PROGRAM NOTES

Carl Maria Von Weber (1786-1826): Trio in G Minor for Flute, Cello and Piano, Op. 63 (pub. 1820)

In addition to his composing, Weber was an important writer about music. He gives, for example, keenly perceptive advice about judging new music. "To judge a contemporary work of art correctly demands that calm, unprejudiced mood which, while susceptible to every impression, carefully guards against preconceived opinions or feelings. It requires a mind completely open to the particular work under consideration…We can very quickly, clearly see whether he has been capable of creating a great structure which will endure, or if, his mind working in momentary unsteady creative flashes, he has caught our fancy with details only, thereby causing us to forget the work as a whole."

Weber is regarded as the founder of German Romantic opera. His Der Freischutz (The Freeshooter) of 1821 is a landmark work. He created, single-handedly, a German style which culminated in Wagner's music dramas.

The Trio in G Minor was composed in sections. The slow movement dates from 1813—probably written in Prague. The rest was begun in 1818 and finished in the course of a summer holiday in July 1819 at Klein-Hostawitz near Pillnitz. The first movement begins soberly and tersely and has a second subject that sounds like question and answer. The scherzo is in two sections—the first in minor, the second in major which is a light and airy ländler, the predecessor of the waltz. The andante is descriptive of its subtitle, A Shepherd's Lament. The finale opens with a theme reminiscent of Kasper's Drinking Song in Der Freischutz.

Two interesting trivia: Mozart's wife Constance Weber was related to Carl Maria. The "von" in his name is spurious. So was Beethoven's "van" for that matter.

-Hoyle Carpenter

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971): Duo Concertant for Violin and Piano (1932)

Ah, to hear a piano playing against a string orchestra - such a lovely sound, right? Well, not to everyone. Here's what Igor Stravinsky had to say about pitting a piano against massed strings: "For many years I had taken no pleasure in the blend of strings struck in the piano with strings set in vibration with the bow. In order to reconcile myself to this instrumental combination I was compelled to turn to the minimum of instruments, that is to say, only two, in which I saw the possibility of solving the instrumental and acoustic problem."

Stravinsky solved the problem with his Duo Concertant for Violin and Piano, composed between the winter of 1931 and summer of 1932. The five-movement piece was written for the Russian-American violinist Samuel Dushkin, and according to the composer, was inspired by Virgil's poem "Georgics." The name suggests the subject of the poem is agriculture, but far from being an example of peaceful rural poetry, it is a work characterized by tensions in both theme and purpose.

The first movement, Cantilène, introduces the instruments separately and fragmentally before bringing them together - a reminder that Stravinsky construes "concertant" as meaning "competition." Following that is an Eglogue, which evokes Stravinsky's "Histoire du Soldat" in its changing meters, staccato style, and double-stopping in the violin part. A second Eglogue brings the two instruments together with a lovely melodic interplay – apparently renouncing any previous combat or competition. An extended dancelike Gigue is followed by the Dithyrambe, the eloquent peak of the Duo Concertant, in which a soaring violin cantilena is grounded by piano chords spanning four octaves and more.

In 1972, George Balanchine choreographed his ballet "Duo Concertant" to Stravinsky's score for the New York City Ballet Stravinsky Festival.

-Steve Siegel

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827): String Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1 (1806)

The most renowned of Beethoven's patrons was Count Razumovsky (later Prince). He was the Russian ambassador to Austria and was a very wealthy patron of the arts. In addition to his financial support of the arts, he was a capable violinist and took part in playing the Haydn quartets. He engaged a permanent professional quartet with a lifetime contract. They concertized as the Razumovsky quartet and became

famous throughout Europe. They were put at Beethoven's disposal and thus became a precious laboratory to try out whatever he wanted to be tested. They did this in complete sympathy and admiration for Beethoven. Be this as it may, Czerny, a Beethoven pupil and writer of an enormous number of piano exercises, reported that at the first run through, the musicians thought Beethoven was playing a joke upon them. It was Razumovsky who had commissioned the quartets. That is the reason that the opus 59 quartets are known as the Razumovsky Quartets. He was not disturbed by any new things in these pieces as he was fully aware of Beethoven's stature as a composer.

As a compliment to the count, Beethoven used Russian themes in the first two of the three quartets. It should be pointed out that the introduction of Russian folk themes did not alter Beethoven's style. The quartets do not sound Russian in any way.

As with many composers, Beethoven's output is divided into three periods: apprentice work, maturity, and the final years. Most of the works that we prize most highly come from the middle period, 1804-1810—a scant six years which saw the creation of such favorites as the Waldstein and Appassionata Sonatas, the Eroica and Fifth Symphonies, Fidelio, the Violin and Emperor Concertos, the Razumovsky Quartets and many others. While the curse of deafness was beginning to disturb him, it had not reached its ultimate devastation. Here is the clarity of classicism along with the darker introspection of Romanticism—a music of both bright light and deep shadows.

The first movement is prophetic of things to come. Deliberately vague tonality is cleared up eventually. This is a practice found in some very different later pieces, e.g. Debussy's Afternoon of a Faune and the Frank Martin Ballade for Flute and Piano. The first non-ambiguous chord occurs in measure 19 where the key of F major becomes well established. At the point where we expect a repeat of the exposition, there is a surprise. The repeat of the first five measures is there, but then a strong G-flat on the cello propels the piece into a development without the customary repetition of the exposition. The development is of impressive dimensions—as Tovey says—"tremendous." Beethoven breaks new ground with harmonic effects, and there is impressive fugal writing. The recapitulation reverses the order of the themes.

