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In Memoriam Gunda Hack

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The Frankfurter Kammertrio

Sunday January 20, 2008 at 3:00 p.m.

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

January 2008

Mon. Jan. 21 Konversationsabend, “Review of Germany’s Present Political and Socio-Economic Status”, with Hardy von Auenmueller, 7:00pm

February 2008

Sat. Feb. 2 Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10:00am
Sat. Feb. 2 Karnevals party in the Ratskeller with Netzwerk Phila., 7:00pm
Fri. Feb. 8 Friday Film Fest, “Nirgendwo in Afrika”, 6:30pm
Sun. Feb. 10 “Wister and More!” Concert Series, The Wister Quartet, 3:00pm
Thurs. Feb. 21 Konversationsabend, “Eine Schiffs-Reise auf der Elbe”, 7:00pm
with Georg Simon

March 2008

Sat. March 1 Women’s Auxiliary Monthly Meeting, 10:00am
Sun. March 9 “Wister and More!” Concert Series, Duo Parisienne, 3:00pm
Fri. March 14 Friday Film Fest, “Effie Briest”, 6:30pm
Mon. March 17 German Society Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm
Tues. March 18 The German Society presents the film “Mein Name is Bach”, 5:30pm
Tues. March 18 The Bach Festival of Philadelphia presents the Jacques Thibaud Trio, in the German Society’s Auditorium, 7:30pm
Fri. March 28 Konversationsabend, The comedy “Der zerbrochene Krug” by Heinrich von Kleist performed by the Elmshorn High School Theater Group from Germany
Sun. March 30 “Wister and More!” Concert Series, Tokito-Oka-Uhlig Trio, 3:00pm

The Library now has hours on Saturdays from 9:45am-12:30pm.
The Frankfurter Kammertrio

Birgit Gruetzner began studying the piano at age five. Born in Berlin, she relocated to Weimar at the age of 14 in order to pursue her performing arts education at the Franz Liszt Special School for Music, subsequent to which she enrolled in the Music Academy of Weimar, graduating with honors. She went on to attend the Vienna Academy for Performing Arts and received the “Grosses Konzertfachdiplom” (Masters in concert piano).

Ms. Gruetzner is presently a freelance pianist living in Berlin. As a soloist, she has performed extensively throughout Europe, the US, and Canada. Most of her performances are dedicated to chamber music, through which she has built an extensive repertoire. She is the founding member and pianist of the piano trio “Viadrina”.

Christian Krech was born in 1969 in Halle, Germany, graduated at age 17 from the Special School for Music in Weimar. He participated successfully in many renowned music competitions, winning first prize at the International Westphalia Music Festival in 1990.

At 19, Mr. Krech was a trainee at the State Opera in Berlin and became Associate Principal Clarinetist of the Comic Opera in Berlin in 1991. Since 1992, he has been Principal Clarinetist of the Brandenburg State Orchestra in Frankfurt (a.d. Oder), Germany.

He has performed with many renowned national and international orchestras, and has worked with several radio stations and recorded works by Mozart, Flosman, Spohr, Glinka, including the Mozart Clarinet Concerto.

Maria Pstroksnska-Nawratil was born in Breslau and attended the Henryk-Wieniawski Talent School in Posen, Poland and graduated with honors from the Ignaz-Paderewski Music School. She completed her concert examination with distinction in 2004 after participating in the master classes of Prof. Wolfgang Boettcher at the University of the Arts in Berlin.

In 1999, she joined the International Orchestra Academy in Bayreuth, Germany and then began an internship with the Radio Symphony Orchestra in Berlin. She is presently the Assistant Principal Cellist of the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

She has won many prizes at national and international music competitions, and has performed as a soloist with the Posen Philharmonic and at the Brussels Music Festival with the Belgian Chamber Orchestra.

PROGRAM

BEETHOVEN

Clarinet Trio, No. 4, Op. 11
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Theme with Variations:
Pria ch’io l’impegno. Allegretto

MENDELSSOHN

Konzertstück, No. 2, Op. 114
Presto
Andante
Allegretto grazioso

INTERMISSION

BRAHMS

Clarinet Trio, Op. 114
Allegro
Adagio
Andantino grazioso
Allegro

The will be a reception with the artists in the Ratskeller following the performance.
Beethoven’s Trio No. 4 in B flat, Op 11, for piano, clarinet and cello, first appeared at New Year, 1798. Its nickname, „Gassenhauer Trio“ (lit. street ballad trio) refers to its finale, based on variations on a „hit“ melody from an opera by Joseph Weigl. A contemporary of Beethoven, famous and celebrated in his day, Weigl is now all but forgotten. Beethoven’s paraphrase of the melody was intended not as an homage, but rather as a send-up of a musical fad. Beethoven would sometimes quote another composer with his tongue planted firmly in his cheek. The Diabelli Variations come to mind.

This trio, published three years after Beethoven’s Opus 1, is one of the few in three movements. The opening allegro combines lovely, playful virtuosity with great earnestness. The initial marked unison theme and the mysterious tonality shifts—groundbreaking in their day—lend the passage its distinctiveness. The ensuing adagio is set in plain, three-part song form. It delves deeply into the thought and feeling of the Romantic. The highlight of the trio is its concluding third movement, wherein Beethoven illuminates Weigl’s theme with abundant phantasy, crisp irony and biting wit.

Mendelssohn’s Konzertstück No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 114 is an incidental composition. At the behest of the clarinetist, Heinrich Baermann, Mendelssohn jotted it down a few hours before a salon performance. The cello part was originally meant for the Bassett horn. That instrument was already on its way out by that time. However, Baermann’s son, Carl, happened to be a great virtuoso on it.

Brahms, as well, composed a trio for the sake of a clarinetist. In 1891, six years before his death, Brahms had stopped composing. He journeyed to the Dukedom of Meiningen, where he met Richard Mühlfeld, the principal clarinetist of the court orchestra under Hans von Bülow. They became great friends, and Brahms dedicated his last four masterpieces to Mühlfeld: Trio for Piano, Clarinet, and Cello in A minor, Op. 114, Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B minor, Op. 115, and the two Op. 120 clarinet sonatas.

The trio makes an almost ascetic impression, quite different from Brahms’ other late compositions, combining two unlikely motifs. A chain of thirds combines with a chromatic second line, producing a very contemplative, almost trance-like conversation among the instruments. The three instruments are interwoven in such a way that the full splendor of each is realized, even while they speak with a single triune voice.