



P R E S E N T S

Montrose Trio



photo by Shayne Gray

Jon Kimura Parker, *piano*

Clive Greensmith, *cello*

Martin Beaver, *violin*

Sunday, September 23, 2018
3:00 p.m.

John H. Williams Theatre
Tulsa Performing Arts Center

This concert weekend is underwritten by the Mervin Bovaird Foundation.

Program

Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Hob.XV:29

Composed in 1797

In three movements:

Allegro (Fast)

Andante (At a walking pace)

Finale: Presto (Very, very fast)

Joseph Haydn

(Austrian, 1732-1809)

Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 66

Composed in 1845

In four movements:

Allegro energico e con fuoco (Fast, energetically and with fire)

Andante espressivo (Expressively, at a walking pace)

Scherzo: Molto allegro quasi presto (Vigorous Dance: Quite fast, as if presto [very fast!])

Finale: Allegro appassionato (Fast, passionately)

Felix Mendelssohn

(German, 1809-1847)

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

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 32

Composed in 1894

In four movements:

Allegro moderato (Moderately fast)

Scherzo: Allegro molto (Playful Dance: Quite fast)

Elegia: Adagio (Elegy: Slowly)

Finale: Allegro non troppo (Fast, but not too fast)

Anton Arensky

(Russian, 1861-1906)

We ask that the audience hold applause until after the last movement of each work.

Today's concert is preceded by a lecture by Dr. Jason Heilman, host of Classical Tulsa on KWTU 88.7 FM.

Chamber Music Tulsa's concerts and educational outreaches are presented with the assistance of the Oklahoma Arts Council and Arts Alliance Tulsa.



About the Program

by Jason S. Heilman, Ph.D., © 2018

Joseph Haydn

Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Lower Austria

Died May 31, 1809, in Vienna

Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Hob.XV:29

Composed in 1797; duration: 17 minutes

In some ways, Joseph Haydn was an exceptionally revolutionary and forward-looking composer, who boldly swept aside the dying vestiges of Baroque tradition to create such new genres as the string quartet and the symphony. Haydn's revolutionary streak is particularly apparent in his glowing admiration for his younger contemporary, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. But in other, equally important ways, Haydn was a musical reactionary, who maintained a remarkably consistent style across five of the most turbulent decades of European musical history. One hallmark of this conservatism was Haydn's decidedly frosty reaction to another musical revolutionary, Ludwig van Beethoven.

Of course, it might be more fair to say that once Haydn landed upon a winning musical formula, he saw no reason to reinvent it later. Indeed, one genre in particular is emblematic of both Haydn's revolutionary and reactionary tendencies: the piano trio. Haydn's contributions to the development of the piano trio were definitive. Inheriting a baroque sonata tradition that paired the cello with the keyboard in order to balance out the dominant violin, Haydn created a new trio genre focused on the keyboard, with both of the strings taking supporting roles. The result was a kind of augmented piano sonata, with the violin accentuating or imitating the piano's melody and the cello mostly mirroring the piano's left hand. Later generations would build upon Haydn's exemplars to create truly egalitarian and collaborative piano trios, with each of the three instruments contributing equally, yet Haydn never seemed to be able to take that step himself, remaining committed to his piano-centric model to the end.

By the 1790s, Haydn was considered one of the most famous composers in all of Europe. Having recently been released from his services as *Kapellmeister* to the noble Esterházy court, where he was obligated to produce new music on demand, Haydn was now free to work on his own schedule. He was also able to take advantage of the many opportunities to travel abroad that were suddenly being offered to him, making two famous voyages to London in 1791-92 and 1794-95. In addition to a fawning public, Haydn met several talented musicians on these trips, some of whom even inspired him to compose new works. It was on his second trip to London that Haydn met the German-born virtuoso pianist, Theresa Jansen Bartolozzi, who would inspire several of his last works for the keyboard, including his final set of three piano trios.

Written five years after his return to Vienna, yet still bear-

ing a dedication to Bartolozzi, the third of this set of piano trios is, according to the current scholarly consensus, the 45th and last piano trio Haydn ever composed. Remarkably, it shows little evolution from his earliest trios: cast in the familiar key of E-flat major, this brief, three-movement trio keeps the piano as the main melodic instrument while relegating the cello to a mainly subservient role. The moderately fast (*poco allegro*) first movement is deceptively simple, with only one real theme, characterized by broad leaps. This theme is developed repeatedly over the course of the movement, with one version veering into a dusky minor key before reemerging into the light. The brief second movement, marked *andantino ed innocentemente* ("somewhat leisurely and innocently"), features a tender, songlike theme that gets passed between the piano and violin. The *presto* finale that follows is a brisk German-style dance, with its cascading melody interspersed with rustic touches that recall the waltzlike *Ländler* of rural Austria. Haydn's sense of humor shines through this movement in the form of a false ending at the midpoint, before the movement reaches its exuberant close.

Felix Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg

Died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig

Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 66

Composed in 1845; duration: 29 minutes

All too often, child prodigies have a difficult time developing and maintaining a flourishing career as they get older. Even Mozart struggled to be taken seriously by an audience that could still envision him as the precocious child sitting in Marie Antoinette's lap. The former child prodigy Felix Mendelssohn encountered a variation on this same stigma. Born into an affluent Jewish family (his father later converted to Christianity and changed the family name to Bartholdy), young Felix composed his first symphony at age fifteen and his Octet for Strings and Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at sixteen. At twenty, he conducted his groundbreaking performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* – a milestone that helped rehabilitate Bach's flagging reputation and create the concept of "classical" music as we know it. Yet for all these accomplishments, Mendelssohn still found it difficult to secure a position teaching at a conservatory or directing an orchestra. These posts, which by this time had become the most secure musical positions in all of German-speaking Europe, were generally awarded to older men. The young Mendelssohn, it was thought, might be a radical who would shake up these established institutions too much. Of course, as it turns out, nothing was farther from the truth.

