

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

Los Angeles Piano Quartet

Joseph Genualdi, violin

Randolph Kelly, viola

Peter Rejto, cello

James Bonn, piano

Sunday, October 6, 1991, 3:00 p.m.

Faye Spanos Concert Hall

University of the Pacific

Stockton, California

Program

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 16

Grave: Allegro, ma non troppo

Andante cantabile

Rondo: Allegro, ma non troppo

Gabriel Faure
(1845-1924)

Piano Quartet in C minor, Op. 15

Allegro molto moderato

Scherzo: Allegro vivo

Adagio

Allegro molto

— *Intermission* —

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47

Sostenuto assai-Allegro ma non troppo

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Andante cantabile

Finale: Vivace

The Los Angeles Piano Quartet appears through the courtesy of
IMG Artists.

The Los Angeles Piano Quartet uses the Steinway piano.

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This program is supported, in part, by funds from the California Arts Council,
a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

The Los Angeles Piano Quartet

America's premier piano quartet, the Los Angeles Piano Quartet made its 1977 debut at The Music Center in Los Angeles to great acclaim. Since that time, they have been repeatedly re-engaged by major chamber music presenters, having been hailed by press and audiences alike in New York, Washington, Detroit, St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Buffalo and Salt Lake City. They have been popular guests on Minnesota Public Radio's "St. Paul Sunday Morning," New York's "Live from WNCN" and at the Bermuda and Carmel Bach festivals.

Following an impressive international debut at the 1986 Cheltenham Festival in Great Britain, the Los Angeles Piano Quartet was engaged for an extensive tour of Europe where their schedule included a performance at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. The immediate success of that tour resulted in an upcoming international schedule of concerts throughout Europe, including two appearances at the Concertgebouw.

The Los Angeles Piano Quartet has been an active force in the creation of new works for piano quartet, and they have been supported in their commissions by the National Endowment for the Arts and Chamber Music America.

Pianist JAMES BONN has appeared with numerous orchestras and under the batons of such conductors as Dorati, Fiedler and Dennis Russell Davies. In addition to his performing career, Mr. Bonn is Professor of Music at the University of Southern California. Violinist JOSEPH GENUALDI has extensive chamber music and solo experience. A former member of the Muir String Quartet, he is a frequent participant at the Marlboro Festival and tours with "Music from Marlboro." He is Professor of Music at the University of Oregon in Eugene. Violist RANDOLPH KELLY has an impressive list of solo performances and is an experienced chamber musician. Mr. Kelly has been the principal violist of the Pittsburgh Symphony for the past thirteen years and this season has been

invited by Maestro Lorin Maazel to make his European solo debut, playing the Walton Viola Concerto. He is currently on the faculty of the Duquesne University School for Music. Cellist PETER REJTO, winner of the International Young Concert Artist award, has appeared with many orchestras including the Dallas and Saint Louis symphonies, and in recital at the 92nd Street Y and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mr. Rejto is Professor of Music at the University of Arizona/Tucson.

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major, Op. 16

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

In these days of historical authenticity and textual fidelity, it never hurts to remember that transcription was not always something considered unsavory. No less a composer than Beethoven actually transcribed a number of his *own* works for other instrumental combinations, among them Opus 16. Written in 1796 as a quintet for piano and winds (oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon), the work appeared in print in 1801 coupled with a companion version by the composer for piano quartet (i.e., piano and strings). Both works preserve the Opus 16 designation, underscoring their parity. Moreover, Beethoven indeed attended to his arrangement with care, sales ploy or not: the string parts of the presently performed version are more extensive than the parallel wind parts, since strings—unlike winds—can play continuously and also have double and triple stops at their disposal.

