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SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2019 ■ 4:00 P.M.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL

NEW WORLD, OLD WORLD

SPONSORED IN MEMORY OF **NANCY SULLIVAN**,
BY HER FRIEND NANCY POTTER

HOLLAND Third Quartet

VIOLINS: NOAH GELLER, STEPHEN KIM

VIOLA: BURCHARD TANG

CELLO: SARAH ROMMEL

PERCUSSION: ARX DUO, GARRETT ARNEY AND MARI YOSHINAGA

BRAHMS Violin Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 108

Allegro

Adagio

Un poco presto e con sentimento

Presto agitato

VIOLIN: STEPHEN KIM

PIANO: NATALIE ZHU

INTERMISSION

FOOTE Piano Quartet in C Major, Op. 23

Allegro

Scherzo

Adagio, ma con moto

Allegro non troppo

VIOLIN: NOAH GELLER

VIOLA: BURCHARD TANG

CELLO: SARAH ROMMEL

PIANO: REIKO UCHIDA

Third Quartet

World Premiere of a Kingston Chamber Music Festival Commission

JONATHAN HOLLAND (B. 1974)

Third Quartet was written for the members of Arx Duo and features their distinctive percussion duo with string quartet. The idea was not to create a work that highlighted the duo using the quartet as accompaniment, or vice versa, but rather a work that integrates the two ensembles. This challenge was unique, in that I envision the string quartet — with its homogenous make-up — not as an ensemble made up of four individual parts, but rather a single, collaborative entity with many intricate parts. In contrast, the percussion family of instruments is so broad that there is no core instrumentation from which to start conceptualizing — anything that makes a sound when it's struck, strummed, plucked, dropped, blown, or shaken can be considered part of the percussion regiment. This work is about the hybrid ensemble that is created by thinking of the combination of instruments as a single ensemble, expanding the concept of the quartet to something more than just four strings, just as the word orchestra can mean a range of possible instrumental combinations as well. — *Jonathan Holland*

Violin Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 108

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Brahms' third and final sonata was composed at the same time as his second, though interrupted by completion of the double concerto. The inspiring setting was Lake Thun (Thunersee) in Switzerland, a favorite, peaceful environment in which he enjoyed composing. The two sonatas are a study in contrasts: the second is more lyrical, while the third, completed in 1888 after a two-year gestation, has a symphonic scope of four movements full of passionate and dramatic passages.

The first movement's violin melody appears over a throbbing piano accompaniment, followed by the piano's lusty outburst and a second theme which brings things down to a more graceful finale. Following this powerful opening, the adagio is highly emotional, almost an outpouring of painful memories, with its melody repeated twice and virtuoso fiddling in between. The scherzo is a typically energetic romp, described insightfully by Clara Schumann as "a beautiful girl frolicking with her lover — then suddenly in the middle of it all, a flash of deep passion, only to make way for sweet dalliance once more." The finale combines the scherzo's momentum with the forceful contrasts and exuberance of the opening movement, an example of Brahms' gift of rich, thick scoring and development through melodic variation.

This sonata is dedicated to the famed pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow, who dubbed Brahms "the third B" alongside Bach and Beethoven. The combination of tenderness, explosive interludes, and sheer craft of this late work proves that accolade to be highly deserved.

Piano Quartet in C Major, Op. 23

ARTHUR FOOTE (1853–1937)

Foote's music had the disadvantage of being written by an American, during a period when classical works were thought to emanate only from Europe. He was the first major American composer to be trained entirely in the United States, a Harvard graduate, an organist for 32 years in a Boston Unitarian church, and the founder of the American Guild of Organists. Amusingly to us at a century's distance, he also was a member of the Society in

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Dedham for Apprehending Horse Thieves. He was one of the so-called “Boston Six” — which also numbered George Whitfield Chadwick, Amy Beach, Edward MacDowell, John Knowles Paine, and Horatio Parker. Though he had been a student of Paine at Harvard, he leaned toward the current German school of Mendelssohn and Schumann, looking forward to the upcoming legacies of Brahms and Wagner, especially after spending the summer, at age 23, at Wagner’s Bayreuth Festival in Germany.

Foote was not prolific, writing four orchestral works, three large choral works, and many songs, but he is most remembered for his three string quartets, piano quintet and, especially, the piano quartet. All four movements are relatively swift, with a declamatory statement opening the first one. Soon we hear the initial example of Foote’s long, soaring lines with the piano leading the way into a rambunctious climax. The second movement begins with a keyboard announcement, echoed by the viola, followed by a plaintive, yearning section by the strings, and a huge build-up suddenly transitioning into a graceful conversation among all members. Once again, in the third movement, the piano leads the way, almost like a solo performance, until the strings announce their presence with rhythmic bounce and jubilation. From here on, forward motion propels the ensemble into what sounds like a succession of codas.

The finale goes through many moods: it begins with a powerful urgency, settles down with a tender violin solo, then alternates between powerful short statements, brief string utterances, and rampaging flurries of unified runs. The constant unpredictability of this last movement provides an excitement that has stirred audiences for the last 140 years.

Notes by Tom Di Nardo