The second movement is scherzo-like in the literal meaning of the term—not sinister as in many Beethoven scherzi. There is a main theme and two subordinate themes, which are taken through many keys and development procedures. But more important is a rhythmic figure that dominates the whole movement both in its original form and in many variants. It is first announced by the cello on the tonic note, B-flat.

The following adagio evokes a feeling of anguish or perhaps the ceremonial grief of the Funeral March in the Eroica Symphony. The key is again F but in its minor form. The mood of the movement is largely reached through the use of hollow sounding fifths, appoggiature, and series of dissonances. The overall minor feeling is relieved by sections in A-flat major and D-flat major. Sonata form is used. The movement ends with a cadenza-like figure on the first violin sounding the C three octaves above the middle C, while the cello sounds its lowest note, five octaves below. Finally, there is an isolated trill that leads directly into the last movement without pause.

The opening melody of the finale is the Russian theme. There is a parallel to the opening of the first movement—cello melody, static accompaniment and ambiguity of key, this time between D minor and F major. The Russian theme is in a folk-song collection that Beethoven owned, which carries annotations in Beethoven's own hand. The key of the Russian melody is really D minor, but Beethoven handles it so that the key is uncertain but finally settling for F major. He does this without changing any of its notes. In the collection, the tempo is indicated as molto andante. Beethoven boosts it into an allegro. In contrast to the preceding movement, this one is good-natured play. Beethoven plays various tricks on the Russian theme, e.g. combining two of its phrases in good-natured double counterpoint and slowing it down to a ponderous adagio with mock expressive chromatic harmonies. One final trick: he starts the recapitulation in the subdominant key with the Russian theme. Here he is forced to make a change—E becomes E-flat. The finale is an elegant, spirited movement in sonata form.

-Hoyle Carpenter

Musicians:

Tanya Witek, flute – Tanya is the co-founder of BridgeMusik. She is a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra at Lincoln Center. She has performed with American Ballet Theater, Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. She holds the Master and Doctoral degrees from The Juilliard School and has appeared at the Banff and Marlboro Music Festivals touring with 'Musicians from Marlboro'. Formerly on the faculty at Montclair State University, she also was a teaching artist for the New York Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center Institute.

Cyrus Beroukhim, violin – His performances of Bach and Vivaldi Concerti with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields were heralded as "flawless and sensitive" by the Zeitung im Espace Mittelland (Switzerland). Mr. Beroukhim has been a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra since 2009 where he has performed as soloist in the Stravinsky Concerto. He also plays regularly with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, New York Symphonic Ensemble, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and several Baroque and chamber orchestras throughout the United States. He has performed as a member of the Zukovsky Quartet, the Rose Quartet and America's Dream Chamber Artists. He holds the doctorate from The Juilliard School and is Steinhardt Associate Professor of Violin at New York University.

Katie Hyun, violin – Katie has performed as soloist with the Houston Symphony, Dallas Chamber Orchestra, the Columbia Festival Orchestra as well as the Busan Sinfonietta and Incheon Philharmonic Orchestra in South Korea. She is founder and director of the Quodlibet Ensemble and founding member of the award-winning Amphion String Quartet which was a member of Lincoln Center's CMS Two. On Baroque violin, she frequently appears with Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Sebastians and New York Baroque. She holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, SUNY Stonybrook and the Yale School of Music.

Caeli Smith, viola – Called "intense, precise, and full of personality" after appearing as concerto soloist with The Juilliard Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall. Caeli Smith is an award-winning chamber musician, educator and facilitator. She has performed across the United States, Europe and Asia with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, The Knights, Sejong Soloists, Jordi Savall and the Verbier Chamber Orchestra. Caeli is an alum of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, the post-graduate performance, education and leadership program of Carnegie Hall and The Juilliard School.

Alex Cox, cello - Cellist Alex Cox has appeared as soloist with the New World Symphony and Boston Pops. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute, New England Conservatory and the Juilliard School. While studying in Cleveland, he co-founded the Omer Quartet. The Quartet went on to win international competitions including Young Concert Artists International, Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition, Premio Paolo International and the Fischoff, holding residencies at the New England Conservatory and at the Universities of Maryland and Yale.

Marcantonio Barone, piano – Marcantonio Barone has performed with major orchestras on four continents and has given solo recitals at the Wigmore Hall in London, the Great Hall of the Saint Petersburg Filarmoniya, Weill Recital Hall in New York, and the National Gallery in Washington, and on the recital series of the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. He has been a member of the Lenape Chamber Ensemble since 1987, and he performs annually as a member of 1807 and Friends and the Craftsbury Chamber Players. He teaches at the Bryn Mawr Conservatory of Music and at Swarthmore College. His recordings are available on the Albany, Bridge, Centaur, and Innova labels. Mr. Barone is a Steinway Artist.

We thank and appreciate all of our wonderful volunteers and contributors who help to make these concerts possible! And we give special thanks to Upper Tinicum Lutheran Church and Delaware Valley University for hosting these concerts. We also give credit to Visit Bucks County for outreach support.

The Friday and Sunday concerts and the Children's 'Concerts in the Round' are supported by Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), the regional arts funding partnership of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, administered in this region by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.