



**2006-2007 Season
Program V**

The Afiara String Quartet:

Valarie Li, violin

Yuri Cho, violin

David Samuel, viola

Adrian Fung, cello

Michael Corner, clarinet

Madeline Prager, viola

Stevan Cavalier, piano

Grace Presbyterian Church

June 10, 2007 3pm



Igor Stravinsky
(1882 - 1972)

**L'Histoire du Soldat: Concert Suite
for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (1919)**

- I The Soldier's March
- II The Soldier's Violin
- III A Little Concert
- IV Tango - Waltz - Ragtime
- V The Devil's Dance

*Yuri Cho, violin Michael Corner, clarinet
Stevan Cavalier, piano*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756 - 1791)

**Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano
in E Flat Major K.498 "Kegelstatt" (1786)**

- I Andante
- II Menuetto
- II Allegretto

*Michael Corner, clarinet Madeline Prager, viola
Stevan Cavalier, piano*

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770- 1827)

**String Quartet No. 8 in E minor,
Op.59, No 2 (1806)**

- I Allegro
- II Molto adagio
- III Allegretto
- IV Finale: Presto

*The Afiara String Quartet:
Valarie Li, violin Yuro Cho, violin
David Samuel, viola Adrian Fung, cello*



Music is like wine...the less people know about it, the sweeter they like it.

A Mixture of Frailties by Robertson Davies

Igor Stravinsky (1882 - 1972)

L'Histoire du Soldat: Concert Suite for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (1919)

L'Histoire du Soldat (The Soldier's Tale) was composed by Stravinsky in collaboration with the Swiss novelist C.F. Ramuz in 1917-18 while "down and out" in Switzerland. The Great War in Europe and the Revolution in Russia cut Stravinsky off from his family estates and publishers royalties. Serge Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, for which Stravinsky had composed *The Firebird*, *Petroushka* and *The Rite of Spring*, was similarly stranded in Lisbon without future engagements. Stravinsky, Ramuz and conductor Ernest Ansermet decided to form a "pocket theater" company which would produce pieces requiring just a few players and be easily portable, enabling them to travel a circuit of Swiss villages. Thus was born *L'Histoire du Soldat* "to be read, played and danced". Though scored for only 3 actors, a female dancer and 7 instruments, even this low-budget operation was beyond Stravinsky's means to produce. Financier and amateur clarinetist Werner Reinhardt generously bankrolled the production; "he paid for everybody and everything" recounted the composer. In appreciation for Reinhardt's generosity, Stravinsky gave him the manuscript of *L'Histoire du Soldat* as well as composing for him the *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo*, and the *L'Histoire du Soldat Concert Suite* in the trio arrangement.

The first performance of *L'Histoire du Soldat* was a success. Opening night was also closing night. Due to the outbreak of Spanish Influenza epidemic (which would kill almost 20 million people in Europe and 500 thousand in America) every public hall was closed by law. The work was not performed again until 1924.

L'Histoire du Soldat is a variant of the Faust Legend - a poor soldier sells his soul (represented by his violin) to the Devil for youth, wealth, and power. Stravinsky would turn to this theme again some 30 years later in his opera *The Rake's Progress*; joining Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Gounod, Mahler, Rachmaninoff, Busoni, and others who were also inspired by the Faust legend. The Germanic tradition through Goethe has Faust redeemed at the end. In keeping with the French tradition, Stravinsky and Ramuz send him to Hell.

The influence of Jazz is discernable in *L'Histoire du Soldat*. Stravinsky describes this influence in the book *Expositions and Developments* co-authored by Robert Kraft as "a wholly new sound in my music, and *L'Histoire* marks my final break with the Russian Orchestral School."

I daresay Stravinsky's Ragtime would have made Scott Joplin uneasy.

People err who think my art comes easily to me. I assure you, dear friend, nobody has devoted so much time and thought to composition as I. There is not a famous master whose music I have not industriously studied through many times. 1

W. A. Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano in E Flat Major K.498 "Kegelstatt" (1786)

And so the story is that Mozart wrote this particular Trio on Aug. 5, 1786 while at a skittles alley (kegelstett). Skittles, still popular in the UK, and other parts of Europe, is the forerunner of ten pin bowling. Nine pins are arranged in a diamond shape; the object being to knock the



pins down by means of a ball, or some such object hurled or rolled at them. (And while only three sentences into the notes, here goes a digression. Skittles was said to have been originally introduced to the American Colonies by the Dutch. Here we see the American Character already developing, as it was then made illegal, being considered pastime of undesirable characters, and leading to another sin; gambling. However, undesirable characters, including musicians, often very resourceful, added tenth pin to other nine, the result being that you had a new game; and perfectly legal.)

