



**The Diablo Regional Arts Association  
presents the**

**2005-2006 Season  
Program III**

**Michael Corner, clarinet  
Pamela Hakl, oboe  
John Chisholm, violin  
Joseph Meyer, violin  
Madeline Prager, viola  
Kenneth Miller, double bass  
Barbara Andres, cello  
Stevan Cavalier, piano**

**Grace Presbyterian Church  
February 5, 2006 3pm**



**Johannes Brahms**  
(1833 - 1897)

**Sonata in G Major for Violin & Piano,**  
**Op. 78 (1878 -79)**

- I Vivace ma non troppo
- II Adagio
- III Allegro molto moderato

*John Chisholm, violin      Stevan Cavalier, piano*

**Sergei Prokofiev**  
(1891 - 1953)

**Quintet for Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, Viola**  
**and Double Bass, Op.39 (1924)**

- I Tema (moderato). Var.I (L'istesso tempo)  
Var.II (Vivace)
- II Andante energico
- III Allegro sostenuto, ma con brio
- IV Adagio pesante
- V Allegro precipitato, ma non troppo presto
- VI Andantino

*Michael Corner, clarinet      Pamela Hakl, oboe*  
*Joseph Meyer, violin      Madeline Prager, viola*  
*Kenneth Miller, double bass*

### **Intermission**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**  
(1756 - 1791)

**Quintet for Clarinet and Strings**  
**K.581 (1789)**

- I Allegro
- II Larghetto
- III Menuetto
- IV Allegro con Variazioni

*Michael Corner, clarinet*  
*John Chisholm, violin      Joseph Meyer, violin*  
*Madeline Prager, viola      Barbara Andres, cello*



**Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)**  
**Sonata in G Major for Violin & Piano, Op. 78 (1878 -79)**

**Rainy Day Music**

As with the Symphony, and the String Quartet, Brahms, ever intimidated by the specter of Ludwig van, did not produce his first Violin Sonata until he was in his mid-forties. As in many other cases, Brahms' First Violin Sonata was not his first crack at the form. He had composed at least three previously, all of which he found to be unsatisfactory, and he destroyed them. The G Major Violin Sonata, perhaps the loveliest, dreamiest piece of music composed by the often prickly Brahms, was written during a stay at the summer holiday resort Pörschach on Lake Worth in the Austrian province of Carinthia.

Perhaps because of his early career as accompanist to violinists, Brahms was especially mindful of the problem of achieving balance between these two wildly differing instruments. The piano, large and polyphonic in nature; and the violin, small and homophonic in nature. His was a solution different from his predecessors. The violin sonatas of Haydn and Mozart were essentially a piano sonata with a violin doubling the piano's melody, with very little independence between the two. Beethoven's Violin Sonatas sought to make the two instruments equals in a musical dialogue. Much to his credit, Brahms, though a formidable pianist (and you know how "front and center" pianists like to be) reined in the piano so that his approach to the violin sonata was not unlike that of vocal music. The piano provides an accompaniment to the violin, which like a vocalist, gets to sing the melodies. As a matter of fact the third movement of this sonata is based on two songs from Brahms Op.59, *Regenlied* (Rain Song) and *Nachklang* (Memories) whose lyrics evoke rain. The ever coy Brahms sent a copy of the Sonata to his friend Dr.Thodor Billroth with this comment "*It's not worth playing through more than once, and you would have to have a nice, soft, rainy evening to give the proper mood.*"<sup>1</sup>

Despite the dreamy nature of the Violin Sonata, it is a tightly structured work. The dotted rhythm that form the first three notes, all of them D's played by the violin, forms a motif that can be heard throughout all three movements. Also the main theme of the middle movement, reappears in the final movement. This middle movement was dedicated to Clara Schumann and her son Felix, though undoubtedly touched by the gesture, she preferred the outer movements, especially the third, of which she wrote to Brahms, "*How deeply excited I am over your sonata...you can imagine my rapture*



*when in the third [movement] I once more found my passionately loved melody... I say 'my' because I do not believe that anyone feels the rapture and sadness of it as I do...*

*My pen is poor, but my heart beats warmly and gratefully, and in spirit I press your hand.”<sup>2</sup>*

For his part, the gruff but kind Brahms had his publisher Simrock deposit the thousand thaler fee for the Violin Sonata, anonymously into Clara's account. To again quote from Jan Swafford's highly recommended biography of Brahms, "She apparently did not detect the gift, or she would have returned it indignantly."

