

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

The Stern /Andrist Duo

James Stern, violin
Audrey Andrist, piano

Sunday, October 3, 1999, 3:00 p.m.
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California



James Stern & Audrey Andrist have donated their fee to benefit FOCM

Program

Rondo in b minor, D. 895 for violin and piano

**Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)**

Sonata in d minor, Op. 108 for piano and violin

**Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)**

Allegro
Adagio
Un poco presto e con sentimento
Presto agitato

—Intermission—

Sonata in A, Op. 47 (“Kreutzer”) for piano and violin

**Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)**

Adagio sostenuto – Presto
Andante con variazioni
Finale: Presto



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The Stern /Andrist Duo, James Stern, violin, and Audrey Andrist, piano, gave their first performances in 1987 in New York City where they met while both were studying at the Juilliard School. Since then, this husband and wife team has been heard in recital throughout North America, performing at New York's Steinway Hall, the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, the Banff Summer Festival in Canada, and Oberlin College. They have recorded for CBC and American Radio and have recorded the music of American composer Donald Erb on CD.

An active recitalist and chamber musician, violinist James Stern has appeared in concert at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in NYC. As a finalist in the US Artistic Ambassador auditions, he performed at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. A native of New York, Mr. Stern received his formal training at the Juilliard School studying with Louise Behrend, Joseph Fuchs, and Lewis Kaplan. Mr. Stern was concert-master of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of New York for two years and held a faculty position at the New York School for Strings. He has performed at the prestigious Marlboro Music Festival, the Bowdoin Festival in Maine, and the Monomoy Festival in Cape Cod. Mr. Stern is also in demand as a teacher and has presented master classes and recitals at many universities, the Intermountain Advanced String Institute, the Pacific Summer Festival at Stanford University, and the Snowmass Chamber Music Festival in Colorado.

Canadian pianist Audrey Andrist was the 1994 winner of the San Antonio International Keyboard Competition. She began her piano studies with Mary Murakami in Estevan, later completing a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Regina as a student of William Moore. The recipient of grants from the Canada Council and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Ms. Andrist continued her studies at Juilliard as a scholarship student of Herbert Stessin. She has been a top prizewinner in many competitions, including the Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition, the Mozart International Competition, the Juilliard Concerto Competition, and the Canadian Broadcasting Competition. Ms. Andrist has appeared as soloist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and performed Beethoven's First Concerto with the Juilliard Orchestra in Alice Tully Hall. An ardent exponent of 20th

century music, Ms. Andrist recently gave the world premier of a Piano Concerto written for her by Andrew MacDonald, with the CBC Vancouver Symphony.

Former faculty members of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Mr. Stern and Ms. Andrist currently reside in Stockton, where Mr. Stern is Associate Professor of Violin at the University of the Pacific and Ms. Andrist maintains a private studio.

Program Notes

The generosity of this duo brings us three demanding works. Schubert's *Rondeau* is a virtuosic presentation composed for a virtuoso, Josef Slavik. The Brahms sonata, last of his three works written in maturity, is sinewy, powerful, and dramatic with a grandeur of symphonic proportion. Beethoven's "Kreutzer" with its dramatic intensity and technical brilliance, was declared by Kreutzer, himself a brilliant violinist, to be "outrageously incomprehensible."

Franz Schubert – Rondeau Brillant in b, D. 895, Op. 70.

Josef Slavik came to Vienna after a successful career in Prague, hoping to make for himself an international reputation. He had impressed Paganini favorably and become friendly with Chopin, who considered him a second Paganini. Schubert's genius told him where Slavik's achievements lay and the two compositions he wrote for him exploit the virtuoso style. The *Rondeau Brillant* in b minor was written in December 1826, and in January 1827, it was performed in Schubert's presence at the home of Domenico Artaria, the publisher. Karl Maria von Bocklet played the piano and Slavik, of course, the violin.

Schubert planned the *Rondeau* with a slow introduction leading to a "Rondo allegro." The violin answers a vigorous rhythmic motif for the piano with ascending or descending flourishes. Some of the episodes are lyrical, others technically exciting. The Viennese *Zeitschrift fur Kunst* reported, in language that now seems quaint, that the work showed an "old master of harmony" who "knows how to unite his shapes and groups in such a way that they all go to the making of a beautiful whole. A fiery imagination animates the piece." It is interesting to remember that though Beethoven was Schubert's idol, he was not his model. If Schubert believed

Beethoven gave the piano new power of heroic utterance, Schubert gave it a voice with which to sing.

Johannes Brahms - Violin Sonata No. 3 in d, Op. 108

Brahms, now in his "harvest" years, spent three highly productive summers, those of 1886-8, in the Swiss village of Thun, where he could make visits into the mountains. A high peak of inspired chamber music was the result. Here were composed his three violin sonatas, the third started in 1887 and finished in 1888. It was dedicated to Hans von Bulow, a friend of eight years who had done much to promote the compositions of Brahms. Brahms and Jenő Hubay gave the first performance in Budapest on 22 December, 1888, and Brahms and Joachim (his life-long friend) introduced it to Vienna a few weeks later.

