



CONCERT PROGRAM IV:

# Beethoven's Friends

JULY 27 AND 29

**Sunday, July 27, 6:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton**

**Tuesday, July 29, 8:00 p.m., Stent Family Hall, Menlo School**

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the orbit of such a universal genius as Ludwig van Beethoven existed numerous native Eastern European composers who likewise captured the attention of Vienna. Anton Reicha, a Czech forebear to Antonín Dvořák and an intimate of Beethoven's from their teenage years, achieved considerable renown in his lifetime as a composer, theorist, and pedagogue; his extensive catalog of solo, chamber, and orchestral music reveals a composer of great originality in his own right. Reicha's Clarinet Quintet, a rarely heard gem of the literature, demonstrates a winning Classical sensibility and a keen melodic imagination worthy of his most prominent contemporaries. The prodigiously gifted Hungarian Johann Nepomuk Hummel was also regarded in his lifetime as one of Europe's greatest composers and arguably its finest pianist. Though Beethoven's emergence in Vienna eclipsed Hummel's own ascent, the two would nevertheless maintain a close, if rivalrous, friendship. More importantly, not even Beethoven's imposing shadow could blot out the brilliance of Hummel's musical language, as encountered in his colorful Septet for Winds, Strings, and Piano.

## SPECIAL THANKS

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

July 27: Libby and Craig Heimark and also to Kathleen G. Henschel and John Dewes in honor of their wedding

July 29: Dave and Judith Preves Anderson and also to Kris Klint

Ludwig van Beethoven playing the piano for friends.  
Albert Gräfle (1807-1889). Photogravure.  
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## ANTON REICHA (1770-1836)

Quintet in B-flat Major for Clarinet and String Quartet, op. 89 (ca. 1820)

*Allegro*  
*Andante*  
*Minuetto: Allegro*  
*Finale: Allegretto*

Anthony McGill, *clarinet*; Nicolas Dautricourt, Arnaud Sussmann, *violins*; Sunmi Chang, *viola*; Keith Robinson, *cello*

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Quintet in E-flat Major for Piano and Winds, op. 16 (1796)

*Grave - Allegro ma non troppo*  
*Andante cantabile*  
*Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo*

Gilbert Kalish, *piano*; Stephen Taylor, *oboe*; Anthony McGill, *clarinet*; Peter Kolkay, *bassoon*; Kevin Rivard, *horn*

## INTERMISSION

## JOHANN NEPOMUK HUMMEL (1778-1837)

Septet in d minor for Piano, Flute, Oboe, Horn, Viola, Cello, and Bass, op. 74 (1816)

*Allegro con spirito*  
*Minuetto o scherzo*  
*Andante con variazioni*  
*Finale: Vivace*

Juho Pohjonen, *piano*; Sooyun Kim, *flute*; Stephen Taylor, *oboe*; Kevin Rivard, *horn*; Paul Neubauer, *viola*; Keith Robinson, *cello*; Scott Pingel, *bass*

# Program Notes: Beethoven's Friends

## ANTON REICHA

(Born February 26, 1770, Prague; died May 28, 1836, Paris)

### Quintet in B-flat Major for Clarinet and String Quartet, op. 89

**Composed:** ca. 1809–1820

**Published:** 1820, Paris

**Other works from this period:** Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, op. 62 (1808); *Requiem* (ca. 1809); Symphony no. 3 in F Major (1809); Six Fugues for Piano, op. 81 (1810); Six Wind Quintets, op. 91 (1820)

**Approximate duration:** 30 minutes

Born to a nonmusical family, Czech composer Anton Reicha eagerly sought to further his musical studies, and after being adopted by his uncle, the conductor and cellist Josef Reicha, he became accomplished on the violin, piano, and flute. Establishing himself in musical circles at a very young age, he moved to Bonn with his uncle's family in 1885, taking a post as Second Flutist in the Court of the Elector of Cologne Orchestra, which Josef conducted. There, Anton befriended Ludwig van Beethoven, who sat in the back of the viola section, and developed an interest in composition, no doubt due in part to this new friendship. Against the wishes of his uncle, Anton secretly began to study composition.

In 1795, Reicha moved to Hamburg to teach harmony and composition while focusing on writing opera, making a visit to Vienna in 1801 in an attempt to promote his recent work, *L'ouragan*. Prince Maximilian Lobkowitz, a longtime patron of Haydn and Beethoven, among others, presented a performance of the opera at his palace. Reicha remained in Hamburg to study with Salieri and Albrechtsberger and returned to Paris in 1808 to teach at the Paris Conservatoire, where his students included César Franck, Franz Liszt, and Hector Berlioz.

