



presents

*The
Wister Quartet*

Sunday
March 6, 2005
at 3:00 p.m.

*Albert and Hete Barthelmes Auditorium
611 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, Pa.*

The Wister Quartet

Since its formation in 1987, the Wister Quartet has earned high praise from critics and audiences alike for its superb musicianship and memorable performances, including those with guest artists Emanuel Ax, Alicia de Larrocha, Wolfgang Sawallisch and Yo-Yo Ma. The Quartet performs widely, including regular appearances at Arcadia and Swarthmore Universities, Gettysburg College, Music at Gretna, the Lenape Chamber Players Summer Festivals, the Bethlehem Chamber Music Society, the Chamber Series of The Philadelphia Orchestra and at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. The Wister Quartet is the core group of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble.

In 1993, the Wister Quartet established its own Chamber Series of five concerts at The German Society of Pennsylvania. These German Society concerts feature some of the greatest quartet literature ever written, as well as rarely played works. The Philadelphia Inquirer wrote of one performance, “The Mozart was especially pleasurable, filling the [German Society’s] hall with glowing refinement. The Quartet has recorded with DTR Recording Company, earning a Grammy nomination and critical praise for their “big vibrant sound, dramatic contrasts and brilliant effects.” The works on its CDs have been performed on the Wister Quartet Concert Series at the German Society.

Nancy Bean has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra since 1983 and is currently its Assistant Concertmaster. She is Artistic Director and first violinist of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble and a member of the Amerita Chamber Players.

Davyd Booth has been a violinist and keyboard player in The Philadelphia Orchestra since 1973. He was a member of the Philarte Quartet for 14 years. He is Co-Director and harpsichordist of the Amerita Chamber Ensemble, and violinist with 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble.

Pamela Fay is a substitute member of The Philadelphia Orchestra and is a member of the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia. She has been a member of the Toronto Symphony and the LeClair String Quartet and is the violist of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble.

Lloyd Smith has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra since 1967 and is currently its Assistant Principal cellist. He is the cellist of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble and the Amerita Chamber Ensemble. A composer, his works have been featured on this Concert Series.

The Wister Quartet

Nancy Bean, violin
Davyd Booth, violin

Pamela Fay, viola
Lloyd Smith, cello

PROGRAM

Crisantemi Giacomo Puccini
(1858-1924)

String Quartet in Db Major, Op. 15 Ernö Dohnányi
Andante - Allegro
Presto acciacato
Molto Adagio - Animato

I N T E R M I S S I O N

String Quartet in A Minor Johannes Brahms
Op. 51, No. 2
Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Quasi Minuetto moderato - Allegretto vivace
Finale: Allegro non assai

*The audience is invited to a reception in the Ratskeller
following the concert*

Program Notes

by Lloyd Smith

Crisantemi

Giacomo Puccini (1-1)

Inspired by the flower of mourning in Italy, the chrysanthemum, Puccini created this single-movement string quartet, an elegy for his friend Amadeo, Duke of Savoy. “I composed it in one night”, he wrote his brother in 1890. He reported on two successful early performances.

Crisantemi belongs to a small collection of Puccini’s works not written for the theater. More than a few of his early pieces, however, did find their way into his operas. Parts of *Tre menuetti* as well as themes from *Crisantemi* appear in his opera *Manon Lescaut*.

Verdi, who died in 1901, had named Puccini “keeper of the seal of Italian melody”. A performance of *Aida* had ignited the young man’s passion for the operatic stage; his destiny was clear. He was not to follow in the tradition of the Puccini family of Lucca — four generations of musicians who had held the post of maestro di capella at the Cathedral of San Martino. At the Milan Conservatory, where he studied with Amilcare Ponchielli (composer of *La Gioconda*), he produced his first instrumental and chamber works.

“Puccini’s harmony and orchestration”, write William Austin, “owed as much to Wagner and Massenet as to Verdi . . . His counterpoint and forms . . . adhered to the simple rules he learned under Ponchielli both now and later when his harmony and orchestration showed various 20th century influences.”

String Quartet in Db Major, Op. 15

Ernö Dohnányi (1877-1960)

Dohnányi, a contemporary of Bartók and Kodály, was born in Bratislava and educated in Budapest and Berlin. Dohnányi began to compose early. In 1896, while studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest (an institution he was later to serve as Director), his symphony was awarded the Hungarian Millennium Prize to commemorate Hungary’s thousand years of existence. He toured widely after the war, taught briefly in Argentina and in 1949 became Composer-in-Residence at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

He composed in a variety of forms. His music, strongly influenced by Brahms, has been described as “the terminal flowering of European Romanticism” and he has been called “a vital link with the 19th century.” Dohnányi wrote three string quartets. The second quartet was composed in 1906, during the period in which he taught piano at the Berlin Hochschule.

The first movement opens with a serene but brief idea which is abruptly

interrupted by a very energetic explosion. The livelier tempo establishes the character of the movement with slower moments returning occasionally to remind us of “how it was meant to be” at the opening.

The Presto movement drives headlong with enormous energy. Basically a Scherzo, it throws key changes about in a frantic but still engaging way. The middle section is an extremely lovely hymn which becomes more worldly as it progresses before returning to the driven idea.

The last movement opens as a slow movement but instead of working out its ideas slips into a reminiscence of the Presto, then of the first movement’s opening theme, then again of the slow movement material before bringing the work to a glorious close with a glowingly ecstatic encapsulation of the opening theme.

