

SANIBEL MUSIC FESTIVAL PROGRAM NOTES

BOSTON CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

**Max Levinson, piano ~ Markus Placci, violin ~ Raman Ramakrishnan,
cello Marcus Thompson, viola and BCMS Artistic Director ~
Jennifer Grim, flute with**

ANN HOBSON PILOT, harp

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

~ PROGRAM ~

**Trio for Violin, Viola, and Cello in G major, Op. 53, No. 1
(Arranged from the Sonata in G major, Hoboken XVI:40)**

**Joseph HAYDN
(1732-1809)**

Allegro innocente
Presto

**Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello
in G minor, K. 478**

**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART
(1756-1791)**

Allegro
Andante
Rondo: Allegro

Deux Pièces en Trio for Flute, Cello, and Harp, Op. 80

**Joseph JONGEN
(1873-1953)**

Assez lent
Allegro moderato

~ INTERMISSION ~

Fantaisie for Violin and Harp, Op. 124

**Camille SAINT-SAËNS
(1835-1921)**

**Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello
in E-flat major, Op. 47**

**Robert SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)**

Sostenuto assai — Allegro ma non troppo
Scherzo: Molto vivace
Andante cantabile
Finale: Vivace

Boston Chamber Music Society

The Boston Chamber Music Society (BCMS) is an ensemble of superb musicians who come together in different combinations to perform chamber music. Since its founding in 1982, BCMS has built a reputation for impassioned performances, ripened over time by the long personal and professional histories of its member musicians. BCMS invites guest artists, chosen for their particular affinity for the works they will play, to join its members, expanding the artistic possibilities to virtually all works in the chamber music repertory. BCMS's mission is to provide the public with exceptional performances of chamber music repertory from the Baroque era to the present day while fostering understanding and appreciation of the art form, making it more accessible to all. BCMS presents the longest-running chamber music series in Boston's musically fertile region. In addition to its monthly concerts at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre, BCMS has performed in many neighborhood venues in the greater Boston area, toured nationally and internationally, and issued critically acclaimed recordings under its own label. Beyond the concert stage, BCMS musicians offer open rehearsals and master classes to students from educational institutions at various levels, and coach participants of all ages in its annual chamber music workshop. Its hybrid fellowship program in cooperation with the New England Conservatory's Entrepreneurial Musicianship Department engages young musicians to serve as interns to learn the inner workings of running an ensemble or concert series and to perform with the ensemble. The BCMS Teaching Artist Program at the Somerville High School in Massachusetts provides the SHS String Orchestra students weekly coaching as well as free access to its concerts.

Ann Hobson Pilot

Ann Hobson Pilot was Principal Harpist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1980 through the 2009 Tanglewood season, having joined the BSO in 1969 as Assistant Principal Harpist and Principal Harpist with the Boston Pops. She was previously Substitute Second Harpist with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Principal Harpist of the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. Ms. Pilot has performed as soloist with many orchestras in the United States and around the world. After her retirement, she returned to the stage as soloist with the BSO to open both its 2009-2010 season and Carnegie Hall season with the premiere of *On Willows and Birches*, written for her by John Williams. As a chamber musician, she has performed with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Marlboro Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and Ritz Chamber Players. Ms. Pilot's recent highlights include a performance at the opening of the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; the *Ginastera Concerto* with the Buenos Aires Philharmonic at Teatro Colón and with the Boston Civic Symphony at Jordan Hall in Boston; and her debut with La Musica International Chamber Music Festival in Sarasota, Florida. Ms. Pilot has recorded for the Boston Records, Koch International and Denouement labels. In 1999, she recorded the *Harp Concerto* by the young American composer Kevin Kaska, a work she commissioned, with the London Symphony Orchestra. In 2013, she released her CD of music for harp, violin, and bandoneon by Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla. She was featured in two documentaries aired by PBS stations nationwide: in 1997, she traveled to South Africa to record *A Musical Journey*, sponsored by the Museum of Afro-American History and WGBH; and more recently, "A Harpist's Legacy, Ann Hobson Pilot and the Sound of Change," which tells the story of her life in music. Ann Hobson Pilot is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of Alice Chalifoux. She received the Distinguished

Alumni Awards from CIM in 1993 and again in 2010. Her other honors include Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Boston Musicians Association and Talent Development League of the Atlanta Symphony, an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Bridgewater State College (1988), and an honorary Doctor of Music degree from Tufts University (2010). Ms. Pilot retired from the faculties of the New England Conservatory and Boston University, and is now affiliated with the State College of Florida, Tanglewood Music Center, and Boston University Tanglewood Institute. She and her husband, Prentice Pilot, are currently residents of Osprey, Florida.

