



**2007-2008 Season
Program III**

**Robin Sharp, violin
John Chisholm, violin
Christina King, viola
Barbara Andres, cello
Adrian Fung, cello
Stevan Cavalier, piano**

**Grace Presbyterian Church
January 20, 2008 3pm**



Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

String Quartet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 49
(1938)

- I Moderato
- II Moderato
- III Allegro molto
- IV Allegro

Robin Sharp, violin
Christina King, viola

John Chisholm, violin
Barbara Andres, cello

Claude-Achille Debussy
(1862 - 1918)

Sonata for Cello and Piano in D Minor
(1915)

- I Prologue - Lent
- II Serenade
- III Finale - Modérément animé

Adrian Fung, cello

Stevan Cavalier, piano

Intermission

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756 - 1791)

String Quartet in C Major,
K.465 "Dissonance" (1785)

- I Adagio; Allegro
- II Andante cantabile
- III Menuetto: Allegro
- IV Allegro

John Chisholm, violin
Christina King, viola

Robin Sharp, violin
Barbara Andres, cello



*Don't expect to find special depth in this, my first quartet opus. In mood it is joyful, merry, lyrical. I would call it 'spring-like'... I tried to convey in it images of childhood, somewhat naïve, bright spring-like moods.**

Dmitri Shostakovich

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975)
String Quartet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 49 (1938)

Shostakovich began composing at age fourteen. He studied at the Leningrad Conservatory where his teachers included Glazunov and Steinberg. His First Symphony, composed at age 19 as a graduation exercise, brought him international acclaim. Subsequent works made him the Soviet Union's leading composer. He ran afoul of the Stalin regime twice, in 1938, when his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* enraged Stalin, and in 1948 when he and a group of distinguished composers, including Prokofiev and Khachaturian, were denounced in a Party resolution. However Shostakovich's preeminence as the "Soviet" composer, and his international reputation probably saved him from the fate (death sentence) of many of his friends, supporters and lesser-known artists.

Shostakovich managed to weather the political storms and during the last decade of his life reached a plateau beyond ideological criticism. He has been described as "shy and inhibited, unassuming and self-critical, nervous and highly strung, though fun loving in his later years. He was unfailingly helpful towards younger colleagues and had a high sense of fairness. Because of his reputation for honesty and integrity, his opinion carries enormous weight everywhere. When forced on the defensive, he did not argue; but through the strength of his genius he overcame the limitation of Soviet realism to the point where it no longer inhibited free musical creation, in that battle it was Shostakovich who ultimately emerged victorious." (Groves)

Shostakovich was a prolific composer, whose output has an amazing variety. He wrote 15 large-scale symphonies, two operas, six instrumental concertos, 3 ballets, incidental music for 11 plays, song cycles, several cantatas and oratorios, chamber music, solo piano music and suites. He also wrote 36 film scores. Curiously enough, he did not show much interest in writing for the string quartet early in his career. It was only after his Fifth Symphony that he wrote the First String Quartet. Seventeen years were to pass before he wrote a second. However, after this, the form grows in importance in his musical output. The string quartet became the vehicle for the expression of his most private thoughts; the symphonies, concertos and film scores were for the public. In this way the quartet served him as it had Beethoven. It is to Beethoven's quartets, both spiritually and technically, and in emotional range, that Shostakovich's quartets pay homage. Like Beethoven, Shostakovich allows his choice of musical material to determine the overall shape of the piece, rather than pouring his ideas into a preexisting mold.



With the composition of the Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich reestablished himself firmly in the Classical-Romantic mainstream. The First Quartet shares that fact, though it does not share in the deep emotional content of the Symphony. The chamber work is more in the style of a four-movement divertimento (it should be recalled that the earliest string quartets of Haydn were called divertimento). Of the quartet's gestation the composer said; "I began to write it without special ideas and feelings, I thought that nothing would come of it. After all, the quartet is one of the most difficult musical genres. I wrote the first page as a sort of original exercise in the quartet form, not thinking about subsequently completing and releasing it. As a rule I fairly often write things I don't publish. They are my type of composer's studies. But then work on the quartet captivated me and I finished it rather quickly."*

The First Quartet was first performed by the Glazunov Quartet on the 10th of October, 1938 in then Leningrad, now St. Petersburg.

