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UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

THE HARTT SCHOOL

Dale A. Merrill, Dean
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presents

Light and Matter

Works by Haydn, Saariaho, and Brahms



Lions Gate Trio

Katie Lansdale, violin
Darrett Adkins, cello
Florence Millet, piano

Program

Piano Trio No. 40 in F# Minor, Hob. XV:26 (1795)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Finale (Tempo di minuetto)

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Light and Matter (2014)

Kaija Saariaho
(1952-2023)

intermission

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 (1854, rev. 1890)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Scherzo (Allegro molto)
- III. Adagio
- IV. Finale (Allegro)

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Upcoming Hartt School Performances

Senior Dance Performance

Wednesday, March 12 – Friday, March 14 | 7:30 p.m.
Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation Theater
Handel Performing Arts Center

Hartt Choirs Spring Concert

Thursday, March 13 | 7:30 p.m.
Millard Auditorium

Graduate Percussion Group

Saturday, March 29 | 7:30 p.m.
Millard Auditorium

Peter and the Starcatcher

Thursday, April 3 – Saturday, April 5 | 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 6 | 3:00 p.m.
Handel Performing Arts Center
Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation Theater

Hartt Orchestra

Friday, April 4 | 7:30 p.m.
Millard Auditorium

Hartt Wind Ensemble and Symphony Band

Saturday, April 5 | 7:30 p.m.
Millard Auditorium

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The first section seems to come out of pure darkness. Shadows hint at inner turmoil as the darkest tessituras of the piano and cello begin the work. The entrance of the violin widens the sound and draws our attention upward. In its attempts to draw the listener out of the darkness, the music becomes paper-thin – threatening to vanish completely. Here it is not tonality that is the main communicator, but rather the texture, the type, and the impression of the sounds made. The second section highlights the interplay between suspension and thematic material that fragments and weaves itself between the three voices. Here the textures and interplay between instruments may remind one of the work of Olivier Messiaen. In this section, subtle hints are made at chordal structures, but only as much as necessary to bring the listener to the third section. Here, cut from the same cloth as the first and second sections, the sounds, voices, and activity that made the first and second sections independent are all calmed, simplified, and eventually, fade away completely.

- Jacob Clark

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 by Johannes Brahms

The mighty Piano Trio in B Major is a testament to Brahms' continuous pursuit of perfection. At twenty-one, he had already been publicly lauded by Robert Schumann and certainly felt the pressure to meet and exceed the high expectations of his contemporaries. Consequently, Brahms was careful and intentional with his publications, but in intense bouts of self-criticism, he was known to destroy less favored pieces; sadly, many compositions, including early chamber works, were lost in this fashion. In November 1854, he gingerly published his first chamber work, the Trio in B Major, and it was first performed in Danzig, Prussia on October 13, 1855. Its American premiere was at Dodsworth Hall in New York City on November 27, 1855, performed by an all-star roster: Theodore Thomas (violinist and eventual conductor of the Chicago Symphony), Carl Bergman (cellist, associate conductor of the New York Philharmonic), and William Mason (pianist and son of American composer Lowell Mason).

Thirty-five years later, Brahms' publisher, Simrock, offered him an opportunity to edit and revise his early works. "I didn't provide it [the trio] with a new wig, just combed and arranged its hair a little," he joked to Clara Schumann, and although he did not alter certain details, like the lush opening melody, by the time of republication, he'd significantly shortened the Trio and heavily revised three of the four movements. The revisions were so significant that close friend Clara Schumann recommended that it be published under another Opus entirely; Brahms ultimately decided against this, perhaps hoping for his revised work to overshadow the initial version. The revised editions were performed publicly many times and tweaked to his eventual satisfaction, with the new edition being premiered in Budapest on January 10, 1890, and was published – under the same opus—in February 1891. This version proved to be one of Brahms' last pieces, as he retired shortly after. The Brahms B Major Trio has proven over time to be a pillar of the genre. Its evolving state gives it the unique privilege of benchmarking Brahms' artistic development and is a true amalgamation of the Brahmsian spirit.

