

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

Mendelssohn String Quartet

8:00 p.m., Saturday, October 10, 1987
Long Theatre
University of the Pacific

Quartet in F major, K. 590
Allegro moderato
Andante
Menuetto: Allegretto
Allegro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

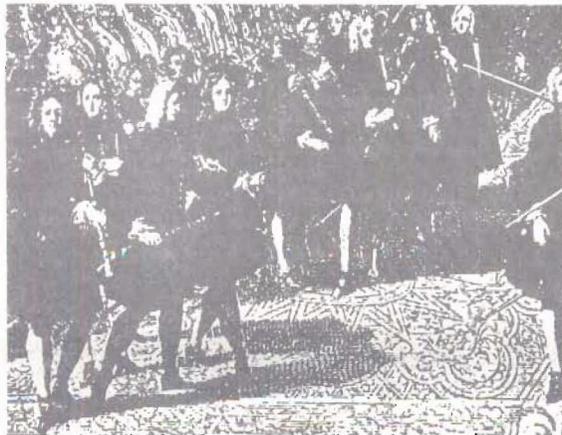
Quartet No.2 "Lettres intimes" (1927-28)
Andante
Adagio
Moderato
Allegro

Leos Janacek
(1854-1928)

Intermission

Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No.3
Introduzione: Andante con moto; Allegro vivace
Andante con moto quasi allegretto
Menuetto: Grazioso
Allegro molto

Ludwig Van Beethoven
(1770-1827)



Program Notes

By Duncan Courvoisier

String Quartet No. 23 in F Major, K.590 (1790) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Written eighteen months before his death, this last of Mozart's string quartets exhibits dramatic, emotional and textural characteristics that presage the later Beethoven.

The first movement opens with a loud unison passage that is repeated more softly; this is followed immediately by smooth passage work in all the parts. There is much work for the cello, the tunes are vigorous and active, and there are many call and response passages.

Soft chordal passages accompanying a quiet theme open the second movement. Mozart is in great control of all his materials allowing him to fashion lovely melodies. This movement is more restrained, more calm in mood and feeling. The scalar passages sometimes become predominant emotionally but the theme reappears strongly later on. The movement comes to a quiet close.

The menuet and trio begin with two violins and then is followed by the cello and viola playing Alberti figures in the lower registers. The trio offers no relief from the heavy texture which reappears in the menuet. Extensive use of non-harmonic tones create dissonances which, however, are resolved immediately.

The fourth movement, in a brisk tempo, opens with descending scale passages that are traded off among the instruments. There is much involvement among all the parts. Mozart is, again, anticipating Beethoven by the uses of dissonance, thick textures, scale passages and great involvement

among all four parts. Near the end there are modulations, shifts to foreign tonalities and a few polyphonic passages, but the tensions resolve and the quartet ends quietly.

String Quartet No. 2, "Intimate Letters" (1928) Leo Janacek (1854-1928)

The "Intimate Letters" of the title to those that Janacek sent to Kamila Stassova from 1916 to his death in 1928. Their relationship was platonic, though his own strained domestic relationships filled him with need for her. The quartet was composed in twenty days in 1928. He was 74; it was his last work.

Janacek's music in general and this quartet in particular are characterized by mercurial changes in mood: lots of space between the high and low registers; strong folk-melodic influences; obsessive concern with repetition; unpredictable changes in mood, rhythm and color; and a rejection of conventional forms and academic models.

The first movement is full of contrasts and has many instances of *sul ponticello* (bowing near the bridge). There are many changes in tempo, numerous soloistic interjections and lots of space between the high and low registers. The movement ends on a traditional cadence, but the overall context is suggestive of Bartok who came later. The second movement contains a folk-like melody with arpeggiated accompaniments in the cello. This melody is distributed among the instruments with varying rhythms. The faster second section exhibits strummings and tremolo on the cello followed by a return to the folk-like melody.

A dotted rhythm melody with open harmony begins the third movement. There are changes

in tempo, registers, mood and the brief appearance of a second melody followed by a return to the beginning of the movement, a gradual *dimuendo* and a fading away. The final movement has many of the characteristics mentioned before, especially the uses of *sul ponticello* and the extremes of register. The dance-like rhythm which opens the movement varies from fast to slow. The music contains short, sectional segments. There are intense, sharp interjections which alternate with slow, melodic sections. The quartet concludes by a return to the dance-like beginning.