Brahms, ever diffident about his work, had sent the Third Violin Sonata to Clara Schumann, who because of her arthritis had her daughter and friend play it. Clara's response was warm: "I marveled at the way everything is interwoven, like fragrant tendrils of the vine." She loved especially the third movement, "which is like a beautiful girl sweetly frolicking with her lover—then in the middle of it all, a flash of deep passion, only to make way for sweet dalliance once more." According to Brahms' reply, he was very pleased with her response.

The first two sonatas enrich us with "tranquil happiness," especially the tender intimate second sonata. Brahms could draw on the romantic overtones of a long flirtation with Hermine Spies, whom he called his "songstress" and who was the inspiration of many alto vocal works. With mature wisdom he was distancing himself from her but Brahmsian yearning may be felt in the contemplative quiet of his lyrical works, for that was a decisive characteristic of his whole being. However, the third sonata is conceived on an ampler plan than the other two, consisting of four movements in the grand style, with a spirit of passion and pathos prevailing.

In the first movement we find passion in agitation, passionate emphasis. The second and crowning movement consists of a seamless hymn-like melody, uncomplicated by development. A superb, grandly conceived cantilena for the violin on the G-string extends over twenty-four measures. It is Brahms in sublime self-forgetfulness. In the

third movement, a Scherzo which some have found frenetic while others have discerned a calm solemnity or passion in repose, we find a typically Brahmsian intermezzo moving within the limits of a very few motifs somewhat cold in color. In the finale, the dramatic conflict comes to a climax, fast and agitated but weighty and passionate. Brahms is highly original, for he presented a puzzle to the pedants, who cannot decide whether the movement is in rondo or sonata form.

According to Neimann, the real Brahms of the later period is found here, more reflection than spontaneity, in form, more terse and concentrated, with virility and massive weightiness. The piano part at times rises to virtuosity. The first two sonatas are more psychologically subtle, representing the ecstatically happy, pensively contemplative, and mournfully resigned side of Brahms. The third has the greater effectiveness and power to grip an audience.

Ludwig van Beethoven – Sonata in A, Op. 47 (“Kreutzer”)

Beethoven sketched and rapidly completed this Sonata for performance on May 24, 1803, at 8:00 a.m., by himself and the violinist George Bridgetower, whose virtuosity had impressed Beethoven. The story goes that at 4:00 a.m., the copyist came to make a clean violin part for Bridgetower, who played the variations at sight. Beethoven played the piano part from the hieroglyphics and occasional notes jotted in his own part.

Beethoven had just completed the oratorio *Christus am Oelberge* (*Christ on the Mount of Olives*) and was about to begin the *Eroica* Symphony. His earlier sonatas, according to Riezler, showed fewer signs of mental struggle than his piano sonatas, so though being more perfect in some respects, they were less individual. The sonatas more closely preceding the *Kreutzer* show new experimental and innovative touches and expansion of tonal sonorities. Beethoven was, according to Solomon, in the process of shaping “a new dynamic and declamatory voice for violin to balance this unprecedented pianistic style.” Beethoven was arriving at the outer limits of high-Classical style.

At this time Beethoven dreamed of moving to Paris, for he chafed under the belief that he was not being given a

“position commensurate with his talents.” The dedication to Kreutzer, the outstanding violinist of Paris, was meant to smooth an entrance to that city. Of course this dream was ended in 1804 when, disillusioned with Napoleon, who had declared himself emperor, he destroyed the “Bonaparte” inscription on his Symphony No. 3.

Beethoven wrote of this sonata that it was “written in a very concertante style, like that of a concerto.” The idea behind concertante style was dramatic dialogue, “conflict” between two instruments. The two instruments of this sonata were to be given equal weight, for the violin had acquired an urgent declamatory voice. As for the sonata form itself, Beethoven was gaining perception of new potentialities within the framework, an aesthetic, flexible form that could be used for explosive musical concepts and could deal with dramatic and tragic subjects. Francescatti, the noted violinist, preferred the form, saying, “Personally, I adore these works, with the instrumentation of a small symphony and with their various movements bound together by systematic construction, yet differing from one another like a suite of short pieces” with various tempos and structures.

Tolstoi reacted violently to the sonata and wrote a bitter book of love and murderous jealousy named *The Kreutzer Sonata*. The tragic hero is incited to murder by a performance of the sonata by his wife and her violinist friend. Tolstoi pronounced the music “terrifying” and warned that such pieces should be played only in important and significant circumstances. He admitted that it disclosed to him completely new feelings and new powers.

The work is in three movements and is the only sonata with a somewhat solemn, slow introduction, built on an arpeggio which leads to a Presto, unusual for a first movement, propelled by a four quarter-note motif immediately rising to a dynamic climax. The slow second movement offers four variations. The final movement was composed in 1802 for his sixth sonata, borrowed perhaps because of the time shortage; but it is better suited to the *Kreutzer*. It is a witty Presto in tarantella (6/8) rhythm.

—Notes by Catherine Roche

FORTY-FOURTH SEASON

1999-2000

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*All 1999-2000 concerts are presented in
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