

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

The Amadeus Trio

Timothy Baker, violin
Jeffrey Solow, cello
Marian Hahn, piano

Sunday, April 16, 2000, 3:00 PM
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California



Program

Trio No. 2 in B minor, Op. 76 (1933)
Lento—Allegro molto moderato
Molto vivace
Lento—Andante mosso—Allegretto

Joaquin Turina
(1882–1949)

Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67 (1944)
Andante
Allegro non troppo
Largo
Allegretto

Dimitry Shostakovich
(1906–1975)

—Intermission—

Trio in G minor, Op. 15 (1855)
Moderato assai
Allegro, ma non agitato
Alternative I: Andante
Tempo I
Alternative II: Maestoso
Tempo I
Finale: Presto

Bedřich Smetana
(1824–1884)



The Amadeus Trio appears by arrangement with
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Program Notes

Turina–Trio No. 2 in b, Op. 76

Turina was of the illustrious company of Spanish composers—Albeniz, Granados, and de Falla—gracing the musical world of the early twentieth century, clustering in Paris during the era of Debussy, and strongly influenced by him. Yet as Amat notes in “New Grove,” Turina tried perhaps harder than his Spanish contemporaries to compose music in the conventional major forms of the European standard. Yet urged by his life-long friend, Manuel de Falla, and true to his Sevillian heritage and his own personality, his work incorporates Spanish musical idioms, not by direct quotes of folk music, but by the subtle evoking of national atmosphere.

In Paris, Turina studied with Vincent d’Indy and Moritz Moszkowski at the Schola Cantorum. Through d’Indy he was influenced by the cyclic idiom of César Franck. He returned to Madrid with Manuel de Falla and contributed to Spanish musical life throughout his life, though his music continued to be successfully performed in Paris as well as Madrid. He was Professor of Composition at the Madrid Conservatory, a founder of the General Music Commission of the Ministry of Education, and a member of the San Fernando Academy. He was a music critic and wrote a dictionary of music as well as a treatise on composition. He was awarded national tributes including the Grand Cross of Alfonso the Wise.

His works include two operas and symphonic works such as his *Sinfonia Sevillana*, a kind of tone poem. Characteristic are his set of gentle, fragrant songs with piano solos interspersed, “Canto a Sevilla,” in homage to his city of birth.

His first published work was a Piano Quintet, showing the influence of Franck and his interest in the European musical heritage. However, his Piano Trio, Op. 35, won him the Spanish National Music Prize. The Piano Trio No. 2 was composed a few years later in 1933, and both of these use elements blending Spanish and international elements. The formal elements of Op. 76 simply support the overwhelming impression of music of great charm through rhythm and timbre and per-

vaded by Turina’s “Sevillanismo.” Solow finds Op. 76 contains all of the musical influences in Turina’s life: “the pastel transparency of Debussy, the sparkling virtuosity of Moszkowski, and the dramatic darkness of Franck.”

The first movement opens dramatically, *Lento*, but soon the lilting theme on the violin with decorating runs on the piano enters *Allegro molto*. The second subject is a conversation, some stress from chordal work on the piano, a cello solo, and violin in its high register. Before the return of the original theme, the piano rhapsodizes in a virtuosic vein.

The *Molto vivace* begins a *perpetuum mobile* on muted strings with the piano providing a rich harmonic chordal foundation. A sudden shock of chords introduces a slower lyrical passage on the strings before the return to *vivace*.

The last movement begins slowly with heavy block chords, Debussy style, reminiscent of *La Cathedrale englouti* (*The Submerged Cathedral*), No. 10 of his Preludes, Book I. A rich string duet and a third dance-like section are followed by rippling piano passages running to a climax. The block chords precede a climatic and abrupt ending.

Shostakovich–Trio No. 2 in e, Op. 67

Shostakovich was launched into large-scale enterprise in the genre of chamber music by a request from the Beethoven String Quartet in 1939. It was an opportunity to expand on his piano repertoire limited to Twenty-four Preludes, Op. 34, composed in homage to Johann Sebastian Bach, a Sonata for Cello and Piano, and his first Piano Concerto. He completed a Piano Quintet, premiered in Moscow in November 1940, and received a State prize. The ceremonies took place just prior to the outbreak of war between Nazi Germany and Russia, 22 June 1941. The Quintet was neither strenuous nor disturbing but contemplative, lyrical, and genial. The composer had an imaginative instinct for the many inherent possibilities in the relationship between piano and strings showing forth in his imaginative sense of texture.

In contrast with the mood of the Quintet, the Trio No. 2 (his first trio

had been a student work) is an elegy. It was to become a key work in his spiritual development. It had been begun as a kind of refreshing work after the labors of the Eighth Symphony, a reflection of the anguish and the pain of war punctuated by both anger and hope. However, Ivan Sollertinsky, a musicologist-critic and close friend and mentor of Shostakovich, died unexpectedly, causing Shostakovich to reshape the emotional content of the Trio. In scope, it transcends his personal grief and is expressive of the sorrows of an epoch, Soviet Russia’s “Great Patriotic War” with Germany, a successor to his “war” symphonies.

