

The Red Bank  
Chamber Music Society  
*presents*

Trio Solisti

María Bachmann, Violin  
Alexis Pia Gerlach, Cello  
Fabio Bidini, Piano

Haydn • Chausson • Dvořák  
Sunday Afternoon  
November 19, 2017 • 4:30 PM  
Trinity Church Auditorium  
Red Bank, NJ  
Advance Notes

# PROGRAM

Haydn: Piano Trio in C major, Hob.XV:27 (1795)

Joseph Haydn

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 3 (1881)

Ernest Chausson

- I. Pas trop lent - Animé
- II. Vite
- III. Assez lent
- IV. Animé

## INTERMISSION

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 26 (1879)

Antonín Dvořák

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Largo
- III. Scherzo. Presto - Trio
- IV. Finale. Allegro non tanto

## Notes on the Program

### Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

#### Haydn: Piano Trio in C major, Hob.XV:27 (1795)

(~18 minutes)



"Haydn takes the view that the quartet is a symphony," in the words of Donald Francis Tovey, "whereas the piano trio is an accompanied solo." Indeed, many of Haydn's early trios were published as "keyboard sonatas with string accompaniment." His last ten trios, all written between 1794 and 1797, were written specifically for the piano rather than the harpsichord. A typical Haydn piano trio, cast in at most three movements, seems to bear more structural resemblance to a piano sonata than to the expansive, four-movement string quartet or symphony. Today's piece follows a sonata-form, three-movement layout, often found among the fifty or so keyboard sonatas Haydn composed in his lifetime. It was published as part of a set of three piano trios dedicated to Therese Jansen-Bartolozzi, to whom Haydn also dedicated his last three piano sonatas.

The opening allegro establishes the prominence of the piano, with crossed-hands leaps and rapid passages in octaves for the right hand. An atmosphere of playfulness dominates, with a musical joke or two thrown in for good measure. The stately andante in A major follows a clear ABA ternary form. The calmness of the principal theme is eventually shattered by a shift to A minor; from there the composer embarks on a remarkable course of harmonic modulations in order to return to the original key for the conclusion. In the finale, the mood turns light hearted again as the music takes on a breathless pace. Assigning an increased role to the violin, Haydn injects the standard sonata form with elements of a rondo – note the recurring refrain – and the result manages to surprise us while it leads us back home.

**Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)**  
**Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 3 (1881)**

*(~31 minutes)*



Born into a wealthy family, Ernest Chausson was a polymath who enjoyed success in virtually all endeavors. His gifts extended to the visual arts, and he also wrote short stories and nearly completed a novel. He earned a doctor of laws degree and was admitted to argue cases before the highest courts in France. To top it off, he displayed musical gifts that won him admission to the Paris Conservatoire at age 24. Chausson composed a small but significant body of work which easily places him alongside colleagues/mentors such as Franck, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Debussy and Ravel in the renaissance of French chamber music of the late 19th Century.

The Piano Trio in G minor, Op.3 was composed in 1881 when Chausson was 26 years old. It bears the stamp of his Conservatoire instructor César Franck, particularly in its “cyclic” character - the first movement commences with a slow introduction which contains several motives which will recur in the third and fourth movements. Following the solemn introduction, the first movement emerges as a lively sonata, but one colored by a new harmonic language no doubt influenced by the composer’s adoration of Richard Wagner.

The second movement also begins with a soft, almost tentative introduction which gives way to a lively intermezzo in the relative major key of B-flat. A set of contrasting themes, all based on an interrupted triplet, is presented in an assortment of musical guises.

In the dark key of D minor, the slow movement unfolds as a dreamlike poem colored by chromatic shifts and extended modulations. The cyclic nature of the entire piece becomes clear, as this movement recalls one of the principal themes from the opening movement for its main theme. Without a firm

resolution to its musical concerns, the movement could be described an uneasy truce between melancholy and optimism.

The finale commences in the parallel major of the home key, yet another chromatic shift (minor to major third). An unexpectedly jaunty mood soon turns dark, as the powerful, piano driven rhythms underscore the tempest. Twice, a gentle interlude offers brief respite before the music finally returns to G minor and the composer completes the cycle by returning to the work's somber opening theme.



**Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)**  
**Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 26 (1879)**

*(~32 minutes)*



When Dvořák began his second piano trio in 1876 he was still more or less unknown at the age of 35, struggling to provide for his wife and one-year-old son and still mourning the loss of a new born daughter the previous year. Among those who did know and appreciate his work was Johannes Brahms, who helped the younger composer earn a commission in Vienna which allowed him to continue composing. Over the next year, Dvořák produced several works which would catapult him to international fame. We hear the first of them today. Composed in only 17 days, the work found the composer working with a small number of themes – no movement contains more than two – to create a full-scale, four-movement program.

The Allegro moderato illustrates the monothematic effect; although there are two principal themes, they are almost variations of one another. An opening burst of two chords creates instant motto which will recur throughout this expansive movement, often functioning as a transition

point. Slavic melodies inform the thematic material, which is presented in an elaborate sonata form.

In the Largo, the mood turns nostalgic. Dvořák once again relies on only one theme which is subjected to various transformations. The scherzo features a theme based on a group of five triplets, an uneven, almost suspended rhythm that keeps the ear waiting for resolution. A gentle trio section offers a more conventional four-beat grouping as the main theme is reexamined in the major mode.

In the finale, some of the sadness that has tinged the first three movements begins to fall away. A staccato burst of chords sets up the rondo whose chromatic theme seems to defy categorization as either major or minor. As one critic of the time observed, “The themes are so unmistakably Slavonic in character that Dvořák may possibly have culled them from the stores of Volkslieder ready to be utilized with effect in instrumental composition.” The music becomes a struggle between an increasingly joyful polka in G major and a darker revisit to the work’s home key. Ultimately, it is the dance that wins out.

*Program Notes by Christopher Hewitt*



**Note**

As a favor to your fellow concertgoers, please remember to turn off your cell phones. If you feel you might have a cough coming on, please try to unwrap any lozenges before the concert begins or between movements.

# Artists

**Trio Solisti's** reputation as “the most exciting piano trio in America” (The New Yorker) was affirmed in rave reviews during the 2016-17 season: “the superlative Trio Solisti gave an immaculate and insightful performance” (The Dallas Chamber Music Society - Theater Jones), “a compelling performance...Trio Solisti really knocked it out of the ballpark” (Chamber Music Monterrey Bay - Peninsula Reviews), and “the most fully explored, interestingly probed, and fully engaged [performance of the Brahms Trio in B major] that I’ve ever experienced. Chamber music connoisseurs should absolutely not miss Trio Solisti.” (Rockport Chamber Music Festival - The Boston Musical Intelligencer)

Noted Wall Street Journal critic Terry Teachout proclaimed that Trio Solisti is “the group that to my mind has now succeeded the Beaux Arts Trio as the outstanding chamber music ensemble of its kind.” The New Yorker called Trio Solisti “probably the finest American piano trio currently on the field,” and The Washington Post praised them for a “transcendent performance.”

Founded in 2001, Trio Solisti – violinist Maria Bachmann, cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach, and pianist Fabio Bidini – performs regularly at the country's major venues and series, including Great Performers at Lincoln Center, People’s Symphony Concerts at Town Hall in New York, Washington Performing Arts Society at Kennedy Center, Seattle’s Meany Hall and La Jolla’s Revelle Series. At Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 2015, the ensemble presented the complete piano chamber music of Brahms in a three-concert series praised in The Strad for “abundant dynamism, exceptional balance and a wholly successful grasp of the interpretive essence.”

Highlights of the 2017-2018 season include a performance of Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with the Wisconsin Philharmonic and conductor Alexander Platt, and appearances at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, The Detroit Chamber Music Society, Kansas City Friends of Chamber Music, and Chamber Music Columbus. In 2017, Trio Solisti gave the world

premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner Jennifer Higdon's Piano Trio No. 2, co-commissioned for the ensemble by Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and the Harvard Musical Association. Composers that have written works for the trio include Lowell Liebermann, Kevin Puts, and Paul Moravec, whose "Tempest Fantasy" written for the group won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize.

Trio Solisti has presented 13 seasons of Telluride MusicFest, an annual summer chamber music festival in Telluride, Colorado. The trio also proudly marks its 13th year as ensemble-in-residence at Adelphi University in Garden City, New York.

A violinist who combines outstanding musicianship with dazzling technical command, a tone of exceptional purity, and a magnetic stage presence, **Maria Bachmann** has received critical accolades since the beginning of her career. The New York Times hailed her as "a violinist of soul and patrician refinement... warmly lyrical, and unexpectedly sensuous." Ms. Bachmann has forged a unique profile as violinist of Trio Solisti, a solo artist, and a proponent of new music. As the artistic director of New York Friends of Chamber Music she curated a three-concert series in 2015 of the complete piano chamber music of Johannes Brahms, performed to critical acclaim by Trio Solisti and guest artists at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall.

