

Houston
Friends
of Music



the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PRESENT

The Guarneri String Quartet

Arnold Steinhardt, *violin*

John Dalley, *violin*

Michael Tree, *viola*

David Soyer, *cello*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1991

8:00 P.M.

ALICE PRATT BROWN HALL

RICE UNIVERSITY

Thirty-second Season — First Concert

Houston
Friends
of Music



the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PRESENT

The Guarneri String Quartet

PROGRAM

JUAN CRISOSTOMO ARRIAGA
(1806-1826)

QUARTET #2 in A

Allegro con brio
Andante (Tema con variazioni)
Menuetto
Andante ma no troppo--Allegro

NED ROREM
(1923)

QUARTET #3 (1990)

Chaconne
Scherzo--Sarabande--Scherzo
Dirge--Dance--Dirge
Epitaph
Dervish

INTERMISSION

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)

QUARTET in D, Op. 44 #1

Molto allegro vivace
Menuetto: un poco allegretto
Andante
Finale: Presto

The Guarneri Quartet records for Philips and RCA Red Seal Records.

The Guarneri String Quartet is on the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia and at the University of Maryland.

The Guarneri Quartet is managed exclusively by Harry Beall Management, Inc.

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 285-5400.

KUHF88.7FM

The radio voice of Houston Friends of Music

PROGRAM NOTES

JUAN CRISOSTOMO ARRIAGA

(1806-1826)

STRING QUARTET #2 IN A

Juan Crisostomo Arriaga y Balzola was born in Bilbao, Spain. Before he was fifteen, he had composed a complete opera, an orchestral overture, and several chamber works. At the age of fifteen he was enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire, studying composition, counterpoint and violin.

In 1824 he published a set of three string quartets -the works for which he is best known today. During the next two years he was prodigiously creative, writing several songs, cantatas, a symphony, and a Mass setting. He died in 1826, ten days short of his twentieth birthday.

Arriaga's music is fluid and elegant, with an impressive but lightly-worn control of contrapuntal textures. Nevertheless a highly attractive individuality infuses his style, and the string quartets especially display a colorful blend of the proper and the personal.

The opening movement of the Second Quartet is fresh and lively. The first violin part (designed for the composer himself?) carries much of the energy. A brief contrast is brought by the second theme, but the central development section is again tightly wrought. After the return of the opening, the *coda* is fast and dazzling.

The *Andante* is set as a series of variations upon a lyrical theme. The instruments take turns interpreting the theme and join together for a *pizzicato* rendition in Variation IV. Variation V turns into a march, and the movement closes with a brief reminiscence of the original version.

A courtly grace colors the *Menuetto*, while the central *Trio* takes on the atmosphere of a country dance.

The last movement is prefaced by a slow introduction which later returns to interrupt the quick movement itself. The ending is exuberant and gay.

Notes by Jeremy Yudkin

NED ROREM

(1923)

THIRD QUARTET (1990)

There is no *First Quartet*. Well, actually there is, but it's a student endeavor stashed forever in a drawer with many another of my opus-minus-ones. However, since my first real string quartet, which dates from 1950, is published under the title of *Second Quartet*, I have no choice but to name the present work *Third Quartet*. Forty years separate these two pieces. The interim contains a hefty amount of chamber music, much of it including-but none of it exclusively for -string quartet.

The *Chaconne's* "ground," uttered in the high reaches of the second violin, is a sequence of twelve notes (B, F#, A, F, B-flat, E, E-flat, D, A-flat, G, C, C#) requiring one slow measure apiece. The resulting dozen measures are repeated seven times, unchanged and expressionless as the sky. Against this neutral background ambiguous disturbances occur: is the first violin an eagle swerving; is the viola a block of clouds; and the cello an oceanic eruption? These disturbances combine, agitate, and eventually fade as they come, while the indifferent sky remains forever. The musical material all derived from the "sky" motive, but played backward by the first violin, and radically transposed-and sometimes upside down-by viola and cello.