The three-movement work, dedicated to Prince Joseph Johann zu Schwarzenberg, opens with an extensive unsettled, dotted-figured *Grave* introduction before the piano introduces the elegant, virtuosic sonata movement proper. Virtually every commentator has pointed out the melodic similarity of the opening of the *Andante* with the first notes of Zerlina's aria "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto" from *Don Giovanni* (1787). In fact the resemblance is slight, but an elaborate aria (marked *cantabile*, no less) the movement certainly is. The keyboard dominates the lyrical writing here, and in fact Op. 16 dates from right around the time Beethoven

expressed his views on this very matter to his piano-builder friend Johann Streicher: "One can also make the pianoforte sing. I hope that the time will come when the harp and the pianoforte will be treated as two entirely different instruments." The finale is a rollicking 6/8 sonata-rondo whose principal theme has a built-in repetition that makes it seem familiar by the end of its very first eight-bar statement. Like its companion movements, the finale features the piano in virtually concerto-solo capacity (here complete with mini-cadenza), a reminder that Beethoven at this time was better known as a keyboard performer than as a composer.

Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 15 Gabriel Faure (1845-1924)

The quartet opens with a unison string statement of the virile, vigorous principal theme, which Faure quickly transforms into a lovely, tender melody. The undulating subsidiary theme, introduced by the viola, is promptly imitated by the other instruments. With many changes of mood and temperament, but maintaining a fluid, flowing piano part throughout, Faure discourses on the two themes and brings them back for a comparatively conventional recapitulation and coda.

The graceful Scherzo emerges with gossamer delicacy; the piano plays the wispy melody over light pizzicato chords in the strings. For the string statement of the tune, the meter changes from 6/8 (six eighth notes to a measure) to 2/4 (four eighth notes to the same measure). The shift of meters and the occasional superimposition of one on the other add a sparkling piquancy to the rhythm. The smooth, suave trio gives most of the melodic burden to the strings, which are directed to play with mutes, lending them a particularly attractive tonal quality. A review of the opening Scherzo ends the movement.

It is easy to imagine Faure working out his personal grief in the Adagio. Organized in ternary form, A-B-A, the deeply emotional movement portrays great yearning and melancholy. Both themes are structured around different treatments of rising scale fragments: the first, weighty and burdened, struggles to reach upward, even as it falls back in failure; the second, more

songful, is slightly more optimistic. The piano part is much elaborated for the return of the opening section.

The principal theme of the finale has the same rhythmic pattern as the first movement, and the same rising-scale melodic contour as the Adagio, an attempt, perhaps, to unify the separate movements. After the energetic opening subject, the contrasting cantabile, but agitated, second theme is heard in the viola before being taken up by the others. After building to an impassioned climax in the development section, the recapitulation starts quietly, leading to the brilliant conclusion.

**Piano Quartet in E-flat Major,
Op. 47**

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

The piano quartet opens with eleven slow introductory bars, in which the piano states the theme to which the strings give answer. After the introduction, the movement begins in a fast tempo. The principal theme is set forth and repeated twice. The second theme starts out in G minor and is imitated immediately by the strings. After pushing this theme through various keys, Schumann ends up in the proper key to end the exposition section. The introductory material starts out the development section and after a vehement passage of octaves in the strings, the climax is reached as the theme reappears in its original form. The composer then makes an inventive recapitulation in which he even adds new themes. The next movement is a scherzo in G minor in 3/4 time. The initial theme is played by the piano and cello in staccato unisons and then taken up by the other strings. This particular movement has two different middle sections with the original material coming back each time as is traditional for a scherzo with trios. The third movement is slow and the theme is stated mostly by the cello, which was described by one reviewer as full-blooded and of luxuriant sensuousness. After this beautiful theme, there is a contrasting theme which changes the mood, and then, as is typical, the original theme comes back. The last movement is full of brilliant melodies and is an example of romantic bravura, overflowing with ideas and having them employed in a masterly manner, using a lot of counterpoint. This movement is considered by many to be the high point of the piano quartet.

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC 1991-92 SEASON

*Presented in Cooperation with University of the Pacific
and the UOP Conservatory of Music
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Los Angeles Piano Quartet

October 6, 1991, 3:00 p.m.

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