

PROGRAM NOTES

by Peter Bergquist

String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111

Johannes Brahms

In December 1890 Brahms sent the manuscript of his G-major Quintet to his publisher with the statement that this would be his final composition and that he would compose nothing more. This fortunately turned out not to be true, but the quintet would have been a wonderful way to go out. Far from being a farewell, much of it displays a youthful vigor that might not be expected from a composer in his late 50s. The inner movements are more introspective, even wistful, but the outer movements maintain high energy almost without a break. One of Brahms's friends suggested that the first movement might be subtitled, "Brahms at the Prater. [the great Viennese amusement park], to which the composer replied, "You've guessed it! With all the pretty girls around!. There certainly are lots of Viennese waltz rhythms in the quintet, while the finale turns distinctly Hungarian.

The Allegro non troppo is in 9/8 meter, a rare choice for a first movement, which allowed Brahms to make 3-against-2 rhythmic contrasts at many different levels. The opening theme in the cello is said to have been taken from a symphony Brahms was working on but never completed. It strides confidently through the full range of the instrument and is taken up by the others before the quieter second theme appears in the violas. The second violin presents yet a third theme, which is magically transformed when the development begins. The movement works over all three themes, recapitulates them, and closes in a blaze of glory.

The passionate Adagio focuses on a single theme, though it is not as formally structured as a theme and variations. The tonal center, though nominally D minor, is ambiguous at first, and it remains so through much of the movement, allowing Brahms to show the theme in a new light each time it is heard. The successive statements of the theme gain in intensity until a cadenza-like passage in the viola leads to a quiet close, finally in major mode. The third movement, Un poco Allegretto, takes up the waltz implications of the first movement in a relaxed intermezzo. It begins in G minor, its trio is in G major, and after the G minor reprise, it finally ends quietly in G major. Perhaps for this reason, the Vivace finale begins away from the home key, and only after several indecisive measures does it launch into a vigorous Hungarian dance, in an unambiguous G major. High spirits reign even through some quieter episodes, and the quintet ends with a mad dash to the final cadence.

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104th Season, 43rd program



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON • SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Beall Concert Hall

8:00 p.m.

Thursday evening

January 22, 2004

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FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

presents

OREGON STRING QUARTET

Fritz Gearhart, violin

Kathryn Lucktenberg, violin

Leslie Straka, viola

Steven Pologe, cello

with guest artist

Diane Monroe, violin



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

PROGRAM

- Geigezoid** (1996) Fritz Gearhart
- Champagne** (1994) Diane Monroe
- Sonata for Jazz Violin
and String Quartet** (1987) David Baker
- I. Fast, with Energy*
II. Song/Blues
III. Calypso
IV. Very fast and intense

INTERMISSION

- String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111** Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro non troppo, ma con brio (1833-1897)
II. Adagio
III. Un poco Allegretto
IV. Vivace, ma non troppo presto

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ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

The **Oregon String Quartet**, formed in 1982, is in residence at the University of Oregon, School of Music. The quartet performs frequently and pursues their interest in 20th- and 21st-century repertoire through ongoing recording projects. Their most recent CD, released by Koch International Classics, features works by the early 20th century African-American composer William Grant Still. The disc has been praised by the press for its beauty and significant content. *Strad Magazine* hailed the disc as “Musical Heaven: Oregon String Quartet...you will adore William Grant Still’s 1960 string quartet, especially in a performance as sumptuously voiced and stunningly engineered as this.” Quartets by Livingston Gearhart and Victor Steinhardt have also been recorded and are currently in post-production. Individually, the members have recorded on the Koch, CRI, and Centuar labels and have performed at numerous festivals including Marlboro, Aspen, Grand Teton, Killington, Newport and Oregon Bach Festivals.

Diane Monroe is a violinist whose versatility and expressive artistry consistently bring both classical and jazz audiences to their feet. Critics here and abroad warmly praise her ability to interpret and communicate varying styles and periods in both European classical and American jazz traditions. Mon-

roe had the honor of appearing at the very first Fiddlefest at Carnegie Hall, where she shared the stage with such legendary performers as Arnold Steinhardt, Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, Midori, Ani and Ida Kavafian and Mark O'Connor. Her rich rendering of Stravinsky’s Fairy’s Kiss and her amazing unaccompanied version of Amazing Grace won her instant acclaim.

Her initial Fiddlefest success led to appearances in Alan Miller’s documentary film *Small Wonders* and the recent Meryl Streep film *Music of the Heart*. Concurrently, she was invited back for Fiddlefests at Alice Tully Hall, the Montreux Jazz Festival in Central Park, and Switzerland’s Tonhalle. Monroe is frequently heard at such renowned venues as the Marlboro, Caramoor, Sitka, Verbier, North Sea Jazz, and Mellon Jazz festivals. She has appeared in concert with Yo-Yo Ma, performing the string quartets of Henry Cowell at BAM, Ethos Percussion Ensemble in Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall, and as guest soloist in Wall to Wall presentations of Kurt Weill and Irving Berlin in New York City. An advocate of new music, Monroe is frequently called upon by composers to premiere their works. David Baker, Anthony Davis, Julia Wolfe, Steven Dembsky, Joseph Nocella, Leslie Burrs, and Robert Moran have all had their solo works premiered and repeated by her. Monroe performs these new works, in addition to the standard classical and jazz repertoire, with a spectrum of respected orchestras and ensembles that includes the Delaware Symphony, Orchestra 2001, Brooklyn Philharmonic Contemporary Ensemble, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, Network for New Music, Relache Ensemble, New York Chamber Symphony, U.S. Air Force Symphony, Jupiter Symphony, String Currents Orchestra, Central Iowa Symphony, and the Atmos and Ethos Percussion Ensembles.

Before devoting all her time to solo engagements, Monroe was first violinist of the Uptown String Quartet and the Max Roach Double Quartet. She made appearances with these critically acclaimed jazz ensembles on The Cosby Show, CBS News Sunday Morning and Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood, and recorded with them on the Philips, Soul Note, and Mesa/Bluemoon labels. Her four seasons with the String Trio of New York were highlighted by appearances with saxophonist Joe Lovano, Bang On A Can All-Stars, and by a CD release on Black Saint Records.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, and student at Oberlin Conservatory, University of the Arts, and Michigan State University, Monroe has worked with great chamber music masters such as Karen Tuttle, Felix Galimir, Mischa Schneider, Julius Levine, and members of the Guarneri and Cleveland Quartets. She taught on the faculty of Oberlin Conservatory, and is currently at Temple University and Swarthmore College. Her distinguished awards include the 2002 Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of the Arts, the Pro Musicis Foundation Recitalist Award, The Alan and Wendy Pesky Award, and two Grants from Meet-the-Composer. Her compelling performances this season, which range from classical repertoire to traditional jazz and her own original music, include a duo concert with Arnold Steinhardt, a residency at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a featured performance in Fiddlefest at the Apollo Theater, and a collaborative jazz concert with Regina Carter, John Blake and Kenny Barron.