**Joseph HAYDN — Trio for Violin, Viola, and Cello in G major, Op. 53, No. 1
(Arranged from the Sonata in G major, Hoboken XVI:40) (1784)**

From his earliest clavichord divertimentos to his last set of three piano sonatas written in London, Haydn composed more than sixty solo keyboard sonatas, mostly for students, friends, and amateurs, though some were intended for performing virtuosos. The Sonata in G major, H. XVI:40, was one of a set of three such works Haydn wrote in 1784, when he was up to his ears composing, producing concerts and operas, and overseeing the bustling musical establishment at Esterháza; the pieces were dedicated upon their publication the following year to Princess Marie Esterházy, wife of Prince Nicolaus II. These three Sonatas (H. XVI:40-42), written when Haydn's fame — and the concomitant demand for his music — was spreading like wildfire across Europe, were created for the talented home pianist rather than for the concert virtuoso. Each comprises two movements: fast and faster. The G major Sonata's first movement alternates strains in major and minor keys, with the opening motive returning several times in varied form. The Presto is a whirlwind rondo with some brilliant passagework at the close. The tasteful arrangement for violin, viola, and cello of the G major Sonata that Anton Hoffmeister published as Haydn's Op. 53, No. 1 in Vienna in 1789 as the first in a set of three such works based on the Piano Sonatas of 1784 is by an unknown hand, almost certainly not that of Haydn.

**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART — Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello
in G minor, K. 478 (1785)**

As Mozart reached his full maturity in the years after arriving in Vienna in 1781, his most expressive manner of writing, whose chief evidences are the use of minor modes, chromaticism, rich counterpoint, and thorough thematic development, appeared in his compositions with increasing frequency. Among the most important harbingers of the shift in Mozart's musical language was the G minor Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello (K. 478), which he completed on October 16, 1785 in response to a commission for three (some sources say six) such works from the publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister. Hoffmeister had only entered the business a year earlier, and Mozart's extraordinary and disturbing score, for which the publisher saw little market, threw a fright into him. "Write more popularly, or else I can neither print nor pay for anything of yours!" he admonished. Mozart cast some quaint expletives upon the publisher's head, and said it was fine with him if the contract were canceled. It was. (Composer and publisher remained friends and associates, however. The following year, Hoffmeister brought out the Quartet in D major, K. 499, which still bears his name as sobriquet.) Artaria & Co., proving more bold than Hoffmeister, acquired the piece, and published it a year later; there are hints in contemporary documents that it enjoyed a number of performances in Vienna.

Alfred Einstein, in his classic 1945 study of Mozart, called the G minor tonality in which the K. 478 Quartet is cast the composer's "key of fate. The wild command that opens the first movement, unisono, and stamps the whole movement with its character, remaining threateningly in the background, and bringing the movement to its inexorable close, might be called the 'fate' motive with exactly as much justice as the four-note motive of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony." Contrast to the movement's pervasive agitation is provided by a lyrical melody initiated by the strings without piano. The Andante, in sonatina form (sonata without a development section), is probing, emotionally unsettled music, written in Mozart's most expressive, adventurous harmonic style. Of the thematically rich closing rondo, English musicologist Eric Blom noted, "[It] confronts the listener with the fascinatingly insoluble problem of telling which of its melodies is the most delicious." So profligate is Mozart's melodic invention in this movement that he borrowed one of its themes, which he did not even bother to repeat here, for the principal subject of a piano rondo (K. 485) he composed three months later.

