



**2009-2010 Season
Program II**

**John Chisholm, violin
Kelly Leon-Pearce, violin
Christina King, viola
Barbara Andres, cello
Stevan Cavalier, piano
Sonia Leong, piano
Marc Shapiro, piano**

**Grace Presbyterian Church
December 13, 2009 3pm**





Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach **Trio Sonata in G Minor**
(1714-1788) **for viola da gamba and keyboard (1759)**

- I Allegro moderato (Moderately fast)
- II Larghetto (A little bit slow)
- III Allegro assai (Rather fast)

Kelly Leon-Pearce, violin *Barbara Andres, cello*
Marc Shapiro, piano

Maurice Ravel **Rapsodie Espagnole for two pianos**
(1875 – 1937) **(1907)**

- I Prélude à la nuit - *modéré* (Moderate)
- II Malagueña – *Assez vif - Lent* (Rather slow)
- III Habanera – *En demi-teinte et d'un rythme las*
- IV Feria – *Assez vif – modéré* (Moderate)

Sonia Leong, piano *Stevan Cavalier, piano*

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven **String Quartet in B Flat Major,**
(1770 – 1827) **Op.18, No. 6 “La Malinconia” (1800)**

- I Allegro con brio (Lively)
- II Adagio ma non troppo (Slow, but not too much)
- III Scherzo: Allegro (Fast)
- IV La Malinconia: Adagio – Allegretto quasi allegro – Prestissimo
(Slow - Faster - Very fast)

John Chisholm, violin *Kelly Leon-Pearce, violin*
Christina King, viola *Barbara Andres, cello*



Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)
Trio Sonata in G Minor for viola da gamba and keyboard (1759)

CPE Bach, second eldest son of JS Bach, was, in his day, a much more popular composer than his father, whose music, even in his lifetime, was considered old-fashioned and too conservative, if not pedantic. In contrast, CPE's music was considered to be the musical equivalent of the writings of the Enlightenment. His music is considered a transition from the polyphonic style of his father and the Baroque Period, to the homophonic, not to be confused with homophonic, music of Haydn and the Classical Period. In the biography of CPE¹ found in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, it is claimed that as a child Emanuel was so gifted a musical prodigy that he could look over his father's shoulder and play the music as it was being written out. As an adult, he was considered the finest keyboard player of his time; which also entailed the art of improvisation. His keyboard method became the basis of pianoforte playing as we have come to know it...and he had a Law degree.

In 1740, CPE obtained an appointment as cembalist to the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia. Frederick was known for his flute playing (much to the dismay of his father). One of Manny's duties was to accompany the king's flute playing. This was not the great gig it might appear to be. The King's idea of ensemble playing was that the other musicians follow him; the King². Supposedly, his tempos, or tempi, if you prefer, were erratic, capricious, and inconsistent; difficult to keep in sync with. To the Prussian court he may have been Frederick the Great, but to a musician of Manny's caliber, as a musician he must have seemed like Frederick the Not-So-Great-If-Not-Mediocre- Or-Maybe-Even-Worse. In addition to having to accompany this Royal Pain in the Gamba, the musical taste of the Prussian Court was very conservative, not at all to CPE's progressive taste, as CPE's music was not at all to Frederick's conservative taste.

Nevertheless, having a musician of CPE's eminence was like having a prize racehorse in his stable; a point of pride, so the King kept him in his service, despite his lack of sympathy for CPE's compositions, and his preference for more accommodating accompanists. CPE made attempts to be released from his service. While as a Saxon, not technically a subject of the Prussian king, CPE married a woman who was one of Fred's subjects. She could not leave the kingdom without the king's permission, which, naturally, he would not give. Under those circumstances, the only way CPE could leave was to abandon his wife and children. To his credit, he did not take this escape route. It wasn't until 1767, and the death of his godfather, Telemann, that CPE was to be released from service to assume the post of Telemann's successor at Hamburg. There he remained, described by a contemporary as, "rather short in

¹ The "P" in CPE was in honor of his godfather Georg Philippe Telemann, who composed more music than anyone ought to.

² As Mel Brooks observed, "it's good to be da King".



stature, with black hair and eyes, and brown complexion, a very animated countenance, and of a cheerful and lively disposition”³, until his death in 1788.

The viol family, to which the viola da gamba belongs, was the most important bowed stringed instrument throughout Europe from the 15th to the 17th centuries. However, with the development of the violin family in the 17th century, its importance declined.