- Esther Benjamin

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Artist Biographies

The **Lions Gate Trio**, an internationally acclaimed ensemble in both the U.S. and Europe, has enjoyed a combination of performing, recording, and working with young musicians in educational settings for over 23 years. Winners of the Koussevitsky Award for recording and lauded by the press for their CDs, the Trio has recorded for Triton and Centaur labels, featuring new American trios, duo and trio music of French composer Nicolas Bacri, and the complete trios of Robert Schumann. Centaur has just released their latest CD of trios by Ravel, Ives, and Rebecca Clarke. Passionate advocates of new music, the Lions Gate Trio has worked closely with a number of leading composers, among them Ralph Shapey, Andrew Imbrie, Alexander Goehr, Augusta Read Thomas, Robert Helps, Evan Williams, Eric Moe, Tamar Diesendruck and Nicolas Bacri. The Trio has performed across Europe and the U.S., and has served residencies at Tanglewood, Yale University and the University of Pittsburgh. The Lions Gate Trio is the trio in residence at The Hartt School and the Guilford and Fairfield Libraries. They have presented live broadcasts on Norddeutscher Rundfunk in Hamburg, Radio France in Paris, and NPR stations in the US. Their performances at the Organization of American States were televised in nine states and sixteen Latin American countries. The Trio recently presented the complete cycles of the piano chamber music of Schumann, Fauré, Brahms, and Beethoven.

Violinist **Katie Lansdale** is widely acclaimed as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator. She has performed as a soloist and chamber artist in North/South America and Europe, and on numerous American concert series, including the Phillips Collection, the Caramoor Series, and Lincoln Center's Rose Room. Winner of Grand Prizes at the Fischhoff and Yellow Springs national chamber competitions, Lansdale has collaborated in chamber concerts with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Felix Galimir, Donald Weilerstein, the Miami Quartet, Robert MacDonald, and Charles Neidich. Lansdale's concerto appearances have included with the National Symphony, the Austin Mozart Orchestra, the Schroeder Classical Orchestra, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, the NY Spectrum Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony and the New York Repertory Orchestra. In New York, where she founded the acclaimed Locrian new music group, Lansdale's extensive chamber music concerts have ranged from Mostly Mozart at Lincoln Center with Yo-Yo Ma to Merkin Hall with the Twentieth Centuryists; she regularly performs in Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall with the Festival Chamber Society. Particularly widely acclaimed for performances of solo Bach, Lansdale has performed the complete cycle over a dozen times in North and South America. "*This is one of the best recordings of this music,*" wrote the American Record Guide of her Bach CD. Having presented solo Bach at Juilliard's Delay Symposium in 2013, Lansdale directs the Promisek Bach workshop program in Bridgewater, CT. Lansdale studied with Josef Gingold, Felix Galimir, Ronda Cole, Donald Weilerstein, and Mitchell Stern. She graduated *cum laude* from Yale, where she was awarded prizes in both the arts and humanities, and earned graduate music degrees (M.M., D.M.A.) at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Manhattan School of Music. She has served on numerous summer festival faculties, including Kneisel Hall Chamber Festival, the Amalfi Coast Chamber Festival, Aria International Music Festival, and Music from Salem. Having taught at Boston University and at State University of New York-Stony Brook, she now teaches at The Hartt School at the University of Hartford and at Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

Program Notes

Performances by cellist **Darrett Adkins** have been called “heroic,” “stunning,” “intensely involving” (NY Times) and “fiery” (Boston Globe). This “adventurous champion of contemporary music” (Strings Magazine) has been the dedicatee of cello concertos by Su Lian Tan and Philip Cashian (both appear with Wernick’s concerto on his three-concerto CD *Myth and Tradition*) as well as Jeffrey Mumford. He gave the first New York performance and the first recording (on Naxos records) of Luciano Berio’s *Sequenza XIV*, the first American Performance of Donatoni’s concerto “*un ruisseau sur l’escalier*” with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, The New York premiers of Concertos by Messiaen (Carnegie Hall), Nordheim (Alice Tully Hall) and Wallin (Zankel Hall), as well as the world premieres of concertos by Stephen Hartke (with Robert Spano) and Andrew Mead. During his tenure with the Flux Quartet, among many creative firsts, he gave the first complete performance (and subsequent recording on Mode records) of Morton Feldman’s monumental String Quartet No. 2, lasting six continuous hours. His Aspen debut was with James Conlon conducting Boulez’s “*Messagesquise*” on just 3 days’ notice. No stranger to the standard repertoire, Darrett Adkins has performed concertos with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, The Aspen Philharmonic, the Tokyo Philharmonic, Cleveland’s Red, Seoul’s Prime Orchestra, the Suwon Philharmonic (in the Seoul Arts Center), the Orchestre National de UFF in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, and the North Carolina and New Hampshire symphonies, among others. He was a guest of the Juilliard String Quartet on their Sony Masterworks recording of Jay Greenberg’s String Quintet, and subsequently gave the first performance with the Chiara Quartet. His solo CD *Hypersuite2* is available on Oberlin Music, and his recording of duos by Ravel, Kodaly, and Sessions, on Engine Company Records was an Amazon top 10 classical CD. Darrett Adkins serves on the cello and chamber music faculties of the Juilliard School, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and the Aspen Music Festival and School.

