

Music@Menlo 2008

Concert Program II:

Classical Bookends: Haydn and Schubert

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 8:00 P.M.

Prelude Performance, 6:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto

FRIDAY, JULY 25, 8:00 P.M.

Prelude Performance, 6:00 p.m.

(at Martin Family Hall, Menlo School)

Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 8:00 P.M.

Prelude Performance, 6:00 p.m.

(at Martin Family Hall, Menlo School)

Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

Music@Menlo dedicates these performances to the following individuals with gratitude for their generous support:

July 23: The Jeffrey Dean and Heidi Hopper Family

July 24: Vivian Sweeney

July 25: Jim and Mical Brenzel

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

HAYDN (1732–1809)

Piano Trio in e minor, Hob. XV: 12 (1789)

“Sunrise” Quartet (1797)

SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Octet in F Major, D. 803 (1824)

Audiences at Music@Menlo's inaugural season viewed the Classical period through the lens of the era's undisputed holy trinity: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. This season, Music@Menlo frames Classicism with the period's two bookend composers. The first half of the program comprises two mature works by Joseph Haydn, the virtual inventor of the Classical style. Haydn's Piano Trio in e minor and “Sunrise” Quartet (the latter work composed six years after Mozart's untimely death) demonstrate the composer's fully crystallized innovations of musical form and expression. The program concludes with Franz Schubert's Octet for Winds and Strings, a late masterpiece rooted in Viennese Classicism, yet prophetic of the Romantic style.

Some terms throughout these program notes appear in **BOLDFACE**. They can be found in the Glossary of Musical Terms in the program book.

PROGRAM

Franz Joseph HAYDN (1732–1809) | **Piano Trio in e minor, Hob. XV: 12** (1789)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante
- III. Rondo: Presto

Derek Han, piano; Jorja Fleezanis, violin; Laurence Lesser, cello

Franz Joseph HAYDN | **String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 76, no. 4, “Sunrise”** (1797)

- I. Allegro con spirito
- II. Adagio
- III. Menuetto: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

The Escher String Quartet:

Adam Barnett-Hart, Wu Jie, violins; Pierre Lapointe, viola; Andrew Janss, cello

INTERMISSION

Franz SCHUBERT (1797–1828) | **Octet in F Major, D. 803** (1824)

- I. Adagio–Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro vivace
- IV. Andante con variazioni
- V. Menuetto: Allegretto
- VI. Andante molto–Allegro

Anthony McGill, clarinet; Dennis Godburn, bassoon; William VerMeulen, French horn;

Arnaud Sussmann, Jorja Fleezanis, violins; Hsin-Yun Huang, viola; Andrés Díaz, cello; DaXun Zhang, bass

Franz Joseph Haydn (Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Lower Austria; died May 31, 1809, Vienna)

Piano Trio in e minor, Hob. XV: 12

Composed: Completed by March 8, 1789

Publication: Artaria, 1789

Other works from this period: The Piano Trio in e minor was published as the second in a set of three, in between the Trio in E-flat Major, **HOB.** XV: 11, and the Trio in c minor, Hob. XV: 13. Instrumental chamber works by Haydn's hand—and piano trios in particular—were a hot item during this time (see below), with four more trios appearing by June 1790. Additionally, the late 1780s saw the completion of three sets of string quartets, **OPP.** 50, 54/55, and 64 (1787–1790); the symphonies nos. 90–92 (1788–89); and the C major and E-flat major piano **SONATAS**, Hob. XVI: 48 and Hob. XVI: 49 (1789–90), among other works.

Approximate duration: 18 minutes

The artistic life of Joseph Haydn embodies the breadth of the Classical era. When he was born, in 1732, the Baroque period had reached its apogee. Over the course of Haydn's life—and, indeed, largely by his own hand—what has since become known as the Classical style would grow to maturity. By the time of Haydn's death in 1809, his own student Ludwig van Beethoven was boldly extending the Classical idiom with his own brand of fiery individualism; and within five years, the precocious Viennese teenager Franz Schubert would pen his first significant works.