<sup>1</sup>Swafford, Jan *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* Vintage Books, NY ©1997

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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**Sergei Prokofiev (1891 - 1953)**  
**Quintet for Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, Viola, and Double Bass,**  
**Op.39 (1924)**

*"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 merely as a brilliant composer of modernistic works."*

Nicholas Slonimsky<sup>1</sup>



## Like the Gurgle of a Bottle Emptying

Chamber music plays a very small part in Prokofiev's output. He composed two String Quartets, the Second (Op. 92) was performed by Sierra Chamber Society in the 1993-94 season. The well-known Overture on Hebrew Themes Op. 34, was also performed by the Sierra Chamber Society in the 1988-89 season. Add to this a sonata for two violins, and the two violin and piano sonatas, the First Violin Sonata performed by the Sierra Chamber Society in the 1995-96 season, (the Second originally scored for flute and piano) and that's basically it.

The G Minor Quintet, like the Overture on Hebrew Themes was the result of a commission. Prokofiev was living in Paris at the time and received the commission from Boris Romanov, a dancer and choreographer in Diaghilev's Ballet Russe troupe. Though the commission was for a small ballet, to be titled *Trapeze*, he was not burdened with having to compose to a story or plot. Thus, the piece could work as a ballet or pure chamber work. It succeeded on both counts. This six-movement work is quite reminiscent of some of his compatriot Igor Stravinsky's "Russian Period" works: *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), *Les Noce* (1917-23), *Renard* (1922), *Berceuses du Chat* (1915), and especially *Pribaoutki* (1914). In fact, in 1919, Prokofiev had been present at the American premiere of this brief set of songs based on popular Russian folk poetry. He wrote to Stravinsky telling of his enjoyment of the work, especially the song Uncle Armand where "the oboe and clarinet are like the gurgle of a bottle emptying. You express drunkenness through your clarinet with the skill of a real drunkard." Note that these are the two wind instruments used in the Quintet. While Stravinsky's spirit, like that of his puppet *Petrushka*, may at times, haunt this quintet, it is nonetheless, an energetic, provocatively playful, highly colored work; a postcard from Paris in the Twenties, and a fine bit of circus music at that. The concert version of the Quintet was first performed in Moscow in 1927. The ballet production was not performed in the then "Soviet Union" until 1972.

<sup>1</sup>Ewen, David *The New Book of Modern Composers*. Knopf, N.Y. 1961



**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)**  
**Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, K. 581 (1789)**

**250 Years Young**

January 27, 2006 marked the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mozart.

The Clarinet Quintet, the Clarinet Concerto and the Kegelstatt Trio were inspired by Mozart's particular love of the clarinet and the artistry of his crony, the principal clarinetist of the court orchestra in Vienna, Anton Stadler. The Quintet bears the subtitle "Stadler's Quintet." Stadler was by all accounts a rotter. He led Mozart to drinking and carousing, borrowed and stole from him (Mozart was in terrible financial shape), and generally abused their friendship in every way possible. Mozart never seemed to have resented this treatment. He respected Stadler's musicianship so much that he never bore him any ill will.

The serenity of the Clarinet Quintet is in stark contrast to Mozart's troubled life at this time. Mozart had wanted to be an independent artist, free of the Church and the Court, yet even a composer of his genius was not able to accomplish this. For Haydn, wisdom lay in working within the system. It was for Beethoven, with his considerable promotional gifts, to achieve the status of an independent artist. Mozart's attempt was a heroic failure. Yet this music betrays none of his personal floundering. In the first movement, in sonata form, Mozart generously treats us to three of his themes, which are developed, shared among the players and repeated in the recapitulation. The beautiful and serene second movement, Adagio has among its admirers Maurice Ravel, who is said to have based the slow movement of his G Major Piano Concerto on this adagio. The third movement, minuetto is a bit unusual in that it contains two trio sections. The last movement consists of a theme and six variations.

