



FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

in Cooperation with Pacific's Conservatory of Music presents

HORSZOWSKI TRIO

JESSE MILLS, violin

RAMAN RAMAKRISHNAN, cello

RIEKO AIZAWA, piano

2:30 PM, Sunday, November 16, 2014
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN **TRIO IN D MAJOR, OP. 70, NO. 1 "GHOST"** (1808)
(1770–1827) *Allegro vivace e con brio*
Largo assai ed espressivo
Presto

JOAN TOWER **FOR DANIEL** (2004)
(b. 1938)

INTERMISSION

ROBERT SCHUMANN **TRIO NO. 2 IN F MAJOR, OP. 80** (1847)
(1810–1856) *Sehr lebhaft*
Mit innigem Ausdruck—Lebhaft
In mässiger Bewegung
Nicht zu rasch

The HORSZOWSKI TRIO is represented by BesenArts LLC
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ARTIST PROFILE



When they played together for the first time, Jesse Mills, Raman Ramakrishnan, and Rieko Aizawa immediately felt the spark of a unique connection. Many years of close friendship had created a deep trust between the players, which in turn led to exhilarating expressive freedom. And so, in 2011, they formed the Horszowski (Hor-SHOV-ski) Trio.

Two-time Grammy-nominated violinist Jesse Mills first performed with Raman Ramakrishnan, founding cellist of the prize-winning Daedalus Quartet, at the Kinhaven Music School over twenty years ago, when they were children. In New York City, they met pianist Rieko Aizawa, who, upon being discovered by the late violinist and conductor Alexander Schneider, had made her U.S. concerto debuts at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Their musical bonds were strengthened at various schools and festivals around the world, including the Juilliard School and the Marlboro Festival.

Ms. Aizawa was the last pupil of the legendary pianist, Mieczysław Horszowski (1892-1993), at the Curtis Institute. The Trio takes inspiration from Horszowski's musicianship, integrity, and humanity. Like Horszowski, the Trio presents repertoire spanning the traditional and the contemporary. In addition, they seek to perform works from the trove of composers with whom Horszowski had personal contact, such as Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Martinů, Villa-Lobos, and Granados.

Based in New York City, the members of the Horszowski Trio teach at Columbia University and the Longy School of Music of Bard College.

Beethoven: Trio No. 1, "Ghost"

During the years 1807-8, Beethoven composed some of his most dramatic orchestral music. From early 1807 came the *Coriolan Overture*, the *Mass in C Major* was composed that summer, and during the fall and winter Beethoven was engaged with the *Fifth Symphony*. Following completion of the *Fifth*, he progressed directly to the *Sixth Symphony* working on that through the summer of 1808. After finishing such massive works, it appears that Beethoven may have needed a change. Leaving orchestral music he turned to the concentrated works of chamber music, composing the two piano trios of Opus 70 and a cello sonata in the fall of 1808; the "*Harp*" *Quartet* followed the next year. Both trios were composed during Beethoven's stay at Countess Marie von Erdödy's estate in the village of Heiligenstadt, outside Vienna. He dedicated the two trios to the Countess and took part in performances of them at her home during the Christmas season in 1808.

The first, in D major, known as the 'Ghost', is one of his best known works in the genre (rivalled only by the Archduke Trio). It features themes found in the second movement of his *Symphony No. 2*. This piece is representative of Beethoven's "Middle" stylistic period, in which he gradually moved away from Classical models in terms of their length and intensity, as well as in their innovation, but never abandoned the Classical harmonic language. In addition, his music became increasingly difficult for even the top players of the time.

Coincidentally, Beethoven was coming to grips with his developing deafness during a six-month doctor-ordered rest, which he spent that summer with the Countess. The consequence of this was obviously not a remedy for his deafness but the composer's answer to the calamity as described in the famed Heiligenstadt Testament.

This letter, addressed to his two brothers, and found only after his death, admits the scope of his hearing loss, and the resultant dread and embarrassment Beethoven underwent. The music written during these years is remarkable, not unexpectedly, for its manifestation of valor and struggle, as well

as its colossal scale. This was a time of doubt and worry in Beethoven's life, made worse as he had no steady source of income at the time.

The composer Carl Czerny was Beethoven's most famous piano student. In 1842 he wrote that the second movement of the Piano Trio in D reminded him of the ghost of Hamlet's father. He was close: evidence from Beethoven's notebook suggests that the playwright Heinrich von Collin and the composer at the time were discussing an opera of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Can you visualize the scene of the three witches in this music? Whatever the truth, Czerny's nickname stuck and today the work is known as the "Ghost."

That ghostly middle movement is introduced with an eerie, sustained three notes in the strings, after which the piano responds mournfully. The strings and piano alternate this way through the introduction, thereby setting the ominous mood of the *Largo*. The dark D-minor melodies of the exposition become more forceful in its repeat. As the development begins, listen to how Beethoven modulates briefly to C major, then quickly moves on through several other keys to re-establish the tense atmosphere. The end of the movement is characterized by gripping pauses and abrupt and intermittent stops and outbursts. With all its ghostly qualities, the movement's effects are achieved quite simply, with slow crescendos and diminuendos, chromaticism and silences, as well as impressionistic use of *tremolando*.

To set off the "Ghost" movement further, Beethoven made the outside movements shorter (each about six minutes long) and much more direct in style, giving the whole trio an arched shape. The first movement begins with a fast-moving rhythmic figure played in a vigorous unison; the main thematic material of the movement is played within the first several bars. The third movement, after the disturbance or even near-upheaval you have experienced in the center movement, is a return to more lucid writing, and serves as bright, warm relief. The music leaves out the sharp contrasts of both preceding movements, and instead flows serenely and seamlessly to the end.

The Op. 70 Trios, were written between the Fifth and Sixth and the Seventh and Eighth symphonies. As every one of those symphonies raised the bar, so scholar Lewis Lockwood says of the 'Ghost' Trio: "(it) raises the genre to a level from which the later piano trio literature could move forward." By the end of Beethoven's second period, he was conceiving chamber music on an even more symphonic scale.

Tower: For Daniel

Many consider Joan Tower to be one of the most significant American composers living at present. She has made enduring contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator during a career spanning more than fifty years. Her works (have been commissioned by major ensembles, soloists, and orchestras, including the Emerson, Tokyo, and Muir quartets; soloists Evelyn Glennie, Carol Wincenc, David Shifrin, and John Browning; and the orchestras of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Washington DC, among others. Tower was the first composer chosen for a Ford Made in America consortium commission of sixty-five orchestras. Leonard Slatkin and the Nashville Symphony recorded *Made in America* in 2008 (along with *Tambor* and *Concerto for Orchestra*). The album collected three Grammy awards: Best Classical Contemporary Composition, Best Classical Album, and Best Orchestral Performance. In 1990 she became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for *Silver Ladders*, a piece she wrote for the St. Louis Symphony where she was Composer-in-Residence from 1985-88. Other residencies with orchestras include a 10-year residency with the Orchestra of St. Luke's (1997-2007) and the Pittsburgh Symphony (2010-2011). She is in residence as the Albany Symphony's Mentor Composer partner in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons.

"For Daniel" was written for the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio with a commission sponsored by John and Helen Schaefer of the Arizona Friends of

Chamber Music. It is dedicated to Joan Tower's nephew, Daniel MacArthur, who passed away in 2003 after a long illness. The composer writes:

"The 17-minute work tries to convey the imagined struggles associated with someone who is facing a long-term terminal illness. The hopes, joys, depression, anger, deep turmoil and occasional serenity are in constant juxtaposition in this work, as they were throughout the last years of Daniel's life. As the end approaches, so does the intensity. In my work, the intensity is loud and fast. Maybe Daniel's approach was more accepting. May he now rest in peace."

The Horszowski Trio recorded "For Daniel" in March 2014 as part of a large recording project of many of Tower's chamber music works being curated by the composer in celebration of her 75th birthday.

Schumann: Trio No. 2

German composer and music critic Robert Schumann was profoundly influenced by literature and by an arduous battle for Clara, the love of his life. However, he also suffered progressively from schizophrenia or manic depression, attempting suicide in his early forties, and spent his final years in an asylum.