And speaking of undesirable characters ², this trio, as well as his other masterworks for clarinet, the Concerto and the Quintet, were composed for Mozart's friend Anton Stadler. While an undisputed master of his instrument, who revealed to Mozart the possibilities and beauty of the clarinet, Stadler is equally remembered as a rascally character who often took advantage of Mozart's friendship. Another person, not at all undesirable, who figures into the creation of this trio was Franziska von Jacquin, sister of Mozart's friend Gottfried von Jacquin, and said to have been one of Mozart's favorite piano pupils.

The work itself is unusual in the combination of instruments employed. The usual trio with piano consisted of piano, violin and cello. The cello often doubled the piano's bass part; the violin often doubled the melody part. This beautifully relaxed and conversational work allows all of the participants equal and independent voices. While it is easy to see the substitution of clarinet for violin, both soprano instruments, the elimination of the cello as bass instrument for the viola is doubtless explained by the fact that it was Mozart's favorite stringed instrument to perform on, as it put him 'in the middle of the harmony' as he liked to say. The work was first performed at the home of Gottfried von Jacquin, with sister Franziska on piano, Stadler on clarinet, and it is believed, the composer himself on viola.

The unbuttoned feeling of the piece is set by the first and second movements being triple meter, the first movement a relaxed and waltz-like, the second a graceful minuet. The third movement, while keeping the overall mood of the piece allows each of the soloists to show off with virtuoso passages. This work is perhaps the most delightful thing a threesome can engage in; still legal in all 50 states.

1 *Mozartiana* Joseph Solman, Vintage Books, NY 1990

2 Undesirable characters: traditionally among them musicians, from the admonition of Kapellmeister Haydn's royal patrons not to "fraternize with the musicians", through the masters of Jazz, to today's Pop performers of various stripes, defined as such by those paragons of virtue and rectitude who continue to be responsible for much of the mayhem committed daily on this fragile planet.

If one may say that Haydn created the string quartet as an art form, Beethoven achieved even greater attainment than his predecessor in the quartets of Op.59, revealing the expressive capacity latent in the genre to an extent never dreamed of by earlier musicians. It is for this reason primarily that these three quartets have so deep a significance.

Joseph De Marliave
Beethoven's Quartets (1925, 1961)



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770- 1827)
String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op.59, No 2 (1806)

For these notes we turn to *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, to the chapter entitled "The Year 1806."

"Perhaps no work of Beethovens met a more discouraging reception from musicians than these now famous Quartets. One friendly contemporary voice alone is heard - that of the *All. Mus. Zeit* (Feb 27, 1807): 'Three new, very long and difficult Beethoven string quartets, dedicated to the Russian Ambassador, Count Razumovsky, are also attracting attention of all connoisseurs. The conception is profound and the construction excellent, but they are not easily comprehended - with the possible exception of the 3rd in C major which cannot but appeal to intelligent lovers of music because of its originality, melody and harmonic power. An article on May 5th concerning the question of publication speaks in the same tone. In Vienna Beethoven's most recent, difficult but fine quartets have become more and more popular. Music-lovers hope to see them printed soon.'

Czerny told Jahn that when Schuppanzigh (*Ignaz "Milord Falstaff" Schuppanzigh, first violinist of the famed Schuppanzigh Quartet and butt of endless fat jokes by Beethoven*) first played the Razumovsky Quartet in F, they laughed and were convinced that Beethoven was playing a joke and that it was not the quartet which had been promised. And according to Dolezalek, when Gyrowitz bought these quartets he said: "Pity to waste the money!"

The Allegretto of the first of these quartets was long a rock of offence. When at the beginning of the year 1812, says Lenz, the movement was to be played for the first time in the musical circle of Field Marshal Count Soltikoff in Moscow, Bernard Romberg trampled underfoot as a contemptible mystification the bass part which he was to play. The Quartet was laid aside. When, a few years later, it was played at the house of Privy Councillor Lwoff, father of the famous violinist, in St. Petersburg, the company broke out in laughter when the bass played his solo on one note. The quartet was again laid aside.

