

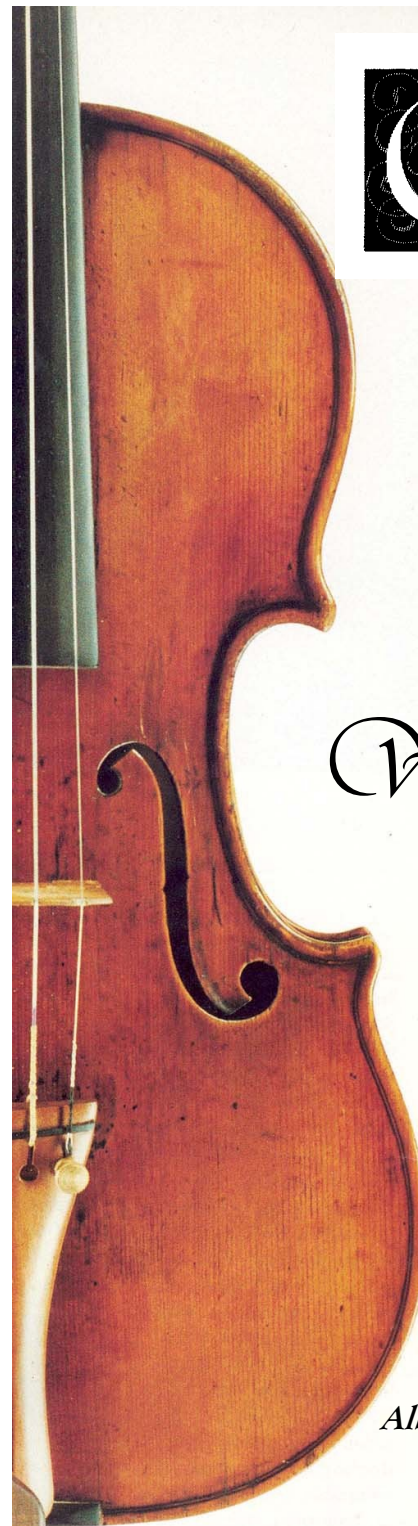
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In Memory of Gunda Hack



The German Society
of
PENNSYLVANIA
Founded in 1764

presents

The
Wister Quartet

Sunday
April 3, 2005
at 3:00 p.m.

Albert and Hete Barthelmes Auditorium
611 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Wister Quartet

Since its formation in 1987, the Wister Quartet has earned high praise from critics and audiences alike for its superb musicianship and memorable performances, including those with guest artists Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Alicia de Larrocha, Wolfgang Sawallisch and Yo-Yo Ma. Its name honors Frances Wister, founder of The Philadelphia Orchestra's Volunteer Committees and a major cultural force in Philadelphia for over a half century.

The Quartet performs widely in the Philadelphia area. It appears regularly at Arcadia and Swarthmore Universities, Gettysburg College, Music at Gretna, the Lenape Chamber Players Summer Festivals, the Bethlehem Chamber Music Society, the Chamber Series of The Philadelphia Orchestra and at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. The Wister Quartet is the core group of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble.

In 1993 the Wister Quartet established its own Chamber Series of five concerts at The German Society of Pennsylvania. These concerts feature some of the greatest quartet literature ever written, as well as rarely played works. The Philadelphia Inquirer wrote of one performance, "The Mozart was especially pleasurable, filling the [German Society's] hall with glowing refinement. The Quartet has recorded with DTR Recording Company, earning a Grammy nomination and critical praise for their "big vibrant sound, dramatic contrasts and brilliant effects." It has featured the works on its many CD's on the Classical Concert Series at the German Society.

Nancy Bean has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra since 1983 and is currently its Assistant Concertmaster. She is Artistic Director and first violinist of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble and a member of the Amerita Chamber Players.

Davyd Booth has been a violinist in The Philadelphia Orchestra since 1973 and was named its harpsichordist in 1999. He was a member of the Philarte Quartet for 14 years and is Co-Director and harpsichordist for the Amerita Chamber Ensemble.