The plucked tune tossed about through the second movement is again derived from the original twelve tones. Counterpointing this is a scurrying figure of five descending notes which, after ninety seconds, subsides into a formal *Sarabande*-actually the *Scherzo* in slow motion. After two and a half minutes the *Sarabande* melts back into its former whispering shape.

Dirge is concocted from a roughish two-bar chorale stated thrice, each statement followed by a solo cadenza. Now comes a second theme, spacious and sustained, accompanied by a murmur growing toward a torrent that finally bursts into a rhythmic dance. The *Dance* is speeded-up-a "released"-version of the *Dirge* to which, for reasons of proprietary symmetry, it returns, and all ends softly.

Epitaph brief and motionless, is a song without words depicting a child's tombstone on a sunny afternoon. *Dervish* is a *perpetuum mobile* surrounding a canon based on the "sky" motive which, after persistent reiterations, whirls to a close.

(Let me stress that although I speak of a 12-note motive, this is indeed a motive and a row in the Schoenbergian sense. My music is profoundly tonal, and so to my ear is all music, tonality being a law of the universe.)

The foregoing information is more visually illustrative than is my usual wont when discussing non-vocal music, but lately I've found such descriptions useful. Hitherto my habit had been to give just the facts, such as: the *Third Quartet*, a 25-minute piece in five movements, was commissioned by the June Festival of Albuquerque as a gift for the Guarneri Quartet. It was composed during the last five months of 1990, in Nantucket, Saratoga Springs, and New York City.

Notes by Ned Rorem

FELIX MEDELSOHN-BARTHOLDY

(1809-1847)

QUARTET IN D, OP 44 #1

The Opus 44 set of string quartets of Felix Mendelssohn comprises three quartets, which were written in the years 1838-9 and dedicated to the Prince Royal of Sweden. The D-major Quartet, the first of the set, was supposed to be the composer's favorite. He wrote to a friend:

My D-major Quartet is finished; the first movement pleases me beyond measure. I wish I could play it to you.

The first movement is grand and orchestral in scope, with a sweeping opening theme, which alternates with a mood of lyricism and restraint. The central development section has a mysterious quality, which is brushed aside by the return of the opening. The *coda* is firm and definitive.

Mendelssohn placed the *Minuet* in the second position and the music is delicate, with long flowing melodies. In the central *Trio* section, the first violin unwinds a curlicued arabesque of melody over sustained drones. The impetus proves infectious but soon subsides into the return of the *Minuet*. A lingering reminiscence is all that remains.

The *Andante* is also restrained, with great charm and a touch of wistfulness. There is something folk-like about the affecting simplicity of this movement. The *pizzicato* cello adds piquancy to the texture. A lengthy parenthetical disquisition from the first violin precedes the quiet ending.

The last movement is a joyful *Presto*, symphonic in breadth and full of brilliant string writing, rhythmic power, and unbridled energy.

Notes by Jeremy Yudkin

GUARNERI STRING QUARTET

Now in its second quarter-century, the Guarneri String Quartet is the most senior string quartet in the world without any changes in personnel since its founding in 1964.

Consistently hailed as the world's premier quartet, in 1990-91 the Guarneri made its 30th European tour including recitals of the complete Beethoven string quartets in the composer's birthplace, Bonn.

The international demand to hear the Guarneri String Quartet reflects the eminence in which the Quartet is held in North America. It was well-defined by the *Los Angeles Times* in reviewing an all-Beethoven recital:

Beethoven was more than well-served, he was revitalized by playing that probed into dark corners and illuminated hidden mysteries. It was the sort of thing that can occur at any time but that rarely happens .. It seemingly has to come from some other-worldly source. Whatever its origin, it has the Guarneri players firmly under its spell. They looked like hard-working musicians, but they played like angels.

