



**The Diablo Regional Arts Association
presents the**

**2004-2005 Season
Program I**

**Jenny Robinson, flute
Robin Mayforth, violin
Cathy Down, violin
Christina King, viola
Barbara Andres, cello
Chen-I Lee, piano**

**Grace Presbyterian Church
Sunday October 24, 2004 3pm**



Welcome to this, the opening concert, of the Sierra Chamber Society's Eighteenth Season.

Today's concert features works by three varieties of "classical"¹ composers spanning three centuries: Mozart; one of the giants of the Eighteenth Century Classical Style, Mendelssohn; the most "classical" of the early Nineteenth Century Romantic composers, and Prokofiev; a composer who fashioned his own version of Twentieth Century Neo-Classicism.

"He asked me what I thought of the worthy Mozart and all his sins. I replied, however, that I should be only too happy to renounce all my virtues in exchange for Mozart's sins."

Felix Mendelssohn, *Letters*²

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1754–1791)
String Quartet in G Major, K.387 (1782)

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 3, which we already have - it is true they are a little easier but most excellently composed. Herr Haydn said to me: 'I say to you before God, on my word of honour, your son is the greatest composer whom I know personally or by name; he has taste and the greatest skill in composition as well' ..."

Excerpted from a letter from Leopold Mozart to his daughter Nannerl³

The six quartets mentioned in the above letter have come to be known collectively as the Haydn Quartets. Some months later, Mozart sent the manuscripts of these six quartets to Haydn with the accompanying letter.

"To my dear friend Haydn,

A father who had decided to send out his sons into the great world thought it 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, the 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 me and flatters me with the thought that these children may one day prove a source of consolation to me.



During your last stay in this capital you yourself, my very dear friend, expressed 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 wholly 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 rights over them. I entreat you, however, to be indulgent to those faults which may have escaped a father's partial 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

Mozart had been profoundly impressed by Haydn's set of six quartets Op. 33., published in 1781. (The Sierra Chamber Society has been presenting performances of these works over the last few seasons. In fact, the fifth quartet in that series will be presented on the Feb. 6, 2005 concert.) 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, influenced in his own subsequent quartets by these quartets which Mozart had dedicated to him.

Today we will present Number One Son - the Quartet in G major, the first in the series. "Excellently composed" it is. However, one could take issue with Papa Mozart as to how easy this quartet is. Taking into consideration that the word *easier*, has also been translated as *lighter*, this quartet is by no means consistent with either of these descriptions. One of Mozart's contemporaries wrote of these quartets; "It is a pity that in his truly artistic and beautiful compositions, Mozart should carry his effort after originality too far, to the detriment of the sentiment and the heart of his works. His new quartets, dedicated to Haydn, are much too highly spiced to be palatable for any length of time." Obviously, not an opinion shared by Haydn.

The graceful opening movement Allegro, has a wonderful interweaving and integration of the four voices. Curiously, the second and third movements are actually the longest of the quartet; a minuet followed by a lovely, quiet but nonetheless dramatic, Andante cantabile.

The presto finale provides the greatest contrast to the three previous movements on different levels; not only by its tempo, but it's combining the sonata form with the fugue. This may have come as quite a surprise to Mozart's listeners! The fugue was the most challenging musical form of the Baroque Era, and was quite out of fashion



in Mozart's time. Nonetheless, Mozart studied the works of J.S. Bach with great interest and determination. This finale may remind listeners of the finale to Mozart's last symphony, No.41, the *Jupiter*, though that work would lie ten years in the future.

¹The values of Classicism, according to Webster, are "formal elegance, simplicity, dignity, and correctness of style, and just and lucid conception and order"

²Solman, Joseph - *Mozartiana: Two Centuries of Notes, Quotes and Anecdotes about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* - Vintage Books, New York, 1990

³Gal, Hans - *The Musicians World: Great Composers in their Letters*
Arco Publishing Co. Inc., New York, 1965

Serge Prokofiev (1891 – 1953) **Sonata for Flute and Piano in D major, Op.94 (1942)**

"It sometimes happens that a composer's personality – his physical appearance, his psychological make-up, his social attitudes – corresponds so perfectly to his art that the music and the man become natural counterparts of each other. The music of Serge Prokofiev was his best portrait.