Pamela Fay is a substitute member of The Philadelphia Orchestra and is a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. She has been a member of the Toronto Symphony and the LeClair String Quartet and is the violist of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble.

Lloyd Smith has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra since 1967 and retired in 2003 to devote himself to chamber music and composing. He is the cellist of 1807 & Friends chamber ensemble and the Amerita chamber ensemble.

The German Society of Pennsylvania

In 1683 thirteen families from Krefeld under the leadership of Frankfurt lawyer, Franz Daniel Pastorius, founded the first German colony in America, Germantown – today part of Philadelphia. Since that time, more than 8,000,000 Germans reached these shores until today, 29% of the total population in the United States claims German ancestry.

Many of these immigrants formed clubs that enabled them to preserve their cultural heritage. They also formed clubs that emphasized a specific geographic area, such as the Swabians, Bavarians, Saxons, Danube Swabians, Plattdeutsche, Tyroleans, and many others.

The German Society of Pennsylvania, founded in 1764, is the oldest German organization in the New World. It was founded to protect German immigrants from unscrupulous shipping agents and to ensure just treatment on their arrival here.

Since that time the German Society has dedicated its efforts to preserving the German cultural heritage. This it does, for instance, by offering a full-fledged German language program as well as scholarships and prizes to students of German. In addition, the Society is a source of cultural programs, lectures, German film series, and seminars, which builds bridges and strengthens national and international relations between individuals, organizations, businesses and governments.

The fine-arts program also includes presentations that feature European music and literature and access to the Joseph Horner Memorial Library for education and research. The newly restored Library, holding over 70,000 volumes, is the largest private German library outside of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In serving its members and the community, and in all its undertakings, the Society strives to benefit anyone in need of its resources.

Wister Quartet Season Finale
at the German Society of Pennsylvania

Sunday, May 8, 2005 at 3:00 p.m.

The Wister Quartet
with special guest artist
Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director
Christoph Eschenbach, piano

Griffes Two Sketches Based on Indian Themes
Mozart String Quartet in C Major, K. 465 ("Dissonant")
Schumann Piano Quintet in Eb Major, Op. 44

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Other Upcoming Events

A complete listing is available at www.germansociety.org

Welcome Bach! Bach Festival Week 2005

April 2 - 9, 2005 at various locations in Greater Philadelphia

The Bach Festival of Philadelphia turns on the volume this weekend with the opening of Bach Festival Week 2005, celebrating the work of one of Germany's greatest composers. Performances take place all over Philadelphia, and all five masses of Johann Sebastian Bach will be featured.

Tickets at www.Bach-Fest.org or call 215-247-BACH.

Hamburger Abend: *Ein Abend an der Waterkant*

Saturday, April 23 - 7:00 p.m., German Society Rathskeller

Cost: \$25 per person, reservations required

Join us for a truly enjoyable evening of German food and drink, along with the music of Willi Aust on the accordion. Reserve your place with Visa or Mastercard by calling the Society (215-627-2332 x10), or by mailing your payment to the Society at 611 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia, PA 19123-3505.

The Wister Quartet

Nancy Bean, violin
Davyd Booth, violin

Pamela Fay, viola
Lloyd Smith, cello

PROGRAM

String Quartet in A Major Ludwig van Beethoven
Op. 18, No. 5 (1770-1827)
Allegro
Menuetto
Variazioni: Andante cantabile
Allegro

Five Russian Pieces Louis Gesensway
Moderato (1906-1976)
Moderato: pizzicato
Largo: molto sostenuto
Moderato: grazioso
Allegro

INTERMISSION

String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10 Claude Debussy
Animé et très décidé (1862-1918)
Assez vif et bien rythmé
Andantino, doucement expressif
Très modéré - Très mouvementé et avec passion

*The audience is invited to a reception in the Rathskeller
following the concert*

Program Notes

by Lloyd Smith

String Quartet in A Major Op. 18, No. 5

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Beethoven's sixteen string quartets reflect an entire creative life. The earliest – the six of Op. 18 – were composed in Vienna between 1798 and 1800; Beethoven's last string quartet (Op. 135) appeared one year before his death.