Joseph JONGEN — Deux Pièces en Trio for Flute, Cello, and Harp, Op. 80 (1925)

Composer, organist, and teacher Joseph Jongen was among the leading figures of Belgian music during the early 20th century. He was born on December 14, 1873 in Liège (César Franck's hometown) and began preparatory study at the Conservatory in that city at age seven. He continued at the school for his professional training, and there won first prizes in fugue (1891), piano (1892), and organ (1896); he began teaching harmony and counterpoint at the Conservatory in 1891. Jongen's reputation as a composer dated from his winning the Belgian Royal Academy Competition with his String Quartet, Op. 3 in 1894. Three years later he won the Belgian Prix de Rome, which enabled him to study in Germany, Italy, and France for the next four years; he received advice and instruction from Richard Strauss in Berlin and Vincent d'Indy and Gabriel Fauré in Paris. Jongen returned to Liège in 1902, resuming his duties on the Conservatory faculty as professor of composition. During World War I, he lived in England, where he appeared in recital as pianist and organist, conducted, and toured with the Belgian Piano Quartet, which he founded. He returned to Belgium in 1919 and was named the following year to the faculty of the Brussels Conservatory, which he served as director from 1925 to 1939; he was succeeded in that post by his younger brother, Léon, a composer and pianist. Jongen was also the conductor during those years of the Concerts Spirituels, a Brussels music society devoted to the performance of sacred compositions. He fled to France in 1939, but returned after World War II to his country estate at Sart-lez-Spa, where he carried on his creative work until his death on July 12, 1953. Jongen was a prolific composer who published over 240 works during his lifetime, including a symphony, concertos for organ, violin, cello, trumpet, piano, and harp, a Mass for chorus, organ, and orchestra, incidental music to Oberon, numerous independent scores for orchestra, three string quartets and much other chamber music, and many songs and vocal pieces. He subjected his works to a rigorous re-evaluation at the end of his life and withdrew all but 137 of them.

Pierre Jamet (1893-1991) was one of the foremost harpists of his generation, prize-winning graduate and later professor at the Paris Conservatoire, principal harpist of the Paris Opéra and Concerts Colonne, founder of the Association Internationale des Harpistes et Amis de la Harpe, Officier of the Légion d'Honneur, and Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres. He had already established his reputation as a soloist and chamber musician by the time he participated in the premiere of Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp in April 1917, after which he ardently sought to expand the repertory for his instrument. In 1922, Jamet founded the Quintette Instrumental de Paris with flutist René le Roy, violinist René Bas, violist Pierre

Grout, and cellist Roger Boulmé, and the ensemble quickly gained prominence not only for its exemplary performances of music by Beethoven, Mozart, Rameau, and other classical masters but also for inspiring new works from such noted contemporary composers as Roussel, Françaix, Koechlin, Schmitt, Tailleferre, and Jolivet. Jongen composed his *Concert à Cinq* for the Quintette in 1923, and two years later wrote the *Deux Pièces en Trio* for Flute, Cello, and Harp for the ensemble.

The wistful first *Pièce* is an Impressionistic analogue to classical rondo, with the gently undulating duet for flute and cello of uncertain tonality presented at the outset returning in subtle transformations as a unifying device throughout the movement. Passages of complementary rather than contrasting character are elided to the reprises of this motto to balance both form and mood. The extroverted second *Pièce* is divided into three large formal paragraphs: a strongly rhythmic opening section (the cello is instructed to play its repeated figures at the beginning “in the manner of a drum”) in which the melodic interest is shared in turn among the participants; an expansive lyrical passage largely entrusted to the cello; and a brilliant coda for the close.

Camille SAINT-SAËNS — Fantaisie for Violin and Harp, Op. 124 (1907)

