The VMI Department of English
and
The Timmins-Gentry Music Society

present

The Kandinsky Trio

Elizabeth Bachelder, piano
Alan Weinstein, cello
Benedict Goodfriend, violin

Program

Trio in C Major, Hob. XV: 27 . . . . . Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
Allegro
Andante
Presto

Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 . . . . Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Allegro vivace e con brio
Largo assai ed espressivo
Presto

Intermission

Trio in G Minor, Op. 15 . . . . . Bedrich Smetana (1824–1884)
Moderato assai
Allegro, ma non agitato
Finale: Presto

Wednesday, September 12, 2007
Jackson Memorial Hall, VMI
7:30 p.m.

FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN, TRIO IN C MAJOR. Haydn's longevity allowed him a career that extended from the earliest formulative stages of the Classical period to more than halfway through Beethoven's ushering-in of the Romantic era. Although he is credited with being a major influence on the music of Mozart and Beethoven, his late works show signs of a backlash of influence by these "later" composers. Such is the case with the Trio in C Major written in 1797, when Beethoven was already 27 years old.

The opening *allegro* is a highly virtuosic movement marked by the sharp contrasts of mood characteristic of Beethoven. The following movement, an *andante* in the key of A Major, begins conservatively enough as a typical ornamented Haydn slow movement. By contrast, the middle section, in A Minor, is of a more tempestuous nature. The concluding *presto* is a devilish movement, full of the peasant humor that both Beethoven and Haydn were fond of evoking.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, TRIO IN D MAJOR, OP. 70, NO. 1 ("GHOST"). Beethoven composed the so-called "Ghost" Trio in the fall of 1808 while occupying rooms in the spacious Viennese apartment of the Hungarian noblewoman and amateur pianist, Countess Maria von Erdody. The overall structure of the work follows an arch shape. In keeping with the alternating moods of optimism and despair which characterize Beethoven's middle period, the outer movements are bright and direct, framing the centerpiece of the work: the foreboding *largo* that gives the Trio its subtitle.

The opening measures of the D Major Trio are a testimonial to the increased scope and range of the pianoforte of this period, and therefore contrast with the style of the Op. 1 trios, which were written for the lighter, smaller classical piano. The wider range of dynamics made possible by the larger instrument allows for very soft tonal shadings, a more expressive use of crescendo and diminuendo, and quasi-orchestral effects such as keyboard tremolos, high and low trills, and octave rolls.

The first movement is characterized by carefully controlled motivic development, unusual key choices, and contrapuntal writing that points ahead to the style of Beethoven's third period. The opening piano figure of the *largo* movement is associated with sketches for the witches'scene of an unwritten opera based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. This melancholy figure, together with certain coloristic effects in the piano part, serves to heighten the prevailing mood of suspense and mystery. The last movement provides a release from the tension created in the *largo*. Although in classical sonata form, it is scherzo-like in feeling, full of good-humor and lightness of spirit.

Intermission

BEDRICH SMETANA, TRIO IN G MINOR, OP. 15. The Czech composer Bedrich Smetana wrote his only piano trio in 1855, following the death of his oldest daughter. Although only four, his firstborn child, Bedricka, was extraordinarily gifted, and seemed destined to carry her father's musical talents to the next generation. Smetana wrote, "Nothing can replace Fritzi, the angel whom death has stolen from us." Throughout the trio, Smetana's

grief takes the form of rage rather than despair. Nostalgic themes and an occasional funeral march remind us of his sadness. Although in a minor key, the work contains many brighter episodes that are perhaps meant to suggest the composer's recollections of the happier times in his daughter's short life. Optimism prevails at the end, as the music moves from minor to major in a triumphant close.

Elizabeth Bachelder

The Kandinsky Trio

Now in its twentieth season, the Kandinsky Trio is celebrating one of the longest, most successful chamber music collaborations in the history of American music. It has given over a thousand concerts in more than 175 cities, including New York (Miller Theater and Merkin Hall), Washington (The Kennedy Center), Atlanta (Spivey Hall), Oklahoma City, Tampa (Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center), Portland, Charleston, San Francisco, Banff, Bratislava, Budapest, Vienna, and Zagreb. The Trio has also performed at the Interlochen Festival, the Concert Society of Maryland, the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville, Cincinnati's Aronoff Center, and the Center for the Arts at Penn State. Its recordings are aired regularly on Boston's WGBH, Chicago's WFMT, and the Maine, Georgia, Nevada, Wisconsin, and Minnesota Public Radio Networks. It has performed on the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, National Public Radio's *Performance Today*, and WNYC's *Around New York*. In 2002, the Trio was in residence at the European/American Master classes at the Hindemith Center in Blonay, Switzerland, and it continues its annual residencies at the Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach and at Roanoke College. The Trio's recording, *In Foreign Lands*, released by Brioso Records, was selected by the critics of both WNED (of Buffalo and Toronto) and London's *Music and Vision* as one of the best CDs of the year 2003.

The Kandinsky Trio is one of only six piano trios ever to win the prestigious Chamber Music America Residency Award. In addition, the ensemble has received awards from the Theodore Presser and Carpenter foundations to extend its artistry and visionary residency ideas to under-served communities.

The Trio regularly collaborates with such diverse artists as bassist James VanDemark, violinist/violist Ida Kavafian, cellist Steven Doane, soprano Dawn Upshaw, composer Gunther Schuller, storyteller Connie Regan-Blake, and jazz legend Larry Coryell. Their innovative projects have included Mike Reid's *Tales of Appalachia* for Trio and storyteller, commissioned for the Trio by nine presenting organizations and performed on over 100 concert series, and John D'earth's *Natural Bridge*, for Trio, jazz bass and guitar. Their newest project, with storyteller/whistler Andy Offutt Irwin, features unique arrangements of jazz standards and folk music.

Next concert:

The Audubon String Quartet

Jackson Memorial Hall

November 14, 2007

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