

"Wister and More!" presents the Wister Quartet – Sunday, April 22, 2012

Dear Members and Friends,

We are delighted to remind you that the next concert in our 2011/12 “Wister and More!” Series will be on Sunday, April 22 at 3:00 p.m.

This will be the Wister Quartet’s final concert on the Series this season.

The Wister Quartet

Nancy Bean, violin

Pamela Fay, viola

Davyd Booth, violin and piano

Lloyd Smith, cello

PROGRAM

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Quartettsatz in C Minor, D. 703

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN

String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95 (“Serioso”)

JOAQUIN TURINA

Piano Quartet, Op. 67

A Brief Overview of our Concert

Drama in the first half, sweetness in the second — the Wister Quartet’s season Finale is filled with the irresistible chamber music which has endeared it to audiences.

Schubert’s “Quartettsatz” is a single movement work which mixes Sturm und Drang with the bittersweet, his signature style. His gift for melody is radiantly apparent as well. The dramatic nature of this music is not as typical of Schubert, who generally preferred to address music’s more positive and lighter side.

Beethoven was at the end of his middle period when he wrote his “Serioso” quartet and the music looks forward to his late works in its freer organization, its unpredictable shifting between moods, and its powerfully spiritual character.

One of the kindest of all composers, Joaquin Turina ultimately found his inspiration in the graceful music of his native Sevilla. We welcome Davyd Booth’s pianistic abilities to bring this

wonderfully tuneful and exquisitely wrought work to you, featuring the Society's marvelous new Bösendorfer piano.

NOTES ON OUR PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Quartettsatz in C Minor, D. 703

We know from accounts of Beethoven's life and from his own sketchbooks that he took enormous pains to master string quartet writing, studying the works of Haydn and Mozart, whose influences and even whose presence he certainly strongly felt in his formative years. Likewise, nearly all of Schubert's work was accomplished in the city — Vienna — and in the cultural community which Beethoven had come to dominate.

It is understandable that Schubert was very careful about what music he released to be heard in performance, and he left behind an unusually large number of uncompleted works. The most famous of these is the B minor symphony we call "The Unfinished", but Schubert was also very self-conscious in the field of chamber music, leaving at least six string quartets unfinished in either small fragments or, in some cases, complete movements.

The Quartettsatz is one such complete movement, written in December of 1820, and it is the only one to have entered the standard repertoire of chamber music. The music has a dark intensity, rushing urgently past the ear but rarely raising its voice beyond pianissimo. The movement is in a modified sonata form. Sonata form itself generally contrasts two elements in music — the key (in this case, shifting between C minor and *Ab* major), and the themes (usually at least two contrasting ideas). In the Quartettsatz, Schubert generates strong musical interest by introducing contrasting thematic ideas at different points in the piece than its changes of key.

When Brahms was working on the first scholarly edition of Schubert's music, he found sketches for a second movement to this work which Schubert had begun, in *Ab* major. Only forty measures exist of this sketch, and there is no evidence that Schubert had ever returned to try to complete this work.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95 ("Serioso")

This quartet, Beethoven's eleventh, is a pivotal work. A particular favorite of the composer, it is one of the very few works he himself nicknamed ("Serioso").

The work dates from 1810, thus falling into the so-called "middle period" works, and even with a chasm of fourteen years separating it from the next quartet (Op. 127), it already looks very forward to the compression, the cryptic implications and, above all, the spiritual embodiment of the later quartets.

The title "Serioso" was inscribed by Beethoven for the third movement and is an indication that his heart was troubled by being refused in a marriage proposal by Therese Malfatti. It makes all the more touching Beethoven's comment, "Those who understand my music must be freed by it from all the miseries that others drag about with themselves."

It is interesting to note also that the composer withheld this work from publication for six years, even during a period of financial distress.

The energy and heartfelt introspection gives this work a special place in the Beethoven canon. From the explosive propulsion of the first movement to the inward searching of the fugal writing of the second, we are in a world of highest ideals and visions. The scherzo-like third movement, despite its "Serioso" title, is upbeat and forward moving, while the last movement, with its rousing finale, brings the work to an exhilarating and sweeping end.

Joaquin Turina (1882-1949)
Piano Quartet, Op. 67

Perhaps more than any of his Spanish contemporaries, Joaquin Turina tried to write music of conventional European character. The mediocre success of his piano quintet, Op. 1, in Paris led Isaac Albéniz to suggest that he find his inspiration in Spanish folk music.

Turina was born in Seville; his father was a painter of Italian descent. As a boy, music quickly became central to his life, and his success in his home town encouraged him to strike out for larger pastures. He arrived in Madrid at the age of twenty with grand ambitions — and some idea of how to achieve them. Madrid, and most particularly the Teatro Real, was difficult for a young composer to break into, but Turina sought out important musicians (among them Manuel de Falla), who vouched for his compositions.

His contact with de Falla turned into a life-long friendship, and while their music is often referred to as related, there are really only limited similarities. De Falla's sense of tragedy is not to be found in the simple, kind Turina, whose strongest musical inspiration

ultimately came from his own roots, the graceful music of Sevilla. He wrote his piano quartet in 1931, not long after joining the faculty of the Madrid Conservatory as professor of composition and, in spite of political difficulties during the civil war, his prestige and recognition afterwards increased considerably.

Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased online at <http://german-society-of-pennsylvania.ticketleap.com/wister/>, by calling 215-627-2332, or at the door one half hour before the performance.

With kind regards,

Beate Brockmann

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