String Quartet No. 9 in C, Op 59, No. 3 (1806) Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven's third Rasoumowsky quartet begins with tensions created by dissonances that are resolved; the uses of silence before beginning themes; and a slow tempo which precedes the main business of the movement, which is in a fast tempo. The first theme is vigorous and assertive; all four parts are very involved but no one part is subordinate. The development section begins quietly and uses the first theme and its variants.

Pizzicato (plucked strings) is used extensively in the second movement, mostly in the cello and both soft and loud, with tension, resolution and anticipation. In the other three instruments there is considerable polyphonic writing using thematic material that is restrained and smooth. The second theme is shared alternately between the upper and lower strings. The closing section uses extensive variants of the opening materials. The movement ends quietly with the *pizzicato* cello.

The menuet and trio are in a moderate tempo. The movement begins with a smooth melody

that is repeated sequentially by the other three strings. The trio is a little more vigorous in action that builds to a climax by rising to higher registers. The movement ends quietly; there is a pause, the tempo changes abruptly, and the fourth movement begins. Very fast tempo, fugal passages in the viola and the cello, and the two violins open the finale. These elements build to a huge climax, producing the maximum tone possible. The music rises to another, greater climax; then there is a soft, tense section before it ends with considerable exuberance.

Mendelssohn String Quartet
Ida Levin, violin
Nicholas Mann, violin
Ira Weller, viola
Marcy Rosen, cello

The Mendelssohn String Quartet, winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 1981, has been the Resident Quartet at the Sante Fe Chamber Music Festival since 1984 and at the Merkin Concert Hall in New York since 1979. The ensemble comes to Stockton fresh from performances in Sante Fe, NM, and Seattle, WA.

The ensemble appears regularly in New York, Boston, Washington, Chicago, Miami, Seattle, and on American campuses. It collaborates with such noted artists as pianists Menahem Pressler and James Levine and the Israeli-born American composer Shulamit Ran. The Quartet has recorded Dvorak, Mendelssohn, Mozart and Schoenberg, and it is heard on National Public Radio and Minnesota Public Radio.

Highlights of recent seasons include a three-concert cycle of the quartets of Schoenberg and Mendelssohn in New York, and performances of the complete Schoenberg quartets in

concerts in Los Angeles and San Francisco. This past summer the ensemble has performed at three music festivals, including the Interlochen Arts Festival in Michigan.

The Mendelssohn String Quartet records on the Musicmasters and the Musical Heritage Society labels, and it is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc., 115 College St., Burlington, VT 05401.

Friends of Chamber Music
32nd Anniversary Year
1987-88 Season

International Chamber Ensemble of Rome (non-subscription)
Friday, September 18, 8:00 p.m., Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP
Underwritten in part by a generous grant from American Savings and Loan Association

Mendelssohn String Quartet
Saturday, October 10, 8:00 p.m., Long Theatre, UOP

Academy of St. Martin-In-The-Field Octet
Saturday, November 21, 8:00 p.m., Faye Spanos Concert Hall, UOP
Underwritten in part by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

Los Angeles Brass
Sunday, January 24, 3:00 p.m., Long Theatre, UOP
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Hagen String Quartet
Thursday, March 3, 8:00 p.m. Long Theatre, UOP

The Kronos Quartet (non-subscription)
Wednesday, April 6, 8:00 p.m. Long Theatre, UOP
Underwritten by generous grants from the City of Stockton and the California Arts Council

Cantilena Piano Quartet
Sunday, April 24, 3:00 p.m., Long Theatre, UOP

To Our Audience

Use of cameras and recording devices, and smoking in the lobby and auditorium, are prohibited.

Latecomers will not be seated until a suitable break.

Please disengage pagers and electronic watches.

FOCM concerts are presented in cooperation with University of the Pacific, whose students are admitted free on space availability.

Programs are subject to change without notice.

Tickets

UOP Box Office: Long Theatre, 1040 Stadium Drive, Stockton, California 95211, 209/946-2474, Monday-Friday 10:00 to 5:30, Saturday 10:00 to 2:00

Ticketron: 209/486-7469

Single \$12 (\$4 Children), Season \$40

Seating is unreserved in the Faye Spanos Concert Hall on September 18 and November 21.

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