The circumstances of Haydn's career likewise reflect eighteenth-century social currents. At the start of his career, he benefited from the traditional system of aristocratic patronage under which Bach and other Baroque composers lived and worked. By the turn of the century, he had obtained the professional freedom that would become the norm in the Romantic period. Along the way, Haydn attained rock-star status throughout Europe: his excellence and fruitfulness in every prevalent musical genre of the day rendered him the most celebrated composer of his generation. Noting his seminal role as the father of both the symphony and the string quartet—two of Western music's quintessential media since the eighteenth century—musicologist James Webster writes that “no other composer

approaches [Haydn's] combination of productivity, quality, and historical importance in these genres. In the twentieth century he was understood primarily as an ‘absolute’ musician (exhibiting wit, originality of form, motivic saturation, and a ‘modernist’ tendency to problematize music rather than merely to compose it), but earnestness, depth of feeling, and referential tendencies are equally important to his art.”

Just as with the symphony and the string quartet genres, Haydn played an important role in the piano trio's rise to prominence in Western musical culture, leaving a catalog of no fewer than forty-five piano trios. These works reflect the heightened awareness of the nuances of writing for particular instruments that helped define the Classical idiom. At the time of Haydn's first piano trio, the combination of piano, violin, and cello had not yet become established as a standard chamber ensemble; indeed, some of the earliest piano trios have been accurately described as keyboard **SONATAS** with violin and cello accompaniment. (In 1775, Haydn's contemporary Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach—the skilled composer son of Johann Sebastian—designated a set of his own trios “Sonatas for Piano, which may equally well be played solo, or accompanied by violin and violoncello.”) But Haydn masterfully developed the piano trio into a sophisticated conversation

among three voices. Consequently, the medium's popularity grew rapidly, with piano-trio music becoming an essential part of any amateur musician's library by the end of the eighteenth century.

Haydn composed his Piano Trio in e minor between 1788 and 1789, during which time he enjoyed especially great acclaim throughout Europe. In response to consumer demand, he produced thirteen piano trios in the 1780s for three different publishers. This trio is one of Haydn's few set in a minor key. But despite its darker hue, the work nevertheless emits Haydn's characteristic elegance and charm.

Following the thoughtfully conversational **ALLEGRO MODERATO**, the second **MOVEMENT** begins with a delicate melody in the piano, accompanied by the violin and cello with quiet

PIZZICATI. Haydn's unusually ornate treatment of this melody recalls the slow movements of the Baroque period. A brief aside evokes the speech-like **RECITATIVES** of Baroque and Classical opera, adding an increasingly human dimension to the music: the piano and violin issue particularly declamatory utterances.

The work's exuberant finale is a **RONDO**, a musical form in which a central musical idea, called the **SUBJECT**, alternates with contrasting passages, called **EPISODES**. Throughout each of the rondo's episodes, Haydn maintains the movement's spirited energy. Midway through the finale, the music turns suddenly inclement, but Haydn effortlessly steers the music through this turbulent episode towards a good-humored finish.

Franz Joseph Haydn

String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 76, no. 4, "Sunrise"

Composed: Haydn began the **OPUS 76** set of six quartets—known collectively as the "Erdödy" Quartets, after Count Joseph Erdödy, who commissioned the works—in 1796 and completed them in the summer of 1797.

Publication: 1799

Dedication: Count Joseph Erdödy

Other works from this period: Detailed in the notes below

Approximate duration: 22 minutes

When Haydn returned to Vienna in 1795 from his second year-and-a-half-long residency in London, the enormous success he had enjoyed in Europe's most vibrant and cosmopolitan city parlayed itself, back on the continent, into a hero's welcome home. (According to the composer's close friend and early biographer Georg August Griesinger, "Haydn often said that he first became famous in Germany owing to his reputation in England.") With Vienna only four years removed from Mozart's untimely death in 1791 and the young Beethoven yet to create his first significant works, Haydn reigned

during this time as the undisputed heavyweight champion of Western music. His newly elevated status brought with it professional demands of greater social import: oratorios commissioned by wealthy patrons (*The Seven Last Words*, *The Creation*, *The Seasons*) and choral-orchestral masses for the Esterházy court (the *Heiligmesse*, *Paukenmesse*, and others). It also led to the gradual tapering off of Haydn's instrumental output over the last fourteen years of his life. Following his return to Vienna, he would complete only one more orchestral work (the Trumpet **CONCERTO**) and one more piano trio

(the E-flat Major, Hob. XV: 30—in fact, Haydn's last work at all for piano), both composed in 1796.