The Guarneri, hailed by *Newsweek* as "one of the world's most elegant chamber ensembles," is the subject of several books including *Quartet* by Helen Drees Ruttencutter and *The Art of Quartet Playing: The Guarneri in Conversation with David Blum*, as well as the 1989 film *High Fidelity - The Guarneri String Quartet*.

The Guarneri is not named after the famed Italian instrument maker. The name was suggested to the quartet by Boris Kroyt, late of the Budapest Quartet, who was once a member of a German quartet, active before World War One, called Guarneri.

The program is edited by Ira J. Black

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 Carter Crawford Elizabeth Duerr Constance Dvoretzky Ann Fairbanks Arthur Ginzburg Ann Goldstein Harvey L. Gordon	Michael Hammond Barbara Kauffman Tomas Klima Daniel Krohn Tom Littman Jack Mazow Daniel Musher Bobbie Newman	Paula Stephenson Stephen Tew Steven J. Tillinger Marsha Tsuchida Irving Wadler Margaret Waisman Seymour Wexler Walter Mannheimer, Emeritus
---	---	---

OFFICERS

President..... Ann Fairbanks
 Vice-Presidents..... Daniel Krohn, Bobbie Newman,
 Marsha Tsuchida, Margaret Waisman
 Secretary..... Ann Goldstein
 Treasurer..... Steven J. Tillinger

BENEFACTORS

Dr. Edith F. Bondi Caduceus Foundation, Inc.	Leon Wilson Clark, M.D. Dr. & Mrs. Grady L. Hallman Barbara M. Osborne	Tom Reiser Dr. Stephen A. Tew
---	--	----------------------------------

Mr. Harold Schiff in memory of Mozelle Edelstein Schiff

PATRONS

Drs. Chester & Jaimie Cochran Fred & Betty Durrance Drs. Ann & Alex Goldstein Dr. & Mrs. Harvey L. Gordon Barbara Kauffman	Tomas & Marcella Klima Dr. & Mrs. James H. Krause Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin O. Leff Bobbie & Arthur Newman H. Irving Schweppe, Jr. M.D.	Mr. Richard Vierbuchen Margaret Waisman & Steven Callahan Seymour Wexler Robert & Edith Zinn
--	---	---

SPONSORS

Drs. Francisco & Mariame Aviles Mr. & Mrs. Jerry W. Brougher Mr. & Mrs. Emory T. Carl Carter D. Crawford Isaac & Constance Dvoretzky Lila-Gene George Dr. Dale B. Haufrect	C. Stratton Hill, Jr., M.D. John S. W. Kellett Nora Klein, M.D. Dr. & Mrs. J. P. Lauzon Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Leon Franklyn K. Levin Drs. Walter & Ilse Mannheimer	Julia & Jack Mazow Daniel & Karol Musher Donald E. Roper Don Thiel Ida & Irving Wadler Drs. A. & J. Werch
--	---	--

CONTRIBUTORS

Drs. Vlasta & Ervin Adam James & Carolyn Alexander Elizabeth Armstrong Edward Blum Dr. J. H. U. Brown Melvin Buck Barbara & Jim Butler James D. & Ritsuko Cox Elizabeth H. Duerr J. Kay Dunn Mr. & Mrs. John W. Eagleton Robert Eikel Lloyd & Margie Elliott	Ann Fairbanks John & Marilyn Flynn Arthur S. Ginzburg Harlan Hall Mr. & Mrs. J. B. Harkness Drs. Eva & Fred Haufrect Beverly I. Hawkins Daniel A. Krohn Yildiz Lee Alicia D. Leff Louise Levien Donna B. Miller	Helen F. Mintz Stephanie L. Normann Mr. & Mrs. Nathan M. Pryzant Elizabeth G. Reynolds Eva P. Rosencranz Mary S. Schoettle Paula Stephenson William M. & Rae Taylor Robert M. & Natalie Thrall Steven & Janet Tillinger Marsha & Douglas Tsuchida Mr. & Mrs. Herschel J. Wood, Jr.
--	--	---