Though in four movements, the Trio is “cyclic;” the last two movements are interlinked and the “motto” theme of the beginning introduction evolves into a final cadenza for the three instruments.

The *Andante* begins with a very soft, tight, tense violin lament, *Lento*, and the cello joins in a counter melody. The piano punctuates with quiet unobtrusive chords. In the *Moderato*, the theme evolves first heard high on the cello in icy harmony, and spiritually remote; then, characteristic of Shostakovich, the piano plays a meditative melody over pulsing strings until the violin returns with more passion and the piano with more emphasis. Roseberry describes this sonata movement as uneasy, suppressed, and unable to decide between reflection, action, sorrow, protest, or joy: thoroughly ambiguous.

The scherzo-rondo in F sharp major, in complete contrast, begins with unrelenting momentum, not more diverting than menacing. The piano contributes a rising passage with trills and reiterated chords.

The *Largo* is a funereal Chaconne, with eight heavy, dissonant chords on the piano forming the ground. As the violin enters and interweaves elegiac melodies with the cello, the ground becomes a subdued tolling. This movement is the heart of the elegy and Shostakovich bares his grief.

A macabre rondo-finale, the *Allegretto*, starts with repeated chords over pizzicati. In its repetitions, the sardonic themes are half dance, half march, building up gradually to a climax, an

agony of pain and despair. This movement has been termed “Jewish” with its modal themes and strong folk rhythmic emphasis. A certain warmth occurs when the theme from the first movement and its cadenza occurs but the *danse-macabre* returns. This movement is said to look forward to the protesting spirit of his “Songs from Jewish Folk Poetry” of 1960 and his later Symphony No. Thirteen, “Babi Yar,” mourning the scene of a Jewish slaughter. After the first performance in 1944 in Leningrad, with the composer at the piano, it is reported that the talk was all of the death camps discovered after the Nazi retreat at Majdanek and Treblinka.

Smetana—Trio in g minor, Op. 15

The Trio is an early work, composed before Smetana exiled himself from the repressive Austrian domination of Bohemia after the 1848 rebellion across Europe. It was also before creating a nationalist music had become his conscious preoccupation. He and Chopin were later collaborators in developing their countries’ musical idioms. Chopin was a major influence in the formation of Smetana’s piano style, and both musicians were piano virtuosos. Smetana’s piano music has been described as Lisztian and suggestive of Schumann’s piano music.

Smetana turned to chamber music for the expression of his most personal and intimate feelings. Two string quartets are entitled “From My Life.” He tells that the *Largo* from the 1876 quartet “recalls the bliss of my first love for the girl who afterward became my faithful wife.” The piano trio was prompted by the death of his first child, Bedriska (Frederika). She was four and a half when she died and her father felt the loss of a child whom he knew was full of musical potential. With fatherly pride he writes, “At the age of three she was singing...and singing well—lieder with the texts and on the piano she was already playing the C major scale in contrary motion with both hands together.” He adds with pathetic paternal pride: “She had learnt all the pieces played at the music school as well as the names of the authors.” He writes that this first chamber work was “written in memory of my first child...who enchanted us with her

extraordinary musical talent, and yet was snatched away from us by death.”

Using a French cyclic thematic transformation, he infused the whole trio with a tragic character, through a falling theme based on an ancient motive signifying death and the Crucifixion. The work is infused with a deep sincerity, with pathos, warmth, and tenderness combined. The expression of emotion is not restrained but it never lapses into sentimentality.

In the *Moderato assai*, the violin introduces the falling motif and the cello takes it up over a pulsating piano. The tragic air of the first theme is offset by the warm tender second theme with gentler piano accompaniment. The *Pui animato* sections, using the opening theme, have a restlessness. Just before the recapitulation, the violin and cello, whose music has the hovering character of repeated notes and falling motifs, are followed by a “tempo rubato” cadenza on the piano—suggestive of the father’s answer?

A sprightly scherzo, *Allegro, ma non agitato*, suggests a musical portrait of Bedriska with family polkas, yet at times darkened with the spirit of death. Two trios are contrasted, one *andante*, in which the gentle falling motif is interspersed throughout with flowing dance turns, and one *maestoso*, in which chords on the piano using dotted rhythms support a definitive and eloquent string melody. In the first, tension is relaxed; in the second, grief is expressed with nobility.

The *Presto*, with an urgently galloping rondo subject, is a reworked earlier piano sonata, the falling theme inserted. The rapid paced sections showcase piano virtuosity, but are interspersed with two hymn-like sections, *tranquillo assai*. In the first, the cello introduces a slow poignant theme. After the second, a funeral march develops with heavy piano chords. The rondo theme returns but is cut off abruptly by the final chords.

—Notes by Catherine Roche

FOCM expresses its sincere gratitude to Marshal Holling and Trader Joe’s for the refreshments served at the reception following today’s concert.

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