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**Monumental Trios**

**PROGRAM**

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827)  
Trio in E-flat major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 70, No. 2 (1808)

Poco sostenuto—Allegro ma non troppo

Allegretto

Allegretto ma non troppo

Finale: Allegro

Juho Pohjonen, piano; Paul Huang, violin; Jakob Koranyi, cello

--INTERMISSION (discussion with the artists)--

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)  
Trio in B major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 8 (1854, rev. 1889)

Allegro con brio

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro

Orion Weiss, piano; Ani Kavafian, violin; Carter Brey, cello

**NOTES ON THE PROGRAM**

**Trio in E-flat major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 70, No. 2 (1808)  
Ludwig van Beethoven (Bonn, 1770 – Vienna, 1827)**

Beethoven wrote the Op. 70 set of two piano trios in 1808. Aside from two sets of variations, they were his first piano trios since his early days in Vienna 13 years before. By 1808, the composer had been living in a series of short-term lodgings in and around Vienna, sometimes on his own, sometimes in the homes of the aristocracy. For a short period, he lived with Hungarian Countess Anna Marie Erdödy, an amateur pianist, and he dedicated these two trios to her for opening her home to him. Beethoven was close friend with the countess—he gave her the curious nickname *Beichtvater* (father confessor) because she was so sympathetic to his struggle with deafness and his desire to secure a steady salary. This trio premiered in December with Beethoven at the piano and was published the following year.

The second of the two Op. 70 trios is very different from the first, the famous “Ghost” Trio. The Ghost Trio is built on unpredictable contrasts—a sprawling, almost uncanny slow movement flanked by two fast movements—while the second trio is surprisingly calm, cool, and collected. The second trio’s four movements have very little in the way of tension or strife. This is Beethoven at his sweetest, a very unusual mood for the malcontent composer. Maybe he felt this was the only surprise left after the unexplored territory of the Ghost Trio.

For all its surface serenity, the piece is full of interesting creative twists. In the first movement, the slow introduction returns numerous times as an integral part of the piece, feeling like a sort-of repose, a meditative break in the action. The second movement is a set of double variations. Two contrasting melodies are played—one in C major and one in C minor—and then the variations alternate between them. The third movement isn’t exactly a dance and it’s certainly not a scherzo. In a nostalgic look back at the Classical style of Mozart and Haydn, a poised, regal melody surrounds a hesitant strain, as if remembered in a dream. A finale with plenty of virtuosity in the piano ends this less-common display of Beethoven’s brighter side.

**Trio in B major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 8 (1854, rev. 1889)  
Johannes Brahms (Hamburg, 1833 – Vienna, 1897)**

Brahms wrote this piano trio, his first published piece of chamber music, right after his initial brush with fame. He was a little-known 20-year-old in 1853 when an introduction to Robert and Clara Schumann opened a new world for him. He spent a few weeks with the Schumanns, playing his compositions, meeting their inner circle, and discussing art. By the end of his visit, Robert recommended Brahms to his publisher, Breitkopf & Härtel, and he wrote a flowery article heralding Brahms’ talent:

“I have thought… someone must and would suddenly appear, destined to give ideal presentation to the highest expression of the time, who would bring us his mastership not in process of development, but springing forth like Minerva fully armed from the head of Jove. And he is come, a young blood by whose cradle graces and heroes kept watch. He is called Johannes Brahms…”

Robert’s words echoed through the German music world, inciting interest, curiosity, and plenty of animosity toward the unknown Brahms. In turn, Brahms was terrified—suddenly he had a huge reputation to live up to. The B major Trio was the first work Brahms completed in the harsh glare of his new-found fame. When he finished it in January 1854, little did he know his life was about to change forever. In February Robert attempted suicide by jumping in the Rhine River and was institutionalized. Brahms rushed to support a devastated Clara, staying near the Schumanns’ home in Dusseldorf for months. Brahms and Clara Schumann developed strong feelings toward each other during that stressful time. Still, even with Robert gone, life continued and their home remained a busy meeting place for musicians. In mid-April, Clara read through the trio with two friends. She gave it her approval and recommended it to Breitkopf & Härtel, who published it later that year. It came out as Brahms’ opus 8, his first larger published work after a series of piano solos and songs. Brahms and Clara Schumann remained friends and confidants for the rest of their lives.

