



**The Diablo Regional Arts Association
presents the**

**2005-2006 Season
Program I**

**Cathy Down, violin
Robin Mayforth, violin
Linda Wang, violin
Christina King, viola
Barbara Andres, cello
Marc Shapiro, piano**

**Grace Presbyterian Church
September 25, 2005 3pm**



Alan Hovhaness
(1911 - 2000)

Bagatelles for String Quartet, Op. 30
Nos. 1-4 (circa 1930s)

Robin Mayforth, violin Cathy Down, violin
Christina King, viola Barbara Andres, cello

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 - 1827)

Trio in C Minor, Op.1, No.3
(1795)

- I Allegro con brio
- II Andante cantabile con variationi
- III Menuetto: Quasi allegro
- IV Finale: Prestissimo

Linda Wang, violin Barbara Andres, cello
Marc Shapiro, piano

Intermission

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
(1809 - 1847)

String Quartet No. 5 in E Flat Major,
Op. 44, No. 3 (1838)

- I Allegro vivace
- II Scherzo: Assai leggiero vivace
- III Adagio non troppo
- IV Molto allegro con fuoco

Robin Mayforth, violin Cathy Down, violin
Christina King, viola Barbara Andres, cello



Alan Hovhaness (1911 - 2000)

Bagatelles for String Quartet, Op.30, Nos. 1-4 (circa 1930s)

American composer Alan Hovhaness was and is a singular voice in Twentieth Century music. Though having studied at the New England Conservatory, he was a musical maverick, and incurred the wrath and disdain of the academic avant-garde, the serialists, the Neo-Classicists and the Americanists. Upon hearing a recording of Hovhaness's First Symphony, Leonard Bernstein was said to have remarked "*I can't stand this cheap ghetto music.*" David Ewen, writer of a shelf full of books on Twentieth Century and American Music does not even deign to mention him in his many works. Fortunately, he did have his champions like fellow maverick composer Lou Harrison, and the conductors Leopold Stokowski, Andre Kostelanetz, and currently Gerard Schwartz.

Hovhaness was a very prolific composer, having produced more than 400, some say 500, works, and is said to have destroyed as many. He described himself as "an Armenian Haydn." Indeed, Armenian music had a large influence on his works. Expanding his unique musical vision, he was profoundly influenced by the music of India, China, Japan, Korea and Indonesia, through study and travels, as well as European counterpoint. His music is now viewed by some as a precursor to Minimalist, and New Age music. Some of his best-known compositions are Symphony No. 2 "Mysterious Mountain" Op. 132, Fantasy on Japanese Woodprints Op.211, "And God Created Great Whales" Op. 229 (for orchestra and recorded whale songs), Fra Angelico, Op.220., Symphony No. 50, "Mt. St. Helens" (eruption included).

Hovhaness resided in Seattle from 1965 to his death. His works, like those of the artists of the Pacific Northwest, Morris Graves and Mark Tobey, share a feeling of mystery and spirituality. This serene, mystical quality, with sinuous melodies, based on exotic scales and modes, heard in relief above a soft shimmering ostinato, can be heard in the four Bagatelles, which were written while Hovhaness was composer-in-residence for the Seattle Symphony. Incidentally, the title "Bagatelles" meaning "trifles" was most famously used by Beethoven for his collections of short keyboard works. In her article on Hovhaness in the Fifth Edition of Grove's, composer Peggy Glanville-Hicks has some prophetic words. "Hovhaness's music is not yet given extensively at ordinary concerts, except under the composer's own direction. Its tranquility and gentleness is still too alien to an age predominantly dissonant and rhetorical; but sooner or later so large and distinguished



an output should find its way into the general concert world, even if only for its contrast and exotic value.”

Well... almost .While the above quote was written about a half century ago, the age is currently no less “dissonant and rhetorical”. The cynicism, greed, and corruption of those in power, and the ramifications of their policies can lead one to believe it is, arguably, worse. However, Hovhanness’s music is becoming well represented on recording thanks to committed performers and conductors, enabling him to assume his rightful place, as a true original, among America’s Twentieth Century composers.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
Trio in C Minor, Op.1, No.3 (1795)

Opus 1 was an important mark in a composer’s career. With that work, the composer was ready to stake out his reputation in the world. In 1772 Beethoven moved from his hometown of Bonn to the Imperial Capital, Vienna, there to seek fame and fortune as a musician. This city, renowned for its music and composers was the greatest challenge a young man could aspire to. Mozart had died only the previous year, and now the older Haydn was top dog.

