

64th Concert Series 2017-2018



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

Edward Arron, cello
Jeewon Park, piano
Tessa Lark, violin

Saturday, April 14, 2018
Ossining High School, Ossining, New York



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We need additional helping hands to carry out our mission. Do consider joining the volunteers listed above. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can discuss several specific areas in which assistance is needed.

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Program

Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 (“Ghost”) Ludwig van Beethoven
Allegro vivace con brio (1770-1827)
Largo assai ed espressivo
Presto

Sonata for Violin and Cello Maurice Ravel
Allegro (1875-1937)
Très vif
Lent
Vif: avec entrain

Intermission

Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65 Antonín Dvořák
Allegro ma non troppo (1841-1904)
Allegretto grazioso
Poco adagio
Allegro con brio

Next Concert

Saturday, April 28, 2018, 8:00 pm at Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York

Brooklyn Rider

Program: Bach: Selections from Art of the Fugue; John Lurie: Bella by Barlight (1985);
Colin Jacobsen: BTT (2014); Caroline Shaw: Blueprint (2016); Beethoven: String Quartet
No. 1 in F minor, Opus 95.

Program notes

Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 (“Ghost”)

Ludwig van Beethoven

In Beethoven’s time the trio for piano, violin, and cello was a very popular medium, and it occupied an important place in his oeuvre. His Opus 1 included three trios that he played in 1793 for Joseph Haydn, who thought the third so advanced that he suggested that it be withheld from publication. However, that one was Beethoven’s favorite; he returned to it 24 years later, arranging it as a string quintet, published as Opus 104.

In his middle years, when he brought the forms he had inherited from Mozart and Haydn to their greatest fulfillment, Beethoven wrote three more trios, the two of Op. 70 and one as Op. 97. He completed Op. 70 in 1808, at the time of his composition of Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6. Because he occupied an apartment in her house at the time, he rewarded her hospitality by dedicating them to Countess Anna Maria Erdödy, who was related by marriage to Haydn’s patrons, the Esterházy. Opus 70, No. 1 is known as the Ghost Trio because of some imagined connection in Beethoven’s mind between the spectral music of its slow movement and the ghost scenes in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*.

During Beethoven’s time this trio was played as *hausmusik* (music played in salons of people’s homes) more frequently than in concert. The composer Louis Spohr, Beethoven’s contemporary, mentioned hearing the composer himself playing the trios of Op. 70 and wrote: “It was by no means an enjoyment, for in the first place the pianoforte was woefully out of tune, which however little troubled Beethoven, since he could hear nothing of it, and secondly, of the former so admired excellence of the virtuoso scarcely anything was left, in consequence of his total deafness.... I felt moved with the deepest sorrow at so hard a destiny. It is a sad misfortune for anyone to be deaf; how then should a musician endure it without despair? Beethoven’s almost continual melancholy was no longer a riddle to me.” Nevertheless, during this middle period Beethoven composed fast and furiously.

This trio is very dramatic, creating masterful effects. Throughout, the music uses deceptively simple materials, moving quickly from loud and violent to soft and lyrical. The outer movements are shorter and have a more direct style, giving the whole trio a kind of arched shape. The first movement, *Allegro vivace con brio*, begins with all three instruments playing in unison a rhythmic motif, violent and fiery, that blends into a more melodic motif first introduced by the cello. These two motifs, displaying Beethoven’s fondness for working with small motifs rather than with expansive themes, dominate the movement; it ends suddenly with a final repeat of the original motif.

The extraordinarily slow second movement, *Largo assai ed espressivo*, has the programmatic quality that gives this work its name. In Beethoven’s sketchbook, music for this movement appeared in the same location as an idea for the opera *Macbeth*, which he never completed; some commentators speculate that it reflects the ghostliness of the witches’ scene in that Shakespeare play. Other commentators, however, find a connection

with the terror of the ghosts that tormented the protagonist in *Hamlet*. Regardless of how the trio became associated with ghostliness, the music throughout shows that Beethoven was reaching toward Romanticism. This tension-filled, suspenseful movement includes serious, dark, mysterious rumblings and other dramatic and eerie effects; as in the first movement, it all grows out of a motif that Beethoven states at the very beginning.

The exciting finale, *Presto*, has a completely cheerful, bright aspect, composed in clearly-defined sonata form with several contrasting themes. Basil Smallman describes this movement as “an admirable compound of high spirits, wit, and occasional rustic good humor.”

Sonata for Violin and Cello

Maurice Ravel

In 1920, the French magazine *La Revue musicale* published a special musical supplement it called *Le Tombeau de Debussy* (“The Tomb of Debussy” or “Debussy’s Tombstone”) after the 17th and 18th century practice of using the word *tombeau* in the title of memorial compositions. Among the ten composers from whom pieces were commissioned for it were Bartók, Dukas, Ravel, and Stravinsky. Ravel’s contribution was a *Duo for Violin and Cello* that he used as the first movement of this sonata, which was completed and premiered in 1922.

