

Core Memory Music

Merz Trio

Stephanie Zyzak, violin

Julia Yang, cello

Amy Yang, piano

Saturday, June 15, 2024

PROGRAM

Dmitri Shostakovich Piano Trio No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8 “Poème” 1923
(1906–1975)

Johannes Brahms Piano Trio No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 101 1886
(1833–1897)
1. *Allegro molto*
2. *Presto non assai*
3. *Andante grazioso*
4. *Allegro molto*

Intermission

Johannes Brahms Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 1854
(1833–1897)
1. *Allegro con moto*
2. *Scherzo*
3. *Adagio non troppo*
4. *Finale*
rev. 1889

* * *

Merz Trio is a winner of the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and is represented by Concert Artists Guild, 12 East 49th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10017 (www.concertartists.org).

Join us on Saturday, August 17, 2024 at 3:00 pm to hear violinist Angela Chan and pianist Sam Hong perform music by Schubert, Schumann, Ysaÿe, and Messiaen.

Shostakovich: Piano Trio No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8 “Poème”

Shostakovich was 38 when he composed his second piano trio, a stunning and potent masterwork firmly in the standard repertoire. Less well known is his Piano Trio No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8, a one-movement work composed in 1923 when Shostakovich was only 16. Such was his precocity that he had already been a student at the Petrograd Conservatory for three years. A bout of tuberculosis sent the young Shostakovich to a sanatorium to convalesce where, according to a letter from his sister Mariya, he got a suntan and fell in love. The object of his affections was a girl named Tatyana Glivenko, to whom Shostakovich eventually dedicated the piano trio. One can imagine his amorous intent from the original title *Poème*.

Sometimes regarded as a "student work", the first piano trio is compelling by any standard—particularly so because it shows that even at the age of 16, Shostakovich was a gifted, skillful, and original composer. The trio was not published during Shostakovich's lifetime. Apparently the current published form was assembled from multiple manuscript sources, with the final missing bars of the piano part completed by composer Boris Tishchenko.

Brahms: Piano Trio No. 3 in C minor, Op. 101

In the summer of 1886, Brahms was on holiday at Lake Thun in Hofstetten, Switzerland. In that short span he produced a remarkable freshet of masterworks: his F major Cello Sonata (Opus 99), his A major Violin Sonata (Opus 100), his C minor Piano Trio (Opus 101), most of his D minor Violin Sonata (Opus 108), and several songs, including the evergreen "Wie Melodien zieht es mir" and "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer." This is an extraordinary accomplishment by any measure. Especially well-loved by Brahms's friends Clara Schumann and Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, his Piano Trio No. 3 exemplifies all the best elements of the composer's late style.

Brahms: Piano Trio No. 1 in B major, Op. 8

In 1854, laboring under the "curse" of Schumann's glowing predictions for Germany's new rising star, a young twenty-one year old Brahms decided to publish his first chamber composition, the Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8. This was no small undertaking: Brahms was a fierce self-critic and is known to have consigned several early chamber works to the fire. Thirty-five years later, in 1890, with all but a few final works ahead, Brahms returned to the same trio to revise and shorten it..

It was around this time that Brahms decided to retire, after which he was coaxed momentarily by a late affair with the clarinet into a final small set of compositions. This piano trio therefore has a special significance for Brahms the chamber composer: it began his public career and it preoccupied his attentions again at the end of an astonishing series of masterpieces. In its final form, the B major piano trio bears the hand, the mind and the heart of both the young and the elder Brahms.

* * *

Merz Trio is a winner of the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and is represented by Concert Artists Guild, 12 East 49th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10017 (www.concertartists.org).

Join us on Saturday, August 17, 2024 at 3:00 pm to hear violinist Angela Chan and pianist Sam Hong perform music by Schubert, Schumann, Ysaye, and Messiaen.