Beethoven was ready for Vienna, for in a short time he had established himself as a keyboard virtuoso and improviser of dazzling ability. In current parlance, he was a “rock star” with all of the perks that go with it; recognition, ladies, patronage, ladies, and... ladies. This was a far cry from the later image of the deaf, disheveled, scowling, tragic Ludwig van. Having conquered as a virtuoso performer, he wished to establish his reputation as a composer. With this in mind he composed the three trios that comprise his Op.1.

It should be noted that Op.1 was by no means his first compositional attempt. He had composed many works up to that time. It is possible that one or more of these trios were written before his arrival in Vienna, but not the C minor trio.

From Thayer’s Life of Beethoven¹ we learn the following. According to Beethoven’s pupil Ferdinand Ries; “It was planned to introduce the first three Trios of Beethoven afterwards published as Opus 1, to the artistic world at a soirée at Prince Lichnowsky’s. Most of the artists and music lovers were invited, especially Haydn, for whose opinion all were eager. The Trios were



played and at once commanded extraordinary attention. Haydn also said many pretty things about them, but advised Beethoven not to publish the third in C minor. This astonished Beethoven, inasmuch as he considered the third the best of the Trios, as it is still the one which gives the greatest pleasure and makes the greatest effect. Consequently, Haydn's remark left a bad impression on Beethoven and led him to think that Haydn was envious, jealous and ill-disposed toward him. I confess that when Beethoven told me of this I gave it little credence. I therefore took occasion to ask Haydn himself about it. His answer, however, confirmed Beethoven's statement; he said he had not believed that this Trio would be so quickly and easily understood and so favorably received by the public."

It is interesting to note that the above-mentioned performance probably took place in late 1793 or the very first weeks of 1794. Despite his irritation at Haydn's remarks, he did do extensive revision on the works, and did not publish them until 1795.

Whereas the Piano Trios of Haydn are often very genteel affairs, the C minor Trio is a big, bold, energetic and upbeat work. The first movement is full of rhythmic propulsion and brio "fire", with turns of phrase recognizable as Beethoven. The second movement is a set of lovely variations on a simple but graceful theme, showing Beethoven's skill at variation, which goes hand in hand with improvisation. The third movement is a sprightly minuet. The finale, marked *prestissimo* (with the greatest possible speed) allowed Beethoven to put his virtuosity on display.

¹ Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*; Revised and Edited by Elliot Forbes. Princeton University Press. Princeton, N.J. revised edition 1967

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809 - 1847)
String Quartet No. 5 in E Flat Major, Op. 44, No. 3 (1838)

Felix Mendelssohn is surely one of music's most celebrated child prodigies. His precocity manifested itself in both performance and composition. He appeared successfully as a pianist at age seven, and by twelve had composed sonatas, songs, cantatas, operas and symphonies.



Mendelssohn came from an upper-middle-class family. And while this meant that Felix never had to work for a living, he nevertheless drove himself to an early grave in an attempt to fulfill all of his many assumed musical responsibilities. It is said that he made the profession of music respectable. He was by all accounts a remarkable person. He possessed considerable talents as both a visual artist and writer. Languages came easy to him. His administrative and organizing talents were also considerable. Along with Robert Schumann and Ferdinand David, he founded the Leipzig Conservatory in 1843. He helped promote his contemporaries, among them Chopin, Berlioz and Schumann, whose symphonies he was the first to conduct, and was regarded as one of the finest conductors of his time. It is also to Mendelssohn that we owe the modern approach to performing the works of Bach and Handel. Mendelssohn was adamant about sticking to the score – well almost, compared, that is, to the liberties then regularly taken. In this respect he ran afoul of most of his contemporaries who believed they could improve the scores of these past masters.

He was also one of the great pianists of his day. Clarity, nuance, lack of mannerism, and again, fidelity to the score marked his playing. His style of playing eventually won out over the empty virtuosity, charlatanism, and showboating of many early 19th Century pianists. He also kept the keyboard works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven alive when they were eclipsed, much to his disgust, by those of Field, Hummel, and Kalkbrenner. In his work *The Great Pianists*, Harold Schonberg asserts that Mendelssohn was probably “one of the greatest improvisers of musical history.”

Mendelssohn was no less a master in writing for string quartet. His Opus 44 consists of three string quartets. They were composed in between performing and conducting tours, at a time when Mendelssohn was at the top of his game. Aside from being a much sought after performer and conductor, he was an internationally recognized composer whose newest works were eagerly anticipated. Though the E Flat Major Quartet is designated as number three, it was actually the second quartet in the series to be composed, and is considered the best of the three. The opening movement features Mendelssohn’s characteristic grace, controlled passion, and clarity. The scherzo is another one of those “Mendelssohn” scherzos. However, in this one, the skittering sections alternate with fugal passages. The third movement Adagio is a solemn affair influenced by Beethoven, while the finale is a fiery one, as marked, full of the stock-in-trade Mendelssohnian melodies and pulsing rhythms.

