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

present

The Kandinsky Trio

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

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Program

Trio in E-flat Minor, Hob. XV: 31 . . . Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
Andante cantabile
Allegro

Circulo . . . . . Joaquín Turina (1882–1949)
Amanecer (Morning)
Mediodia (Noon)
Crepusculo (Evening)

Intermission

Trio in D minor, Op. 63 . . . . . **Robert Schumann (1810–1856)**
Mit Energie und Leidenschaft (With energy and passion)
Lebhaft, doch nicht zu Rasch (Lively but not too fast)
Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung (Slowly, with feeling)
Mit Feuer (Fiery)

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Jackson Memorial Hall,VMI
Wednesday, September 30, 2009
7:45 p.m.

Haydn, Trio in E-flat minor. One of Haydn's late piano trios, the E-flat minor consists of just two movements. (Most classical trios have three.) The first movement is a slow, deeply affecting set of rondo-variations, the third theme of which is, in Charles Rosen's words, "a long high soaring melody for the violin, one of Haydn's finest solos." The second movement, written a year before the first as a stand-alone piece, was originally titled "Jacob's Dream"—a humorous reference to the Bible story in which Jacob dreamed that he saw angels ascending and descending a ladder that reached from earth to heaven. In composing the rapid, high-lying scale passages that evoke this angelic activity, Haydn was poking fun at a German violinist with a propensity for playing very high notes in the vicinity of the bridge.

The classical piano trio usually has three movements. This one has only two. Originally, it had but one. While visiting London in 1794, Haydn composed the second movement (in E flat) as a stand-alone work. According to an early biographer, he wrote it for an amateur violinist who liked to play in the higher register of his instrument. Perhaps to challenge (or trip up?) the wannabe virtuoso he wrote the rapidly rising and falling scale passages that provide the movement's most arresting effects. In titling the piece "Jacob's Dream" he evidently meant to suggest that these [passages] represented the angels that Jacob dreamed he saw ascending and descending a ladder connecting heaven and earth.When, in 1795, he composed the E flat minor Andante, now the first movement of the trio, he erased the title.

Rosen calls the first movement "a deeply expressive slow rondo-variation-set." It has three main themes, the second and third of which turn the opening melody on its head.

2nd movement: H's trios have been denigrated because of the imbalance of strings and keyboard parts [the dominance of the piano]. [Or have been called piano sonatas with string accompaniment. Often the piano does dominate, but in this movement the strings achieve parity with the piano Rosen's: separate fragments.

Turina, Circulo. Born in Seville, Spain, Joaquin Turina studied composition with Vincent d'Indy in Paris in the early 1900s. He associated with Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy, the latter of whom encouraged him to return to Spain and draw inspiration from his native folk music. The structure of *Circulo* ("Cycle"), composed in 1936, is an arch form in which elements of impressionism and late Romanticism are skillfully combined with Spanish color. The headings of its three movements—"Morning," "Noon" and "Twilight"—make clear the meaning of the title.

Intermission

Schumann, Trio in D minor, Op. 63. Schumann once observed that Felix Mendelssohn's great D minor trio, written in 1839, was "the master trio of the present era," so it is no coincidence that he chose D minor as the key of the first of his three piano trios. Written in 1847, nearly a decade after his great outpouring of piano solo music and about five years after his composition of the masterly piano quartet and piano quintet, it is a fully mature work. The first movement contains many examples of Schumann's rhythmic flexibility—sudden changes of accent, obscuring of basic bar-rhythms, etc.—and generally contrapuntal texture: throughout the exposition, fragments of the violin theme are repeatedly echoed by the cello. In the development section, however, counterpoint gives way to the bold statement of a new, rather strange melodic idea the strangeness of which is enhanced by the scoring, which requires that the pianist play very softly in the upper treble range while the violinist and cellist play *am Steg* (on the bridge). This mysterious theme recurs at the end of the movement.

The Scherzo is full of rhythmic vitality. Its trio—the middle section of its three-part structure—is, by contrast, smooth and flowing. The remarkable slow movement, the most romantic in feeling of all the movements, is somber and deeply moving. Here the strings play a far more independent role than in the faster movements. As in Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio, this slow movement is third in the sequence of movements and contains a brief transition that leads directly into the Finale—a vigorous, multi-sectioned rondo with a lengthy coda that accelerates to a brilliant conclusion.

Elizabeth Bachelder

The Kandinsky Trio

Now in its twenty-second 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 in the United States and Europe, including New York, Washington, Atlanta, San Francisco, 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 Pennsylvania State. Its recordings have aired regularly on Boston's WGBH, Chicago's WFMT, and the Maine, Georgia, Nevada and Minnesota NPR outlets. It has also performed on the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, National Public Radio's "Performance Today," and WYNC's "Around New York." In 2002, the Trio participated in the European/American Master Classes at the Hindemith Center in Blonay, Switzerland, and it continues its annual residences at the Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach and at Roanoke College. The Trio's recording *In Foreign Lands*, distributed 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 2003.

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

The Trio has collaborated with such diverse artists as bassist James VanDemark, violist/violinist Ida Kafavian, cellist Stephen Doane, soporano 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 piano 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 piano trio, jazz bass and guitar.

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Next concert:

The Baltimore Consort
Gillis Theater, Marshall Leadership Center
Wednesday, October 28, at 7:45

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