Despite unfulfilled and aborted attempts to become a concert pianist, permanently injuring his fingers attempting to practice using a mechanical invention of his own defective design, Schumann was a natural and fluent compositional genius making him one of the most important of the romantic composers for the instrument. His greatest music largely comprises his compositions that include piano: the immense collection of music for solo piano, art songs, and the chamber works featuring the piano quintet, piano quartet, and three piano trios.

In the first years of his 1840 marriage to Clara, Schumann seemed to concentrate on a different genre each year: 1840 was the famed "year of song," during which he wrote 130 songs. The following year he turned to orchestral music, and in 1842 he took up chamber music, writing three string quartets, a piano quintet and quartet, and starting several others. Then he lost interest in chamber music, setting the form aside completely until 1847.

But for Schumann, 1847 was relatively bereft of composition. He revised his *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, which he had written three years earlier. In April, he outlined the overture to his opera, *Genoveva*, which he then set aside until the next year. During the rest of 1847, he composed a few songs, the brief choral work, *Beim Abschied zu singen*, and two Piano Trios, No. 1 in D minor, Op. 63, and No. 2 in F major, Op. 80.

Chamber music allowed Schumann to indulge his favoritism for ornate figurations and discreet harmonic nuances that are such a prominent attribute of his solo piano work. So it should come as no surprise that his piano chamber works are openly piano driven, with the strings either shadowing the keyboard or, together, opposing it. This work falls between Schumann's other two piano trios and it is also the most harmonically daring. Listen throughout for keys that are very distant from F major.

Schumann was a fine pianist, but he did not play a stringed instrument, and he tends to treat the violin and cello as a unit. In the first movement, a sonata form in $\frac{6}{8}$ time signature, they play together or have similar music, and he frequently sets this music in contrast to the piano's line. We see this from the first instant, where the strings share the long opening idea over chordal piano accompaniment.

This beginning, which Schumann marks *Sehr lebhaft* ("Very lively") represents some of the fastest music in the entire trio. The violin and cello combine to provide an ambiguous quality to the first theme. More lyric themes follow, with D major and G major heavily-emphasized key areas in this movement. At first, the development is imitative, which contrasts with the chordal nature of the opening theme, but then listen for the second theme to be highlighted. You will hear the piano declare compellingly in the first part of the second theme, but the violin later takes the lead: the piano's soft chordal subject and a flowing idea presented in turn by violin and cello that Schumann marks both *dolce* and *ausdruckvoll* ("expressive"). There is no exposition repeat, and Schumann rounds the movement off with a coda that presses ahead more and more quickly.

Both middle movements are characterized by restraint. The second movement, *Mit*

innigem Ausdruck—Lebhaft ("With heartfelt/inward expression—lively"), contains stratified melodic features and coinciding triplet and dotted rhythms that weave together complex lyric lines in both stringed instruments and from each of the pianist's hands.

In place of an expected third movement scherzo, Schumann offers another quiet movement. The music seems to pulse ahead slightly in the course of the movement but eventually draws to a subdued close. He sets this movement, *In mässiger Bewegung* ("In moderate movement"), in what could be a scherzo meter of $\frac{3}{8}$ time, but then asks for a moderate tempo, and the emphasis is on gentle lyricism. You will hear texture that includes brief canons, a sparsely-imitative trio section, and a hesitant coda leading to a restrained close on quiet pizzicato stroke.

The fourth movement finale, *Nicht zu rasch* ("Not too quickly"), finally re-asserts the title key signature of F Major. This not-too-fast finale offers some rhythmic surprises along the way as Schumann syncopates the piano part at length. The piano part is especially complex and pervasive in this closing movement and there are nice, quick exchanges among the three instruments. The agreeable manner of the first three movements is evident here too, and Schumann brings the trio to a spirited close.

A certain quality of control permeates the *Piano Trio in F Major*. It has no truly fast movement, and the two central movements are both at a comparatively slow tempo. Even in the finale, which we anticipate will bring a spirited conclusion, Schumann takes care to stipulate *Nicht zu rasch*. Instead, the emphasis in this music is on lyricism, on themes that can be sung. There are no excesses in this music, nor does Schumann show any interest at all in virtuosity—the violin part, in fact, can be played almost entirely in first position. This music appeals not through spectacle or exhilaration but through a gentle melodiousness.

— notes © Dr. Michael Spencer

59TH SEASON

2014-2015

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