It was hunted to extinction by European hunters, primarily for its gut frets, though a few specimens survived and could be found in private reserves in Poland and Lithuania, until the time of the Great War, when these too became casualties of the carnage.⁴

The viol family differs in many ways from the violin family. It has six strings instead of the violin’s four, and uses the same tuning as the lute, the other important stringed instrument of 15th to 17th centuries. Unlike the violin family, the finger board has frets, which are made of gut. In addition, it has sloping shoulders and a flat back side (*Alas, now, yes, but I wasn’t always that way*). All members of the viol family, from the smallest to the largest are played by resting the instrument on the performers lap, or with the larger instruments, between the legs, as a cello is played; hence the term “da gamba”, Italian for “legs” (*I suspect that that’s also the etymology of the term, circa WW2 “gams” as in “get a load of those gams!”*). The viola da gamba that this sonata was written for is actually the bass member of the family, which remained popular in Northern Germany and in Frederick the Great’s court as a solo and ensemble instrument. It is believed that CPE composed this work and his two other viola da gamba sonatas for the court gamba player. Having said all of that about an instrument you will not hear today; you will hear CPE’s sonata performed on cello, I would add that at the time of this sonata’s composition, the viola da gamba was considered by progressive musicians an outmoded instrument, with a sound far inferior to that of the violoncello, or cello as it’s now commonly called.

Having stretched the reader’s credulity and patience to the limit with this essay, I would conclude by further adding that the term “trio sonata” refers to the music being written in three parts; not the fact that the sonata has three movements; or the confusing spectacle of only two musicians performing a trio. The keyboard player plays two of the parts; a bass part with the left hand and a melodic part with the right hand. The main melodic part is played by the cello.

³ Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Fifth Edition.

⁴ This sentence is aimed at students who “write” their research papers by cutting and pasting undigested chunks of Internet “facts”.



“There are only two types of music, that which pleases and that which is boring”

Maurice Ravel

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Rapsodie Espagnole for two pianos (1907)

*Music of Dreams and Lies*¹

Although best known as an orchestral showpiece, and Ravel’s first orchestral masterwork, *Rapsodie Espagnole* was originally conceived and written as a work for two pianos. In point of fact, the third movement *Habanera* was originally composed in 1895, as the first of two movements, the other called *Entre cloches* (Among Bells), of a work for two pianos entitled *Sites auriculaires* (Listening Posts, or Aural Landscapes). A poor premiere performance of the work caused the composer to shelve it. Many years later, in an autobiographical sketch, Ravel would say of this *Habanera* “ I believe that this work, with its ostinato² pedal point³ and its chords with multiple appoggiaturas⁴, contains the germ of several elements which were to predominate in my later compositions”⁵.

The *Habanera* in *Rapsodie Espagnole* contains all of the same musical material as in the 1895 version. Ravel only redistributed the parts between the two players, presumably to ensure a more successful performance. In addition he made sure that the original date of composition of the *Habanera* appeared in the score. He had been wrongly and unfairly accused of being an imitator of Debussy. In fact, he had sent Debussy a copy of the score of the original *Habanera*. Debussy’s own *habanera*, entitled *La Puerta del Vino*, the third prelude in his second volume of piano preludes, did not appear until many years later. This was not the only instance of Ravel scooping Debussy, yet being accused of being his imitator.

The remaining three movements, composed in 1907- 08, share the motif of four descending notes F# E D C that begins the nocturnal *Prélude*. In his BBC Music Guide entitled *Ravel’s Orchestral Music*, Laurence Davies claims that the basis of this prelude was a song Ravel’s mother, who was Basque⁶, and spent years of her life in Spain, sang to him as a child. The *Malagueña*, with its violent contrasts evokes a Spanish Gypsy dance of Malaga. The previously mentioned *Habanera*, evokes a languid, sexy dance from Havana, which the composer instructs to be played “in half-tint and in a tired, fatigued, rhythm”.

1 This epithet was coined by the Spanish composer Manuel De Falla to describe the “Spanish” music written by French Composers; among them, Saint-Saens, Bizet, Lalo, Chabrier, & Debussy. The Russians, Glinka, and Rimsky-Korsakov; as well as Liszt, and even Chopin, who composed a Bolero, were guilty of this as well.

2 Ostinato is a term derived from the Italian word for obstinate. It is an incessantly repeated, usually bass, figure. It is a mainstay of pop music today.