In 1833, Mendelssohn finally received his first profes-

sional appointment as music director of an ensemble in Düsseldorf, though this lasted barely a year before he resigned in disgust over the reigning provincialism. In 1835, he was offered the position of music director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, which was already one of the most important orchestras in Europe. It may have been appropriate for the noted Bach revivalist to find work reshaping musical tastes in Bach's own city, but it was also convenient for him to find such a posting in what was becoming the epicenter of German musical romanticism, which was then home to Robert and Clara Schumann. Mendelssohn stayed with the orchestra until 1843, when he founded the Leipzig Conservatory, which still exists today as the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy University of Music and Theatre.

During his later years in Leipzig, Mendelssohn returned to chamber music often, and it was here that he created his Second and final Piano Trio in C minor. Published as his Opus 66, the piece has four movements: The undulating motion of the *allegro energico e con fuoco* ("energetically quick and with fire") theme that opens the first movement recalls the opening of Mendelssohn's earlier *Hebrides Overture*, showing Mendelssohn at his most intense and atmospheric. The second movement, marked *andante espressivo* ("expressively leisurely"), is a kind of "song without words," with a melody introduced by the piano then taken up by the strings. The brisk *scherzo* third movement is of the kind that made the young Mendelssohn famous: fleet and sprightly yet classically restrained, with an air of dignity. The finale, marked *allegro appassionato* ("passionately quick"), has an interesting split personality: it opens with a jaunty, almost rustic theme, but it gets interrupted at about the halfway mark by the intrusion of a Lutheran chorale tune. The use of a chorale here is not unusual for Mendelssohn; chorales formed the basis of his 1830 "Reformation" Symphony No. 5 as well as many of his piano sonatas. In this movement, the chorale (musicologists disagree as to which chorale it is, exactly) is briefly played first by the piano, then transferred to the strings before the secular music returns. But the chorale makes a second, more triumphant appearance as the trio reaches its transcendent conclusion.

Anton Arensky

Born June 30, 1861, in Novgorod, Russia

Died February 12, 1906, in Perkjärvi, Russian Finland

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 32

Composed in 1894; duration: 30 minutes

By the 1870s, the musical scene in Russia was split into opposing camps. Those who followed Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) heard Russia's musical future in the cosmopolitan sounds and compositional rigor of Western Europe and oriented themselves toward Vienna and Berlin. Nationalists like Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) and Alexander Borodin (1833-1877), on the other

hand, eschewed the polish and precision of the West and instead turned inward to the angular and alien sounds of Russian folk music for their inspiration. This situation created a political and artistic minefield for the next generation of composers, who struggled to find their own path between these two poles.

One of the leading lights of this "lost" generation of Russian composers was Anton Stepanovich Arensky, who shifted his musical allegiance back and forth over the course of his brief career. Born in Novgorod, he moved with his family to nearby Saint Petersburg as a child and entered the Saint Petersburg Conservatory at age eighteen. It was there that he first fell into the nationalists' orbit, as a composition student of Rimsky-Korsakov. After graduating in 1882, Arensky moved to Moscow to teach at the Conservatory, where his students ultimately included Alexander Scriabin and Sergei Rachmaninoff. It was in Moscow that he befriended Tchaikovsky, who had by then left the Conservatory, but who still loomed large on the city's musical scene. Arensky taught in Moscow for thirteen years before returning to Saint Petersburg in 1895 to direct the Imperial Choir. Always in poor health, he contracted tuberculosis and died just eleven years later, at age 44, at a sanatorium in Russian-controlled Finland.

Arensky composed in nearly every genre, but it was his chamber works that met with the greatest success. The most celebrated of these is his First Piano Trio in D minor, which Arensky composed during his final year in Moscow. By this time, his musical style had moved closer to Tchaikovsky's, and the influence of Tchaikovsky's monumental 1882 A-minor Piano Trio is palpable. Like Tchaikovsky's trio, Arensky's First Piano Trio is an elegy for a deceased mentor – in this case, Karl Davydov, the former director of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, who had died in 1889. Davydov was the most prominent cellist in all of Russia during his lifetime, and Arensky memorialized his formidable skills by giving the cello a prominent role throughout the Trio. The piece is cast in a conventional four-movement scheme, opening with an *allegro moderato* ("moderately quick") first movement that recalls the romantic piano trios of Felix Mendelssohn in its brooding tone and arching melodies. The *allegro molto* ("very quick") second movement dispels this romantic gloom with a shimmering waltzlike *scherzo* melody; a central episode takes this sunny outlook almost to the point of parody. Arensky called the *adagio* ("slow") third movement an Elegy, and it is here that Davydov gets his proper memorial, with muted, melancholic music occasionally brightened by nostalgic touches. The finale, marked *allegro non troppo* ("not too quickly"), opens with a bold melody, but goes on to recall some of the more reflective themes from the Elegy and the opening movement, deftly balancing the different moods of the piece as it reaches its decisive climax.