



The Sixty-seventh Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,689th Concert

Vienna Piano Trio
Wolfgang Redik, *violin*
Matthias Gredler, *violoncello*
Stefan Mendl, *piano*

October 26, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Piano Trio in E Minor, Hob. xv:12

Allegro moderato

Andante

Rondo–Presto

Bedrich Smetana (1824–1884)

Piano Trio in G Minor, op. 15 (1855)

Moderato assai

Allegro ma non agitato

Presto–Grave, quasi Marcia–Presto

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Piano Trio in E-flat Major, op. 100, D. 929

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro moderato

Allegro moderato

The Musicians

For almost twenty years, the Vienna Piano Trio has been performing regularly in the major music centers in the Americas, Australia, Europe, and the Far East. Founded in 1988, the Trio undertook extensive studies with highly renowned ensembles and musicians, including the Beaux Arts Trio, the Haydn Trio Wien, and Isaac Stern, paving the way to an international career. Described by the *Washington Post* as “one of the world’s leading ensembles of violin, cello, and piano,” the Vienna Piano Trio has been praised for its silken, homogenous sound.

The Trio has performed at many of the leading music festivals, including the Aix-en-Provence, Bratislava, Carinthischer Sommer, Casals, Domaine Forget, Flanders, Kuhmo, Lanaudiere, and Schleswig-Holstein festivals as well as the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, the Salzburg Mozartwoche, the Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, the Wiener Festwochen, and the Woodstock Mozart Festival. For a number of years, the ensemble has performed in Vienna in the Jeunesse series at the Wiener Musikverein and, as of the 2006–2007 season, the Trio has its own series at the Wiener Konzerthaus’ Mozartsaal.

The Vienna Piano Trio appears annually at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Wigmore Hall in London. Other cities that have welcomed the Trio include Berlin, Budapest, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, Montreal, New York City, Paris, Philadelphia, Quebec City, Rotterdam, Seattle, Vancouver, and Washington, DC. The Trio’s National Gallery debut took place in February 2004.

Recordings by the Vienna Piano Trio have won numerous awards, including the British magazine *Classic CD*’s “Top of the Class” award in 1999 and the *London Times*’ “Classical Album of the Year” in 2000. Since 2003 the ensemble has been recording exclusively for the German MDG label. A recording of the Eduard Steuermann arrangement of Schoenberg’s *Verklarte Nacht* was released in October 2005 and won *Pizzicato* magazine’s

“Supersonic Award.” Concerts of the ensemble have been repeatedly broadcast on National Public Radio stations, and the Trio has appeared live on WGBH Boston and Saint Paul Sunday.

The members of the ensemble teach on a regular basis and have given master classes at London’s Wigmore Hall and Royal College of Music, at Sydney’s Conservatory of Music, at the University of Wellington (New Zealand) as well as in Finland, France, and the United States.

The Vienna Piano Trio appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Shupp Artists Management of Port Jefferson, New York.

Program Notes

Haydn's piano trios, composed during his late period, reflect the prevailing practice of the late eighteenth century, in which the piano takes the main role in the ensemble. In these works, which he published as *Sonates pour le pianoforte avec l'accompagnement du violon et violoncelle*, Haydn restricted himself to the conservative and old-fashioned form, not giving the cello and violin equal roles in the ensemble, despite the fact that in all other aspects he was constantly moving forward. The first movement of the *Trio in E Minor* is a strong statement, which remains determinedly minor, eschewing the typical shift to major at the end of the movement. In the second movement, Haydn gives the cello and violin a pizzicato coloring, offering a different course from the typical doubling of piano lines. The last movement, *Presto*, is a perfectly symmetrical *rondo*.

Bedrich Smetana, born in the northeastern part of Bohemia, was the first major nationalist composer of the country. Born to a father who was a master brewer and amateur violinist, he showed a gift for music at an early age. Though he was given the chance to play the piano and violin, he was sent to regular school, rather than a music academy, as his father did not intend for him to have a career in music. Nevertheless, the son's desire and talent won out and eventually he pursued opportunities in teaching, composing, and performing music.

A series of personal tragedies surrounds the composition of the *Piano Trio in G Minor*: in the first six years of his marriage, Smetana lost three daughters to illness. In 1855, his eldest daughter, less than five years old and already blessed with promising musical talent, died of scarlet fever. The trio is dedicated to her memory. A somber work from beginning to end, it stays in the key of G minor throughout, with only occasional slips into the major key, though even at those times it remains doleful. In the first movement there are several solo recitative passages, reflective of personal tragedy. The second movement, *Allegro ma non agitato*, is rhythmically more active, yet is

in the same key and general mood as the first movement. The final *Presto* contains incessant funereal bell-like tones and a relentless rhythmic drive that carry it to a dark end.

Franz Schubert enjoyed little commercial or financial success during his short lifetime, despite the prolific number of songs, works for solo piano, and chamber music that he composed. Had he been more proactive about promoting himself and his compositions, he might have been surprised by success. Eight months before his death, he took the advice of a friend—who knew how popular Schubert was, and how many would come to a performance featuring only his works—and organized a concert in which, among other things, his recently composed *Trio No. 2 in E-flat Major* was performed. The audience demanded a complete encore of the piece.

Schubert's capacity for melodic writing is fully reached in all four movements of this late work. The first movement begins with a dramatic unison, which is followed by a contrasting lyrical second theme. The melody of the second movement is supposedly taken from a Swedish folk tune that Schubert had heard in concert. In the third movement the *Trio* and *Scherzo* both provide rhythmic interest, but are contrasting; the *Scherzo* is reminiscent of the *Ländler*, an Austrian folk dance, while the *Trio* is heavier in character. With a reappearance of the folk tune from the second movement, along with another theme, the final *Allegro moderato* switches back and forth between a duple and a triple meter.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Musica ad Rhenum

Music by Sweelinck and other composers
of the “Golden Age” in The Netherlands

Presented in honor of *Jan Lievens: A Dutch Master Rediscovered*

October 29, 2008
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
West Building Lecture hall



National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble

Music by Huygens, Sweelinck, and other composers
of the “Golden Age” in The Netherlands

Presented in honor of *Jan Lievens: A Dutch Master Rediscovered*

November 2, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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