

Classical Contemporaries: Middle Years

WEDNESDAY | JULY 6 | 11 AM
THE ELMS



Gabriela Díaz, violin | **Ariel Horowitz**, violin | **Jordan Bak**, viola
Jaqueline Choi, cello | **Charlie Kim**, piano

HAYDN String Trio Op. 6, No. 3 Hob. V:1

I. Adagio

II. Allegro

III. Tempo di minuetto

(Approximate duration 13 minutes)

MOZART Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat Major, K. 254

I. Allegro assai

II. Adagio

III. Rondeaux. Tempo di Menuetto

(Approximate duration 17 minutes)

BOCCHERINI Viola Sonata, G.18, C minor

I. Moderato

II. Largo

III. Minuetto e Trio

(Approximate duration 13 minutes)

BOLOGNE Sonata in G minor No. 3, Op. 1a

I. Allegro

II. Rondeau gracioso

(Approximate duration 11 minutes)

BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 2 in F minor, WoO 47

I. Larghetto maestoso - Allegro assai

II. Andante

III. Presto

(Approximate duration 11 minutes)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732- 1809): String Trio Op. 6, No. 3, Hob. V:1

Franz Joseph Haydn led in the development of the string trio, as he did in that of the string quartet. Even in the late 18th century, the distinctive quality of chamber music was its functional, mostly social nature; it was generally intended either for private performance and/or the pleasure of the performers. Composers tailored their works to the tastes and skills of specific players. The string trio, which, like the string quartet, grew out of the Baroque trio sonata by dropping the harpsichord, was one of the most popular instrumentations as entertainment music (often in the form of divertimentos) in the middle

of the 18th century.

This trio begins slowly, with an Adagio, followed by an Allegro, and then a final Tempo di minuetto. Perhaps because it is a relatively early work, it follows the older sonata da chiesa tradition in which the opening movement is in a slow tempo, Adagio, yet the trio has the conventional three movement form of later trios. It has not received attention from historians or critics, because, as is typical of Haydn's early works in particular, it presents many problems of authenticity and chronology. For every undoubtedly genuine work, there is at least one that can be described as only 'probably', 'possibly,' or 'probably not' Haydn's work.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat Major, K.502

The piano trio as a medium of musical expression was not one on which Mozart lavished much attention. Haydn composed a sizable group of around thirty major trios late in his life in comparison to the about a half dozen that Mozart completed. Mozart wrote his first piano trio in Salzburg in 1776, but called it a Divertimento even though it has three movements, not six. In 1786, he wrote two more piano trios and, in 1788, three.

The first published edition of K. 502, completed on November 18, 1786, as well as two other late Mozart trios, published around 1789, were even called Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Forte Piano, with the Accompaniment of a Violin and Cello. The late Charles Rosen, in his book *The Classical Style*, suggests, not entirely in jest, that the trios should be performed at piano recitals rather than at chamber music concerts if the pianist can afford the cost of engaging the additional instrumentalists.

Piano Trio, K. 502 has charm and technical brilliance and is generally agreed to be one of Mozart's finest chamber compositions. The keyboard writing in this Trio, similar to that in the two piano quartets of the preceding year, is more nearly akin to that of a concerto than to that of a sonata even though Mozart composed it with the needs of amateur players foremost in his mind. In this trio, for the first time, Mozart creates a fully idiomatic trio texture with the instruments each quite independent, not solely in accompanying roles. Although the piano dominates the ensemble, the cellist no longer doubles the piano's left hand and has many challenging and independent passages.

Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805): Sonata for Viola with cello accompaniment, G. 18, in C minor

Luigi Boccherini was a cellist and composer who had a brilliant career as a touring virtuoso in Italy, Germany, France, and Spain, where he settled in 1769 and spent most of the rest of his life. As a child he had studied cello with his father, and while he was a teenager, he and his father travelled to Vienna, where they both played in the court orchestra; in Vienna the young Boccherini began to attract notice for his compositions. Over time, his output was colossal: hundreds of pieces of chamber music, dozens of symphonies and concertos, two operas, and many other vocal and choral works. Haydn and he admired each other's music, and Mozart was once thought to have polished his craft by modeling a concerto after one of Boccherini's. In his time, his music was valued for its boldness of conception and elegance of expression. From 1770-1786, Boccherini served as chief chamber musician and composer to the Infante Luis, brother of the Spanish king, a wonderfully stable position that allowed him freedom to compose and publish his works. Following his patron's death in 1785, Boccherini stayed in Madrid, where he was able to make a living on commissions. One of the most lucrative was as court composer to King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia. Even though Boccherini never seems to have actually traveled to Prussia, he sent at least a dozen works to King Friedrich Wilhelm each year for

the next decade.

First published in in 2009, this sonata, according to Luigi Puxeddu, bears the title *Sonata a viola à violincello solo*, which means that Boccherini wrote the work with both the viola and the cello in mind. It has three movements. I. Moderato II. Largo, and III. Minuetto e Trio.

Joseph Boulogne (Bologne), Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745-1799): Sonata in G minor No. 3, Op. 1a

Boulogne held a truly unique place in Western classical music history. Much of what is known about Boulogne's life is only inadequately and contradictorily documented; some is even purely anecdotal, but enough has been established that it is clear that few other composers have led such a fascinating, multidimensional life.

Unfortunately, Boulogne sometimes was given the nickname "The Black Mozart" (*Le Mozart noir*) which is both offensive and inaccurate. In truth, Boulogne may actually have been an influence on Mozart. Unquestionably, when Mozart traveled to Paris, he witnessed the French nobility's acceptance of Boulogne. Marie-Antoinette held musicales in the salon of her *petit appartement de la reine* in Versailles, limiting the audience to her intimate circle and a few musicians; Boulogne was included among them; he played his violin sonatas with her Majesty playing the forte-piano part.

Boulogne's Op. 1 sonatas feature the two instruments, violin, and fortepiano, as equals, which was a major break from the Baroque tradition of using a basso continuo in a sonata. Boulogne's harmonies, textures, and formal schemes more resemble Classical style, which was just beginning to be developed. *Sonata Op. 1 No. 3* in G minor, probably composed in 1781, was published as written for harpsichord (clavecin) or fortepiano with accompaniment of violin obbligato. (A manuscript of *Sonatas Op. 1, Nos. 1, 2, and 3* is in the Fonds Musicaux of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.) The Op. 1 designation of his three sonatas can be misleading since he had published a set of six string quartets as Op. 1 eight years before.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827): Piano Sonata No. 2, in F minor, WoO 47

Beethoven composed three piano sonatas WoO47 in 1782 and 1783 when he was eleven and twelve years old. This early sonata, the second in the group subtitled "Kurfürstensonaten" ("Prince Elector Sonatas") is a rarity on the concert stage.

Beethoven's musical talent was recognized when he was very young, and these three sonatas give an early glimpse of the composer's abilities as well as his boldness. The autumn of 1783 saw the publication of his first significant publication, these three piano sonatas.

Sonata No. 2 in F minor and the two other early sonatas of WoO47 are dedicated to the Prince elector (German: Kurfürst) Maximilian Frederick and therefore also known as the "Kurfürstensonaten." They offer an insight into the young Beethoven's ambitions, which can be gleaned from his dedication letter to his early supporter, the Elector Maximilian Frederick, "Most lofty sir ... since my Muse has whispered to me often during the hours of devotion: Be bold and lay down the harmonies of your soul!" ... May I now, exalted Prince, dare to lay the first of my juvenile outpourings at the steps of your throne?" © Susan Halpern, 2022.

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