3 A pedal point is a sustained or continually repeated note.

4 Appoggiaturas are grace notes. They can be accented or unaccented. The term is derived from the Italian word for “leaned on” or “supported”, as the tone slides over to the next without a break. Enough with the definitions.

5 *Ravel: Man and Musician* by Arbie Orenstein. Dover Publications Inc. NY, 1991

6 The Basques are believed to have been the first inhabitants of Europe. Their language is related to no other language in Europe. The seven provinces that were and are their territories were divided up between France and Spain. The Basques are still not happy about this. They will occasionally remind the French and Spanish of their displeasure with a well placed bomb. One of Ravel’s never realized projects was to have been a piano concerto based on Basque themes. There are a number of Basque nationalist composers whose works have been recorded, and can be heard on the Naxos label.



The Finale *Feria* conjures up the sounds and energy of a Spanish fair, with at least five popular Spanish tunes breaking one upon the other. This activity is relieved by an interlude sounding for all the world like the tipsy stumbling of someone who has perhaps partied a bit too hard. There is a reprise of the work's opening four note motive before the brilliant pianistic fireworks that conclude the work.

"Come to me my melancholy baby..."

George A. Norton, Maybelle E. Watson (1912)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

String Quartet in B Flat Major, Op.18, No. 6 "*La Malinconia*" (1800)

The B flat major Quartet, despite its designation as number six, was actually the next to last to be composed. It is thought that Beethoven placed this work last in the published series because the weight of the final movement, *La Malinconia* (Melancholy), would serve as an apt closing to the entire set. Beethoven, who had heretofore designated a single work, or a set of three works with an opus number, paid homage to the tradition established by Haydn (who was still alive and composing) and Mozart (dead and decomposing) by writing a set of six quartets, as they had done. Being mindful of the works in this medium by these giants, Beethoven did not rush into quartet writing, just as he did not rush into the composition of symphonies. In 1795 he had been commissioned by Count Apponyi (who had commissioned Haydn for quartets and received in 1793 the set: Op. 71, Nos.1-3, and Op.74, Nos.1-3, known as the *Apponyi Quartets*) for two string quartets and two string pieces. Beethoven fulfilled only half the commission by composing the Trio. Op.3, and the Quintet Op.4, and giving the quartets a pass.

All six works in Op.18 were composed between 1798-1800. The French music scholar and critic, Joseph de Marliave (1873 – 1914), in his pioneering and oft quoted study *Beethoven's Quartets* (1925) comments: "In these works of Beethoven's youth, the clarity and freshness of Haydn are found linked with the grace of Mozart, but so far from being a slavish imitation of these two Masters, they form, as it were, the crowning achievement of their art."

Incidentally, de Marliave was a friend of Ravel, and the dedicatee of the *Toccata*, the finale of the six movement piano version of Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. He was also the husband of the pianist Marguerite Long, who premiered *Le Tombeau* and Ravel's *G Major Piano Concerto*. Ravel did not share his friend's enthusiasm for, in his words "The Big Deaf One"('s), music.

The Op. 18 Quartets were dedicated to Prince Franz Joseph Lobkowitz, and are, not surprisingly, known as the "Lobkowitz Quartets"- the same appellation given to the last two quartets by Haydn, whose turn it now was to defer to the younger composer. Though he went on to compose brilliant symphonies (a form which



Beethoven had not yet tackled) and oratorios, Papa Haydn abandoned quartet writing, a form he pioneered.

The B flat Quartet, as well as the others in the series, were first performed privately at weekly Friday morning quartet concerts at the home of Prince Karl Lichnowsky, friend and former pupil of Mozart. Both Prince Lobkowitz and Prince Lichnowsky were said to have been excellent musicians; however the string players at these particular sessions were four virtuosi connected with the musical circle of Count Rasumovsky (to whom Beethoven would dedicate his Op.59 Quartets). First violinist was Ignaz Schuppanzigh, whose corpulence provided Beethoven with the opportunity for endless “fat jokes,” among them an unpublished chorus entitled In Praise of the Fat One, and the sobriquet “Milord Falstaff.” Despite the composers tiresome and relentless jests, Schuppanzigh remained a faithful friend and performer of this demanding composer’s demanding music, from the first (Op.18) to the last (Op.135) quartets. Second violinist was Louis Sina; Franz Weiss, viola, and Anton Kraft, violoncello. On the occasion when one of these players was absent, Prince Lichnowsky would sit in.

