Summit Piano Trio

Helen Kim, violin
Charae Krueger, cello
Robert Henry, piano

Monday, April 14, 2014
8:00 p.m.
Audrey B. and Jack E. Morgan, Sr. Concert Hall
Dr. Bobbie Bailey & Family Performance Center
One Hundred Third Concert of the 2013-14 Concert Season
Program

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1822-1897)
Trio in C minor, opus 101

Allegro energico
Presto non assai
Andante grazioso
Allegro molto

Intermission

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)
Trio No. 1 in B-flat Major, D. 898

Allegro moderato
Andante
Scherzo
Rondo
Program Notes

Trio No. 3 in C minor, opus 101 (1887)
JOHANNES BRAHMS

Brahms wrote this trio - his last for violin, cello, and piano - during the summer of 1886, which he spent at Hofstetten on Lake Thun in Switzerland. From the windows of his room, Brahms could look out over the lake to the immense glaciers of the Bernese Oberland, and some have felt that the elemental power of that craggy vista made itself felt in the music Brahms composed there. Certainly the piano Trio in C Minor communicates tension from its opening instant. A description of an early performance of this trio, with Brahms at the piano, suggests the composer’s own intensity in this music: “A simple room, a small upright pianino, the three giants, and Clara Schumann turning over the leaves . . . I can see (Brahms) now looking eagerly with those penetrating, clear, grey-blue eyes, at Joachim and Hausmann for the start, then lifting both of his energetic little arms high up and descending ‘plump’ on that first C minor chord . . . as much as to say: ‘I mean THAT.’” For all its power, though, the Trio in C minor is probably Brahms’ most concise work: despite being in four movements, it is almost the shortest of his twenty-four pieces of chamber music.

The opening of the Allegro energico explodes off the page, driving forward on the triplet rhythm that will energize much of the movement. A warmer second subject, marked cantando and scored for the strings in octaves, brings some relief, but this movement remains taut throughout: Brahms omits the exposition repeat and keeps both development and recapitulation quite short. The opening theme returns only in the closing moments and drives the movement to an unrelenting close.

The Presto non assai, also in C minor, is more restrained. Brahms mutes the strings and marks the beginning semplice (“simple”); the music skims along fluidly in the piano, with the strings following and echoing. The middle section, with arpeggiated pizzicato chords riding above the staccato piano, is particularly effective.

Much has been made of the rhythmic complexity of the Andante grazioso. Brahms originally thought the movement should be set in the unusual meter 7/4 but later changed this to one measure of 3/4 followed by two measures of 2/4; the middle section, marked quasi animato, continues the rhythmic complexities, switching between 9/8 and 6/8. Brahms alternates sonorities throughout this movement, the melodic line flowing back and forth between the piano and the combined strings.

The Allegro molto finale returns to the mood and the C-minor tonality of the first movement. There is nothing of the cheerful rondo-finale here (the movement is in modified sonata form): the flickering half-lights of the subdued opening quickly give way to the same craggy outbursts that marked the opening movement, and only in its final moments does Brahms relent and let the music break free to end in the tonic major. Rarely has C major sounded so fierce.
Benjamin Britten called the last year and a half of Schubert’s life - during which he wrote *Winterreise*, the *C Major Symphony*, the last three piano sonatas, the *C Major String Quintet*, his last two songs, and a dozen other glorious pieces - arguably “the richest and most productive eighteen months in our music history.” Yet as hard as it is to imagine today, Schubert had great difficulty getting his music played and published in his lifetime. Just as hard to imagine is that he wrote some of his sunniest works while suffering from a debilitating and ultimately fatal illness. Among those works was the *B-flat Major Piano Trio*, the first of the two great piano trios written in the last year of his life. It is one of his most radiant compositions, overflowing with the rich harmonies and ingratiating melodies that make Schubert’s work instantly recognizable. Schumann later said of it, “One glance at Schubert’s Trio and all the troubles of our human existence disappear, and all the world is fresh and bright again.” Yet it wasn’t published until eight years after Schubert’s death, and during his lifetime it was performed only once, privately, at the apartment of a friend who was celebrating his recent engagement. Today it is one of his best-loved works.