* Laurel E. Fay, Shostakovich: A Life, Oxford University Press, NY, 2000

<i>Au claire de la lune,</i>	By the light of the moon,
<i>Mon ami Pierrot,</i>	My friend Pierrot,
<i>Prete moi ta plume</i>	Lend me your pen
<i>Pour ercite un mot.</i>	So I can write a note.

<i>Ma chandelle est morte.</i>	My candle is dead
<i>Je n'ai plus de feu.</i>	I have no more fire.
<i>Ouvre moi ta porte,</i>	Open your door to me,
<i>Pour l'amour de Dieu</i>	For the love of God.

French Children's Song

Claude-Achille Debussy (1862 - 1918)
Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor (1915)

The Cello Sonata was the first of a group of six projected sonatas for various instrumental combinations. As it turned out, Debussy was able to compose only three of the works before dying of the colon cancer that made his final years a misery - misery intensified by depression at the carnage being suffered by his countrymen in the World War then raging. The other two completed works were the *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* and his final work the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (both works have been programmed in Sierra Chamber Society concerts in past seasons).

One can only lament the fact that he was unable to complete the proposed series which it is said would have included a Sonata for oboe, horn and harpsichord, and



one for clarinet, trumpet, bassoon and piano. After his death, the common belief was that Debussy's late works were the products of flagging inspiration, and a reliance on atrophied mannerisms. His choice of sonatas was an indication that his own experimentalism had reached a dead end. To be honest, he did produce a few clunkers during his final years; the ballets *Khamma* and *The Toy Box*, and one might also include *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*. That being said, those same years saw the composition of his late masterworks; the ballet *Jeux, En Blanc et Noir* for two pianos, the *Etudes* for piano, and these sonatas. In some of these works he remained the revolutionary, without sacrificing his love of elegance. Had he lived, one doubts that he would have been enchanted by the embracing of popular culture and banality of Les Six- though he did live long enough to be horrified yet fascinated by a private preview of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* performed on two pianos. His ballet *Jeux*, became an inspiration for the post-World War II avant-garde composers such as Pierre Boulez, who championed the work in his capacity as a conductor. We today are so familiar with Debussy's language that it is difficult for us to realize how strangely original it was in its own time. Musicologist Joseph Machlis wrote; "His music was without antecedents. Like Berlioz and Wagner before him, like Stravinsky and Schoenberg after, he stands among the great innovators in the history of his art."*

The Cello Sonata evokes the 18th century, but an 18th century that existed only in the poems of Verlaine and the paintings of Watteau. It is said that the Cello Sonata was originally to be titled - *Pierrot fâché avec la lune*; Pierrot angry with the moon. (The Pierrot in question is not the quirky little billionaire from Texas - Who? How fast we forget the buffoon who did *not* make it to the White House -, but a French Pantomime character; a sad, lovesick clown with white face and white floppy clothes. Pierrot makes an appearance in Schumann's *Carneval*, as well as being the subject of Schoenberg's eerie expressionist song cycle *Pierrot Lunaire* [Moonstruck Pierrot], actually written a few years before Debussy's Cello Sonata. And finally for you film buffs, Jean-Louis Barrault plays the mime Duberau who portrays Pierrot in the classic 1946 film *Les Enfants du Paradis* -The Children of Paradise).

This brief work is marked by the clarity and concision one has come to expect from French composers from Rameau and Couperin, to Debussy and Ravel . A sonata it is, but modeled on the Baroque sonata, rather than the complex, large-scale works of say, Beethoven and Schubert. The overall mood is sad, yet ironic. The second movement framed by a slow prologue forming the first movement. and rapid third movement finale; "Serenade" is particularly striking in the use of the cello to suggest a guitar or lute being strummed and plucked; Pierrot serenading the moon. I've written enough; you've read enough. *Ma chandelle e morte....*

The Cello Sonata as well as the other two sonatas were dedicated to the composer's daughter, Emma Claude-Debussy.