Florence Millet, of Franco-German descent, performs with orchestra, in recitals and ensembles in venues across Europe, Asia and the Americas. Conductors she has worked with are Charles Dutoit, Pascal Vert, Simon Blech, Heinz Holier, Julia Jones, Elena Schwarz, Jonathan Darlington, and David Marlow. A Professor at the *Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln*, she was Chair of the Piano Department until 2021, then was elected Executive Director of the Wuppertal Campus. She has worked closely with leading voices in composition: Luciano Berio, Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, George Crumb, Johannes Schöllhorn, Jörg Widman, Hans Werner Henze, and Hans Abrahamsen. Millet played with the Ensemble Intercontemporain under Pierre Boulez and David Robertson from 1992-2000. Her recordings for the labels Centaur, Sony, Triton and Erato were praised on both sides of the Atlantic. Soon to be released are CDs with horn trios by Ligeti, Abrahamsen, Koechlin and Cage, the world premiere of the Piano Concerto, Op. 31, by Adolph Busch, along with his Solo and Duo piano music, Morton Feldmann’s Piano and String Quartet (with the Jack Quartet) and a thematic solo recording including Bach, Janacek, Kurtag, Aperghis, Kapralova, Rihm etc. A graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, Millet received her master’s and doctoral degrees at State University of New York at Stony Brook where she studied under Gilbert Kalish. Her other mentors were Leon Fleisher, Paul Badura Skoda, Peter Serkin, and Jean Hubeau. She is artistic adviser of the Lichterfeld Foundation, promoting tolerance, intercultural understanding and creator of the Echospore.de platform which propagates music from persecuted composers. Millet often explores multidisciplinary concert formats with actors, choreography, and dance (Pina Bausch Tanztheater Wuppertal) and Arts at the Tony Cragg Foundation, Van der Heydt Museum, Philipps Collection or in lecture recitals.

Piano Trio No. 40 in F# Minor, Hob. XV:26 by Joseph Haydn

Joseph Haydn is often regarded as the father of the piano trio, having played a crucial role in defining and developing the genre. His approximately forty piano trios, composed over several decades, trace the evolution of the ensemble from a harpsichord-centered texture to a more balanced interplay among the instruments. The Piano Trio in F-sharp minor, Hob. XV:26, composed in 1795, stands among his late works in the genre and showcases the maturity and expressive depth of his chamber music style.

Written during Haydn’s second visit to London, this trio reflects the composer’s engagement with broader musical influences and his deepening exploration of dramatic expression. The key of F-sharp minor, while not entirely unprecedented, was relatively uncommon in the Classical era, particularly in large-scale works. Its rarity can be attributed to its complexity on period instruments and its highly expressive, introspective character. While chamber and keyboard works in F-sharp minor existed, they remained infrequent compared to more conventional keys. Haydn’s use of this key in the trio thus lends the work a distinctive intensity and pathos.

The opening Allegro is characterized by its turbulent and harmonically rich themes, immediately setting a serious tone. The dialogue between the piano and strings is highly developed, with the violin emerging as a lyrical counterpart to the piano’s more virtuosic writing. The cello, while still often reinforcing the bass line, plays a more integral role than in earlier trios, reflecting Haydn’s evolving conception of instrumental balance.

The second movement, Adagio cantabile, shifts to A major, offering a moment of repose with its warm, song-like melody. Here, Haydn’s gift for lyrical expression is evident, as the violin and piano engage in an elegant and expressive conversation. The movement’s simplicity and poise provide a striking contrast to the more agitated outer movements. The trio concludes with a Finale: Tempo di Minuetto, which defies expectations by presenting a minuet imbued with melancholy and subtle rhythmic dissonance. Unlike the buoyant minuets of Haydn’s earlier works, this movement maintains the expressive weight of the trio, reinforcing its dramatic cohesion. The chromaticism and harmonic ambiguity further enhance the work’s emotional depth.

The Piano Trio in F-sharp minor exemplifies Haydn’s mastery of the genre. While still rooted in the Classical tradition, it foreshadows the more expressive and individualistic approaches of later composers. Through works like this, Haydn established the piano trio as a significant chamber music form, paving the way for Beethoven, Schubert, and beyond.

- Luke Ashworth

Light and Matter by Kaija Saariaho

Kaija Saariaho left the public with several thoughts regarding this piano trio before her passing in 2023. She was initially hesitant to approach this instrumentation, but in typical Saariaho fashion, was inspired by both the natural and other elements that surrounded her. Thus, we may now engage in her *Light and Matter* piano trio. Saariaho writes of her desire to blur the lines between traditional movement structure, and instead compose a work that moved fluidly between sections - “kinetic texture, thematic motives and slowly moving choral material.”