Thomas Appleby, was a leader of the musical world of Manchester, England, and a principle director of concerts there. When these quartets came out in London, Clementi sent a copy of them to him. They were opened and thrown upon the pianoforte. Next day Felix Radicati and his wife, Mme. Bertinotti, called and presented letters, they being upon a concert tour. During the conversation the Italian went to the pianoforte, took up the quartets and seeing what they were, exclaimed (in substance): 'Have you got these here! Ha! Beethoven, as the world says, and as I believe, is music-mad;- for these are not music. He submitted them to me in manuscript and, at his request, I fingered them for him. I said to him, that he surely did not consider these works to be music? - to which he replied, Oh, they are not for you, but for a later age.'"

Indeed, Beethoven had the last word in the matter.

Although Beethoven himself did not live to see the extent to which tide of criticism would turn in favor of these quartets, in the 1820's the Op. 59 Quartets were gaining some important admirers, among the Rossini, then a European superstar. However, it might be noted that this same decade, the last of the composer's life, also saw the creation of the late quartets, which were as far beyond the Op. 59 set, as the Op. 59 set was from his early Op. 18 set. These three quartets have often been described as the most symphonic of all his quartets. In his study of Beethoven, written in 1852 and published in Paris, von Lenz writes, "The three quartets dedicated to Count Rasumowsky are the natural fulfillment of the promise of the symphonies



and the piano sonatas, but a greater achievement, since the form of the quartet is less adapted to innovation of style than either the sonata or the symphony the content of these quartets is as great as the content of the symphonies, only the medium is different." Still, opinions regarding these works were by no means unanimous. In response to von Lenz's work, another book appeared by one Ulibishev and published Paris in 1857, which voiced the following opinion "Few people liked them at the time of their first appearance in St. Petersburg. But since then opinion has changed, and contemporary critics place them far above the first six quartets that Beethoven wrote. Some have gone so far as to call them miracles. (It was von Lenz who said this.) If I cared at all for public opinion, I should have not the hardihood to confess that for my part the quartets have never much interested me. It has been in vain that I have played them for years, and heard them played by performers of the front rank; I have tried to make myself like what has at last found general acceptance, but I cannot find them interesting. I feel sure that many others share my opinion, but dare not express it, since in no community is individual opinion so much dominated by prejudice and self-deception, cliques and catchwords, as the world of music. Today the Op. 59 are called the great Beethoven quartets, soon the Op. 127, 130, 131, 132, and 135 works will be called the very great quartets, and these titles will undoubtedly be quite exact, since the score of the longest Op. 18 quartet is thirty pages in length, the longest in Op. 59 is thirty-eight, and the longest of the last, sixty-two. Certainly one cannot quarrel with their arithmetic."

Despite the drama of the first movement of the Quartet in E minor, it is the second movement *molto adagio*, or *adagio molto* which has become the highlight and most-commented-upon movement of this quartet. I quote from de Marliave. "The impassioned *Allegro* is followed by a slow movement breathing an inspired idealism, profoundly spiritual yet deeply human: 'a vision of Paradise where mortal love finds eternal happiness.'" (Quote within the quote again from von Lenz) It is an unbroken stream of melody, with various phrases bound together by connecting chords, not split up and set against one another in the working out of the counterpoint an unending melodic line often found in the later Beethoven quartets, and developed to perfection by R. Wagner.

Holtz the violinist, an intimate friend of Beethoven's, and a member of the famous Schuppanzigh Quartet (also subject to merciless teasing and scurrilous bad jokes from Ludwig van) tells how the composer conceived the idea of this movement one night, at Baden, near Vienna, as he gazed up at the stars, contemplating the harmony of the spheres. Czerny (he of the finger exercises) concurs: "The *Adagio*, E Major, in the second Razumovsky Quartet, occurred to him when contemplating the starry sky and thinking of the music of the spheres." Beethoven admonishes the players with the following written instruction; "*Si tratta questo pezzo con molto de sentimento*". (This piece must be played with much feeling).

In his *Guide to Chamber Music*, Melvin Berger points out something about this movement that I did not find mentioned in other sources. He notes that the main theme's first four notes are derived from a transposition of the musical spelling of Bach's name. (In German, B, A, C, H, are the notes B flat, A, C, B.) At one point in the development section, the cello actually plays these exact notes. The third movement is marked *allegretto* rather than *scherzo* and is noteworthy for its use of syncopation. In the fourth movement, Beethoven introduces a Russian folksong onto the mix. Supposedly each of the Razumovsky quartets was to contain a Russian theme. Beethoven did do so in the first, and this quartet. He seems to have discarded the idea for the third quartet, which contains no such theme. The Russian theme used in the E minor quartet is a patriotic hymn entitled "Slava". It was later used by Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov in *The Tsar's Bride*, and Mussorgsky in *Boris Godunov*. Interestingly



enough, Beethoven treats the theme in a way similar to the way Haydn used his hymn in the "Emperor" quartet. The theme, each time it appears, is presented without variation or elaboration. Who knows, perhaps the composers, especially Beethoven who could vary a theme like nobody's business, felt that too much inventiveness with the theme, might cause the listeners not to recognize it.