* Joseph Machlis, Introduction to Contemporary Music, W.W , NY 1961



*Beauty must appeal to the senses, must provide us with immediate enjoyment, must impress us or insinuate itself into us without any effort on our part. Take Leonardo da Vinci; take Mozart; these are the great artists.**

Claude Debussy

Vienna, 16 February 1785

On Saturday Herr Joseph Haydn and the two Baron Tinti visited us. The new quartets were played, but only the 3 new ones, which he has composed in addition to the other three, which we already have - it is true that they are a little easier (this has also been translated as "lighter," rather than "easier") but most excellently composed. Herr Haydn said to me: "I say to you before God, on my word of honor, your son is the greatest composer whom I know personally or by name; he has taste and the greatest skill in composition as well. ..."

(Letter from Leopold Mozart to his daughter Nannerl.)

The C Major K. 465 was one of these three quartets played on this occasion. It is one of six quartets, which have come to be known as the "Haydn Quartets." Some months later, Mozart sent the manuscripts of these quartets to Haydn with the accompanying letter.

Vienna, 1 September 1785

To my dear friend Haydn.

A father who had decided to send out his sons into the great world thought it was his duty to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a man who was very celebrated at the time and who, moreover, happened to be his best friend..

In like manner I send my six sons to you, most celebrated and very dear friend. They are, indeed, the fruit of a long and laborious study; but the hope which many friends have given me that this toil will be in some degree regarded, encourages and flatters me with the thought that these children may some day prove a source of consolation to me.

During your last stay in this capital you yourself, my very dear friend, expressed to me your approval of these compositions. Your good opinion encourages me to offer them to you and leads me to hope that you will not consider them unworthy of your favor. Please, then, receive them kindly and be to them a father, guide and friend! From this moment I surrender to you all my rights over them. I entreat you, however, to be indulgent to those faults which may have escaped a father's indulgent eye, and in spite of them to continue your generous friendship toward one who so highly appreciates it. Meanwhile, I remain with all my heart, dearest friend, your most sincere friend.

W.A. Mozart.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)
String Quartet in C Major, K.465 “Dissonance” (1785)

Mozart had been profoundly impressed by Haydn’s set of six quartets Opus 33 published in 1781. Inspired by these works, he returned to the writing of string quartets after a lapse of ten years. It was between 1782 and 1785 that the six “Haydn” quartets were composed. As musicologist Alfred Einstein says, “Mozart did not allow himself to be overcome. This time he learned as a master from a master; he did not imitate, he yielded nothing of his own personality.” He followed Haydn’s lead in conceiving the string quartet as a four-part discourse, shared by all the instruments. Their respect and admiration being mutual, Haydn was, in turn, to be influenced in his own subsequent quartets by these quartets that Mozart dedicated to him.

The C major Quartet was the last of the series to be composed. It was completed on January 14th, 1785. Its appellation “Dissonance” refers to the introductory adagio’s opening passage. As is usually the case, the composer had nothing to do with this nickname. And, if you’re expecting, because of this name, to be treated to ear-crushing dissonance, of the sort that would make Charlie Ives stand up and cheer; fugettaboutit. The “dissonance” occurs in the opening passage; a progression of chords over a pedal point by the cello. While it is a rather chromatic passage, it’s quite within the rules of 18th century harmony.

So while it may have reportedly caused a tantrum or two by a disgruntled aristocrat with “sissy ears”, as Ives would say, causing him to tear up the parts, and caused scores to be returned to the publisher, by performers, with corrections indicated, none other than the dedicatee (and no mean musical experimenter himself) Haydn would remark; “Well, if Mozart wrote it, he must have meant it.”** What this opening passage achieves is a deliberate sense of ambiguity. Mozart is keeping us in the fog, rather than clearly establishing the key of C major. With the Allegro that follows this introduction, the fog has lifted and we are the sunny key of C major. The second movement andante cantabile is considered to be the heart of the work; a lovely, lush, lyrical (forgive the alliteration) work. The third movement menuetto is interesting in that central to it is a rather agitated section that places it way out of the realm of a courtly or even country dance. The finale is a good natured romp ala Haydn, using his type of clipped themes and a device that Haydn was an absolute master of...