Thirty-five years later, Brahms’ early Breitkopf & Härtel works were acquired by another publisher and he had a chance to edit this trio. He took the opportunity to make major changes, writing to Clara Schumann, “I have written my B major Trio once more.” The changes were extensive in every movement but the scherzo, which has a lively staccato motive impulsively skipping around and through a lyrical middle section. In the other three movements, Brahms kept the main theme and thoroughly revised the following music. He shortened the piece, tightened the forms,and cut out quotations of a Schubert song in the third movement and a Beethoven song in the fourth. The revised version is almost exclusively performed today. It is passionate but controlled, and there is no sense of disparate parts—the changed sections are integrated seamlessly. A hybrid of Brahms’ youth and maturity, this trio is a fervent and tightly unified product of the arc of Brahms’ long career.

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**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Carter Brey** was appointed principal cellist of the New York Philharmonic in 1996, and made his subscription debut as soloist with the orchestra the following year in Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations led by then-Music Director Kurt Masur. He has performed with the philharmonic under Music Director Alan Gilbert in the Barber, Dvorák, Elgar, and Schumann cello concertos; in Richard Strauss's Don Quixote with former New York Philharmonic music directors Lorin Maazel and Zubin Mehta; and in the Brahms Double Concerto with then-Concertmaster Glenn Dicterow and conductor Christoph Eschenbach. He is cellist of the New York Philharmonic String Quartet, which has performed in Europe, South Korea, and throughout the United States since its debut in 2017. As a chamber musician he has collaborated with the Harlem Quartet and appeared regularly with the Tokyo and Emerson string quartets, Spoleto Festival in the US and Italy, and the Santa Fe and La Jolla chamber music festivals. He has performed in recital with pianist Christopher O'Riley, with whom he recorded The Latin American Album for Helicon Records. Brey rose to international attention in 1981 as a prizewinner in the Rostropovich International Cello Competition, and was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1983. A faculty member of the Curtis Institute, Brey was educated at the Peabody Institute and Yale University. He is represented worldwide by Sciolino Artist Management of New York.

Recipient of a 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists, violinist **Paul Huang** makes recent and forthcoming appearances with the Mariinsky Orchestra with Valery Gergiev, the Detroit Symphony with Leonard Slatkin, and the Houston Symphony with Andrés Orozco-Estrada. In the 2021-22 season, he opens the Nürnberger Symphoniker season and appears with the Rotterdam Philharmonic with Lahav Shani and the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan with Tan Dun. Other highlights include engagements with the Colorado, Eugene, Charlotte, Tucson, Knoxville, Des Moines, Brevard, and Reading symphonies. A frequent guest artist at music festivals worldwide, he recently stepped in for Anne-Sophie Mutter at Bravo! Vail Music Festival playing Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 4 with Chamber Orchestra Vienna-Berlin and made recital debuts at the Lucerne Festival and Aspen Music Festival, all to critical acclaim. Winner of the 2011 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Huang earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees at The Juilliard School and is an alum of CMS’s Bowers Program. He plays on the legendary 1742 ex-Wieniawski Guarneri del Gesù on loan through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

Violinist **Ani Kavafian** enjoys a prolific career as a soloist, chamber musician, and professor. She has performed with many of America’s leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony. In the 2019-20 season, she continued her longtime association as an artist of the Chamber Music Society with appearances in New York and on tour. She recently participated in several music festivals, including the Heifetz International Institute and the Sarasota Chamber Music, Bridgehampton, Meadowmount, Norfolk, and Angel Fire festivals. She and her sister, violinist and violist Ida Kavafian, have performed with the symphonies of Detroit, Colorado, Tucson, San Antonio, and Cincinnati, and have recorded the music of Mozart and Sarasate on the Nonesuch label. She is a Full Professor at Yale University and has appeared at Carnegie’s Zankel Hall numerous times with colleagues and students from Yale. She has received an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions award and has appeared at the White House on three occasions. Her recordings can be heard on the Nonesuch, RCA, Columbia, Arabesque, and Delos labels. Born in Istanbul of Armenian heritage, Ms. Kavafian studied violin in the US with Ara Zerounian and Mischa Mischakoff. She received her master’s degree from The Juilliard School under Ivan Galamian. She plays the 1736 Muir McKenzie Stradivarius violin.

