

"Wister and More!" presents the Wister Quartet - Sunday, December 9, 2012

Dear Members and Friends,

We are delighted to remind you that the next concert in our 2012/13 "Wister and More!" Series will be on **Sunday, December 9th at 3:00 p.m.** This will be the Wister Quartet's second concert on the Series this season.

The Wister Quartet

Nancy Bean, violin Pamela Fay, viola
Davyd Booth, violin Lloyd Smith, cello

The Program

ARCANGELO CORELLI	Christmas Concerto, Op. 6, No. 8
W. A. MOZART	String Quartet in B \flat Major, K. 458 ("The Hunt")
ROBERT SCHUMANN	String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 41, No. 1

A Brief Overview of our Concert

One of the founders of modern violin playing, Arcangelo Corelli was also a very important composer of his time. Nearly all of his compositions are sonatas and concerti for the violin with accompaniment, but late in life he turned to a form of the Concerto Grosso and created some remarkable works. His "Christmas Concerto" is considered his most famous of these.

At a critical point in Mozart's life, his decision to stay in Vienna and work on his own opened up new creative energy. The "Hunt" Quartet is one of the first set that he had written since making this all-important decision. Its exuberant energy and emotional depth make it one of his greatest quartets.

Also at a turning point in his life, Robert Schumann was after long struggles able to marry his beloved Clara Wieck. Her career as a concert pianist meant long months of separation. During the first of these, Robert, deeply depressed by her absence, plunged into a study of the string quartet. Upon her return his joy was unbounded and he went into a frenzy of creative work, composing all three of his quartets in quick succession. The first quartet on today's program is considered his finest.

Notes on Our Program

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)
Christmas Concerto, Op. 6, No. 8

Born two generations before the great composers of the high Baroque — Bach, Telemann and Tartini, for instance — Arcangelo Corelli was one of the most mild-mannered and modest creative musicians. His many violin sonatas and concerti are some of the most important of the early Baroque era. In the last year of his life he wrote a series of Concerti Grossi based on a style perfected by his fellow Roman, Alessandro Stradella, a generation earlier.

Corelli, however, changed the (then) normal scoring of the solo instruments of the Concerto Grosso (violin, two violas, and bass instruments) into what we now know as the string quartet — two violins, one viola and a cello. The Concerto works perfectly as a string quartet, making Corelli perhaps the unwitting founder of the genre.

The Concerto Grosso known as the “Christmas Concerto” is considered his most famous of the series and has since been adapted for choral performance as well as its original instrumental scoring.

The first movement is a grand series of tempo and thematic changes — opening fast-paced, then alternately slowing and re-energizing, until towards the end the tempo remains fairly rapid and energetic.

The second movement is a wonderfully lush Pastorale. Its luminous harmonies are some of the most beautiful of any composer of his time, and they serve to give an almost sensual glow to the idea of Christmas as portrayed in music.

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)
String Quartet in Bb Major, K. 458 (“The Hunt”)

Salzburg, Mannheim, Paris, München, finally Vienna! The young Mozart had had a very movable career by 1781 and no doubt had the highest hopes for Vienna. Here he began what were to be the happiest and most productive years of his life.

The central chamber works of this period were six string quartets dedicated to his dear friend Joseph Haydn, whom he first met in that pivotal year 1781. Originally published as a set as his Op. 10 quartets, the Köchel listings have scattered them about for no understandable reason.

“The Hunt,” K. 458, was originally the fourth quartet of this set and was considered to be the most relaxed of the six. Its developmental writing is less formal and predictable than the earlier quartets and its minuet, which precedes the slow movement, is more miniature than usual.

Its opening movement gives the quartet its nickname due to its 6/8 meter and jaunty opening statement. The rather thoughtful Menuetto is relieved by a very happy little trio section, and the slow movement is one of the great gems of expressive writing. The finale is a cheerful one but wonderfully balanced, a satisfying end to one of the truly great quartets.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Quartet No. 1 in A Minor Op. 41, No. 1

Introvert, passionate, impulsive, Robert Schumann was the epitome of the Romantic composer. He fell in love easily, was transported both by real beauty and illusion, was severely tortured by real-world complications in his life. His relationship with Clara Wieck was filled with both such rapture and torture; after a long legal battle they were married in 1840.

All was not smooth in their married life. Clara was well established as a concert pianist, and her tours separated them frequently. One such separation happened towards the end of 1841, lasting nearly five months. Schumann, now deeply melancholic, was visited by “quartettliche Gedanken” — quartet-ish

thoughts — and made use of the lonely days by studying the string quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

Upon Clara's return, he plunged into a creative frenzy: a week after beginning his first quartet, he began his second. A month and a half later, all three of his quartets were complete.

His first quartet is an exquisite mixture of fantasy and poetry (the first movement), temperament (the driving Scherzo), love (the slow movement is a Romanza) and exuberance (the Finale).



Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased online at <http://german-society-of-pennsylvania.ticketleap.com/wister2012-13/>, by calling 215-627-2332, or at the door.

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