The B flat Quartet opens with a short and lively movement. Again, de Marliave; “... *the gay principle theme, so true to quartet style, recalls Haydn, while the bridge passage recalls Mozart.*” However, he also finds this the weakest movement of the quartet: “...*the passive acceptance of the classical form is the weak point of the Allegro con brio; the working out of repeats according to rule involves the recurrence of the first theme four times in succession, almost without modification, with an inevitably monotonous effect.*” Of the second movement Adagio, de Marliave comments; “*At the writing of this slow movement, Beethoven must have been enjoying one of the periods of relaxation that he was so rarely to experience during his life*”. As for the third movement Scherzo, I quote Robert Haven Schaufner from his book *Beethoven: The Man Who Freed Music* (1929): “*In the Scherzo of the B flat Quartet we catch Beethoven in the act of stealing the Twentieth Century’s thunder by inventing Jazz.*(Everyone knows that Jelly Roll Morton did that!). *For this Scherzo is brimful of the subtle, catchy syncopations, the bizarre wit, and the perversely independent part writing which most people imagine to be the popular invention of the 1920s*” Quite an exaggeration, and nonsense, to be sure, but this movement, short as it is, is recognized as the most original of the entire set.

As for the finale, it is from this movement that the quartets sub-title La Malinconia (Melancholy) derives. Beethoven provides written instructions in the score as to how he wants this section performed: *Questo pezzo si deve trattare colla piu gran delicatezza.* (This piece must be played with the greatest refinement). In his *Guide to Chamber Music* (1985), Melvin Berger comments: “*From the point of view of musical development, this introduction is decades ahead of the rest of Op. 18. In some ways it presages the Late Quartets of the 1820s, with its moving evocation of grief and despair; it provides, as well, an insight into the depths of Beethoven’s emotional state.*”



It should be noted that the young composer's hearing was already seriously deteriorating; a fact which he was still trying to hide from even his most intimate friends. This Adagio forms an introduction to a lively peasant dance, Allegretto quasi allegro, which forms the main body of the movement, and whose gaiety is twice interrupted by strains of *La Malinconia*, a reminder of the composer's personal tragedy as he observes the lively Dance of Life¹.

On behalf of the Sierra Chamber Society, I wish you a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season, and look forward to seeing you in the New Year at our next concert.

Program Notes by Joseph Way

The Musicians

John Chisholm, violin, has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony for the last four 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.

Kelly Leon-Pearce, violin, studied with Dorothy DeLay, the great violin pedagogue who has taught such artists as Itzhak Perlman, Midori, and a healthy contingent of SFS musicians. She became a regular substitute in the New York Philharmonic and was a founding member of the Persichetti String Quartet. In the fall of 1989, she came to the San Francisco Symphony as a substitute, winning a permanent place in September 1990.

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.

¹ Finally, the end of the footnotes.



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.

Sonia Leong, piano, has performed in Canada, the United States, England, Romania, Switzerland, and Hong Kong. She has appeared with the Filarmonica de Stat Dinu Lipatti in Satu Mare, Romania, as well as with the Banff Festival Chamber Orchestra. She also plays with the contemporary music group Music Now, and is a member of the New Pacific Trio, based at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. Dr. Leong currently teaches at the University of the Pacific.

Marc Shapiro, piano, is accompanist of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. Mr. Shapiro plays principal keyboard with the California Symphony and performs with other ensembles such as Composer's Inc., San Francisco Choral Artists, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and on Chamber Music Sundae, San Francisco Symphony Chamber Music Series and The Mohonk Festival of the Arts in New York.

Ticketing

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*"Music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend."
 ~Beethoven*

*"Without music to decorate it, time is just a bunch of boring production deadlines or dates by which bills must be paid"
 -Frank Zappa*



**Sierra Chamber Society 2009-2010 Season
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Featuring the Afiara String Quartet

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Aleksandra Vrebalov "Pannonia Boundless"
Mendelssohn String Quartet E minor Op 44 No 2
Shostakovich Piano Quintet G minor Op 57

Sunday March 21, 2010

Boccherini String Quintet "Nights in the Streets of Madrid"
Faure/Duparc Songs with special guest
Donna Bruno, mezzosoprano
Cherubini String Quartet No 6 A minor

Sunday May 16, 2010

Martinu - Serenade H 216 No 2 for 2 Violins and Viola
Ries - Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano
Dvorak - Sextet No 1 Op 48 A min

Programs Subject to Change

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