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CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY *of* UTICA

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ELIZABETH LEMIEUX and MARIETTA VON BERNUTH

presents

Neave Trio

ANNA WILLIAMS, VIOLIN • MIKHAIL VESELOV, CELLO • ERI NAKAMURA, PIANO

Sunday, 21 November 2021 • 2:30 PM

Sinnott Family Bank of Utica Auditorium • Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute
Utica, New York

PROGRAM

Piano Trio No. 1 in E-flat Major, Opus 33 (1844)..... Louise Farrenc (1804-1875)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio Sostenuto
- III. Menuetto: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Vivace

Piano Trio in A Minor, Opus 150 (1938)..... Amy Beach (1867-1944)

- I. Allegro
- II. Lento espressivo
- III. Allegro con brio

INTERMISSION

Piano Trio No. 1 Opus 11 (1881)..... Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto Leggiero
- IV. Allegro Molto Agitato

Piano Trio (2003)..... Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

- I. Pale Yellow
- II. Fiery Red

This concert is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and by the generous contributions of the donors listed in this program.



NEAVE TRIO

Since forming in 2010, Neave Trio – violinist Anna Williams, cellist Mikhail Veselov, and pianist Eri Nakamura – has earned enormous praise for its engaging, cutting-edge performances. *WQXR* explains, “‘Neave’ is actually a Gaelic name meaning ‘bright’ and ‘radiant’, both of which certainly apply to this trio’s music making.” *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* reports, “it is inconceivable that they will not soon be among the busiest chamber ensembles going,” and “their unanimity, communication, variety of touch, and expressive sensibility rate first tier.”

Neave has performed at many esteemed concert series and at festivals worldwide, including Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival, Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, Smithsonian American Art Museum, 92nd Street Y, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Chamber Music Series (United Kingdom), and the Samoylov and Rimsky Korsakow Museums’ Chamber Music Series in St. Petersburg (Russia). The Trio has held residency positions at Brown University, University of Virginia, San Diego State University as the first ever Fisch/Axelrod Trio-in-Residence, and the Banff Centre (Canada), among many other institutions. Neave Trio was also in residence at the MIT School of Architecture and Design in collaboration with dancer/choreographer Richard Colton. In the fall of 2017, the Trio joined the faculty of the Longy School of Music of Bard College as Alumni Artists, Faculty Ensemble-in-Residence.

Neave Trio strives to champion new works by living composers and reach wider audiences through innovative concert presentations, regularly collaborating with artists of all mediums. These collaborations include *D-Cell: an Exhibition & Durational Performance*, conceived and directed by multi-disciplinary visual artist David Michalek; performances with the Blythe Barton Dance Company; with dance collective BodySonnet and projection designer Ryan Brady; in the interactive concert series “STEIN2.0” with composer Amanuel Zarzowski; in *Klee Musings* by acclaimed American composer Augusta Read Thomas, premiered by Neave; in the premiere of Eric Nathan’s *Missing Words V*, sponsored by Coretet; in Leah Read’s *Cloud Burst* for piano trio and electronics; in Dale Trumbore’s *Another Chance*; and in a music video by filmmaker Amanda Alvarez Díaz of Astor Piazzolla’s “Otoño Porteño.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, the Neave Trio continued to find meaningful ways to perform safely. The Trio has performed virtual concerts for The Violin Channel’s “Living Room Live” series, the “Notes of Hope: Music for the Frontline” series, and for Longy School of Music of Bard College’s Virtual Benefit. Other recent and upcoming livestream concerts include performances presented by the Asheville Chamber Music Series and the Auditorium Chamber Music Series at the University of Idaho. Recent outdoor, socially distanced concerts include performances at PS21 in Chatham, NY; the Walnut Hill School’s “Summer of Art, Six Feet Apart” festival; and the Newport Music Festival.

For more information, visit www.neavetrio.com.

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Trio No. 1 in E-flat Major, Opus 33 (1844)..... Louise Farrenc (1804-1875)

Louise Farrenc was from the Dumont family of artists, her father Jacques–Edmé and brother August were third and fourth-generation sculptors in a dynasty that often enjoyed royal patronage. By age fifteen Louise was already an accomplished pianist and promising composer, at seventeen she married Aristide Farrenc, a flutist, bibliophile and publisher. After some years of touring together he began to publish his own and her compositions, and she resumed studies with Anton Reicha of the Paris conservatory. *Editions Farrenc* became quite an important firm for about forty years, publishing works of Beethoven, Hummel, and others. Their most ambitious undertaking was a massive twenty-three volume compendium of three centuries of keyboard music. Aristide lived to see the completion of the first eight volumes; Louise completed the rest alone. From her position as piano professor at the Paris conservatory she became a proponent of early music performance practice, holding “historical” concerts featuring herself and her many students.

Farrenc’s chamber works are considered her best compositions—she was twice awarded the Chartier Prize by The Institute de France for them. The nonet for winds and strings was a great success in part because Josef Joachim (of Brahms concerto fame) was the violinist for the premier. She often performed the piano part in her two piano quintets and two piano trios. Other works include a sextet for piano and winds, two violin sonatas, one cello sonata and two other trios. According to Bea Friedland in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, Farrenc’s chamber music is “...uniformly fine in craftsmanship and exceedingly tasteful and attractive...” The Piano Trio No. 1 shows these qualities well: it has great formal and expressive balance and proportion, and would make an excellent model for any four movement sonata-allegro of the transitional period between the Classical and Romantic eras.