Prokofiev was tall, prematurely balding, with long legs, long arms and long fingers that seemed prehensile at the keyboard. His bodily movements were angular and quick, his gestures abrupt. He had a voice that cut through the air without being loud, and a brusque manner of speech, often laden with sarcasm. He totally ignored social amenities but he had many devoted friends to whom he was loyal.

These physical, psychological and social characteristics are reflected in his music with its tremendous kinetic energy, short and almost abrupt thematic statements and a spirit of irreverence toward established traditions, but there is also in Prokofiev's music a spirit of lyricism, all the more profound because lyric passages occur in contrast to typically boisterous episodes. He regarded this lyric element as very important and resented being classified as a brilliant composer of modernistic works.

It was not a mere coincidence that Prokofiev's favorite recreation was chess. He was in fact the best chess player among composers...and ranked in Russia just below the Grand Master level. The basic qualities of a good chess player – planning, logic, precision – were also qualities that he demanded from himself, and from other composers. He detested musical untidiness, but was full of admiration for technical skill and discipline in performance as in composition.



Prokofiev began his career as a rebel against tradition, but he ended by establishing a tradition of his own. There are few Soviet composers who have not experienced Prokofiev's influence, but the unique combination of kinetic energy, gaiety and lyric poetry that constitute the essence of Prokofiev's art could not be reproduced by the miracle of Prokofiev's physical resurrection, for his music was the natural product of his living personality."

Nicholas Slonimsky¹

"I strive for a greater simplicity and more melody. Of course I have used dissonance in my time, but there has been too much dissonance. Bach used dissonance as good salt for his music. Others applied pepper, seasoned the dishes more and more highly, till all healthy appetites were sick and until the music was nothing but pepper. I think society has had enough of that. We want simpler and more melodic style, and dissonance once again relegated to its proper place as one element in music, contingent principally upon meeting of the melodic lines..."

Serge Prokofiev - from an interview with Olin Downes in the N.Y. Times 1941

If chamber music played a small part in Prokofiev's creative output, then instrumental sonatas, other than piano sonatas, played an even smaller role.

There are only two such works; his Violin Sonata in F minor, Op. 80, and the Flute Sonata in D Major, Op.94. Well... there are actually three. Pushy violinists have appropriated the lovely Flute Sonata, as if they didn't have enough sonatas of their own. And so, the Flute Sonata in D Major, Op.94 is also known as the Violin Sonata #2 in D Major, Op.94. (Prokofiev himself adapted the Flute Sonata for the violinist David Oistrakh.) George Bernard Shaw, in his capacity as music critic, described this sonata as a "humorous masterpiece of authentic violin music." (*As another George once said, "There's an old saying in Tennessee—I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee—that says, fool me once, shame on—you. Fool me—you can't get fooled again."*)

Despite the fact that this sonata was written during World War II, difficult times for the people of the Soviet Union, this work, unlike other "war years" compositions of his, is surprisingly bright-faced, filled with lyricism, warmth and humor. It is indeed a work of classical proportions and forms. As the composer himself said; "I want nothing better, nothing more flexible or more complete than the sonata form, which contains everything necessary to my structural purpose."²

¹ Ewen, David - *The New Book of Modern Composers* - Alfred A. Knopf, 1961

² Machlis, Joseph - *Introduction to Contemporary Music* - W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1961



Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)
String Quartet No. 6 in F Minor, Op.80 (1847)

The F Minor quartet is arguably the most impassioned piece of music penned by a composer noted for his classic qualities; elegance, clarity, emotional restraint, and superb craftsmanship. This quartet was borne of tragic circumstances – the sudden death of Mendelssohn’s beloved sister, Fanny.

Fanny (Cecile) Mendelssohn Hensel, three years older than Felix, was also a gifted musician. At the age of thirteen she scored a Handel Oratorio for full orchestra- as an exercise. As a birthday present for her father, she memorized 24 Bach Preludes. She composed music throughout her short life. In fact some of her works are included in Mendelssohn’s “Songs Without Words”; his Op.8 Songs, Nos.2, 3, & 12; Op.9 Nos. 7, 10, & 12 all without attribution. Despite her obvious gifts she was not encouraged to become a “professional” musician by her father Abraham; “Music should be an accomplishment, and never a career for women.”

For his part, brother Felix felt that she was a better pianist than he (no mean feat), and sought her approval on matters musical. “Fanny, you really know what God was thinking when He invented music.” Yet, Felix tended to share their Papa’s view of women musicians. It was her husband, the painter Wilhelm Hensel who encouraged Fanny to publish her works. While on tour in England, Mendelssohn had occasion to play through some of his songs, the vocalist being none other than the young Queen Victoria. When the Queen expressed her special delight in one of the songs, Felix had to admit that the song was actually composed by Fanny. There was, however, no jealousy between them. They remained devoted and close.

On May 17, 1847, during rehearsal for the family’s famous Sunday musicales in Berlin, Fanny collapsed and died of a cerebral hemorrhage at age 41. Felix was devastated when told of her death. He collapsed and ruptured a blood vessel in his head. He remained so distraught that he was unable to attend his sister’s funeral. At the urging of his wife, family and friends he was persuaded to go to Interlaken, Switzerland to recover. As he was accompanied by an entourage of no less than twenty people, rest and quiet were not to be had, though it seems that rest and quiet were never sought by what we now call a Type A personality. Nevertheless, it is felt that Felix never did recover from the blow dealt him by the death of his sister. A contemporary account says that “he took to walking immoderately so that his wife was frightened by his absences of many hours... he said it was the only thing that would calm his mind.” Felix wrote to his younger sister Rebecca, “I force my self to be industrious in the hope that later on I may feel like working and enjoy it.” I might mention that Mendelssohn, also a talented painter and draftsman, also spent his time making drawings and watercolor paintings of the Swiss landscape.

The F minor quartet was completed by that September. On Sept. 7, he returned to Leipzig, then traveled on to Berlin to tend to details concerning an upcoming



performance of his oratorio *Elijah*. While in Berlin, he was taken to the room where his sister was stricken. On the piano was one of his Walpurgisnacht choruses, still open to the page that she was playing when she collapsed. Nothing had been moved since her death, either in this room or the room where she died. Mendelssohn became even more distraught than before. He was unable to supervise the performance of *Elijah*, and returned to Leipzig. In less than two months he would be dead at age 38, the result of a paralytic stroke.

The first movement of the F minor Quartet alternates music of rage and lamentation. The second movement, which might have otherwise been a Mendelssohnian scherzo, light and airy is in this work bitter and sardonic, more like Mahler than Mendelssohn. The third movement is a long elegiac adagio with echoes of the anguished wails of the first movement. The finale returns to the rage and grief of the first movement, with no sense of acceptance or resignation.

One wonders, would this quartet, his last completed piece of chamber music, mark a new direction in this composer's work, unfulfilled by his untimely death, or would he have returned to the classical restraint of his previous works?

And still another George more than once said: "Say Goodnight Gracie."

Program Notes by Joseph Way

The Musicians

Jenny Robinson, flute, is currently the principal flutist of the Oakland East Bay Symphony. She is completing her Masters degree at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, as a scholarship student of Timothy Day. Originally from Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, she received her B.M. with first class honors from the Royal College of Music in London, supported by a full scholarship from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Ms. Robinson's orchestral experience includes playing principal flute under Lorin Maazel, and principal piccolo in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 under Bernard Haitink. Last year, she performed Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* at the San Francisco Conservatory with Gilbert Kalish, Susan Narucki, and faculty. An active baroque flutist, her upcoming performances include Brandenburg V, and the sonatas and concerti of Bach and Handel with members of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

Cathy Down, violin, was 5 years of age when she began taking lessons, emulating her mother who was a professional violinist. She attended the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where she received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees, studying with Zaven Melikian. Her desire for travel led her to move to Europe where she played as Second Concertmaster with the Baden-Baden Orchestra in Germany for one year and as Associate Concertmaster of the National Orchestra of Belgium for 3 years. In September 1993 Cathy moved back to the Bay Area and played with



the New Century Chamber Orchestra and Sacramento Symphony until joining the San Francisco Symphony as an acting member in 1994. She became a member of that orchestra in September of 2001.

Robin Mayforth, violinist, is a founding member of the Pegasus String Quartet and currently serves as the Concertmaster of Symphony Silicon Valley. She has also served as concertmaster of the San Jose Symphony, the San Diego Opera, the Utah Festival Opera Company, the Performance Orchestra of Philadelphia and the Queens Philharmonia, NY. She has taught on the violin faculty at Stanford University and Santa Clara University. As a soloist, she has appeared with the Lancaster, Newark and Kennett Square Symphonies, as well as with the Delaware Chamber and Repertoire Orchestras. Robin received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the Juilliard School where she studied with Dorothy Delay, Hyo Kang and Paul Kantor.

