

Houston  
Friends  
of Music



the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music

PRESENT

**MENDELSSOHN  
STRING QUARTET**

*Ida Levin, Violin*

*Nicholas Mann, Violin*

*Katherine Murdock, Viola*

*Marcy Rosen, Cello*

*Tuesday, November 20, 1990*

*8:00 P.M.*

*Hamman Hall*

*Rice University*

*31st Season*

THIRD CONCERT

Houston  
Friends  
of Music



the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music

PRESENT

**MENDELSSOHN STRING QUARTET**

Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 3.....FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

(1732-1809)

*Vivace assai*

*Adagio*

*Menuetto: Allegretto*

*Finale: Allegro con spirito*

String Quartet No. 1.....TOBIAS PICKER

New Memories (1987)

(1954- )

**INTERMISSION**

Quartet in G Major, Op. 161, D. 887.....FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797-1828)

*Allegro molto moderato*

*Andante un poco moto*

*Scherzo: Allegro vivace*

*Allegro assai*

The Mendelssohn String Quartet is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.,  
115 College Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

A recently released Nonesuch CD of T. Picker's String Quartet No. 1  
is available at Sound Warehouse in Houston, Texas.

Photographing and sound recording are prohibited.

We further request that audible paging devices not be used during performances. Paging arrangements may be made with ushers.

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

This is a tax-deductible donation. Call 527-4933.

**KUHF88.7FM**

The radio voice of Houston Friends of Music

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 3

F.J.HAYDN

Commissioned in 1790, the year of Prince Nicolaus Esterhazy's death, the six quartets of Op. 64 mark the culmination of nearly thirty years of experimentation by Haydn. During his years in the service of Prince Esterhazy, Haydn's operatic, symphonic, instrumental and religious compositions were largely influenced by the specific requirements and musical tastes of his patron. Haydn did not find a great demand for string quartets in the Court of Prince Esterhazy, and so he sent these works to publishers all over Europe, thereby gaining a wider public and a greater spirit of universality. Unlike his symphonic works, which were governed by the changing personnel of the court orchestra, Haydn's string quartets were limited only by the intrinsic limitation of the form itself. This challenge appealed to Haydn's inventive mind, and he often used the medium as a means for expressing his deepest and most personal feelings.

Haydn's experimentation with the string quartet involved new ideas with a number of technical devices. In the sonata form, he tried thematic dualism instead of monothematicism. He varied phrase structures, created a new intervallic awareness, used new harmonic resources, devised more original contrapuntal ideas, and experimented with the coda. He also reconsidered the position of the slow movement, making various changes in regard to melodic decoration, textural variety, and the general form of the movement. Haydn wanted to create more drama and excitement in the minuet and trio, as well as in the finale. It seems, however, that he was never satisfied with his solutions to these problems, continuing to experiment for his entire lifetime.

The first movement of Op. 64, No. 3, in B-flat major, really has four themes. Two rhythmically motivated themes are contrasted by two melodic themes of a cantabile nature. The absence of a coda in this movement is clear evidence of Haydn's inventive approach. The adagio in E-flat may be described as a type of variation form. The minuet and trio, in B-flat, is built on a theme very similar to that which forms the basis of the minuet in Op 33, No. 2. The movement is characterized by interesting rhythmic shifts, and a simple melodic line contrasted by virile trills and leaps. The finale is clearly in sonata-form, with interesting harmonic constructions and a focus on rhythmic intensity. The final ten bars consolidate Haydn's concepts and bring the quartet to a satisfying close.

Notes by Constance Dvoretzky

### String Quartet No. 1 New Memories (1987)

T. PICKER

Tobias Picker's distinctive musical aesthetic may stem in part from a synergy of diverse factors: a deep affection for the music of Stravinsky, exceeded only by a passion for Brahms; a thorough, albeit idiosyncratic grounding in the rich potential of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone system; and the catalyst of an extraordinary "musicality." The result of all this is a powerfully expressive music, vibrant, ambitious in scope, and rich in associative resonance.

In 1985, concurrent with his Houston Symphony appointment, Tobias Picker accepted an invitation to be composer-in-residence at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival during the summer of 1987. This further entailed a commission to write a work to celebrate the 100th birthday of the artist Georgia O'Keeffe, the area's most famous resident and a long-time supporter of the festival. Having chosen the medium of the string quartet, the composer was at work on the piece when O'Keeffe died in March 1986 at the age of 98. During that summer, Picker toured the Southwest, visiting O'Keeffe's houses at Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu, steeping himself in the character of the land and the recently vacated home of the artist. The composer had not had the opportunity to meet O'Keeffe before her death and the quartet's title, *New Memories*, signifies this posthumous acquaintance.