But Haydn meanwhile found opportunities in the late 1790s to further cultivate a medium, the string quartet, which had occupied a significant part of his musical imagination throughout his career. (Indeed, Haydn's relationship with the string quartet was a mutually beneficial one, as it was his efforts that essentially installed the quartet genre as the spinal column of the modern chamber literature.) These opportunities came to fruition in the six Opus 76 "Erdödy" Quartets, commissioned in 1796 by Count Joseph Erdödy, and the two Opus 77 "Lobkowitz" Quartets, composed in 1799 for Prince Franz Joseph Lobkowitz, himself an amateur violinist and avid chamber musician.

The Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 76, no. 4, like its five siblings, demonstrates Haydn's mature, fully crystallized quartet-writing style. Author Melvin Berger contends, "In the view of many, Op. 76, No. 4, is the finest among Haydn's eighty-three quartets. Rarely, if ever, did he equal its luminous spirituality and depth of feeling." The quartet's nickname, "Sunrise," comes from its opening measures: despite the

Allegro con spirito tempo marking, the work begins with a slow, radiant ascent in the first violin above a sustained chord in the lower strings. The viola answers this dawning introduction with a languorous melody, as if reluctant to awaken with the break of day, before Haydn coaxes the music out of its slumber. The second **THEME** is closely related to the first: beneath a held chord in the upper strings, the cello offers a descending mirror image of the opening "sunrise" melody.

In contrast to the gregarious *Allegro con spirito* comes the meditative second movement, which ranks among the slowest and most deeply felt of Haydn's **ADAGIOS**. A simple, salon-esque charm colors the third movement **MENUETTO**; the **TRIO** section sets a mildly disorienting folk melody above a rustic drone in the viola and cello. The finale similarly contains a folk-like element: its elegantly buoyant theme is thought to draw from an English folk song which Haydn might have heard while in London. Haydn conjures a fleeting moment of anxiety midway through, but he soon restores the movement's blithe spirit, and decisively so: the **CODA** eggs the players on with markings of "Più allegro" and "Più **PRESTO**."

Franz Schubert (Born January 31, 1797, Vienna; died November 19, 1828, Vienna)

Octet in F Major, D. 803

Composed: February–March 1, 1824

Publication: The first, second, third, and sixth movements were originally published, posthumously in 1853, as Schubert's op. 166; the complete work appeared in print in 1889.

First performance: A private performance was given at the home of Count Ferdinand von Troyer (see below) on April 16, 1824; the Octet's public premiere took place exactly three years later, on April 16, 1827.

Other works from this period: Schubert's muse responded heatedly to personal crisis. In the first three months of 1824—the period following a diagnosis of syphilis—Schubert completed the **VARIATIONS** on *Trockne Blumen* for Flute and Piano, D. 802; the a minor and d minor string quartets, D. 804 and D. 810 ("Death and the Maiden"); and numerous songs, in addition to the Octet.

Approximate duration: 65 minutes

Schubert serves as Western music's gateway from the Classical era into Romanticism. He worked within the musical forms inherited from his predecessors, producing nine symphonies, twenty string quartets, roughly a dozen piano sonatas, and a staggering catalog of more than six hundred **LIEDER**, among myriad works across other genres. (The American composer John Harbison has said that Schubert "wrote the best piece in every genre he really tackled.") But in the subjective depth of emotional expression contained in his music, Schubert looked beyond the Classical pedigree of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven and foresaw the aesthetic movement that would define the Romantic generation. While never relinquishing the Classical Viennese salon elegance that characterizes Haydn's music, Schubert extends that idiom to reach ecstatic peaks and depths of despair that might have caused Haydn to blush.

Schubert composed the Octet for Winds and Strings between February and March of 1824. Just the timeline surrounding the Octet's composition testifies to Schubert's genius and commitment to his craft. First, that he completed such a monumental masterpiece in the span of one month is astonishing. Also, only one year earlier, the twenty-six-year-old Schubert began showing symptoms of the illness that would prematurely claim his life. In

Schubert's time, the contraction of syphilis typically left its victims fewer than ten years to live. The composer was devastated. In May 1823, he wrote the following lines of verse:

With a holy zeal I yearn
Life in fairer worlds to learn
...See, annihilated I lay in the dust,
Scorched by agonizing fire,
My life's martyr path,
Approaching eternal oblivion...

