direct. Recipient of the Longy School's Nadia Boulanger Prize for Excellence in the Art of Teaching, he received his formal studies at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, University of Toronto, Utrecht Conservatory, Hartt School of Music, The Juilliard School and Yale University.