Piano Trio in A Minor, Opus 150 (1938).....Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Amy Beach was a gifted child who could play four-part hymns by ear, improvise counter melodies, compose mentally, and do other prodigious things well before she had had her first formal piano lessons from her mother at age six. Although it was recommended to her parents to enroll her in a conservatory, they declined this in favor of private instruction from pianists they hired. She also studied harmony and counterpoint in this way, but only to a limited extent; her studies in composition were extensive but largely self-directed. She played many recitals in her childhood and teenage years, one of which was reviewed in the *Folio* magazine and led to offers of tours from managers, which her parents also declined, much to her later gratitude. She married a prominent surgeon twenty-four years her senior when she was eighteen. Perhaps because he saw it as her truest strength, or for other reasons, he made it a condition of their marriage that she

concentrate on composition, not give piano lessons, and perform only two recitals per season donating the proceeds to charity. In any case, her composing produced many firsts. The premier of her Mass in E-flat by the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston in 1892 was the first time that organization had ever played a work by a woman composer. Similarly, it was a first for the New York Philharmonic Society when, in the same year, they presented her concert aria *Eilende Wolken*. Her Gaelic Symphony (1896) was the first symphony by an American woman.

Beach composed the piano trio while in residence at the MacDowell Colony in 1938. The trio is formally unusual in having only three real movements, yet the Lento has a brief “movement within a movement”, a folk piece toward the end, a bit of which recurs at the conclusion. What Judith Tick says in the New Grove Dictionary about Beach’s instrumental music applies: “Her style is elaborate and inventive rather than concise, relying on a natural gift for melody ... contain(ing) many themes, broad developments and complex harmonies. Frequent modulations, half-diminished chords, pedal points and the use of folk tunes are typical traits”.

Piano Trio No. 1 Opus 11 (1881)..... Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944)

When Cécile Chaminade gave her first American performance as the soloist in her Opus 40 *Concertpiece* with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1908, her fame had very much preceded her. She had already toured for a long time in Europe and surrounding countries, receiving many decorations from heads of state and monarchs. She was the first woman composer to be awarded the French Legion of Honor. Many of her songs and piano pieces were very popular and sold millions of copies in sheet music. In America there were Chaminade Clubs devoted to her music, just as there were Pleyel Societies and Mendelssohn Clubs. Her tour in America included a concert in Carnegie Hall that garnered its highest gross receipts up to that time. While Chaminade recorded only seven of her pieces in 1901 in London for the Gramophone and Typewriter Company, she made many piano rolls before and after WWI. Chaminade’s playing was characterized by great fluency; it is said that Franz Liszt compared her technique to that of Chopin.

The Piano Trio Opus 11 was probably composed just after or near the end of her violin, piano and composition studies with various faculty of the Paris Conservatory. Her affluent father only allowed private study; as a consequence, she lacked any degree. For some years she was able to compose without financial concern, but when her father lost his fortune and died, she—of necessity and deliberately—turned more and more to salon music as a means of income. Some critics, apparently in ignorance of her entire opus, were dismissive of her works as being clever and charming, but trivial, mere “drawing room” music. Regardless of the merits or otherwise of the salon music genre, it is hard to hear this first trio as insubstantial. It is a solid example of French Romanticism.

Piano Trio (2003)..... Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

A prolific, versatile and original composer, Jennifer Higdon grew up in an artistic environment but had very little musical instruction or exposure to classical music in the broader sense. She was an avid listener to many popular musicians and styles. She taught herself to play the flute and read notes from a band manual, and played flute and percussion instruments in school concert bands. As she became more familiar with classical music, she was ever more drawn to it because of its depth. When she first entered Bowling Green State University as a flute major she found herself far behind her classmates in many respects. With great perseverance she went on to earn a diploma from the Curtis Institute, and then studied with George Crumb at Penn State. She was a professor of composition at the Curtis Institute from 1994 to 2021. She has been composer-in-residence with several orchestras, has received a Pulitzer prize and three Grammy awards, numerous other awards and commissions, and is perhaps the most performed living American composer. Higdon was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 2019.

The Piano Trio is actually half of a set of four pieces, the other two being *Wondrous White* and *Brilliant Blue*, known together as *Colors Through*. The composer has stated that performers may mix and match these as they wish. *Pale Yellow* is wonderfully melodic throughout, unfolding in an organic way from quiet free-floating lyricism to exalted exuberance and back again. The harmony is coloristic and arises from a confluence of melody rather than any traditional chord progression. The string writing is especially effective. *Fiery Red* is by contrast a propulsive rhythmic piece of sometimes Bartokian ferocity, with raging scalar patterns and swirling ostinatos. The flames die down at times to smoldering embers and flying sparks, only to erupt again.

Notes by Raymond Zoekler
Information from the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, Wikipedia, YouTube, www.jenniferhigdon.com.



CMSU'S NEXT CONCERT—

American String Quartet

Sunday • 9 January 2022 • 2:30 PM
Sinnott Family Bank of Utica Auditorium • Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute

Haydn: Quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5
Barber: Adagio
George Walker: Lament
Brahms: Quartet in A Minor, Op. 51, No. 2.

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