By early 1824, Schubert's health, and, consequently, his psyche, had reached crisis mode. But for the tireless craftsman who had once asserted, "I have come into the world for no purpose but to compose," and who even slept at night wearing his glasses so that he would lose no time in returning to work upon waking—for an artist so devoted to serving his muse, not even this catastrophe could extinguish the creative impulse.

Schubert composed the Octet on a commission from Count Ferdinand von Troyer, a Viennese court official and avid amateur clarinetist. Count von Troyer's specific wish in commissioning the Octet was for a companion piece to Beethoven's Opus 20 Septet for Winds and Strings, another popular Viennese favorite of the day. (The Septet's great popularity, in fact, became a bane for Beethoven: he once exclaimed, "That damn

work; I wish it could be burned!”) In addition to a clarinet part for the count, the Octet is scored for bassoon, horn, string quartet, and bass, thus employing the same instrumentation as Beethoven’s Septet, with an additional violin.

Like the Beethoven Septet, the Octet also contains an especially virtuosic first-violin part. Moreover, in addition to Count von Troyer’s explicit request for a companion piece to the Septet, Schubert would hardly have needed to be told that a robust clarinet part was likewise expected. Much of the work is driven by spirited dialogue between the clarinet and first violin. But Schubert’s deft handling of his instrumental forces extends to the full ensemble. Throughout the Octet, Schubert subtly uses each instrument’s particular timbre to imbue his musical ideas with different inflections, as if viewing the same object from different angles or through differently colored lenses.

The *Adagio* introduction that begins the first movement serves both to establish the Octet’s overall expressive breadth—the work’s six movements, spanning an hour of music, make for a heady listening experience indeed—and to foreshadow the movement’s central themes. The dotted rhythm that appears, first as a distant horn call, comes to the fore as the movement arrives at its *Allegro* section, propelling much of the action that follows.

A dulcet clarinet melody, set above a featherweight accompaniment in the strings, opens the second movement, recalling the sublime slow movement of Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet. Again, Schubert casts the clarinet and first violin in leading roles. After expounding on the clarinet’s opening reverie, the violin presents the second theme, now colored by a countermelody in the clarinet and bassoon and propelled by a gently pulsing figure in the viola. Later in the movement, Schubert returns with renewed fervor to this pulsing accompaniment:

storm clouds roll in, casting a shadow of anxiety over the movement’s pastoral serenity. But at least for now, Schubert allows just a fleeting moment of worry to disrupt his mellifluous idyll. It is as if we have only flirted with the threat of banishment from the Garden of Eden—but, in Schubert’s idealized universe, we are allowed to return.

The third movement **SCHERZO** is a devil-may-care folk dance. By the end of the Classical period, and subsequently throughout the Romantic period, the scherzo (Italian for “joke”) had become a standard component of multimovement works. This mischievous grandchild of the genteel **MINUET** of Haydn and Mozart appropriately bears some resemblance to the stately dance—retaining, for instance, the minuet’s triple **METER**—but Haydn’s civilized restraint has now yielded to unbridled joy. By the end of the Classical period, we hear in the Octet’s and other scherzi the beginning of a rebellion against the values of the previous generation.

Schubert lifts the fourth movement’s affable theme from his own opera *The Friends from Salamanca*, composed in 1815 (though not performed until 1928). A delightful set of seven **VARIATIONS** follows.

Despite the scherzo, Schubert includes a minuet as the Octet’s fifth movement. In contrast to the wild-eyed scherzo, Schubert’s minuet hearkens back to a Haydnesque refinement.

The final movement, orchestral in scope, begins with high drama: above suspenseful **TREMOLOS** in the cello, the winds and high strings issue a regal declamation. The stately double-dotted rhythm and extreme fluctuations in dynamics between powerful **FORTISSIMOS** and the softest **PIANISSIMOS** work to riveting effect. The gravitas yields to a seemingly innocuous march (introduced by the first violin, echoed by the

clarinet), but Schubert's insistent aggrandizement of this theme throughout the finale, punctuated by abrupt silences, suggests something more psychically complex. Following a sudden evocation of the finale's pregnant

opening measures, Schubert races exuberantly to the Octet's stirring final **CADENCE**.

Notes on the Program by Patrick Castillo