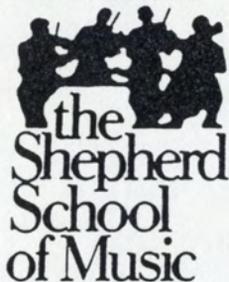


Houston
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PRESENT
THE

ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS
CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Kenneth Sillito, *violin*
Malcolm Latchem, *violin*
Robert Smissen, *viola*
Stephen Orton, *cello*

Paul Marrion, *bass*
Andrew Marriner, *clarinet*
Timothy Brown, *French horn*
Graham Sheen, *bassoon*

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Mariedi Anders Artists Management, Inc., 535 El Camino del Mar, San Francisco, CA 94121.*

Thirty-fourth Season — Seventh Concert

**THE ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS
CHAMBER ENSEMBLE**

Stude Concert Hall Alice Pratt Brown Hall
Rice University
March 24, 1994 8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Gioachino Antonio Rossini
(1792-1868)

Sonata in G, No. 1

Moderato
Andantino
Allegro

Bohuslav Martinů
(1890-1959)

Serenade No. 2

Allegro
Poco Andante
Allegro con brio

Carl August Nielsen
(1865-1931)

**Serenata in vano for clarinet, horn,
bassoon, cello and bass**

Allegro non troppo ma brioso

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Octet for winds and strings in F Major, D. 803

Adagio - Allegro
Andante un poco mosso
Scherzo (Allegro vivace)
Andante (Theme and Variations)
Menuetto (Allegretto)
Andante molto-Allegro

Photographing and sound recording are prohibited.

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If it is anticipated that tickets will not be used, subscribers are encouraged to turn them in for resale.

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PROGRAM

GIOACHINO ANTONIO ROSSINI Sonata in G, No. 1

Giachino Antonio Rossini was born in 1792 in Pesaro, an Adriatic port under the rule of Rome. In his seventy-six years, Rossini wrote thirty-nine operas, two large non-operatic compositions, and hundreds of smaller works. At the age of twelve, he composed six *sonate a quattro* for two violins, cello and double bass. These sonatas were only discovered after the Second World War, at the Library of Congress in Washington. Five of the sonatas were determined to be the same works as Rossini's early string quartets, and all six corresponded to his set of wind quartets for flute, clarinet, horn and bassoon. Alfredo Bonaccorsi, who edited the *Quaderni Rossiniani* at Pesaro in 1954, concluded that the transcriptions were not done by Rossini, "because Rossini, who had taken into account the characteristics and nature of the double bass and was composing for a double bass player, would not have been able to give up that instrument's rusty voice, almost that of a *basso buffo*."

A note by Rossini written later in his life appears on the manuscript copy of his six sonatas, referring to them as "six dreadful sonatas composed by me at the country place (near Ravenna) of my Maecenas friend (Agostino) Triossi, when I was at the most infantile age, not even having taken a lesson in accompaniment, the whole composed and copied out in three days and performed by Triossi, double bass, Morri, his cousin, first violin, the latter's brother, violoncello, who played like dogs, and the second violin by me myself, who was not the least doggish, by God."

Rossini composed his six sonatas for Triossi, an amateur double bass player and patron of the arts, at a time that the double bass was quite popular as a solo instrument. Rossini's six *sonate a quattro* differ from string quartets of a classical texture. They consist of a main melody, related submelodies, a divertimento, and a restatement of the main melody. Despite their simple structure and Rossini's self-deprecatory comments, his sonatas are quite interesting and require exceptional instrumental technique. The two violins appear with equal importance, with a slight contrast of tone and color that is an integral part of each work. Unlike the custom of the period, the cello and bass parts are almost totally independent of each other, with frequent solo passages.

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ Serenade No. 2

Bohuslav Martinů was born in 1890 in the belfry tower of St. James the Great Church in Policka, on the border of Bohemia and Moravia. Young Martinů began violin lessons at the age of seven, and by age ten he had written his first composition, a string quartet. He trained at the

Prague Conservatory from 1906 until his expulsion in 1910 "for incorrigible negligence." Nonetheless, Martinů went on to become a prolific composer, producing 400 scores ranging from symphonies, ballets and full-length operas to jazz-like chamber pieces.

Martinů was greatly influenced by Stravinsky as well as the French School - particularly Debussy, Ravel, Dukas and Roussel. In 1923 he moved to Paris and began to study with Roussel, composing almost forty works in his first five years in France. Until 1942 Martinů composed almost exclusively chamber music or music written for chamber orchestra. The torment and anxiety of impending war became clearly reflected in his music of the late 1930s. Blacklisted by the Nazis, Martinů finally succeeded in escaping to America in 1941.

Martinů's works have been hailed for what Miles Kastendieck has decried as "the happy fusion of diverse elements...the basic Czech essentials, French clarity and precision, and the contemporary American spirit." He goes on to state that "Martinů's persuasive command of dissonance, fascinating sonorities, and sliding harmonies represents the contemporary spirit fully formed and expertly articulated."

Martinů's *Serenade No. 2* for two violins and viola is one of several serenades that he wrote in early 1932. Martinů displays a gentle, lyrical charm throughout these works, characteristic of the folk melodies of his homeland. Later in the 1940s, four of his serenades were harmonically integrated into a series and premiered by members of the Prague Symphony. They have since enjoyed much popularity around the world.

