

November 12, 2017 Program & Notes
Willy Sucre and Friends West Shore Trio

Brahms -

Piano Trio in C minor, Op 87

- 1) Allegro non troppo
- 2) Scerzo: Allegro
- 3) Andante
- 4) Finale: Allegro commodo

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Dvorak -

Piano Quartet No 2 in Eflat major, Op 87

- 1) Allegro co fuoco
- 2) Lento
- 3) Allegro moderato e grazioso
- 4) Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

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PROGRAM NOTES

In this “Willy Sucre and Friends” concert with the West Shore Piano Trio, we transition from the Classical Period of the September concert to the Romantic Period.

We begin with music by the Viennese bachelor, **Johannes Brahms** – big beard, big cigar, big heart, and a member of the “Killer Bs” – Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. At the age of 24 he declared his motto to be “lonely but free” in response to his internal muse’s inclination for serenity and quiet, despite his intense romantic love for Clara Schuman. Brahms composed this piece in his late 40s, during a period of financial security and great pride in his mature looking beard. During this period his reputation as a composer was growing as his proficiency as a pianist declined.

Brahms *Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major, Op. 87*. The intimate nature of chamber music, often called the music of friends, is on display in this piece. The 1st movement, like each following movement, begins with the violin and cello playing a theme in unison, an octave apart. As the strings “hold hands,” I suggest you do the same with your friend next to you, to feel the tenderness and passion that you hear in the music. While the strings are in unison, the piano is sometimes agreeing, sometimes disagreeing, sometimes going on a separate path! The 2nd movement, with theme and variations, appealed to me because of the lyrical and intimate conversation shared by the violin and cello. Hungarian folk tunes were a favorite of Brahms and there is a hint of this music in this movement. The 3rd movement presents a lightness at the beginning and end that liven up the mood. The themes in between are reminiscent of earlier movements. The 4th’s grand end is of symphonic proportions that go beyond the usual dynamics of a trio.

Antonín Dvořák, married, with Bohemian peasant roots, is considered the essence of Czech folk music. (You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy.) Dvořák is often compared with Brahms, his most ardent supporter, because of their friendly relationship, the time, and the place, which were all conducive to similarities in style.

Dvořák *Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 87*. More so than folk songs, the Schubert/Brahms classical influence is apparent in the first two movements. The 1st movement begins with a bold four-note motif that is repeated in various spots to signal an impending change. Dvořák is known for moving from a darker and heavier German Teutonic tone to a lighter, more colorful folk tone. He does not disappoint us here in the soft fluttering of the upper strings prior to the big finish. The siren call of the cello introduces us to the 2nd movement. Each instrument calls to us with intimate expressions of grace and emotion. This is suddenly interrupted by a second theme, then a reconciliation into a serene ending. The 3rd movement entertains with a gentle waltz, changing to a somewhat faster, driving rhythm demanding a much faster tap of the toe. Then we are back to the gentle waltz-like themes. Watch for the end of this movement, a surprising closure that made me wonder if I should clap. The 4th movement is very robust, with unusual key shifts, ending in a triumphant finish. We have traveled from the pastoral settings of Bohemia to the traditional Viennese majesty with our composer, and loved every minute of it!

Program notes by Paul Ordogne, Placitas Artists Series board member.