The Razumovsky Quartets were premiered by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in Feb. 1807. As for the Count, Andreas Kyrillovich Rasumovsky, the man who commissioned the Op. 59 quartets; he was a man of great wealth and generosity who served as the Russian Ambassador to Vienna. He also headed the Russian delegation to the Congress of Vienna. For this service, he was made a Prince by the Czar in 1815. He was known equally as a ladies' man, not to say womanizer, as well as a patron of the arts. He was an early supporter of Beethoven, and in 1808 created a String Quartet to be put at Beethoven's disposal for the performance of his new works. This was the famed Schuppanzigh Quartet. The position of second violin was left open, and the Count himself often played in the quartet. Beethoven enjoyed this enviable position until 1816. During a gigantic New Years Eve party, celebrating his elevation from count to prince, Razumovsky's palace caught fire, destroying his magnificent art collection and library. This mishap devastated him both emotionally and financially, causing him to disband the quartet and pension off the musicians.

In the end, and for various reasons, Beethoven wound up being stiffed by his aristocratic patrons; never collecting all of the money he was promised.

Program Notes by Joseph Way

The Musicians

The all-Canadian **Afiara String Quartet** takes its name from the Spanish *fíar*, meaning "to trust". It has been said that chamber music is a conversation between friends. Within the support of friendship, the Afiaras found that trusting each other, in rehearsal and on stage, was vital to the depth and joy of their music-making. As part of the Morrison Center for Chamber Music, they are in residence at San Francisco State University as teaching assistants to their mentors, the Alexander String Quartet. They have worked with the Kronos Quartet, Paul Hersh, Robert Mann, Mark Sokol, and Ian Swensen. The Quartet consists of:

Valerie Li, violin, received her Bachelor's from the Peabody Conservatory and her Master's from the New England Conservatory. She has performed at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie, Jordan and Strathmore Halls. Ms. Li won first prize in Chamber Music at the National Music Festival of Canada and was the recipient of a British Columbia Arts Council Award to study at Peabody, where she won the Marbury Prize and the Hulsteyn Award. Ms. Li has been named a fellow at Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival, and has performed at Taos School of Music in New Mexico and the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts. She has played with the Baltimore and Singapore Symphonies and served as Concertmaster of the New England Conservatory Philharmonia, the Peabody Symphony Orchestra and with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. Ms. Li has studied violin with Miriam Fried, Herbert Greenberg, and Gwen Thompson and chamber music with members of the Takacs, Juilliard, Vermeer, and Borromeo String Quartets.



Yuri Cho, violin, received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from The Juilliard School, where she studied with Dorothy Delay, Naoko Tanaka, and Masao Kawasaki as a recipient of the Dorothy Starling Violin Scholarship and the Jean Doyle Loomis Award. Hailed by the San Francisco Classical Voice as a musician with virtuosity, she was a featured soloist with the Seoul Royal Symphony in Korea and Japan, the Concordia Symphony Orchestra in Canada, and has given concerts in New York's Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Ms. Cho has performed with Norman Fischer, Jean-Michel Fonteneau, Paul Hersh, Jodi Levitz, and Ian Swensen. She was named an Osher Scholar at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Ian Swensen and is currently a faculty member of the San Francisco Conservatory's Preparatory Division.

David Samuel, viola, received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from The Juilliard School under the Nathan Gordon Scholarship and the Jerome L. Greene Fellowship. He has studied viola with Karen Tuttle, Michael Tree, and Paul Hersh, and chamber music with Emanuel Ax, Joseph Kalichstein, and members of the Juilliard String Quartet. He has performed in Canada, the U.S., and more than a dozen countries in Europe. His concerts have taken him to the Berlin Konzerthaus, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center. As an orchestral musician, Mr. Samuel has been the principal violist of the Juilliard Orchestra and the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra. As a chamber musician, he performed with Robert Mann, Bonnie Hampton, Norman Fischer, Martha Katz, and Pinchas Zukerman. Mr. Samuel has been a teaching assistant to Michael Tree and is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Preparatory Division.

