

The Morrison Artists Series 2015-16 Season Continues

Coming Up: The Fidelio Trio's San Francisco Debut



Dear Patrons,

On Sunday, November 8, the virtuosic Fidelio Trio from London will take the McKenna Theater stage in their San Francisco debut. Their meteoric career has put them on concert stages worldwide, and their many recordings reflect their growing influence as interpreters of music of classical, romantic and modern repertoire. The program is a most interesting one, including:

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921),
Trio No.2 in E minor, Op. 92 (1892)

Allegro non troppo
Allegretto
Andante con moto
Grazioso, poco allegro
Allegro

Judith Weir (b. 1954), Trio No.2 (2003-4)

How Grass and Trees Become Enlightened
Your Light may go Out
Open your own Treasure House

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), *Verklärte Nacht*,
Op. 4 (1899), arranged for piano trio by Eduard
Steuermann (1892-1964)



The Fidelio Trio

Camille Saint-Saëns was the foremost composer of instrumental music in 19th Century France, and Judith Weir has distinguished herself as one of the foremost composers working today in the United Kingdom. The third composer on the program, Arnold Schoenberg, is likely the most talked about, most controversial, most influential, least understood and least listened to composer of the 20th century. Born in Vienna in 1874, so ten years younger than Richard Strauss, he was heir to the late Romantic tradition embodied in the works of Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler and others, and had a close and

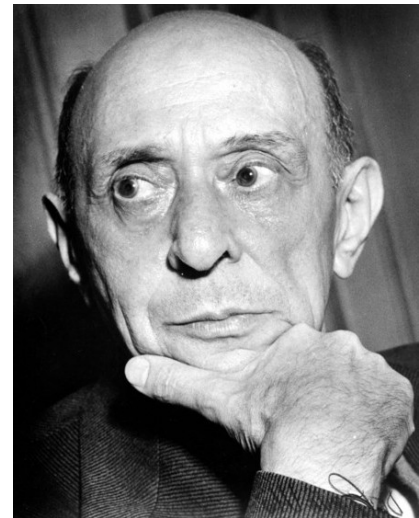


Composer Judith Weir

lifelong affinity for the aesthetic of Johannes Brahms, whose music he described as embodying the “principle of developing variation”.

Not content to compose within the stylistic framework of existing tradition, and clearly sensing a vast palette of harmonic possibilities based on the full resources of the chromatic scale going far beyond even the wonderfully rich harmonic resources of the late romantic style, Schoenberg brought about a revolution in tonal organization which eventually coalesced into a novel approach known as serial, or twelve-tone composition. This novel approach, together with its implicit idea of the “emancipation of dissonance”, to use Schoenberg’s words, is what led to the far-reaching influence of his ideas, influential in their enthusiastic adoption by many composers and their equally strenuous rejection by others – hence the inherently controversial aspect of his influence.

Schoenberg’s early works were, however, squarely within the language of late romanticism. *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) written in 1899 for string sextet (two violins, two violas and two cellos) probably marks the apotheosis of Schoenberg’s romantic period. Based on an ecstatic poem by Richard Dehmel (German poet, 1863-1920), it is a large-scale, single-movement programmatic work of transcendent beauty, in the tradition of the tone poems of Richard Strauss. Dehmel’s poem recounts a stark moonlit forest scene, a man and woman walking together. In the first part of the poem the woman somberly confesses her pregnancy through an indiscretion; in the second part the man rapturously accepts her and the embryonic child in an awareness of the glowing splendor of life and the love the two feel for each other, and thus the night is “transfigured” – transformed into an elevated and beautiful universe - as in the poem’s title.



Arnold Schoenberg

Of all Schoenberg’s works, the two that have become iconic repertory pieces are *Verklärte Nacht*, and the 1912 song cycle, or “melodrama”, *Pierrot Lunaire*, a setting of twenty-one of Albert Giraud’s group of poems of the same name, based on characters from Italian *Commedia dell’arte*. The latter, *Pierrot Lunaire*, is iconic as an astonishing work of *avant-garde* experimentalism that retains its vigor, freshness, and ability to delight to the present day. The former, *Verklärte Nacht*, is iconic as a kind of quintessential culmination of fully mature romanticism that the composer was soon to leave behind in his search for as yet unexplored means of musical expression.



Pianist Eduard Steuermann

The Fidelio Trio will perform *Verklärte Nacht* in a 1932 arrangement for piano trio made by pianist Eduard Steuermann (1892-1964), who, to paraphrase Fidelio's pianist Mary Dullea, "brings out the music's rich detail without losing any of the expressive eloquence or color of the original.

"The name Steuermann is virtually synonymous with almost all of the piano music of Schoenberg and his disciples of the eponymous Second Viennese School, Alban Berg (1885-1935) and Anton von Webern (1883-1945). Steuermann played the piano part in the first performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, and was the soloist in the premiere of Schoenberg's 1942 Piano Concerto. "

Please join me Sunday, November 8 at 3pm when the Fidelio Trio takes the McKenna Theater stage in their San Francisco debut performance. I'll be giving a pre-concert talk about the concert repertoire at 2pm, and the trio members will give a master class from noon to 2pm on Monday, November 9. All events are admission free and open to the public, but tickets are required for the concert and pre-concert talk. Reserve your seats now on our website, morrison.sfsu.edu, or by calling the San Francisco State box office at 415.338.2467. I look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

Richard Festinger
Artistic Director