Reicha is most renowned as a prolific composer of wind music and especially for his contribution to the wind quintet repertoire. His impressive catalog of twenty-four wind quintets was composed between 1809 and 1820. By 1815, Reicha's subscription series had become so popular that it warranted the establishment of an independent wind ensemble simply to debut these quintets. Also while in Vienna, Reicha likely encountered Mozart's Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581, the first significant work in the genre. Reicha, however, adapted the new medium to his own voice, infusing strict Western **counterpoint** with the folkloric character of Central European melodies. Like his Viennese counterparts, Reicha was moreover fascinated with **fugue**; small fugal sections can be found throughout his works.

The Quintet in B-flat for Clarinet and String Quartet, **op. 89**, was intended for Jacques-Jules Bouffil, a professor of clarinet at the Conservatoire and a member of the wind ensemble. Though the exact dates of composition are unclear, the work was likely composed over eleven years, completed and published circa 1820.

The opening **Allegro** begins with a jovial statement by the strings, followed by a graceful **subject** presented by the clarinet. The subject shifts to the violin, and the clarinet and lower strings provide a sonorously complex **arpeggiated** accompaniment. A light, long-breathed **development** brings a return to the airy opening **theme**, much fuller and more energetic than before. Immediately noticeable is the equal importance Reicha gives to both the strings and the clarinet, which is delicately exploited further in the second **movement Andante**. The boisterous **minuet** employs the full dynamic range of the ensemble: while the clarinet plays gaudy, glissando-like passages, the cello wails in its deep register at the close of each phrase. The lighthearted **Allegretto** finale, with its fugal passages, carries the work to a flourishing close.

—Andrew Goldstein

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(Born Bonn, baptized December 17, 1770; died March 26, 1827, Vienna)

### Quintet in E-flat Major for Piano and Winds, op. 16

**Composed:** 1796

**First performance:** April 6, 1797

**Other works from this period:** String Quintet in E-flat Major, op. 4 (1795); Two Cello Sonatas, op. 5 (1796); Serenade in D Major for String Trio, op. 8 (1796–1797); Opus 18 string quartets, *Lobkowitz* (1798–1800); Symphony no. 1 in C Major, op. 21 (1799–1800)

**Approximate duration:** 20 minutes

In November 1792, the twenty-two-year-old Ludwig van Beethoven, bursting with talent and promise, arrived in Vienna. So undeniable was the genius he had already demonstrated in a sizeable amount of piano music, numerous chamber works, cantatas on the death of Emperor Joseph II and the accession of Leopold II, and the score for a ballet that Maximilian Franz, the Elector of Bonn, his hometown, underwrote the trip to the Habsburg imperial city, then the musical capital of Europe, to help further the young musician's career (and the Elector's prestige). Despite the Elector's patronage, however, Beethoven's professional ambitions quickly consumed any thoughts of returning to the provincial city of his birth, and when his father died in December, he severed for good his ties with Bonn in favor of the stimulating artistic atmosphere of Vienna.

During his first years in Vienna, Beethoven was busy on several fronts. Initial encouragement for the Viennese junket came from the venerable Joseph Haydn, who had heard one of Beethoven's cantatas on a visit to Bonn earlier in the year and promised to take the young composer as a student if he came to see him. Beethoven, therefore, became a counterpoint pupil of Haydn's immediately after his arrival late in 1792, but the two had difficulty getting along—Haydn was too busy, Beethoven was too bullish—and their association soon broke off. Several other teachers followed in short order—Schenk, Albrechtsberger, Förster, Salieri. While Beethoven practiced fugal exercises and setting Italian texts for his tutors, he continued to compose, producing works for solo piano, chamber ensembles, and wind groups. It was as a pianist, however, that he gained his first fame among the Viennese. The untamed, passionate, unconventional quality of his playing and his personality first intrigued and then captivated those who heard him. When he bested in competition Daniel Steibelt and Joseph Wölfl, two of the town's noted keyboard luminaries, he became all the rage among the gentry, who exhibited him in performance at the soirées in their elegant city palaces. In catering to the aristocratic audience, Beethoven took on the air of a dandy for a while, dressing in smart clothes, learning to dance (badly), buying a horse, and even sporting a powdered wig. This phase of his life did not outlast the 1790s, but in his biography of the composer, Peter Latham described Beethoven at the time as "a young giant exulting in his strength and his success, and youthful confidence gave him a buoyancy that was both attractive and infectious."