The Quintet was completed on September 29, 1789 and the first performance took place the following December 22, at the Imperial and Royal Court Theater with, of course, Stadler as clarinetist.



## Correction

As one of our listeners was astute enough to point out, there was a typo in the last concert's program notes.

Bohuslav Martinu lived from 1890 - 1959, not 1950. My apologies for the mistake.

*Program Notes by Joseph Way*

### The Musicians

**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 Music Society, appearing several times a year at the Walnut Creek Performing Arts Center. 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.

**Pamela Hakl**, oboe, is currently Principal Oboe of Symphony San Jose and the orchestra of Ballet San Jose. She served as Principal Oboe of the San Jose Symphony from 1980 until the orchestra closed in 2001. During this time, she was featured as a soloist in concertos by Albinoni, Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Hummel. In addition to her responsibilities in San Jose, Ms. Hakl has performed with the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Opera, and the San Francisco Ballet. Ms. Hakl was also on the faculty of the School of Music at San Jose State University from 1982 until 2005.

**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.



**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.

**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.

**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.

### Origins of Musical Notation

As with our previous discussion of tempo and movement markings here is more musical information with which you can impress your friends when playing Trivial Pursuit.

There is some evidence that a kind of musical notation was practiced by the Egyptians from the 3rd millennium BC and by others in the Orient in ancient times.



Ancient Greece had a sophisticated form of musical notation, which was in use from at least the 6th century BC until approximately the 4th century AD; many fragments of compositions using this notation survive. The notation consists of symbols placed above text syllables. An example of a complete composition — indeed the only surviving complete composition using this notation — is the Seikilos epitaph, which has been variously dated between the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD. The Delphic Hymns, dated to the 2nd century BC, also use this notation, but they are not completely preserved

Knowledge of the ancient Greek notation was lost around the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. Scholar and music theorist Isidore of Seville, writing in the early 7th century, famously remarked that it was impossible to notate music. By the middle of the 9th century, however, a form of notation began to develop in monasteries in Europe for Gregorian chant, using symbols known as *neumes*; the earliest surviving musical notation of this type is in the *Musica disciplina* of Aurelian of Réôme, from about 850. There are scattered survivals from the Iberian peninsula before this time of a type of notation known as Visigothic *neumes*, but its few surviving fragments have not yet been deciphered.

Other types of notation date from the 10th century in China and Japan. In East Asia, as later in India and elsewhere in Asia, music was notated with the use of characters for sounds. Rhythmic motifs could also be prescribed in a similar way. In Europe, on the other hand, the foundations were laid for a purely symbolic notation of music, which does not seem to have been brought to existence anywhere else.

The founder of what is now considered the standard music stave was Guido D'Arezzo, an Italian Benedictine monk who lived from 995-1050 A.D. His revolutionary method, combining a 4 line stave with the first form of notes (*neumes*), eventually paved the way to the five line stave which was introduced in the 14th century. Guido D'Arezzo's achievements paved the way to the first written music, to music books and the concept of Composers to exist.

And may I point out, once again, that it was an *Italian* that thought up that musical stave that we take so much for granted today.

A pop quiz may take place at our next concert. Be prepared. In the meantime let us all praise Guido D'Arezzo for his foresight.



**Sierra Chamber Society  
2005 - 2006 Program**

**Program IV**

**March 26, 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 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**

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

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

**Email**

The Musicians - [players@fuguemasters.com](mailto:players@fuguemasters.com)  
Stevan Cavalier - [steve@fuguemasters.com](mailto:steve@fuguemasters.com)  
Richard A. Gylgayton - [richard@fuguemasters.com](mailto:richard@fuguemasters.com)  
Greg Mazmanian - [greg@fuguemasters.com](mailto:greg@fuguemasters.com)  
Joseph Way - [joe@fuguemasters.com](mailto:joe@fuguemasters.com)



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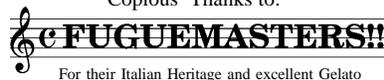
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