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 twelve seasons.

Chen-I Lee, piano, a native of Taipei, Taiwan, completed her graduate studies at San Francisco Conservatory of Music with a piano performance and accompanying major this year with Paul Hersh and Timothy Bach. Her undergraduate studies were completed at Oberlin Conservatory under Lydia Frumkin, Phillip Highfill, and James Howsmon where she received the dean's talent award. She has performed at many venues and has participated in master classes with Manahem Pressler, Robert Mann, and Paul Katz. Chen-I Lee frequently accompanies vocalists and instrumentalists alike, and is a staff accompanist at the San Francisco Conservatory Preparatory Department.



Sierra Chamber Society 2004-2005 Season
All concerts at 3PM

December 19, 2004

Hugo Wolf - Italian Serenade
Brahms - Haydn Variations, Op. 56b
Arthur Bliss - Oboe Quintet

February 6, 2005

Haydn - String Quartet Op. 33, No. 5
Khatchaturian - Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano
Brahms - Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115

April 10, 2005 3pm

Paul Juon - Trio-Miniaturen
Schubert and Mahler - Songs
Beethoven - String Quartet in C, Op. 59 No. 3

May 15, 2005 3pm

Arnold Bax - String Quartet No. 1
Ernst Bloch - Concertino for Flute, Viola and Piano
Dvorak - Piano Quartet in E flat, Op. 87

<http://www.fuguemasters.com/scs.html>

Email

The Musicians - players@fuguemasters.com
Stevan Cavalier - steve@fuguemasters.com
Richard A. Gylgayton - richard@fuguemasters.com
Greg Mazmanian - greg@fuguemasters.com
Joseph Way - joe@fuguemasters.com

The Sierra Chamber Society:
Stevan Cavalier, General Director
Greg Mazmanian, Executive Director
Joseph Way, Artistic Director
Richard A. Gylgayton, Program Editor

Sierra Chamber Society
PO Box 4485
Walnut Creek CA 94596
925-932-1731
<http://www.fuguemasters.com/scs.html>



**Ticket prices provide a small percentage of our season's cost.
We are deeply indebted to our donors whose additional
generosity is gratefully acknowledged below.**

Business Contributors

Walnut Creek Super Print
Rob Wilson Recordings
Sunrise Bistro

Founders (\$1000 or more)

Anonymous
Barclay and Sharon Simpson

Patrons (\$500 or more)

Anonymous
Bruce and Mary Jo Byson
Daniel Cavalier
In Memory of Naomi Cavalier
Andrew Hartman
Ivan B. and Ruth Majdrakoff
Shirley Weber

Sustainers (\$250 or more)

Carl and Rita Carlson
George and Nancy Leitmann
Peter and Anne Levine
Arturo Maimoni
Roy K. and Miriam Sexton

The Sierra Chamber Society is also proud to
acknowledge the assistance of the **Diablo
Regional Arts Association** who has provided
invaluable support for sixteen seasons.



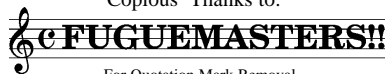
Supporters (\$100 or more)

C. Jean Bigelow
Beverly Bortin
In Memory of David Bortin
Jay W. Carson
Carol and Ken Fowler
William and Toby Gottfried
Evelyn Gayton
Jean Harris
Mary Harvey
Bill Kieffer with Lois Boykin
In Memory of Elaine Kieffer
Manfred and Bernice Lindner
Charlotte Oppenheim
In Memory of Charlie Prager
Mr. Robert E. Muller and Ms. Verna Osborn
Sara and James Parmley
Ted and Marjorie Plant
Paul Popenoe
Dorothy Whittemore Ross
Bill and Leslie Rupley
Frank Scalpone
Barbara M. Scanlon
Franz and Sarah Wassermann

Donors (\$25 or more)

William W. and Katherine B. Clingan
Richard Cornils
Bruce and Katy Hartman
Robert and Judith Ilgen
Michael and Nancy Kaplan
Lottie Kornfeld
Shirley Maccabee
Noam and Naomi Molad
Balazs and Jean Rozsnyai
Sue Scott
Virgie Shore
Maury and Susan Stern

Copious Thanks to:



For Quotation Mark Removal

www.fuguemasters.com/scs.html