It is interesting that O'Keeffe's first abstract oil paintings in 1919 were inspired by music. Correspondingly, the quartet reflects the influence of the artist's surroundings as well as her technique. The expansive grandeur of its slower movements, with their spacious voicings, evokes the enormous rock formations, seemingly still but imperceptibly moving in geological time, of the New Mexico landscape. O'Keeffe's method of subjecting the same subject matter to a series of varied renditions is also used; repeated hearings will reveal that the quartet's movements subtly reflect one another. Perhaps the most significant affinity shared by both composer and artist is a tension-creating ambiguity involving the familiar and the purely formal. In O'Keeffe's works it is the exquisite balance of figuration and abstraction; in Picker's an implication of traditional melody and harmony which exists within a twelve-tone framework.

String Quartet No. 1, *New Memories*, contains six movements, generally felt to be fast, slow, fast, slow, less slow, and fast. The organic, spontaneously irregular unfolding of the slow movements contrasts dramatically with the energetic pulsations of the faster ones. O'Keeffe had often heard the pulsating, sorrowful songs of the Penitentes floating over the garden wall of her home in Abiquiu, a sound which had reminded her of cows lowing for their calves. The music of this secret southwestern lay order is represented at the very end of the quartet's coda by florid figurations in the cello. This is a literal transcription of a passage for *pito*, a small wooden flute, which traditionally links stanzas of the *alabados*, the Penitentes' music for the dead. Here it serves as an accompaniment to the release and transcendence of the artist's spirit.

Notes by John Van Der Slie

(continued)

## Quartet in G Major, Op. 161, D. 887

F. SCHUBERT

Schubert wrote his last, certainly his most ambitious, and probably his greatest, string quartet in June 1826, at Währing, near Vienna. After a long period of inactivity, during which one can presume the work to have been taking shape in his mind, he started work on 20th June and in only eleven days the quartet was completed. Like so many of Schubert's greatest works, it had to wait long for recognition. It was performed privately quite soon, but no complete public performance is recorded until 1850. In March, 1828, the first movement alone had been played by the famous Schuppanzigh Quartet, at a concert organized by Schubert himself, if we are right in assuming that an item billed simply as a 'New String Quartet' was in fact this one. It was first published in 1851, twenty-five years after its composition. Seen chronologically in Schubert's output, it comes two years after the other two great quartets, the A minor (D. 804) and the D minor (D. 810), and it was immediately preceded by some songs and minor piano works.

The first movement of the G major quartet is by any standards one of Schubert's finest, for its power, imagination and masterly construction. The development of this movement, intensely dramatic in its use of modulation and its treatment of the material of the opening bars, is unique, and might well be taken to indicate the directions Schubert would have explored had he lived longer.

The cello melody which opens the slow movement was long thought to be derived from a Swedish folk-song, but Deutsch has shown that the occasion on which Schubert came across Swedish folk-songs was in fact after the composition of the quartet, and the story probably relates to the E flat piano trio. The serene beauty of the opening hardly suggests the drama which is to follow.

The B minor Scherzo, of great rhythmic impetus, has a *laedler-like* trio (marked *Allegretto*, though the Scherzo is *Allegro vivace*) which recalls earlier works but is infinitely more pathetic. The finale opens with another firm statement of the major-minor relationship. But in general this movement is on a less intellectual level than the earlier ones: in 6/8 time, with almost constant quaver movement (apart from two more sustained episodes, like the finale of the D minor quartet which it resembles), it is full of Schubertian high spirits - though it has an impressively dark episode in the remote tonal region of C sharp minor. Although formally highly organized, it does not conform to any of the conventional strait-jacket designs of classical orthodoxy; and without being an anti-climax, it permits the listener some relaxation after the profound stresses of the earlier part of this extraordinary quartet.

From Schubert: The Last Four Quartets-VOX SVBX 601

## MENDELSSOHN STRING QUARTET

The Mendelssohn String Quartet has established a reputation as one of the most imaginative and exciting quartets of this generation. They have been Resident Quartet of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival since 1984 and at Merkin Concert Hall in New York since 1979, and have newly been appointed Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Delaware. Highlights of recent seasons include: a three-concert cycle of the quartets of Arnold Schoenberg and Felix Mendelssohn presented at and by New York's Merkin Concert Hall; performances of the complete Schoenberg string quartets in two concerts at both the Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music; the world premieres of works by Stephen Paulus, Tobias Picker, Shulamit Ran and Ne' Rorem; nationwide broadcasts on National Public Radio and Minnesota Public Radio; and release of three recordings on the Musical Heritage Society and Musicmasters labels.

During the summer of 1989, in addition to performing with the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in both Santa Fe and Seattle, the Quartet made their Carnegie Hall debut; appeared at the Kennedy Center in Washington with the Mostly Mozart Festival; participated in Maryland's Eastern Shore Music Festival, and in the first American String Quartet Congress in Washington, DC.

The Mendelssohn won the young Concert Artists' International Auditions in 1981, and is the recipient of grants from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Touring annually throughout North America, the Mendelssohn String Quartet appears regularly in major cities including New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and on campuses across the country. The Quartet collaborates with such noted artists as pianists Rudolf Firkušny, Ursula Oppens, Menahem Pressler and Peter Serkin; sopranos Lucy Shelton and Evelyn Lear; Robert Mann, viola; and Charles Neidich, clarinet.