...the pause.

* Leon Vallas, *The Theories of Claude Debussy: Musicien francais*, Dover, NY, 1967

** Melvin Berger, *Guide to Chamber Music*, Anchor Books Doubleday, NY, 1985,1990

Program Notes by Joseph Way



The Musicians

Robin Sharp, violin, is currently concertmaster of both the Berkeley Symphony and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestras. She has formerly served as first violinist of the Ives String Quartet, as professor of violin at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Santa Clara University, and Sacramento State University and has played several seasons with the San Francisco Symphony.

John Chisholm, violin, has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony for the last three years. After receiving a BA and Performance Certificate from the Eastman School of Music, he played with the Rochester Philharmonic as a first violinist. He has also served as Associate Concertmaster of the Louisville Symphony.

Christina King, viola, joined the San Francisco Symphony's viola section in the Fall of 1996. She has been a member of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, was principal violist in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, (training orchestra of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra), and has also played with Lyric Opera of Chicago and various orchestras in Mexico City. She received a Master's in Music from Northwestern University, and an A.B. in English from Barnard College/Columbia University.

Barbara Andres, cello, is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with Lynn Harrell and Stephen Geber. She has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony since 1977. She was cello performance coach for the San Francisco Youth Orchestra for four years and since 1999 has performed the same role as mentor and coach for young performers at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She is active as a recitalist and chamber musician throughout the Bay Area, and has appeared as Principal Cellist of the Sierra Chamber Society for the last thirteen seasons.

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 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. He is currently an Osher Scholar at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, studying with Jean-Michel Fonteneau.

Stevan Cavalier, piano, studied with Maryan Filar, himself a pupil of Walter Gieseking, 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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Listen to Your Vegetables, Then Eat Them

Das erste Wiener Gemüseorchester (also known as The First Vienna Vegetable Orchestra or simply The Vegetable Orchestra) is an Austrian musical group who use instruments made entirely from fresh vegetables. They are the world's foremost (and perhaps the only) exponents of this genre.

The group, founded in February 1998, consists of ten musicians, one cook, and one sound technician. The members of the ensemble are all active in various artistic areas (for example trained musicians, sound poets, sculptors, media artists, designers, and architects) and have worked together on conceptualizing and carrying out their project. The interdisciplinary approach is a crucial factor in researching and further developing the vegetable music. The intention is to create a sonorous experience which can be perceived with all senses. Musical concepts of the Fluxus movement, for example compositions from John Cage (*Branches*, 1976) could be considered as a source of inspiration for this unique orchestra. Their distinctive repertoire also seems to be deeply rooted in sound art and experimental and electronic music as they play beside own compositions unheard-of interpretations of Igor Stravinsky, the German electronic pioneers Kraftwerk or the Austrian band Radian. All the pieces feature various forms of graphical notation and are exclusively composed for live performance.

Their instruments, which are all of their own invention, include carrot recorders, clappers made from eggplant, trumpets made from zucchini, and numerous others, which are amplified with the use of special microphones. The instruments are made





from scratch just one hour prior to each performance using the freshest vegetables available, then all ninety pounds of vegetables are cooked into a soup following the performance.

Das erste Wiener Gemüseeorchester has released two CDs: *Gemise* and *Automate*. They have toured Europe and also performed in China and Singapore. Their website is located at www.gemueseeorchester.org*

*Wikipedia

Sierra Chamber Society 2007 - 2008 Season

Sunday, April 6, 2008

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

Sunday, June 1, 2008

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

Programs are subject to change.

The Sierra Chamber Society:
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*Call any vegetable. Call it by name.
And the vegetable will respond to you.*

Frank Zappa



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generosity is gratefully acknowledged below.**

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