Program Notes by Joseph Way



Message from the Director:

This first program of our 19th season is dedicated to the memory of Vera Hopkins, a devoted, and, while she lived, self-effacing audience member, whose enthusiasm for the Sierra Chamber Society came to blazing to light with a generous bequest from her estate after her passing last year. We would like to have known Vera better, to have officially recognized her intentions in advance, had she wished. If you are thinking about making a bequest to the Sierra Chamber Society, please let us hear from you.

The start of a vibrant season, our 19th - The Sierra Chamber Society welcomes back our venerable musicians, and, of course, you our invaluable audience, all enduring friends. As always, we've a hopper-full of enticing music to share, offering you the high-polish and passion, the bold diversity you may expect:

- Piano Trios by Beethoven, Saint Saens, Dvorak and Martinu.
- A sonata for Violin and Piano by Brahms
- Four-Hand Piano works, the *Mother Goose Suite* and *Rhapsodie Espanol* by Ravel in his own dazzling arrangements.
- String Quartets by Haydn and Mendelssohn.
- Mozart's great Clarinet Quintet
- And Quintets for Piano and Strings by Erno Dohnanyi and for Winds and Strings by Prokofiev
- Surprises by Alan Hovhaness, Maurice Duruflé, and Joseph Marx.
- Beethoven's little known delights, the Scottish Folk Songs, selected from his Op. 108, for Piano Trio and Voice (look for Donna Bruno and company)
- A new commission from composer and jazz pianist Bevan Manson
- A second Jazz entrée with Bevan and his friends.

We're so glad you've chosen to devote these selected Sundays to the Sierra Chamber Society (all except our Jazz program – somehow Jazz just fits better on a Saturday). Those who purchased individual tickets to today's performance, but would now like to enjoy the whole season, take heart! You can still get subscriber discounts by purchasing a *4-concert mini-series* (or 5 with the Spring Jazz event). Just call the Dean Leshner Regional Center Ticket Office at 925-943-SHOW to inquire.

And, speaking of hearing from our audience, although we do appreciate quiet devotion, we can handle spikier reactions to our programming as well. Actual



remarks we've heard - "Enough clarinet, already!" "Enough Poulenc!" Although we can't put Poulenc on the shelf forever - we *have* done nearly *all* his chamber works! - we've too many fabulous clarinet players on hand, like Carey Bell and Michael Corner, to neglect the instrument for long, and then there's that heavenly Mozart Clarinet Quintet... Truly, we program some of the music to challenge (if not provoke), ourselves as well as our audience. But, like you, we're always listening

Stevan Cavalier
General Director, SCS.

The Musicians

Cathy Down, violin, 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.



Linda Wang, violin, made her debut with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic at the age of nine, and has performed throughout the United States. Her solo concerts have taken her to New York City's Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam's Beurs van Berlage and the Berlin Schauspielhaus. She studied at The Juilliard School (Pre-College Division) and the University of Southern California. Awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, she pursued advanced studies at the famed Salzburg Mozarteum. Her principal teachers have been Dorothy DeLay, Alice Schoenfeld and Ruggiero Ricci. Linda performs on a 1767 J.B. Guadagnini, and is Assistant Professor of Violin and chamber music at the University of the Pacific's Conservatory of Music.

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.

Marc Shapiro, piano, is accompanist of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. He has been a featured soloist in Les Noces, Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals, and James P. Johnson's Yamekraw with the San Francisco Symphony, as well as annual concerts with 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.



**Sierra Chamber Society
2005 - 2006 Program**

Program II

December 11, 2005

Durufle – Recitatif et Variations, Op. 2 for Flute, Viola and Piano
Martinu – Trio “Bergerettes” for Violin, Cello and Piano
Saint-Saens – Piano Trio

Program III

February 5, 2006

Haydn – String Quartet Op. 33 No. 4
Ravel – *Mother Goose Suite* and
Rhapsodie Espanol for Two Pianos 4 Hands
Dvorak – Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano

Program IV

March 26, 2006

Brahms – Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1 in G major
Prokofiev – Quintet for Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, Viola
and String Bass, Op. 39
Mozart – Clarinet Quintet

Program V

May 21, 2006

Joseph Marx – String Quartet No. 1
Beethoven – Scottish Folk Songs from “25 Schottische Lieder”, Op.
108 with Special Guest Donna Bruno
New Commission
Dohnanyi – Piano Quintet

Jazz at the Sierra

April 15, 2006

with Bevan Manson, piano, and Distinguished Guests

The Sierra Chamber Society:

Stevan Cavalier, General Director
Greg Mazmanian, Executive Director
Joseph Way, Artistic Director
Richard A. Gylgayton, Program Editor
Mary Harvey, Business Manager
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