The first movement, Allegro moderato, opens warmly and convivially, with an airy first theme introduced by the strings playing in unison. After the piano joins in, this first theme is expanded before the cello introduces an expansive second theme. A typically leisurely development section ends with a striking example of Schubert’s adventurous harmonies: In a surprising modulation, he begins the apparent recapitulation with the violin playing not in the expected key of B-flat major, but in the unexpected key of G-flat major. Eventually the music winds its way back to a real recapitulation in the opening key. Schubert’s melodies don’t get any more beguiling than the one with which the cello begins the Andante second movement. The violin and the cello trade this melody back and forth before the piano introduces a second theme at the start of a more agitated middle section, after which the three instruments recapture the enchantment of the opening with restatements of the first melody. Like the second movement, the playful, contrapuntal third is vintage Schubert, a witty Scherzo built on two of Vienna’s most popular dances, the ländler and the waltz. Schubert called the Finale a rondo, but it doesn’t follow strict rondo form. Instead of repeating the opening theme between contrasting episodes, it is “put through a variety of hoops,” as Schubert biographer Brian Newbould puts it - including a wonderful moment when Schubert shifts from 2/4 time to a three-beat bar, a shift that reappears in the exuberant coda.

Alfred Einstein pointed out that the opening theme of the Finale recalls an earlier Schubert song, “Skolie,” which includes the verse, “Let us, in the bright May morning, take delight in the brief life of the flower, before its fragrance disappears.” It’s a fitting sentiment for this joyful trio.
Helen Kim joined the music faculty in 2006 at Kennesaw State University with a stellar performance background. She made her orchestral debut with the Calgary Philharmonic at the age of six, and has gone on to become a respected and sought-after artist. She has appeared as a soloist with the Boston Pops at Boston's Symphony Hall, as well as with the Milwaukee and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras.

Ms. Kim earned her Master's Degree from the Juilliard School, where her teachers included Cho-Liang Lin and Dorothy DeLay. She is the recipient of more than one hundred national and international awards. In 1992, she won the prestigious Artists International Competition in New York and, as a result, gave debut recitals at Carnegie Weill Hall and the Aspen Summer Music Festival.

A native of Canada, Ms. Kim has been engaged by many of Canada's leading orchestras, including the National Arts Center Orchestra, Montreal Metropolitan Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, McGill Chamber Orchestra, and the Windsor, Regina, Victoria and Prince George Symphonies. She has also appeared with the Cobb, Georgia Symphony Orchestra, DeKalb, New Orleans, Aspen and Banff Festival Orchestras, and with orchestras in the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland.

Ms. Kim has toured extensively throughout Canada and the United States, including performances at Alice Tully Hall and the Sante Fe and La Jolla International Music Festivals, where she performed with Cho-Liang Lin, Gary Hoffman, Andre Previn, and the Orion String Quartet. She performed Bach’s Double Violin Concerto with Hilary Hahn at the 2002 Amelia Island Chamber music festival.

Ms. Kim has been profiled on national and international television and has appeared on CBC, PBS and CBS networks. Her performances have been aired on NPR and CBC radio networks. Ms. Kim served as assistant and associate concertmaster for the Atlanta Symphony for three seasons. She is currently the assistant concertmaster of the Atlanta Opera Orchestra. Ms. Kim performs with local new music ensembles, Bent Frequency, Sonic Generator, Thamyris, and recently joined the Atlanta Chamber Players.

Charae Krueger is Principal Cellist for the Atlanta Opera Orchestra and the Atlanta Ballet Orchestra. She is the Cello Artist-In-Residence and professor at Kennesaw State University and performs with the KSU Faculty Trio. Ms. Krueger enjoys chamber music and solo recital work and plays frequently throughout the Atlanta area. Recent concerts include performances with Cleveland Orchestra Concertmaster William Preucil at Highland-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival and Wofford College, performances at the Emory Chamber Music Society of Atlanta, appearances at Fringe concert series, soloist in the Beethoven Triple Concerto with DeKalb Symphony and Atlanta Community Orchestra, the Elgar Concerto with KSU Orchestra and the Beethoven cycle of Cello Sonatas with pianist Robert.
Henry. Ms. Krueger also plays frequently with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. She enjoys recording studio work and has recently played on albums of Bruce Springsteen, Faith Hill and Natalie Cole.