CARL AUGUST NIELSEN Serenata in vano

Carl August Nielsen was born in 1865 in Denmark. While he became a very learned and well-travelled musician during his sixty-six years, the music of the Danish villagers always remained an influential part of his music. Known primarily as an orchestral composer, Nielsen also wrote some notable choral and vocal music including two operas, some outstanding piano music and several chamber music works. Interestingly, Nielsen was himself a professional violinist and avid chamber music player, yet he wrote only six string quartets early in his career (two of them unpublished student efforts) before going on to focus his chamber music primarily on ensembles for wind instruments.

Musical commentator Robert Simpson describes Nielsen as "the driving force in Danish music, drawing together the threads of the past, purifying and sifting what he found, casting out what was worthless or dead, while he nourished new ideas and thoughts, fertilizing them by his rich understanding of the past."

After his string quartets, Nielsen composed two other noteworthy chamber works, one of which was his well-known *Wind Quintet*. The other was the *Serenata in vano*, which he composed at the request of bassist Anton Hegner in 1914. It was first performed in public a year later, but not published until 1942. Nielsen envisioned this music as a country serenade by a band of players, and he called it "a humorous trifle." He described the piece this way: "First the gentlemen play in a somewhat chivalric and showy manner to lure the fair one out onto the balcony, but she does not appear. Then they play in a slightly languorous strain (*Poco adagio*), but that hasn't any effect either. Since they have played in vain (*in vano*), they don't care a straw and shuffle off home to the strains of the little final march, which they play for their own amusement."

The colors and textures of the *Serenata in vano* give it an orchestral quality, illustrating the unique capacities of each wind instrument, particularly the clarinet. The work is played in three continuous sections, the first one free and rhapsodic, the second simple, evocative and beautifully lyrical, and the final one very lively and comical, with irregular phrasing.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Octet for winds and strings in F Major, D. 803

Born in Vienna in 1797, Franz Peter Schubert lived only thirty-one years. Despite a brief life and an incomplete education in general subjects as well as in music, his musical instinct inspired a wealth of compositions. In fact, Schubert is among the most prolific composers of all time. Known particularly for his charming lyricism, he composed over six hundred songs, at least eight symphonies, twenty-four piano sonatas, over twenty chamber music works, and many smaller pieces.

Listening to Schubert's *Octet for winds and strings*, one cannot discern the physical and emotional suffering that he was experiencing just prior to composing this work. In a letter written at that time Schubert stated, "Every night when I go to bed I hope I may not wake ... I live without pleasure or friends." Nonetheless, he proceeded to compose a radiant octet, commissioned by Count Ferdinand von Troyer, a high official in Archduke Rudolph's court and an excellent amateur clarinetist. Von Troyer wanted a work that would be comparable to Beethoven's well-received *Septet*, Op. 20, and one that would allow him to perform. Thus Schubert created a work with the instrumentation of Beethoven's septet, with the addition of a second violin.

Though completed in 1824, the octet was not published until 1853. In creating the octet, Schubert remarked that he was preparing for a "Grand Symphony," and indeed its richness, brilliance and detail do suggest an orchestral fullness. A stately introduction leads into

the vigorous first movement, which becomes quieter as the clarinet introduces the subsidiary theme. A lyrical *Andante* follows, beginning with a lovely clarinet passage, no doubt for Count von Troyer. The strings introduce a gentle yet robust peasant dance in the *Scherzo*, and a powerful *tutti* response follows. Next, an *Andante* features several variations on a simple theme, with a melody borrowed from Schubert's earlier opera, *Die Freunde von Salamanka*. A charming, delicate *Menuetto* follows, and finally a powerful, dramatic *finale* concludes the work.

Program notes by Susan Maise Strauss

Program notes were written with reference to the following sources:

Guide to Chamber Music, Melvin Berger

"Bohuslav Martinů," Maurice Hinson, in *Clavier*, Oct. 1982

Martinů, Brian Large

Carl Nielsen, *Symphonist, 1865-1931*, Robert Simpson

Chamber Music, Homer Ulrich

Rossini: *A Biography*, Herbert Weinstock

ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Orchestra is known around the world as Great Britain's finest performing ensemble, and their interpretations of music ranging from the Baroque to the contemporary are widely praised as consistently exciting and exquisitely wrought.

Since 1972, the principal players of the Academy have presented concerts of the larger chamber works, from quintets to octets, endowing this often neglected repertory with the same high qualities. Whereas these works are usually played by temporary ensembles formed for one or two concerts, The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble brings to its performances the subtlety of nuance and the unsurpassed finesse of five to eight players intimately accustomed to playing together. The ensemble's programs include nearly the entire span of chamber music, from works by Boccherini and Mozart to those of Schoenberg and Martinů.

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble tours Germany and France annually, and has visited Switzerland, Norway and Yugoslavia. Tonight's performance is part of their North American debut.

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble has an extensive discography to their credit, which includes all of Handel's chamber music, the Schubert *Octet*, Beethoven's *Septet*, Mozart's *Divertimenti*, *Wind Quintet* and *Quartets*, and the Boccherini *Guitar Quintets* with Pepe Romero. For these recordings the Chamber Ensemble has received many top international awards, including the *Grand Prix de l'Academie Charles Cros* and the *Wiener Flotenuhr*. They are now under exclusive contract with Chandos.