

PROGRAM NOTES by Stephen Rodgers

this combination of instruments by the likes of Franck, Dvořák, Fauré, and Shostakovich. The scope and technical mastery of the quintet are abundantly evident—in the Allegro first movement, for example, with its endless thematic variation and rhythmic invention, and in the slow movement, which manages to sound at once gentle and majestic. Yet the real marvel of the piece, the movement that refuses to release you from its grip, is the scherzo. Insistent, driving, fiery, even vaguely sinister, it gallops relentlessly from beginning to end, stopping for rest only during the stately trio section. One scholar has commented that the scherzo's musical ideas multiply “like a force unleashed by the sorcerer's apprentice.” Listening to the movement is indeed like being cast under a spell—a magical, menacing, thrilling spell.

IN BEALL WITH BRAHMS CONCERT THREE

Monday, May 18, 2015 | 7:30 p.m.

Violin Sonata in G major, op. 78
Violin Sonata in D minor, op. 108
Piano Trio in C major, op. 87

The In Beall with Brahms series will continue next season. The SOMD will present three concerts during the 2015-16 academic year, and the entire series will culminate during the 2016-17 season. The concert dates will be announced with other SOMD events on our website music.uoregon.edu

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Season 114, Program 63



UNIVERSITY OF
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SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

In Beall with
Brahms
concert two

Searmi Park, violin I
Holland Phillips, violin II
Leslie Straka, viola
Steven Pologe, cello
Alexandre Dossin, piano

Beall Concert Hall
Monday, March 2, 2015 | 7:30 p.m.



In Beall with Brahms, concert 2

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Quartet in C Minor, op. 60

Allegro non troppo
 Scherzo: Allegro
 Andante
 Finale: Allegro comodo

Searmi Park, violin
 Leslie Straka, viola
 Steven Pologe, cello
 Alexandre Dossin, piano

INTERMISSION

Piano Quintet in F Minor, op. 34

Allegro non troppo
 Andante, un poco adagio
 Scherzo: Allegro
 Finale: Poco sostenuto
 Allegro non troppo
 Presto, non troppo

Searmi Park, violin I
 Holland Phillips, violin II
 Leslie Straka, viola
 Steven Pologe, cello
 Alexandre Dossin, piano

Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 60

“Imagine a man for whom nothing is left and who wishes to put an end to himself.” So wrote Brahms about the first movement of his Piano Quartet in C Minor. These may seem like strange words to describe a piece of music—so vivid and so violent—but in this case they are more than apt. The first movement of Brahms’s quartet is full of despair, and you feel it from the very beginning: in the stark piano octaves (evoking the tolling of bells), and in the funereal passages in the strings. The prevailing mood is one of anxiety, leavened only occasionally by brief refuges of lyricism. (Brahms had reason to be anxious when he began writing the piece in 1855: at the time, his friend Robert Schumann was suffering from a tragic, final battle with mental illness, and Brahms was feeling torn between his despair over Schumann’s decline and his developing affection for Schumann’s wife, Clara.) For reasons we cannot fully know, Brahms set aside the unfinished work, only to return to it some twenty years later, at which point he added new material and transposed the piece from C-sharp minor to C minor. He referred to the work as “half old, half new,” adding that “the whole thing isn’t worth much.” Yet this is pure self-deprecation: this “half old, half new” composition is one of Brahms’s most lasting achievements, a work full of great energy, virtuosity, and tragedy.

Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34

Brahms’s lone piano quintet is also a piece that resulted from years of tinkering. Brahms initially intended it to be a string quintet; however, dissatisfied with this early effort, he scrapped the original version and recast the work as a sonata for two pianos. Finally, inspired in part by comments from Clara Schumann, he effectively melded these two versions together, transforming them into the famous piano quintet arrangement heard on tonight’s program. The piece occupies a central place in the piano-quintet repertoire, standing alongside other noteworthy compositions for