Among the works with which Beethoven sought to establish his reputation as a composer during his early years in Vienna was a series of pieces for wind instruments—the Trio for Two Oboes and English Horn (op. 87), the Trio for Piano, Clarinet, and Cello (op. 11), the Sonata for Horn and Piano (op. 17), and the Septet (op. 20, by far his most popular composition during his lifetime) and Quintet for Piano and Winds (op. 16)—which enabled him to demonstrate his skill in the traditional modes of chamber music without broaching the genre of the string quartet, then still indisputably dominated by Joseph Haydn. The Opus 16 Quintet drew its inspiration and model from Mozart's exquisite Quintet for Piano and Winds of 1784 (K. 452), which Beethoven heard performed in Prague in spring 1796 during a concert tour that also took him to Dresden

\*Bolded terms are defined in the glossary, which begins on page 100.

and Berlin. He apparently began the quintet in Berlin and completed the score later that year in Vienna. The piece was first performed at a concert organized by the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh on April 6, 1797, at the palace of Prince Joseph Johann von Schwarzenberg, which was also to be the site of the premiere of Haydn's *The Creation* the following year and *The Seasons* in 1801. In appreciation, Beethoven dedicated the score to Schwarzenberg when it was published by the Viennese firm of Mollo in March 1801. (Beethoven also arranged the quintet for piano and three strings at that time and published it with the identical opus number.) Ferdinand Ries, the composer's amanuensis during those years, related an incident from the quintet's premiere that illustrates both Beethoven's skill as a pianist and his strong self-will. Beethoven, it seems, took advantage of a fermata in the last movement to launch into a vast but unannounced **cadenza**. "It was comical to see the other players waiting expectantly," Ries reported, "ready every moment to go on, continually lifting their instruments to their lips, and then quietly putting them down again. At last, Beethoven was satisfied and dropped back into the **rondo**. The entire audience was delighted."

Though Beethoven's Quintet for Piano and Winds is modeled on the **Classical** example of Mozart's eponymous work in its form, style, instrumentation, and key, it is very much a product of its time and its creator. The eminent English musicologist Sir Donald Tovey wrote, "The majority of Beethoven's early works show a nervous abruptness which is as different from the humor of Haydn as it is from the Olympic suavity of Mozart...In the quintet, Beethoven is, indeed, obviously setting himself in rivalry with Mozart's quintet for the same combination; but if you want to realize the difference between the highest art of Classical composition and the easygoing, safety-first product of a silver age, you cannot find a better illustration than these two works." The American pianist-scholar Charles Rosen offered a further insight on Tovey's thesis: "[The quintet and the septet] are classicizing rather than Classical. They are reproductions of Classical forms...based upon the exterior models, the results of the Classical impulse, and not upon the impulse itself." The quintet, in other words, stands at the threshold of Beethoven's titanic accomplishment of wrenching music from the tidy and precisely circumscribed arena in which it existed during the late eighteenth century into the unbounded, cathartic realm of the **Romantic** age. Within a half-dozen years, Beethoven's youthful buoyancy would crack under the loss of his hearing and the unprecedented deepening of his art.

The quintet opens with a slow introduction whose stately tread and pompous rhythms recall the old **Baroque** form of the French **overture**. With its sweeping figurations and full scoring, the piano announces its intention to be *primus inter pares* in the music to follow and, indeed, appropriates for itself the principal theme of the main body of the movement, a sleek, triple-meter melody made from a quick upward leap and a gently descending **phrase**. The winds are allowed to dabble in this melodic material before more bold piano scales and **arpeggios** lead to the subsidiary subject, a lovely, flowing strain in even note values. The development section busies itself with some piano figurations before settling down to a discussion of the main theme. A long scale in the piano reaches its apex at the **recapitulation**, which returns to the earlier thematic materials to lend this handsome movement balance and formal closure. The *Andante* is a richly decorated slow rondo (A-B-A-C-A) that touches on some poignant proto-Romantic sentiments as it unfolds. The finale is a dashing rondo based on a galloping theme of opera buffa jocularly.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda

## JOHANN NEPOMUK HUMMEL

(Born November 14, 1778, Pressburg; died October 17, 1837, Weimar)

**Septet in d minor for Piano, Flute, Oboe, Horn, Viola, Cello, and Bass, op. 74**

**Composed:** ca. 1816

**Other works from this period:** Piano Trio in G Major, op. 65 (ca. 1814–1815); *Sérénade* no. 2, op. 66 (ca. 1814–1815); Piano Concerto in a minor, op. 85 (1816); Adagio, Variations, and Rondo on "The Pretty Polly," op. 75 (ca. 1817); Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, op. 87 (1822)

**Approximate duration:** 40 minutes

The relationship between Ludwig van Beethoven and Johann Nepomuk Hummel was one of extreme ebb and flow. Hummel—a young emerging pianist whose curriculum vitae already included private study with Mozart and a five-year tour encompassing all of Western Europe—arrived in Vienna in 1793, shortly before Beethoven's arrival in the Austrian capital. Beethoven, eight years Hummel's elder, began to captivate the Viennese audience with his brash pianism and greatly intimidated the teenage Hummel. The two pianists, however, crossed paths regularly in pursuit of becoming recognized as Vienna's finest and in fact both studied simultaneously with Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and asynchronously with Joseph Haydn between the elder's London trips.

Although ultimately a long-lasting one, the friendship between these two rising stars was a rivalrous and often contentious one. On one occasion, in 1799, Beethoven wrote to Hummel: "Do not come any more to me. You are a false fellow, and the knacker take all such." Entering the early nineteenth century, Vienna had divided itself into two camps: one praising Beethoven's ferocious tenacity and the other preferring Hummel's more delicate treatment of the piano. As their friendship began to deteriorate, Hummel was appointed Konzertmeister at Esterházy Palace as a successor to Haydn in 1804. A poorly prepared performance of Beethoven's Mass in C Major at the palace on September 10, 1807, added further tension to the relationship, and in 1813 Hummel married singer Elisabeth Röckel, whom Beethoven may have also had interest in. Nevertheless, the two remained in close contact—whether friend or foe—and Hummel agreed to perform the percussion part of Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory* in December 1813, on which occasion Beethoven wrote:

Dearly beloved Hummel! Please conduct this time the drum-heads and the cannonades with your excellent conducting Field-Marshal staff—please do this; and if one day you may want me to praise you, I am at your service body and soul. (December 8, 1813)

Soon after, Hummel was dismissed from his post at Esterházy Palace and spent time freelancing before taking a post at Stuttgart. There he wrote his Septet in d minor, one of his most revered compositions to this day. Hummel's work is indicative of the passing of an era, the final transition from the Classical to the Romantic, and the septet is a clear indicator of this. Though it is written for piano, winds, and strings, the balance among the instruments is asymmetrical. Hummel, a pianist himself, gives the piano a prominent role throughout, supported by a pseudo-orchestral blend of winds and strings.

In **sonata-allegro form**, the first movement begins with a series of exclamatory chords, alluding to a driving momentum in the piano that remains characteristic of the entire work. Despite the ominous key of d minor, the development and recapitulation remain surprisingly bright. It is interesting to note that Hummel marks the second movement *Minuetto o scherzo*. At the time of Beethoven, the characteristically faster scherzo began to take prominence over the classical minuet. Hummel's use of both titles for this movement signifies the changing norms surrounding his compositional career. Hummel playfully passes the trio melody between the winds and strings, while the piano seems to plot methods of compromising

the cheery melody. The *Andante con variazioni* is a set of four **variations** on a sonically rich theme, each parsed by a gracious interlude.



The finale, a second brilliant sonata-allegro, begins with a vivacious introduction dominated by the piano. A brief fugue is announced by the cello and answered by the oboe and piano, one of the few sections of the work where the piano is subordinate. This segues to a lyrical sonata-like section with cello melody accompanied by the piano. The full ensemble rejoins the work, building it to a robust and zealous recapitulation. The **coda** returns the work to d minor, and a triumphant unison D closes the piece.

Heeding requests for a more practical arrangement of this piece, Hummel published a version of the septet for piano, violin, viola, cello, and double bass. This inspired no less than Franz Schubert, whose encounter with Hummel in Vienna while paying final respects to the dying Beethoven—a true testament to the underlying character of their seemingly rivalrous friendship—provided inspiration for Schubert’s beloved *Trout* Quintet.

—Andrew Goldstein

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