SHIRLEY TREPEL, cello
with guest artist
ALBERT HIRSH, piano

Wednesday, March 15, 1978
8:30 P.M.
Hamman Hall
PROGRAM

Sonata in C Major, Op. 102, No. 1
   Andante - Allegro vivace
   Adagio
   Allegro vivace

Sonata, Op. 11, No. 3
   Massig Schnell viertel mit kraft
   Langsam
   Sehr Lebhaft

Ludwig van Beethoven
   (1770-1827)

Paul Hindemith
   (1895-1963)

TRE II

Intermission

Sonata in G Minor, Op. 19
   Lento - Allegro moderato
   Allegro scherzando
   Andante
   Allegro mosso

Sergei Rachmaninoff
   (1873-1943)
NOTES

Sonata in C Major, Op. 102, No. 1

Ludwig van Beethoven

While the rest of Vienna waltzed in celebration of the Vienna Congress in 1815, Beethoven embarked on a new style of composition with his cello sonatas op. 102. In this new style, he experimented with new ways to use counterpoint, harmony, instrumental recitatives and new approaches to the trill. This sonata also represents new attitudes toward form. For while the work appears to be two large movements, each with a slow introduction, the work can be heard as four independent yet inter-related sections.

The cello begins the sonata unaccompanied with a theme whose importance is made gradually clearer throughout the piece. An Allegro, in sonata form, follows in the unlikely key of A minor. Throughout the movement, the third both as melodic interval and key relation is explored. The opening of the second movement proper, marked Adagio, resembles an accompanied recitative. It leads directly to a remarkable moment when both cello and piano recall the sonata's opening theme – a musical gesture Beethoven was to use again in the 9th symphony. A fast, witty finale marked by short, rhythmic motives and sudden harmonic shifts (by thirds) ends the work.

Sonata, Op. 11, No. 3

Paul Hindemith

While still serving in the military, young Hindemith began to formulate new musical ideas. Of his projected work he wrote:

I want to compose a whole series of such sonatinas of rather small sonatas... Each of them is to be completely different from the preceding ones – also in form... I want to see whether I can't increase the expressive possibilities and extend the horizon.

Completed in 1918, Hindemith thus made a breakthrough in his personal style – a style which later came to be labeled as “Neo-Classical”. Like Beethoven’s cello Sonata, the work, although divided into two large movements, can actually be heard as four, inter-related sections.

Much like a Baroque invention, the sonata opens with scalar themes in a relentless motor rhythm. Pausing only briefly on D, the next major section begins with a melodic-rhythmic motive which is then developed and transformed. Hindemith’s use of free dissonance and chromaticism borders on the atonal.

The second movement features a slow, lyrical theme based on the interval of a tritone. Throughout the section a five note motive gradually emerges and thus acts as a link to the finale. Although cast in sonata form, only the repeats and ordering of musical events are traditional.

Sonata in G Minor, Op. 19

Sergei Rachmaninoff

In 1901 Rachmaninoff recovered from a period of depression and “artistic pause” to create both this cello sonata and the 2nd Piano Concerto, often considered his best work. Dedicated to, and first performed by Russian cellist, Antoli Brandukov, the work was, according to the composer, written for “two instruments in equal balance”. The virtuosity of the piano provides a turbulent background against which the cello bares its soul.

The first movement, in traditional sonata form, features broad lyricism, frequent shifts of mode over long pedal points and a mood of Russian melancholy – all typical of Rachmaninoff’s overall style. The humor of the second movement scherzo, again in traditional form, is sinister and reminiscent of the apparitions and erlkings that obsessed
many a Romantic. The succeeding slow movement epitomizes Romantic subjectivity and Sehnsucht with its chromatic, rhapsodic melodies and sweeping accompaniment. The sonata ends with a challenging rondo which contrasts a strong and brilliant main theme with introspective, elegiac passages.

Program notes by Alice Hanson. (Ms. Hanson is instructor of music history at The Shepherd School of Music.)

SHIRLEY TREPEL is Cellist of the Shepherd Quartet and Artist Teacher of Cello at The Shepherd School of Music, as well as Principal Cellist of the Houston Symphony. Ms. Trepel is a graduate of the Curtis Institute where her tutors were Feuermann and Piatigorsky. She has performed as a soloist with major symphony orchestras in the United States and England and is recorded on RCA Victor.

ALBERT HIRSH, head of the piano department, professor of music and artist-in-residence at the University of Houston, has enjoyed a distinguished career as concert performer and pedagogue since his Town Hall debut in New York in 1934. He has appeared on leading concert courses throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, West Indies and Europe. Known as an interpreter of great sensitivity, Mr. Hirsh is much in demand as a coach by instrumentalists and singers and has frequently been dubbed “the musicians’ musician”.

Mr. Hirsh’s reputation as one of the top accompanists is attested to by his long association with many of the world’s eminent artists including Francescatti, Menuhin, Feuermann, Milstein, Starker, Tucker, Morini, Rabin, Ricci, Friedman, Rose and Perlman, to name but a few. His repertoire includes virtually the entire string, vocal and chamber music literature.

In Houston Mr. Hirsh was instrumental in the founding and growth of many of the music series now enriching the musical life of the city – the Bach Society of which he was musical director, the Jewish Community Center Series, and has played for the Music Guild and the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Hirsh is pianist of the Lyric Art Quintet, piano quintet-in-residence at the University of Houston, and has toured as a sonata team with Fredell Lack throughout this country.

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