Adrian Fung, cello, has given solo recitals in New York's Carnegie Hall, the Goethe Institute, Montreal's Pollack Hall, the Toronto Centre of the Performing Arts, the Living Arts Centre, and Taiwan's National Concert Hall. He has been soloist with Ensemble 212, Columbia Chamber Players, and will appear with the Oakville Symphony next season. Mr. Fung was awarded an Artist Grant from the New York Foundation of the Arts and received the Goodrich Award from the National Arts Centre of Canada. He has performed at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center and the Orford Music Festival's "Musicians On Tour" and premiered several works, including pieces by Huck Hodge and the International Society of Contemporary Music. A graduate of McGill University and Mannes College, Mr. Fung studied cello with Fred Sherry, Antonio Lysy, David Hetherington, and Susan Gagnon. He is currently an Osher Scholar at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, studying with Jean-Michel Fonteneau.

Michael Corner, clarinet, has been a featured soloist with the San Jose Symphony, Sinfonia San Francisco, the Marin Symphony, the Mendocino Music Festival and the Colorado Music Festival. An active recitalist, Corner is a regular member of the Sierra Chamber Society. Corner is a graduate of the University of Southern California and has studied at Tanglewood and the Basel Conservatory in Switzerland. While in Europe, Corner served as principal clarinet of the Zurich Chamber Orchestra and performed with many major Swiss orchestras.

Madeline Prager, viola, has performed extensively as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe, where she lived for 25 years. After receiving a BA in Music from UC Berkeley, and a Masters degree in Germany studying with Bruno Giuranna, she performed as principal



violist of the Wuerttemberg Chamber Orchestra and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. Until two years ago she held a Professorship of Viola at the Music Conservatory in Karlsruhe, Germany. In addition to playing as much chamber music as possible, Madeline Prager teaches at the Crowden School, in the Berkeley Public schools, at the University of the Pacific, and in her private studio.

Stevan Cavalier, piano, studied with Maryan Filar, himself a pupil of Walter Giesecking, at the Settlement School in Philadelphia, as well as with harpsichordist Lori Wollfisch and pianist Robert Miller. He has attended the Interlochen Summer Music Festival, and appeared in chamber ensembles in many Bay Area venues, including Davies Symphony Hall. Dr. Cavalier is Director of the Sierra Chamber Society.

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Undesireable Characters

If Beethoven had been killed in a plane crash at the age of 22, it would have changed the history of music...and of aviation.

Tom Stoppard (1937 -)

Sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to play like yourself

Miles Davis (1926 - 1991)

If you develop an ear for sounds that are musical it is like developing an ego. You begin to refuse sounds that are not musical and that way cut yourself off from a good deal of experience.

John Cage (1912 - 1992)

You can't always write a chord ugly enough to say what you want to say, so sometimes you have to rely on a giraffe filled with whipped cream.

Frank Zappa (1940 - 1993)

I don't know anything about music. In my line you don't have to.

Elvis Presley (1935 - 1977)



Sierra Chamber Society 2007 - 2008 Season

Sunday, October 14, 2007

Joaquin Rodrigo – Violin Sonata
Boccherini – Guitar Quintet in D major
Dvorak – String Quartet No. 8 Op 80 E major

Sunday, December 16, 2007

Joseph de Bologne de Saint George – String Quartet No 5 in E flat
Rachmaninoff – Piano Trio No 1 in G minor
Schubert – String Quartet “Death and The Maiden” D.810 D minor

Sunday, January 20, 2008

Jean Francaix – Divertimento for Flute and Piano
Samuel Barber – Summer Music for Wind Quintet
Beethoven – Quintet for Piano and Winds

Sunday, April 6, 2008

Shostakovich – String Quartet No 1.
Debussy – Cello Sonata
Mozart String Quartet “Dissonant”

Sunday, June 1, 2008

Haydn – Piano Trio
Stravinsky – Suite Italienne for violin and piano
Debussy - String Quartet

Programs are subject to change.

The Sierra Chamber Society:

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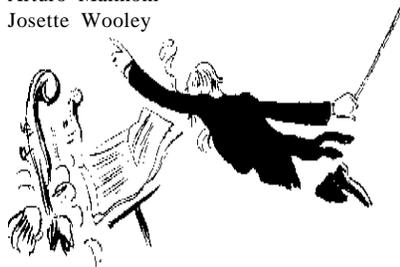
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