Swedish cellist **Jakob** **Koranyi** has firmly established himself on the classical music scene as one of Europe’s most interesting young soloists. Acclaimed for his commanding virtuosity and passion for diverse and innovative programs, he has toured extensively performing as a recitalist as well as a soloist all over the world. Orchestral highlights of previous seasons include performances with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra working with conductors such as Sakari Oramo, Jan-Pascal Tortiellier, David Atherton, Jaime Martin, and Christian Lindberg. A committed chamber musician, he collaborates with distinguished musicians such as Yura Lee, Simon Crawford-Phillips, and Juho Pohjonen and has appeared in chamber music concerts alongside such international stars as Vilde Frang, Kim Kashkashian, Leonidas Kavakos, Misha Maisky, Martin Fröst, Lawrence Power, and Denis Kozukhin. He also enjoys working with artists of other disciplines and has a lasting collaboration with dancer Heather Ware. The 2016-17 season saw the premiere and Dutch tour of their new piece Battle Abbey, as well as performances with the Helsinki Philharmonic, Orquesta Filarmonica de Bogota, and the Stockholm Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The current season sees performances of the Haydn C major Concerto with the Vasteras Sinfonietta and Gävle Symfoniorkester, Kurt Atterberg’s Cello Concerto with the Swedish Radio Symphony, as well as other interesting projects and festivals. An alum of CMS’ Bowers Program, Mr. Koranyi performs regularly with the Chamber Music Society, and plays an Iosephi Gratiani cello built in 1756 in Genoa.

Finnish pianist **Juho** **Pohjonen** performs widely in Europe, Asia, and North America, collaborating with symphony orchestras and playing in recital and chamber settings. His growing discography offers a showcase of compositions by such Finnish compatriots as Esa-Pekka Salonen and Kaija Saariaho. He made his Minnesota Orchestra debut, opening its 2019–20 season with performances of Grieg’s Piano Concerto conducted by Osmo Vänskä. This season he also debuts as soloist with the New Jersey Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, and Orchestre Symphonique de Québec. He makes recital debuts at Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Steinway Society of the Bay Area and returns to Howland Chamber Music Circle and Rockefeller University. Chamber music appearances include those at San Francisco Performances and Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach with violinist Bomsori Kim, Parlance Chamber Concerts with violinists Paul Huang and Danbi Um, and performances with the Sibelius Trio in Orange County and Santa Rosa, California. An alum of CMS’s Bowers Program, he enjoys an ongoing association with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center with concerts in New York’s Alice Tully Hall and Chicago’s Harris Theater. His most recent recording with cellist Inbal Segev features cello sonatas by Chopin and Grieg and Schumann’s Fantasiestücke. Plateaux, his debut recording on Dacapo Records, featured works by late Scandinavian composer Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, including the solo piano suite For Piano and piano concerto Plateaux pour Piano et Orchestre, with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and conductor Ed Spanjaard.

One of the most sought-after soloists in his generation of young American musicians, pianist **Orion Weiss** has performed with the major American orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and New York Philharmonic. His deeply felt and exceptionally crafted performances go far beyond his technical mastery and have won him worldwide acclaim. In 2019-20 he performed with orchestras from Austin to Milwaukee, toured with both James Ehnes and Augustin Hadelich, and performed in recital with his curated repertoire. Recent seasons have seen him in performances for the Lucerne Festival, the Denver Friends of Chamber Music, the University of Iowa, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center’s Fortas Series, the 92nd Street Y, and the Broad Stage, and at Aspen, Bard, and Grand Teton summer festivals. He is an alum of CMS’s Bowers Program. Highlights of recent seasons include his third performance with the Chicago Symphony, a performance of Beethoven's Triple Concerto with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and recordings of Gershwin’s complete works for piano and orchestra with his longtime collaborators JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic. Named the Classical Recording Foundation’s Young Artist of the Year in 2010, in the summer of 2011 he made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood as a last-minute replacement for Leon Fleisher.