James Harding titled the final part of his 1965 study of Saint-Saëns and His Circle “The Legend,” and opened it with the following priceless anecdote: “One day in the 1890s, a devout Breton peasant woman bought a packet of chocolate. It contained the picture of a saint, one in a series of cards depicting famous people given free with every packet. As the woman’s son was very ill and prayers for his recovery had so far gone unanswered, she decided to invoke this saint of whom she had never heard before, vowing that should he cure her son she would always display the holy effigy on her own person. Almost immediately her plea was met: the boy returned to health, and ever afterwards she carried reverently attached to her bosom the yellowing likeness of Camille Saint-Saëns.” Though Saint-Saëns was never canonized by the Church, he certainly was lionized by the musical world. The fiftieth anniversary, in 1896, of his debut as a virtuoso pianist at age eleven provided the catalyst for a stream of honors, awards, citations, memberships, honorary degrees, and demands for personal appearances that continued unabated until the day he died. Though his health deteriorated gradually during his later years, his tenacity and remarkable energy never flagged. He visited the United States for the first time in 1906, giving concerts of his music in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. despite being seriously ill with diphtheria. He attended the unveiling of a statue in his honor in Dieppe in 1907 and left enough mementos of his life to the town to establish a Musée de Saint-Saëns there. He represented France at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, conducting his choral work *Hail California*, written especially for the occasion. In 1916, he made his first tour of South America; in May 1920, he took part as conductor and pianist in a festival of his music in Athens; he gave a solo recital at Dieppe in August 1921 in observance of his 86th birthday; he put in two hours of practice at the keyboard on the morning he died, December 16, 1921, in Algiers. Saint-Saëns allowed that he composed music as easily, naturally, and inevitably as an apple tree produces fruit, and he remained active and creative to the very end of his long life.

Three times during his later years, Saint-Saëns applied his art of beauty, precision, and formal perfection to music for the harp: *Fantaisie for Solo Harp* (Op. 95) of 1893; *Fantaisie for Violin and Harp* (Op. 124) of 1907; and *Morceau de Concert for Harp and Orchestra* (Op. 154) of 1918. The *Fantaisie for Violin and Harp* was composed early in 1907 at Bordighera, on the Italian Riviera, where Saint-Saëns had gone to rest after overseeing the first production in

thirty years of his opera *Le Timbre d'Argent* ("The Silver Bell") in nearby Monte Carlo. He dedicated the score to the harpist Clara Eissler and her sister Marianne, who enjoyed a modest career as a violinist. (She recorded the Bach–Gounod *Ave Maria* in 1905 with the celebrated diva Adelina Patti, then completing her international round of farewell appearances.) Saint-Saëns eschewed the classical forms that he usually favored for his instrumental works in the *Fantaisie* in favor of a sectional construction: an introductory passage of improvisatory nature; an *Allegro* of more robust character that reaches an impassioned climax; a scherzo-like episode with a contrasting pastoral interlude; an *Andante* built above a repeating ostinato figure in the harp; and reminiscences of the first two sections as a coda.

**Robert SCHUMANN — Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello
in E-flat major, Op. 47 (1842)**

"I often feel tempted to crush my piano — it is too narrow for my thoughts," wrote Schumann in 1839 to Heinrich Dorn, his former composition teacher. Until that time (Schumann turned thirty that summer), he had produced only songs and small-scale works for solo piano, with the exception of an abandoned symphony in 1832, but within a year of his words to Professor Dorn he received strong encouragement to act on his ambition to launch into the grander genres of music. The venerated Franz Liszt had recently taken up a number of his piano works, notably the brilliant *Carnaval*, and tried to convince his young colleague

that he was capable of accomplishing bigger things. Liszt fired off several letters encouraging Schumann to forge ahead, even offering to arrange performances and seek out a publisher for him. "I think I have already expressed to you in one of my previous letters the desire I have to see you write some ensemble pieces — trios, quintets, septets. Will you forgive me for insisting again on this point? It seems to me that success, even commercial success, will not be denied them." Liszt was the brightest star in the European musical firmament at that time, and Schumann could hardly help but be swayed by his advice. Another source of encouragement for Schumann to broach the larger musical forms came from his beloved wife, Clara. Their long-hoped-for marriage finally took place in September 1840, and Clara, one of the greatest musicians and pianists of the 19th century, was soon coaxing her new husband to extend his creative range. Her urging had an almost immediate effect. The year 1841 was one of enormous productivity for Schumann, during which he wrote not one but two symphonies, the first movement of what became his *Piano Concerto*, a hybrid orchestral work called *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale* (Op. 52), and sketches for a C minor symphony that was never completed.

