



**THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY
OF UTICA**

presents

THE AMERICAN CHAMBER PLAYERS

Sara Stern, flute Joanna Maurer, violin Miles Hoffman, viola
Stephen Balderston, cello Anna Stoytcheva, piano

THE MARY KERNAN BUTLER AND MARTHA GILBERT BUTLER MEMORIAL CONCERT

19 November 2017
2:30 PM

Sinnott Family Bank of Utica Auditorium
Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute

Program

**Trio Sonata in Bb Major for flute, violin
and continuo, H. 578 (1748)**

Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Allegretto

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
(1714-1788)

***Prélude, Récitativ Variations* for flute, viola
and piano, Op. 3 (1928)**

Maurice Duruflé
(1902-1986)

Quartet in a minor for piano and strings (1876)
Nicht zu schnell

Gustave Mahler
(1860-1911)

Intermission

**Variations on "*Là ci darem la mano*" for flute,
violin and viola, WoO 28 (1797)**

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

**Quartet No. 1 in c minor for piano and
strings, Op. 15 (1879)**

Allegro molto moderato
Scherzo: Allegro vivo
Adagio
Finale: Allegro molto

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)



This concert is made possible by the Gilbert and Ildiko Family Foundation, Inc., with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and by the generous contributions of supporters listed on the back page.

THE ARTISTS

The American Chamber Players were formed in 1985 from a core group of artists of The Library of Congress Summer Chamber Festival and are among today's most exciting and innovative chamber music ensembles. Heard countless times on NPR's Performance Today and on local radio stations throughout the United States, they are the resident ensemble of the June Chamber Festival at the Kreeger Museum in Washington, DC.

Violist Miles Hoffman, founder and artistic director of the ensemble, made his New York recital debut in 1979 at the 92nd St. Y and has since appeared frequently around the country in recital, as chamber musician and as soloist with many orchestras. He is regularly heard as Music Commentator for NPR's flagship news program, Morning Edition.

Cellist Stephen Balderston began his studies on the cello with Gabor Rejto in his native southern California. Currently professor of cello and string coordinator at DePaul University School of Music in Chicago, Mr. Balderston was Assistant Principal Cello of the Chicago

Symphony Orchestra for ten years and a member of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra for ten years.

Born and raised in Colorado, violinist Joanna Maurer is a versatile artist with a broad repertoire. Now a resident of New York City, Miss Maurer performs regularly with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and she is a member of the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra as soloist and concertmaster.

Flutist Sara Stern is solo flutist of the 21st Century Consort in residence at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. Her work as guest artist with the Emerson String Quartet and other distinguished chamber ensembles has taken her to many concert halls throughout the country.

Since winning the prestigious Ettore Pozzoli International Competition in Milan, Italy, at the age of seventeen, pianist Anna Stoytcheva has performed throughout North America, Europe and Japan. The subject of several documentaries on Bulgarian National Radio and Television, she is a co-founder of the concert series "Bulgarian Concert Evenings" in New York.

PROGRAM NOTES

Trio Sonata in B-flat Major, H. 578 (1748)

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was the fifth child of Johann Sebastian Bach. His second name was given in honor of his godfather Georg Philipp Telemann.

Johann Sebastian Bach educated four of his children in music and all four pursued careers, with C. P. E. and Johann Christian becoming the best known. C. P. E. Bach worked at a time of transition between his father's baroque style and the classical style that followed it and he influenced and was influenced by other composers of his day, including Haydn, Handel and Telemann. His extensive set of works for keyboard instruments complements his book on Keyboard technique, a guide that was important to Clementi, Haydn and Beethoven. In the late 1700s, C. P. E.'s reputation became greater than that of his father; when Mozart said "Bach is the father, we are the children," he was referring to C. P. E. Bach, not J.S. Bach.

C.P.E. Bach composed the trio in B-flat, H. 578, in 1748, while working in the service of Frederick the Great (a flutist himself) in Berlin. ("H. 578" refers to its designation in the catalogue of Eugene Helm (1989). C. P. E. was in his early thirties, with forty years of composition ahead of him.

In all three movements of H. 578, the flute introduces the theme with continuo accompaniment. After the first phrases are stated, the violin enters with a repeat of the theme, a fourth lower, while the flute plays an embellishing counter-melody. This fugue style continues, with the

repetitions of material growing closer together, sometimes merging into a joint presentation of material in harmony.

You might be asking, "What is continuo?" The trio sonata's third written element is the continuo (or "basso continuo"), an accompanying bass line, written with numerical notations that indicate the chords. The keyboard artist can then fill out this "Figured bass" with chords to accompany the flute and violin. The continuo accompaniment is the improvised realization of this figured bass line, whether it is with keyboard alone or, as is more common, with a keyboard and another instrument (a low string instrument or bassoon, typically) playing the bass line along with the keyboard instrument's chordal improvisations.