## The Artists...

**IDA LEVIN, violin**, a former Leventritt artist and winner of a 1983 Avery Fisher Career Grant, has recently appeared with Rudolph Serkin "In Performance at the White House;" on the Distinguished Artist Series at the 92nd Street "Y" in New York; in London on a BBC nationwide broadcast; in Rome; in Florence; and, for the second time, as special guest of Salvatore Accardo at the Settimana Musicale Internazionale Festival in Naples, Italy. She is a favorite at festivals in this country (Marlboro, Aspen, Seattle, Martha's Vineyard, Marblehead) and in Europe (Asolo, Cremona, Bologna, Turin, Cricklade, Ravel). A frequent soloist with orchestras here and abroad, Ms. Levin has recently performed with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; the New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center; the St. Louis Symphony; the Toulouse Symphony; and the Victoria Symphony in British Columbia. Ida Levin began her violin studies at the age of three, and performed as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra when she was ten. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Juilliard School.

**NICHOLAS MANN, violin**, grew up surrounded by music and musicians. From an early age, he has collaborated with such noted artists as Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman and Lynn Harrell; and with his father, violinist Robert Mann, he has performed more than a hundred concerts in the United States and Canada. Mr. Mann has performed extensively as a recitalist and soloist. In New York City alone, he has appeared on the Great Performers series in Alice Tully Hall, with Chamber Music at the "Y," and with Musica Camerit in Merkin Hall. He has been a member of the "Y" Chamber Orchestra, and has served as concertmaster of the Jupiter Symphony. After receiving Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Juilliard School, he made his New York recital debut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1983, and has recently given recitals in Boston, Berkeley, San Francisco and New York. His participation in summer festivals includes solo performances at the Ravinia Festival, several seasons with the Aspen Music Festival, and frequent engagements with San Francisco's Chambermusic West and Colorado's Baca Ensemble.

**KATHERINE MURDOCK, viola**, has performed as soloist and chamber musician in the music capitals of Eastern and Western Europe, the U. S., Canada and South America. She has performed at the Edinburgh and Salzburg Festivals, the Gulbenkian Festival of Lisbon, and the Spoleto and Tanglewood Festivals. A participant in the Marlboro Music Festival for three summers, she has toured the U. S. on several occasions with Music from Marlboro and the Brandenburg Ensemble. Ms. Murdock has been a member of the Boston Chamber Music Society, the Boston Musica Viva, and the Cambridge Chamber Players. She regularly tours the U. S. and Europe with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and recently returned from a highly acclaimed State Department tour of South America with the New York Philomusica chamber ensemble. Ms. Murdock had the privilege of studying with Joseph Silverstein and the late William Primrose. She has recorded for Columbia, Delos, CRI, Nonesuch, and Northeastern Records, and for Deutsche Grammophon with the Orpheus Ensemble.

**MARCY ROSEN, cello**, is widely recognized as a soloist of international stature. She has recently participated in the International Musicians' Seminar in England and the Madeira Bach Festival in Portugal, and performed in Sofia, Bulgaria. Named a 1986 winner of Young Concert Artists' International Auditions, Ms. Rosen adds this award to a long list that includes the Mischa Schneider Memorial Award from the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, Musical America's "Young Artist of 1981" award and first prize in the 1979 Washington International Competition for Strings. She has appeared as soloist with orchestras across the country, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Caramoor Festival Orchestra and Brandenburg Ensemble. A founding member of the Boccherini Ensemble with violinist Pina Carmirelli, she also performs with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Marcy Rosen records for the Marlboro Recording Society, Columbia, Masterworks, Nonesuch, Pro Arte, Musical Heritage Society, Musicmasters and Deutsche Grammophon.

HOUSTON FRIENDS OF MUSIC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the presentation of chamber ensembles with national and international reputations, and to the development of new audiences.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Francisco Aviles-Roig  
Ira J. Black  
Constance Dvoretzky  
Elmer Eisner  
Ann Fairbanks  
Arthur Ginzburg  
Harvey L. Gordon  
Michael Hammond

Barbara Kauffman  
Tomas Klima  
Daniel Krohn  
Thomas Littman  
Walter Mannheimer  
Jack Mazow  
Daniel Musher

Bobbie Newman  
David G. Parsons  
Mary Schoettle  
Steven J. Tillinger  
Marsha Tsuchida  
Irving Wadler  
Margaret Waisman  
Seymour Wexler

### OFFICERS OF HOUSTON FRIENDS OF MUSIC

President.....	Ann Fairbanks	Vice Presidents.....	Ira J. Black, Walter Mannheimer,
Secretary.....	Bobbie Newman		Mary Schoettle, Marsha Tsuchida
Treasurer.....	Steven J. Tillinger		