In 1842, Schumann turned from the orchestral genres to concentrate with nearly monomaniacal zeal on chamber music. Entries in his diary attest to the frantic pace of his inspiration: "June 4th: Started the Quartet in A minor. June 6th: Finished the Adagio of the Quartet. June 8th: My Quartet almost finished. June 11th: A good day, started a Second Quartet. June 18th: The Second Quartet almost finished up to the *Variazioni*. July 5th: Finished my Second Quartet. July 8th: Began the Third Quartet. July 10th: Worked with application on the Third Quartet." Schumann's three string quartets, published together under the single opus number 41, were completed in a frenzy of creative activity within just six weeks, after which he never wrote another work in the form. Having nearly exhausted himself, he and Clara took a holiday at a Bohemian spa in August, but he again threw himself into composition soon after his return: the *Piano Quintet* (Op. 44) was begun in September and the *Piano Quartet* (Op. 47) on October 24th; both were finished before the *Phantasiestücke* for Piano, Violin, and Cello (Op. 88) was created in December. Schumann,

drained by three months of feverish work, then slumped into a state of nervous collapse, and he was unable to compose again until the following February, though his achievement of 1842 — the composition of six chamber music masterpieces in five months — stands as one of the greatest bursts of creative inspiration in the history of the art.

The Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello in E-flat major, published as Schumann's Op. 47 in June 1845, was composed for and dedicated to the Russian Count Matvei Wielhorsky, a notable patron of the arts and an amateur cellist of such accomplishment that he was able to hold his own in the public premiere of the work on December 8, 1844 in Leipzig with a distinguished ensemble which included Ferdinand David (concertmaster of the Gewandhaus orchestra, for whom Mendelssohn wrote his Violin Concerto), Niels Gade (the Danish composer and conductor who often deputized for Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus concerts and succeeded him as music director of that organization in 1847), and Clara as pianist. Such value did Wielhorsky place on Schumann's music that he had sponsored a princely soirée several months earlier in St. Petersburg during the Schumanns' tour of Russia for which he hired a full orchestra so that the composer could conduct his own B-flat Symphony ("Spring"). In writing of the first performance of the Quartet, Schumann noted, "[It] seemed to please players and listeners alike, in particular Mendelssohn."

The piano quartet is a form little explored by the Classical composers. Mozart wrote two such works; Beethoven one; Haydn, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, none. Schumann's single example, which inspired his friend and protégé, Johannes Brahms, to contribute three specimens to the genre, is one of the outstanding compositions in the Romantic chamber repertory.

The Quartet's opening Allegro, a fully realized sonata form, gives the main theme first in a slow, hymnal, introductory configuration before it is presented in a quick-tempo, staccato transformation to launch the main part of the movement. The second theme, announced in imitation between the piano and the strings, begins with an accented note followed by a rising scale pattern. Using a device perhaps borrowed from Beethoven's C Minor Piano Sonata, Op. 13, "Pathétique" (he studied the music of Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart constantly when he was composing his chamber works in 1842), Schumann marked the start of the development section by recalling the slow introduction that opened the movement. The development, utilizing the main theme exclusively, builds a line of rising intensity to lead into the recapitulation and the return of the earlier thematic material. The coda ("more agitated," the score instructs the performers), which includes a new melody for the cello, brings the movement to a spirited close.

The Scherzo is a veritable dance for a whirling dervish that almost seems to call for some exotic Turkish cymbals and drums for accompaniment. To balance this furious rhythmic exercise, two contrasting trios are interspersed in the movement, though both contain brief punctuating references to the infectious dance that surrounds them.

The Andante is the expressive heart of the Quartet. The cello is entrusted with the movement's principal theme, a beautiful melody enfolding many wide leaps, both rising and falling, of the expressive interval of a seventh. Following a central interlude, the viola sings the theme again with detailed embroidery from the violin while the cellist tunes the lowest string down from C to B-flat in order to provide the long tonic pedal-tone upon which the ethereal closing measures are allowed to float.

The finale is dominated by a plenitude of fugue. The movement's thematic abundance is overshadowed only by its pervasive imitative texture, which Schumann contrived to make sound vivacious rather than pedantic, a marvelous example of the rigorous techniques of Bachian counterpoint combined with the vibrant expression and harmonic richness of Schumann's most expressive Romanticism.

©2020 Dr. Richard E. Rodda