Both the fugal style and the continuo accompaniment are characteristic of the first half of the 1700s. C. P. E.'s debt to the baroque (and to his father) is evident here.

Thomas McKay

***Prélude, Récitatif et Variations* for flute, viola and piano, Op. 3 (1928) Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)**

Despite the fact that the French composer and organist Maurice Duruflé lived into his eighties, his list of works is quite brief. Strong self-criticism and doubts as to his compositional abilities kept him from writing more than a handful of works, most of them for organ or choir. His surprising self-effacement was not due to a lack of recognition of talent, for he won several prizes both for

his organ playing and his compositions, and his works - of which the *Requiem* (1947) is the most famous - are of a consistently high quality, revealing a mastery of harmonic color, counterpoint and formal clarity. His early exposure to plainchant (Gregorian chant) melody while attending a choir school in Rouen became a central influence apparent throughout his career.

Durufié's *Prélude, Récitatif et Variations* for flute, viola and piano is a rare example of the composer's instrumental chamber music. He wrote the work in 1928 and dedicated it to the memory of the well-known French publisher and contemporary music enthusiast Jacques Durand, who had died in August of that year. The *Prélude*, marked *Lent et triste* ("Slow and sad"), begins quietly. After building to an impassioned climax, the piano's cascading arpeggios settle down and give way to the Recitative (a style of "singing speech," borrowed from opera and sacred music), a dialogue between the viola and flute. The ensuing theme, intoned by the flute with a very spare accompaniment in the piano, demonstrates Durufié's absorption of plainchant style and serves as the basis for the Variations that conclude the work.

Miles Hoffman

Quartet in a minor for piano and strings (1876)

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Mahler composed and performed the piano quartet movement in a minor in 1876, when he was a teenager studying at the Vienna Conservatory. There is also a sketch of 24 bars of an additional scherzo movement, but Mahler never completed any movements other than the one on today's program. It appears that he sent this complete movement and the scherzo sketch to a publisher for consideration, but the project was not accepted.

Mahler's widow, Alma, discovered the quartet manuscript in the early 1960s and Peter Serkin and the Galimir Quartet performed its twentieth-century premier in January 1964. The quartet is also part of the soundtrack in Martin Scorsese's 2010 motion picture *Shutter Island*.

The quartet is elegantly constructed on the basis of just a few motifs with a strong forward movement until near the close. A brief cadenza in the first violin leads to a quiet ending that reiterates the second of the principal motifs in a more introspective way.

Thomas McKay

Variations on "Lá ci darem la mano" for flute, violin and piano (1795) Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

"Lá ci darem la mano" ("There we will give each other our hands") is a duet for the characters Don Giovanni (baritone) and Zerlina (soprano) from Act I of Mozart's 1787 opera *Don Giovanni*. Beethoven wrote this lovely set of variations in 1795, when he was 25 years old. (Many others

including Franz Danzi, Frédéric Chopin, Hector Berlioz, and Franz Liszt, also wrote variations on this theme.) At this time, Beethoven was studying Mozart's works, and many regarded him as a successor to Mozart. 1795 was also the year in which Beethoven first performed in Vienna, premiering one of his piano concerto's. Composed originally for two oboes and English horn, Beethoven's variations are here performed by a trio with flute, violin and viola. The essence of chamber music is here. These are pieces that could be enjoyed in a home, where listeners could appreciate each performer's contribution to the musical event.

Thomas McKay

Piano Quartet No. 1 in c minor, Op, 15 (1879)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Gabriel Fauré's Piano Quartet No. 1 in c minor. Op. 15 is the first of his two works for the combination of piano, violin, viola and cello. He began composition in 1876, completed the first version in 1879 and revised it, completely rewriting the finale in 1883.

In 1877, Fauré succeeded in becoming engaged to Marianne Viardot after several years of trying. Unfortunately for him, she broke off the engagement after a few months. He was working on the quartet at this time and many have linked the somber tone of the third movement adagio to his disappointment in love.

Much later in his life (1922), Fauré himself notes a very practical consideration in the genesis of the quartet. "The fact of the matter is that before 1870 I would not have dreamt of composing a sonata or a quartet. At that time, a young musician had no chance of getting such works performed. It was only after Saint-Saëns had founded the National Music Society in 1871, the chief function of which was to perform the works of young composers, that I set to work."

The work is generally conventional in its form, except that the lively *scherzo* precedes the slow movement and is in a duple meter rather than the usual triple meter of a *scherzo* movement.

Despite being predominantly in a minor key, the overall tone of the quartet is very positive, with a bright C Major finish to the finale. Adrian Corleone (*AllMusic*) describes the quartet as "the combination of a highly refined personal style with compelling high spirits," based in strong melodic material, sparkling dialogue in the parts and consistently adept writing for piano.

Thomas McKay

Thomas McKay's notes are provided courtesy of the Syracuse Friends of Chamber Music

Edited by Susanna Watling