Ms. Bachmann has made acclaimed debuts with The National Symphony at The Kennedy Center, the St. Louis Symphony, the Taipei Symphony and the Shanghai Symphony, and she performed Philip Glass's Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra with the Orchestra of The Hague in The Netherlands. Since her recital debut at New York's Town Hall, Maria has performed recitals in Tokyo, London, Paris, Shanghai, Taipei, The Kennedy Center, New York's Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, and Boston's Jordan Hall. Of Hungarian descent, Ms. Bachmann was invited by the Library of Congress to recreate the legendary Bartok/Szigeti recital of 1940 for a nationally broadcast performance. As a leading advocate of new music she has premiered and recorded works by Philip Glass, Lowell Liebermann, Paul Moravec, George Rochberg, and Leon Kirchner, among others.

In 2016, Ms. Bachmann's CD releases include the world premiere recording of Paul Moravec's Violin Concerto with Rossen Milanov conducting Symphony in C on Naxos, and Trio Solisti's Tchaikovsky & Rachmaninoff Piano Trios. Her recordings encompassing works from Beethoven's Violin Concerto to new music can be found on Sony Masterworks, Sony/RCA Red Seal, Naxos, Endeavour Classics, Orange Mountain Music, and Bridge Records.

Upon completing her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music with Ivan Galamian and Szymon Goldberg, Ms. Bachmann was awarded the Curtis Institute's Fritz Kreisler Prize for outstanding graduating violinist. She performs on a 1782 violin by Niccolò Gagliano.

Cellist **Alexis Pia Gerlach** has been lauded by the press for the "gripping emotion" and "powerful artistry" of her interpretations; qualities which have led to a career striking for its wide range of artistic collaborations. She has appeared extensively in recitals and as a soloist with orchestras across the United States, as well as in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America, with such conductors as Mstislav Rostropovich, James DePreist and Peter Oundjian. Her recording with pianist Fabio Bidini of the Franck and Rachmaninoff Sonatas is released on the Encore Performance label.

As a sought-after chamber musician she performs at major festivals including Marlboro, Aspen, Bridgehampton, La Musica di Asolo and Caramoor, where she is a Texaco Rising Star, and as a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She has played extensively with Musicians from Marlboro, on both national and international tours. As a founding member of Concertante, a string sextet based in New York City, Gerlach performs on major concert series throughout North America, and has toured Asia and the Middle East. Concertante's recordings of the string sextet repertoire have been met with critical acclaim.

Gerlach was born in New York City where she first studied cello at The Manhattan School of Music Preparatory Division. She graduated from The Yale School of Music and The Juilliard School where she was a student of

Aldo Parisot. She worked additionally with Pierre Fournier, William Pleeth and Janos Starker.

**Fabio Bidini** is recognized as one of the foremost pianists to have emerged from Italy since the days of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. After winning top prizes in numerous international competitions, his sensational success at both the Busoni and Van Cliburn International Piano Competitions launched his international career. His playing is noted for its technical wizardry and poetic lyricism, and encompasses a vast repertoire of 84 piano concerti and works from the baroque through the modern era.

His glowing London debut at the Barbican Center with the London Symphony Orchestra and Michael Tilson Thomas, was followed shortly after by his highly acclaimed North American debut with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Joel Levi.

Mr. Bidini is also in great demand as a chamber music partner, in collaborations including the American String Quartet, the Janáček Quartet, the Brodsky Quartet, the Szymanowski Quartet, the Modigliani Quartet, the Quartetto di Fiesole, Zoltán Kocsis, Nikolaj Znaider, Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt, Paula Robison, Corey Cerovsek, Wendy Warner, Eva Urbanova, Eva Mei, Roberto Fabbriciani, Alexis Pia Gerlach, Nina Kotova, Dimitri Ashkenazy and Sabrina-Vivian Höpcker.

Mr. Bidini's discography comprises thirteen CDs from such leading record companies as BMG, Classichord, Musikstrasse, EPR and True Sounds. His duo with Sabrina-Vivian Höpcker released a debut CD of violin sonatas by Prokofiev and Strauss, laying the foundation for an extensive collaboration with the label.

In 2005 Mr. Bidini accepted a professorship at the Universität der Künste Berlin, followed by his appointment in 2009 to one of the highest chairs for piano in Germany, at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin. In 2015 Mr. Bidini joined the faculty of the Colburn School in Los Angeles.