

Core Memory Music

Trio Gaia

Andrew Barnwell, piano
Grant Houston, violin
Yi-Mei Templeman, cello

April 8, 2023

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven	Piano Trio in E-flat major, Op. 1 No. 1 <i>1. Allegro</i> <i>2. Adagio cantabile</i> <i>3. Scherzo. Allegro assai</i> <i>4. Finale. Presto</i>	1795
Toru Takemitsu	Between Tides <i>Intermission</i>	1993
Robert Schumann	Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 63 <i>1. Mit Energie und Leidenschaft</i> <i>2. Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch</i> <i>3. Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung</i> <i>4. Mit Feuer - Nach und nach schneller</i>	1847

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Please join us on Saturday, April 22 at 3 pm to hear the distinguished pianist Spencer Myer perform music for solo piano by Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, and Granados.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Piano Trio in E-flat major, Op. 1 No. 1

The piano trio was a relatively minor genre prior to the works of Beethoven. It initially served as repertoire for the private soirées of amateur musicians. Haydn's thirty odd piano trios display clarity of texture, an abundance of elegance, and some surprising virtuosity. Mozart increased the prominence of the violin part and the independence of the cello part in his six piano trios. He married this slightly thicker texture with his effortless gift for melody.

In the hands of Beethoven, the piano trio evolved into a large scale form, with three fully independent instrumental lines forming a rich texture. Beethoven not only expanded the complexity of Sonata-Allegro form in the first movements of his works, but also added a Scherzo and Trio, (or Menuetto and Trio) movement before the Finales. By identifying these works as "Opus 1" on the title page of the three trios published in 1795, the 25 year-old Beethoven declared them to be his first completed compositions wrought from a personal style that transcended any influence.

The novelty of these works was not lost on the audience during the premiere at the home of Prince Lichnowsky, who was to become one of Beethoven's greatest supporters and friends. Franz Ries, another friend of the composer, reported that "with the majority of Vienna's artists and connoisseurs being in attendance, and particularly Haydn, with whom final judgment rested, the trios were executed and declared extraordinary on the spot. Haydn himself had much good to say of them."

Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856)

Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 63

Schumann's greatest music generally comprises his compositions involving the piano: the vast array of distinctive music for solo piano, art songs, and the chamber works featuring the piano quintet, piano quartet, and piano trios.

Schumann was the quintessential romantic composer, and this composition might well be regarded as one of the definitive romantic piano trios. The musical language is brooding, idiosyncratic and frequently tangential in the manner of Schumann's multi-character musical fairy tales.

"I used to compose almost all my shorter pieces in the heat of inspiration," Schumann wrote in a retrospective diary entry. "Only from the year 1845 onwards, when I started to work out everything in my head, did a completely new manner of composing begin to develop." Compared to his earlier work, Schumann's "new manner" relies less on literary influences and idiosyncratic references. It's intuitively expressive, and in some ways more traditionally rigorous, but continuously finds unique solutions to the old problems of classical form.