**String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 51, No. 2 Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)**

The two quartets of Op. 51 — No. 1 in C Minor and No. 2 in A Minor — were published in 1873 and dedicated to the Viennese surgeon and musician Dr. Theodore Billroth. The premiere of the A Minor work was given in Berlin by the Joachim Quartet.

Brahms had struggled for twenty years with the demands of quartet writing. Op. 51 was the result of these labors. Only one more string quartet survived his extremely self-critical destruction of works he was not completely satisfied with — Op. 67 in Bb Major, in 1876.

In the A Minor quartet, Brahms used the violinist Joseph Joachim’s personal motto — the notes F-A-E, standing for *Frei, aber einsam* (“free, but lonely”). He made these notes the second, third and fourth notes of the first movement’s main theme. He also wove his own motto into the musical texture: *Frei, aber froh* (“Free, but happy”).

The quartet opens earnestly and with questions before relaxing into a more *gemütlich* second theme of great charm. Brahms wouldn’t be Brahms, though, if he couldn’t raise questions about even the most charming melody, and the movement explores with restless energy both its earnestness and its charm, ending (predictably) quite seriously.

The slow movement is a love song, with a fight in the middle and a very engaging reconciliation before returning to the original song. The next movement is marked “Quasi Minuetto”, and properly so. It is too mysterious, and the middle section too playful, to be a formal dance, and the two sections alternate more randomly than a Minuet would allow. It is Brahms at his most fantastic, a peek into the later Romantic realms of Debussy and Ravel.

The Finale is boisterous, beginning most contentiously but eventually becoming more colloquial. Just as we begin to make friends with it, the music interrupts the mood with another contentious burst. This alternation between bluster and friendliness seems to illustrate the social Brahms, too blunt to be the constant friend but eager to reach out whenever he could.

Future Wister Concerts

At the German Society of Pennsylvania

April 3, 2005

The Wister Quartet

Beethoven, Smith, Debussy

May 8, 2005

The Wister Quartet with

Philadelphia Music Director

Christoph Eschenbach

Griffes, Mozart, Schumann

* * *

Other Upcoming Events

A complete listing is available at www.germansociety.org.

Friday, March 18 - 7:00 p.m.

Konversationsabend

***The Topicality and Trochaic Requirement
of a Language***

This is the specialty of Augustin Speyer, a post-graduate student in the Linguistic Department of PENN. While such a lecture at first glance may sound a bit high brow, many of us grew up in a multi-lingual environment, making it interesting to learn more about the sentence structure, intonation, etc, in our language, and how it has evolved over the centuries.

Friday, March 25 - 6:30 p.m.

Friday FilmFest

Das Wunder von Bern (German w/ English subtitles)

Former professional soccer player and director Sönke Wortmann ("Der bewegte Mann") tells the story of Germany's sensational 1954 World Cup Final victory (3-2) over favorite Hungary in Bern , Switzerland .

Saturday, April 23—7:00 p.m.

Hamburger Abend— Ein Abend an der Waterkant

The return of a beloved Society tradition, with Wieners, Potato Salad and Gulaschsuppe and the music of Willi Aust on the accordion. Space is limited, reserve your place now!

The German Society of Pennsylvania

In 1683, thirteen families from Krefeld under the leadership of Frankfurt lawyer, Franz Daniel Pastorius, founded the first German colony in America, Germantown — today part of Philadelphia. Since that time, more than 8,000,000 Germans reached these shores until today, 29% of the total population in the United States claims German ancestry.

Many of these immigrants formed clubs that enabled them to preserve their cultural heritage. They also formed clubs that emphasized a specific geographic area, such as the Swabians, Bavarians, Saxons, Danube Swabians, Plattdeutsche, Tyroleans, and many others.

The German Society of Pennsylvania, founded in 1764, is the oldest German organization in the New World. It was founded to protect German immigrants from unscrupulous shipping agents and to ensure just treatment on their arrival here.

Since that time, the German Society has dedicated its efforts to preserving the German cultural heritage. This it does, for instance, by offering a full-fledged German language program as well as scholarships and prizes to students of German. In addition, the Society is a source of cultural programs, lectures, German film series, and seminars, which builds bridges and strengthens national and international relations between individuals, organizations, businesses and governments.

The fine-arts program also includes presentations that feature European music and literature and access to the Joseph Horner Memorial Library for education and research. The newly restored Library, holding over 70,000 volumes, is the largest private German library outside of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In serving its members and the community and in all its undertakings, the Society strives to benefit anyone in need of its resources.

BENEFACTORS OF THE
2004-2005
CLASSICAL CONCERT SERIES

Heinz and Hella Berndt	Edward Keller
Morgan and Sonia Churchman	Dr. F. Peter and Marjorie Kohler
Dr. Edmund Cohen	William and Anita LaCoff
James and Marjorie DelBello	Margarete Larmann
Bernard Freitag	Dr. Kenneth McNeil
Dr. Janice and Arthur Goldman	James and Dorene Mundy
Gisela Hill and Joseph Perry	Dr. Victor Schutz
	Hanno and Sonja Spranger

PATRONS OF THE
2004-2005
CLASSICAL CONCERT SERIES

Daniel Cosper	Adelaide Loftus
Frank and Renate Genieser	Harold Shaffer
Dr. Harold Glass	Karl and Ann Spaeth
Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Greenstein	Ingrid Virok
Noel and Eva Jackson	Roger Whiteman
Sunny Lawrence	Cdr. Richard Wilking USN (Ret.)

In Memory of Gunda Hack