Ms. Krueger received her early cello training in Canada with Cameron Lowe at the Regina Conservatory of Music. She went on to study at Brandon University and received her Bachelor of Music Performance degree from New England Conservatory in Boston. She also holds an Artist Diploma from the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA.

Artist-in-Residence in Piano

Robert Henry, hailed as a “consummate artist - brilliant, formidable, effortless, and the epitome of control and poise,” is an internationally distinguished pianist, winning universal acclaim as orchestral soloist, recitalist, accompanist, and chamber musician.

Career highlights include 2002 solo debut recitals at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, with critics praising his “flawless technique, smooth and limpid phrasing, exciting programming.” He has presented concert tours of the United States, England, Nova Scotia, and Italy. A renowned collaborator and chamber musician, he has appeared with such notable conductors as Robert Spano, Donald Runnicles, and Stefan Sanderling. He has presented recitals with the Pacifica Quartet, cellist Shauna Rolston, soprano Mary Ann Hart, and tenor Sergio Blasquez. In response to Hurricane Katrina, he coordinated and performed in the 2006 “Pianists for New Orleans” tour of the United States, raising over $100,000.

He has presented concert tours in the U.S., England, Nova Scotia, Russia, and Italy. He’s currently preparing a tour to China. In 2011, Dr. Henry presented his London debut in prestigious Wigmore Hall, playing Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier, and critics applauded his “gorgeous tone, and his immense control of voicing, texture, and dynamics.” He is regularly heard on NPR’s Atlanta Music Scene and Performance Today.

Dr. Henry has enjoyed phenomenal success competitively, ultimately winning the Gold Medal in four International Piano Competitions. On three occasions, juries have spontaneously created special prizes to honor his performances, including Best Performance of a 20th-Century Work and Best Performance of a Commissioned Work.

In 2010, Dr. Henry released his debut CD, Twelve Nocturnes and a Waltz. The recording is a collection of some of the world’s best-loved melodies, including the world premiere recording of Alexei Stanchinsky’s forgotten Nocturne from 1907. Dr. Henry was also winner of two 2010 Telly Awards for the documentary about his recording experience. His own transcription of Chet Atkins’ Waltz for the Lonely was recently published. Future projects include a 2013 solo recording of Brahms, Schubert, Liszt, a 2014 recording of Beethoven’s Complete Works for Cello and Piano with cellist Charae Krueger, a 2014 debut in China, and a recording of Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I.
In recent news, Dr. Henry has just released the world premiere recording of Brahms’ recently discovered “Albumblatt,” available now on iTunes as a single. This track will also be included in the album, “As the Songbird Sings: Music of Schubert and Brahms,” to be released summer, 2013.

Dr. Henry earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Maryland, with additional studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Glinka Conservatory in St. Petersburg, Russia. He has studied closely with pianists Larissa Dedova, Sergei Dzeyanovsky, Anne Koscielny, David Watkins, Sergei Babayan, and André Watts. As an educator and pedagogue, Dr. Henry presents lectures, masterclasses, residencies, youth concerts, and has been featured in American Music Teacher, Gramophone, and Clavier. He has served as clinician and juror for state, regional, and national MTNA conventions and competitions. Currently, he is Artist-in-Residence at Kennesaw State University, Director of Music at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Assistant Director of the Atlanta Boy Choir, a member of the Summit Piano Trio, and Artistic Director of the “Great Performances Concert Series” in Highlands, NC. He maintains his web-presence at www.roberthenry.org.
Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events will take place at 8:00 pm in Morgan Concert Hall.

Tuesday, April 15
Jazz Guitar Ensemble & Jazz Combos

Wednesday, April 16
Classical Guitar Ensemble

Thursday, April 17
Philharmonic and Concert Band

Monday, April 21
Symphony Orchestra

Tuesday, April 22
Jazz Ensembles

Wednesday, April 23
Wind Ensemble

Thursday, April 24
Choral Ensembles

Monday, April 28
Percussion Ensemble

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