In the Op. 18 quartets the clarity and freshness of Haydn are found linked with the grace of Mozart. Now Beethoven, while adhering to the principles of classic Viennese tradition, would begin expanding its possibilities in a form which would challenge him throughout his life.

Beethoven had just undertaken a change in the way he worked during these years: he began organizing his sketches in notebooks, which reveal the depth of his struggles to capture his music. Even his fair scores, presented to his publishers, were filled with revisions – not just corrections – and showed the extent of Beethoven's self-consciousness with his writing.

The first movement opens light-heartedly, gracefully unfolding in a very Classical manner. The beautiful inventiveness of harmony and counterpoint give this movement its luster. The Menuetto likewise opens conventionally but eventually picks a fight with itself. The Trio section is one of his great miniatures, filled with good humor and unconventional accents.

The variation movement opens most innocently. Beethoven treats it alternately whimsically and lyrically, culminating in a jaunty march – suddenly interrupted. We are returned without warning to the chaste music of the opening. A windswept and playful Allegro completes this sparkling, good-natured quartet.

Five Russian Pieces

Louis Gesensway
(1906-1976)

Louis Gesensway was born in Dvinsk, Latvia and grew up in Toronto, Canada. After violin studies at the Toronto Conservatory (where he helped to found the Toronto Symphony) and The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, he joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1926 at the age of 19, an association that was to last 45 years.

Most of his compositions are for chamber groups, but he has composed a large body of orchestral works and a comic opera for children. His best-known symphonic work is his acclaimed "Four Squares of Philadelphia", written in 1951. His works have been performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago and the Helsinki Symphonies, and others.

Gesensway's interest, exploration, and use of musical folklore began during his studies with famed Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály during 1930-31 and continued throughout his life.

In his "Five Russian Pieces", written in 1938, Gesensway presents songs, dances and marching tunes familiar to the people of Eastern Europe prior to the 1917 revolution. He makes no attempt to modernize these widely known melodies, which recall a world long gone and almost forgotten, but recaptures their original style, harmony and vigor.

String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

When the String Quartet (1893) of Claude Debussy first appeared, the critics had a field day. Kufferath called it "an example of the shapelessness of everything today." Parisian critics chastised Debussy for being "tormented with the desire to create the bizarre, the incomprehensible and the unplayable."

These kinds of charges may sound familiar; they have been used against whatever has been daring and unfamiliar since the Ars Nova (New Art) of Medieval times, through Beethoven's experiments, right up to the present day.

Debussy had a difficult time at the Paris *Conservatoire* with his teachers as well. He seemed to make a point of breaking as many of the traditional rules of harmony and thematic development as possible. What may set Debussy apart from similar unfortunates in history is that no composer seems to have made such advancing leaps while simultaneously creating an overwhelmingly gorgeous tableau of sound that influenced so many.

Despite its novelty and advancement, the String Quartet really belongs to the conclusion of Debussy's early period and it is with the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faune* that his next, all-important phase began. Nevertheless, the quartet provides the earliest model for some of the most important of 20th century quartet writers including Ravel, Webern and Bartók. One measure of a composer's achievement is the level of influence on subsequent composers. Claude Debussy had this kind of influence in abundance.

It is with his quartet that Debussy first fully revealed the new directions for which the composer is now famous. We discover that the opening theme provides ongoing material for all but the slow third movement. Debussy achieves a kind of endless variation and gives priority to the rhythmic character of the music over exacting melodic detail.

The first movement, *Animé et très décidé*, is a rather free interpretation of the tradition sonata-allegro form, the opening motive pervading the entire work. The second movement further emphasizes the rhythmic element, demonstrating a Spanish influence, a passionate interest of the composer. De Falla said of it, "Most of it could pass for one of the finest Andalusian dances ever written." A dreamy atmosphere permeates the Andantino, and a certain Russian melancholy is hinted at. The finale, *Très modéré*, is full of energetic vitality and reworks many of the musical elements already heard.