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In Memoriam Gunda Hack

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The
Wister Quartet

Sunday
April 22, 2007
at 3:00 p.m.

“Latin Passions”

Albert and Hete Barthelmes Auditorium
611 Spring Garden Street Philadelphia, Pa.
History of 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. 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 United States. 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 German 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, film series, and seminars. These events build bridges and strengthen relations among individuals, organizations, businesses and governments.

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

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

Since the time of Pastorius, more than 8,000,000 Germans reached these shores. Today, 29% of the total population in the United States claims German ancestry.

It may be time to consider a membership for yourself, your family or a friend.

Calendar of Events at the German Society of Pennsylvania

April
Mon. April 23 Konversationsabend, “Weeds Like Us” Book review and discussion with author, Günter Nitsch
Sat. April 28 AATG High School Student German Awards Ceremony, 9:00am
Sun. April 29 Annual Membership Meeting, 3:00pm

May
Fri. May 11 Film Fest, “The Inheritors”, 6:30pm
Sat. May 19 Women’s Auxiliary Anniversary Luncheon, 12:00 noon
Sat. May 19 Pennsylvania Microbrewery Beer Tasting with Marnie Old, 4:00pm
Wed. May 23 Konversationsabend, “Spirituality of Martin Luther” with Drs. Peter and Philip Krey, 7:00pm

June
Sat. June 2 Women’s Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00am
Fri. June 15 Film Fest, “Am I Beautiful?”, 6:30pm
Sat. June 23 Konversationsabend, Historic Burlington Walking Tour, 10:00am

July
July 16—Summer Adult Language Classes (abbreviated 6-week session)
August 24

Though the Business Office will remain open, the German Society will not host any events in July and August.
Please check our website (www.germansociety.com) for a Fall 2007 schedule of events, to be posted mid-summer.

Be sure not to miss our German-American Weekend Celebration from October 5-7!
The Wister Quartet

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

PROGRAM

“Latin Passions”

String Quartet No. 1 in D Minor . . . . . . Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga
   Allegro
   Adagio con espressione
   Menuetto: Allegro
   Adagio - Allegretto

Tango Jalousie . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Jacob Gade
   (Quartet alone)

Por Una Cabeza . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Carlos Gardel
   (1887-1935)
   Dancers: Peter Kadel and Meredith Tretiak

INTERMISSION

Danse Espagnole . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Manuel de Falla
   (1876-1946)

Piano Quartet, Op. 67 . . . . . . . . . . . Joaquín Turina
   Lento - Andante mosso
   Vivo
   Andante - Allegretto - Allegro molto

The audience is invited to a reception in the Ratskeller following the concert
Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga (1806-1826)

String Quartet No. 1 in D Minor

Born in Bilbao, Spain, Arriaga was an uncommonly talented composer and violinist, a child prodigy (helped along by the common practice of subtracting a couple of years from his actual age). His untimely death at the age of 19 has been attributed to a lung ailment, exhaustion, or both.

His education was completed at the Conservatoire de Paris. In his nineteen years, he had written two operas (the first at the age of 13), a symphony, a fair amount of sacred music, and three sparkling string quartets (at the age of 18, the year before his death).

Following his death, his biographical material was inflated by his grieving devotees. He became a cult figure as Spanish musical nationalism took hold, and he was dubbed “the Spanish Mozart.”

Gade’s “Tango Jalousie” is the prime example of the European Tango. Premiered in 1925, it became an instant international hit and was featured in over one hundred films. The royalties allowed the Danish composer of popular orchestral music to devote himself to composition full-time for the rest of his life. The royalties now fund a foundation for young musicians.

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

Danse Espagnole

Manuel de Falla came from a family of Catalan and Valencian origin living in Cádiz, Spain. His early contact with the music of Grieg, with its marked national character, inspired him to develop “something similar with Spanish music.”

When he composed his opera “La Vida Breve” in 1904-5, his distinctive personality first emerged. The opera was given its premiere in Paris, where it was enthusiastically received. “Danse Espagnole” is one of the most alluring elements of “La Vida Breve,” featured here in our arrangement for piano trio.

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 hometown 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 Seville. 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.

Two Tangos:

Tango Jalousie          Jacob Gade (1879-1963)
Por Una Cabeza          Carlos Gardel (1887-1935)

The Tango began being danced around the 1880s, coincidentally when the bandoneon was imported from Germany and used as the mainstay of the Tango. Originally danced in brothels and regarded as obscene, the Tango gained popularity and then relative respectability in Argentina. The Tango became absorbed into the greater society all over the world, losing some of its crassness in the process.

It is still one of the most vibrant and spectacular dances in the world. It has gone through several metamorphoses — from the original sensual dance, it became sung entertainment, then cabaret entertainment usually by small bands consisting of a bandoneon (similar to the accordion), a flute (later the violin), and a guitar or two (later the piano and a bass, sometimes a cello), and finally reverted to a dance, performed by professionals in marvelous tango halls as formal entertainment with spectacular dancing and virtuoso playing. The dance itself remains very popular and its basic steps are learned and enjoyed by ballroom dancers worldwide.

“Por Una Cabeza” was a sung Tango. Carlos Gardel established this form of Tango through his enormous popularity as a singer. The song laments betting on horses and always losing “por una cabeza” (by a head).