The work, Ravel said, “marked a turning point in my career. Economy of means is here carried to extreme limits.” Debussy used a spare construction in his late writing, and Ravel used it as a model. In addition, Ravel’s interest in the new music then being written in central Europe meant that he also was influenced by Kodály’s *Duo for Violin and Cello* as well as strands of Hungarian themes. He also experimented with harmony; bitonality and some harmonies much like those in Schoenberg’s chamber music can be detected. However, all that withstanding, his **Sonata** essentially is a classical piece.

The first movement, *Allegro*, takes the shape of a well-balanced, sonata-form structure based on two clearly distinguished and defined subjects. The second movement, *Très vif*, is a scherzo, with brilliantly inventive writing for the two instruments. Next comes a three-part serene slow movement, *Lent*. The finale, *Vif, avec entrain* (“Lively, with dash”), is a Mozartean rondo in which the main theme alternates with three wide-ranging, sharply contrasting episodes.

Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65

Antonín Dvořák

Although Dvořák came from a humble, non-musical background (his father was a butcher and inn-keeper), that did not deter him from studying both violin and organ. At age sixteen, he left his native village to go to Prague to continue his musical education; by age twenty-two he had shifted to playing the viola and had joined the orchestra of the National Theater. By that point, he already was composing as well, primarily creating lengthy

works in classical forms; it was with his colleagues in the orchestra that he experimented at writing chamber music. Except among the local Prague community of musicians, he did not become well known for another decade.

However, in 1875, Brahms recognized his talent and gave Dvořák significant help that propelled him into his ultimately successful and great career. Brahms arranged for Dvořák to get a generous grant from the Austrian Minister of Culture that allowed him the freedom to concentrate on composition. From then on, chamber music pieces occupied an important position in Dvořák's work. Most were quartets and quintets, modeled after those of Beethoven and Schubert.

By the time of this **Piano Trio**, in 1883, Dvořák's fame was spreading throughout Europe. His mother's death in 1882 moved him to emotional depths that are reflected here for the first time in his music. This **Trio** also reveals how much he had learned from Brahms, who had taken such an interest in his artistic development; however, the Slavonic sadness of much of the work is entirely his own.

The first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, begins with a strong, questioning theme in octaves for the strings; other melodic ideas provide lyrical contrast. The ideas are developed with symphonic power of a kind not previously heard in Dvořák's work. Next, instead of a scherzo, comes a gentle Czech folk dance, *Allegretto grazioso*, in which the piano is given a prominent role. The slow movement, *Poco adagio*, one of the finest in all his works, is based on two themes, one sad, one consoling, with a contrasting section in martial rhythm. At the end, the coda anticipates the *Finale: Allegro con brio*, which is a dramatic movement in rondo form with a recurring main theme in the style of the Czech dance called the *furiant*.

— program notes © 2018 Susan Halpern



About the Artists

Cellist Edward Arron has garnered recognition worldwide for his elegant musicianship, impassioned performances, and creative programming. A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, he made his New York recital debut in 2000 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Since then he has appeared in recital, as a soloist with major orchestras, and as a chamber musician throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.

In 2013, Mr. Arron completed a ten-year residency as artistic director of the critically acclaimed *Metropolitan Museum Artists in Concert*. He then became artistic director, host, and resident performer of the *Musical Masterworks* concert series in Old Lyme, Connecticut, as well as the *Festival Series* in Beaufort, SC, and *Chamber Music On Main* at the Columbia Museum in Columbia, SC. He curates a series, “Edward Arron and Friends,” at Caramoor, and is co-director with his wife, pianist Jeewon Park, of the new *Performing Artists in Residence* series at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA. He is a graduate of Juilliard. In 2016 he joined the faculty of University of Massachusetts Amherst, after having been on the faculty of New York University from 2009 to 2016.

Korean-born **pianist Jeewon Park** is known for her dazzling technique and poetic lyricism. She has been heard in numerous live broadcasts on National Public Radio; many of her performances have been nationally broadcast throughout Korea on KBS television. She came to the U.S. in 2002 after having won all the major competitions in Korea. An avid chamber musician, she has performed at prominent festivals around the world, and has been featured in concerts with members of the Guaneri, Juilliard, Vermeer, Brentano, Tokyo, Fine Arts, and Miami Quartets. She is a graduate of Juilliard and Yale and holds the DMA degree from SUNY Stony Brook.

Kentucky-rooted **violinist Tessa Lark** is the recipient of a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant and winner of the 2012 Naumburg International Violin Competition. Since making her concerto debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at age sixteen, she has appeared with orchestras throughout the U.S. As a chamber musician she has toured with musicians from Ravinia’s Stearn Music Institute and this year will do two tours with Musicians from Marlboro. She joined Caramoor Virtuosi as a result of her participation in Caramoor’s Rising Stars program. Additionally, she performs and programs bluegrass and Appalachian music regularly, and also plays jazz violin. She is a graduate of the New England Conservatory, and completed her Artist Diploma at Juilliard.

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