

Placitas Artists Series - November 20, 2016 Program

The third concert of our 30th season is an *evening concert*. It will begin at **6pm** on Sunday, November 20th, 2016 at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church.

The concert features Willy Sucre and Friends performing chamber music by Beethoven, Turina, and Schumann.

Ivonne Figueroa, piano
Guillermo Figueroa, violin
Willy Sucre, viola
James Holland, cello

"Duo, Trio, Quartet"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 12 No. 3

- I. Allegro con spirito*
- II. Adagio con molto espressione*
- III. Rondo, Allegro molto*

Joaquin Turina (1882-1949)
Piano Trio No. 2 in b minor for Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op. 76

- I. Lento - Allegro molto moderato*
- II. Molto vivace*
- III. Lento - Andante mosso - Allegretto*

Intermission

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47

- I. Sostenuto assai - Allegro ma non troppo*
- II. Scherzo - Molto vivace*
- III. Andante - Cantabile*
- IV. Finale - Vivace*

Program Notes for Willy & Friends November 20, 2016 Performance

Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 12 No.3 by Ludwig van Beethoven

The three violin sonatas in Beethoven's Opus 12 are dedicated as a set to Antonio Salieri. We don't really know much about these works. The published edition containing them appeared in 1798. The E flat major Sonata opens with a tonic arpeggio. This splendid key for pianistic display meets with a violin which reinforces the opening phrases in a game of catch-up in the playful first movement. Syncopations, a Beethoven trademark, add further to a sense of slight tipsiness or instrumental hiccoughs. The slow movement is the first Adagio in Beethoven's series, *con molto espressione*. As that might suggest, this C major movement is very much the emotional core of the work, its aria style suggestive of Mozart. The closing Rondo is closer to Haydn in character, perhaps even with a hint of the 'Hungarian' side of that composer's music.

Piano Trio No. 2 in B minor for Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op.76 by Joaquín Turina

Spain enjoyed a musical "Golden Age" during the Renaissance, after which it was largely overshadowed on the international stage by the prevailing styles from Italy, France, and the German-speaking countries. It was not until the rise of musical nationalism in the late 19th century that Spain found its voice again with its first modern masters such as Albéniz, Granados and de Falla, whose most well known music was written in the 1900's. It was Albéniz who provided the necessary connections for the younger Turina to study in Paris under Vincent d'Indy. While in Paris, Turina came to know such French masters as Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré, who left an undeniable influence on his subsequent music. No Spanish composer devoted more energy to chamber music than Turina.

Written in 1933, Turina's *Piano Trio No. 2 in b minor, Op. 76* is one of his three mature piano trios. Lively, sparkling, evocative and concise, it is refreshing for its time, associating on one hand with the classical and romantic piano trio traditions, and, on the other, with the harmony, color, and relaxed form of the more recent French and Spanish composers. Distinctively Spanish elements pervade its vocabulary in the form of melodic intervals, harmonic chord progressions, and rhythmic patterns, including the middle movement scherzo written in a characteristic Spanish dance meter of 5/8. Even where Turina reminds us of the modern French composers who influenced him, it is worth remembering that both Debussy and Ravel were captivated by the sounds of Andalusia, the flavors and idioms of which Turina could "borrow" back quite naturally and authentically.

The three-movement form harkens back to the first classical piano trios of Haydn and Mozart. The first movement follows a sonata outline with clear, contrasting themes first in minor, then major keys, followed by a developmental interlude introducing fresh melodic material. The second movement is a brief but dense scherzo based on a spicy dance rhythm, a bright countermelody, and a languid trio. The finale is a majestic landscape miniature with all the poetry and perfume of great Spanish music. A rondo, it visits a number of vivid scenes between recurring refrains of a dark, masculine cast. Using a technique that Turina likely acquired from his French schooling, he takes a cyclic look backward in the final episode, recalling all the themes from previous movements before a dazzling entrance into the final, wonderfully elaborated refrain.

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Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47 by Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann's "Year of Chamber Music," 1842, began miserably, owing to his having to endure the first lengthy separation of his marriage, while Clara was on a concert tour in Germany and Denmark. The Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 47, completed by late November, was composed for Count Matvei Wielhorsky, an accomplished amateur cellist, and performed in December at private soirées, with Felix Mendelssohn playing the piano on at least one occasion. The public première took place on 8 December 1844 in the Leipzig Gewandhaus, where the Quartet was the opening selection on Clara and Robert Schumann's farewell concert prior to their departure for Dresden. Clara was at the piano. Publication followed in February 1845.

Clara expressed obvious delight over the work's lyricism and freshness in her diary in April, 1843, "In the evening we played Robert's E-flat Major Quartet for the first time at our house, and again I was really enchanted by this beautiful work, which is so youthful and fresh, as if it were his first." That the piano dominates the Quartet is hardly surprising given Clara's extraordinary talents, but there are also moments when the violin, viola, and cello emerge from the thickly woven texture.

The first movement is in sonata form, preceded by a slow introduction that returns strategically in the Allegro proper, perhaps reflecting Schumann's study of Beethoven's string quartets. The second movement Scherzo has two trios. The Andante, in three-part form, starts with a brief introduction, after which the cello plays a tender melody that is taken over by each instrument in turn and subject to ornamental variation, both here and in the closing section. The theme of the contrasting middle section is hymn-like. The Finale demonstrates Schumann's contrapuntal facility, incorporating fugal writing in the exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda.