

PERMITTAGE

MARY ANNE RENNOLDS

Chamber Concert Series 2023-24



3 PM | September 10, 2023
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
W.E. Singleton Center

vcuarts | music

Hermitage Piano Trio

Misha Keylin, violin

Sergey Antonov, cello

Ilya Kazantsev, piano

**JOAQUÍN
TURINA
(1882-1949)**

Piano Trio No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 76

Lento – Allegro molto moderato

Molto vivace

Lento – Andante mosso –

Allegro molto moderato

**SERGEI
RACHMANINOFF
(1873-1943)**

Piano Trio Élégiaque No. 1 in G Minor

Lento lugubre

**MARIANO
PERELLÓ
(1886-1960)**

Tres Impresiones (1922)

Pensando en Albéniz (Poco Allegro)

Capricho Andaluz (Allegro)

Escenas Gitanas (Allegro)

INTERMISSION

**ANTONÍN
DVOŘÁK
(1841-1904)**

Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 90 “Dumky”

Lento maestoso - Allegro quasi doppio

movimento

Poco adagio - Vivace non troppo - Vivace

Andante - Vivace non troppo - Allegretto

Andante moderato - Allegretto scherzando -

Quasi tempo di marcia

Discography: REFERENCE RECORDINGS

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Notes on the Program

Turina, Joaquín (1882–1949) Piano Trio No.2 in B Minor, Op. 76

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 Joaquín Turina to study in Paris under Vincent d’Indy and to publish his first work, a piano quintet. While in Paris, Turina came to know such French masters as Debussy, Ravel and Fauré, leaving an undeniable influence on his own subsequent music. Turina produced a sizable quantity of chamber music including several piano trios, string quartets and sonatas, a piano quartet, two piano quintets and a piano sextet. His most well known works include *Círculo* for piano trio and *La Oración del Torero* for string quartet.

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 one 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.

All three of Turina’s mature piano trios use a three movement form harkening 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.

Rachmaninoff, Sergei (1873–1943) Trio Élégiaque No.1 in G Minor

Rachmaninoff had a precarious and emotionally fraught childhood. His father dissipated the family fortune and they had to move several times, his sister died in a diphtheria epidemic, and his parents separated. Yet he remained enrolled at the St. Petersburg Conservatory until 1885, when he failed all of his academic subjects (in part, at least, because his now single mother was no longer supervising his homework). That led to him being transferred to the Moscow Conservatory, where he was boarded with a notoriously strict piano teacher, Nikolai Zverev.

That proved to be a blessing for his career, as Rachmaninoff became one of the most prodigiously skilled virtuosos on the keyboard. And at Zverev’s apartment, the young musician met many of the leading Russian musicians of the day, including Tchaikovsky and Arensky. Rachmaninoff studied harmony with Arensky at the Conservatory, but

it was Tchaikovsky who proved the most influential, as an idolized mentor. In January 1892, Rachmaninoff made his official debut in Moscow, playing solo pieces by Chopin, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky, plus some of his own chamber works: two pieces for cello and piano, and his *Trio élégiaque* in G Minor, which he had written less than two weeks before the concert in just four days.

Like most of his music of this time, this trio was highly influenced by Tchaikovsky, though the voice is already clearly Rachmaninoff's own. It is cast in a single long movement, with pronounced similarities to the first movement of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Trio in A Minor*, composed in 1882 after the death of Nikolai Rubinstein. Rubinstein had been Tchaikovsky's friend, teacher, and the director of the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky's long first movement was called "Pezzo elegiaco" (Elegiac Piece), and like it, Rachmaninoff's "Elegiac Trio" ends with a funeral march. There are other points of reference to Tchaikovsky, but the Trio's powerful sweep, along an arc of growing animation before the somber close, is pure Rachmaninoff.

Perelló, Mariano (1886–1960) **Tres Impresiones**

Mariano Perelló (1886–1960) was a renowned Catalan violinist and also an accomplished pianist. Following the advice of Isaac Albéniz, he continued his musical education with the Belgian violinist Mathieu Crickboom, who was a teacher at the Conservatory of Brussels but at the time lived in Barcelona.

When Crickboom left for Brussels in 1900, Perelló went with him, joining Crickboom's quartet as the second violinist. After years of performances in Brussels and Barcelona, Perelló joined the teaching staff of the Granados Academy in Barcelona. He was one of the promoters for the Association League of Catalan Music as well as director of the Chamber Music Association of Barcelona. He taught in

the Conservatory of Vizcaya and in the Conservatory of the Liceo of Barcelona. In 1911, together with the pianist Ricard Vives and cellist Pere Marés, he formed the Trio Barcelona. The trio started its career in Berlin and they regularly toured around Europe and the Americas.

As a teacher he made a significant contribution to the world of music. In 1930 he published a well-known project to reorganize musical instruction called “Our music conservatories: What they are and what they should be.” At the end of 1935, Trio Barcelona retired from performing due to a worsening condition in Perelló’s left hand. After that Perelló participated in very few cultural events. He was twice on the jury of the Marshall Academy (the new name of the Granados Academy) and accompanied performers on piano. He did briefly return to the violin – in 1941 the Trio Barcelona gave a concert at the Marshall Academy and in July 1942 he played the violin at the funeral of a daughter of guitarist and journalist Alfred Romea Catalina. He finally left teaching in 1949. A few months before his death, he gave a speech as part of the celebration of the centenary of the birth of Isaac Albéniz. The composition “Las Tres Impresiones”, written in 1922, is dedicated to “my friends and colleagues from the ‘trio’, Vives and Marés.”

Dvořák, Antonin (1841–1904) Piano Trio No.4 in E minor, Op. 90 “Dumky”

Dvořák wrote reams of incredible chamber music in all forms. His combination of natural lyricism, clear texture, vivid color, rhythmic vitality and a sure sense of dramatic development place him among the composer gods with a noticeable affinity for Schubert who was undoubtedly a strong influence. After the “American” Quartet, the “Dumky” Trio is probably Dvořák’s most celebrated chamber work, neck and neck with the Piano Quintet in A Major. If the “American” Quartet is a possible mirror of indigenous American folk music, the “Dumky” Trio is pure Bohemian and Czech, an even more convincing

reflection of a national folk tradition, this time in Dvořák's own mother tongue. He composed the "Dumky", his fourth and final piano trio, in 1891 at the age of 50, just prior to his legendary trip to America.

The word dumky is the plural for dumka, a Czech and Ukrainian term that, in summary, means "ballad", "elegy" or "lament." A dumka was a kind of poetic ballad or tribute, often told about a heroic saga, a tragic historical event or the plea of a subjugated people. It fostered a musical genre of single-movement pieces that mix slow somber melancholy with fast, wild, exuberance almost like two stages of grief. Dvořák wrote a number of dumky scattered throughout his compositions and each one is a showcase of passionate Czech folk music in a sort of idealized classical realization. The "Dumky" Trio is essentially a suite of six dumky, each of the six movements a complete dumka exhibiting a dichotomy of slow and fast, dour and bright, with masterful contrast of character, rhythm, tempo and color. Since the first three dumky are played in sequence, without pause, some have commented that the "Dumky" Trio coalesces into a kind of classical three or four-movement design. A nearly unbroken tapestry of sectional contrasts spans the movements making for a compelling, continuous narrative. The fourth movement reverses the dichotomy by starting out fast and lively rather than slow and deep and the last dumka is perfectly placed as the finale. It seems certain that Dvořák arranged and possibly composed the suite with a layered conception of flow, unity and dramatic shape as a series of heroic tales and epic laments, a book of fairytales, a suite of songs in a prevailing national style, each singular, exotic species in a common thread. Dvořák wrote other such collections such as his breakthrough Slavonic Dances and the set of string quartet "songs" known as Cypresses.

Dvořák was a master of color in all of his music, whether written for a full orchestral palette or, nearly the opposite, a string quartet. But his chamber music with piano is a particularly rich vein of color. With Dvořák, the very term "color" becomes slippery and ambiguous. The constantly changing sonorities in his music involve instrumental

techniques and carefully chosen ensemble configurations, but the color seems likewise inseparable from the essential elements of the music more fundamental than this: the melody and rhythm. All these elements are melded together creating vivid expressions and impressions in what is the brilliant signature style of Dvořák himself. But witness here how masterfully he deploys the piano trio, discovering ranges of sonic expression hitherto unknown (except perhaps to Schubert).

The clear, earthy, emotionally full and broadly accessible aspects of Dvořák's most famous music span his entire career. The "American" Quartet often serves as the poster child of this lovely trend in Dvořák's music and therefore it may often become entangled with a notion that it was unique to his American works or to a specific quest for a folk music inspiration in the new world. But the "Dumky" Trio and the Terzetto for 2 violins and viola of a few years prior both pre-date Dvořák's American sojourn and yet they exhibit many of the same qualities including the spare, open harmonies, rustic rhythms and pentatonic folk scales. One might say that one set of works has a slight Bohemian accent, the other that of the American Midwest, both sharing underlying traits of world folk traditions. But really what they share is Dvořák's own innate musical personality, a proclivity for direct and bountiful expression with robust, passionate vitality from a generous and gifted sensibility.

Program Notes by The Hermitage Trio

Artist Biographies

“...more striking even than the individual virtuosity was the profound level of integration among the players, who showed a rare degree of ensemble from beginning to end.”

- *The Washington Post*

Now entering their second decade, the United States-based Hermitage Piano Trio has solidified its place as one of the world's leading piano trios, garnering multiple GRAMMY® Award nominations and receiving both audience and press accolades for their performances that *The Washington Post* singled out for “such power and sweeping passion that it left you nearly out of breath.”

The Trio is a champion of immense repertoire ranging from the works of the great European tradition to more contemporary American pieces. Hallmarks of the Hermitage Piano Trio are their impeccable musicianship, sumptuous sound and interpretative range, which have led to demand for many repeat performances. They have appeared on major chamber music series and festivals in Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami, Washington, D.C., Tucson, Portland (OR), Tulsa, San Diego, Corpus Christi, Newport (RI), San Miguel de Allende (Mexico), Winnipeg (Canada), New Orleans, and many others. In addition to their extensive touring engagements, the Trio is involved in educational and outreach projects.

Hermitage Piano Trio began its multiple-album recording deal with Reference Recordings, debuting its CD titled “Rachmaninoff,” which featured Sergei Rachmaninoff’s two trios and his unforgettable Vocalise. Echoing many enthusiastic reviews of the “Rachmaninoff” recording, *The Strad* lauded the Trio’s “outstanding playing in intense, heartfelt performances,” and *American Record Guide* praised that “the Hermitage wants to burst forth with passion, to let

the whole world know! I am really glad that someone can still play that way in our utterly unromantic age.” Their next album release is slated for 2023, and will feature the music of 20th century Spanish romantic composers.

A rarity in the chamber music world, this elite Trio brings together three accomplished soloists in their own right. An established soloist, violinist **Misha Keylin** has performed in forty-five countries spanning five continents. He has captured special attention with his world-premiere CD series, released by Naxos, of Henri Vieuxtemps seven violin concertos and showpieces. These recordings have already sold hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide and have garnered numerous press accolades and awards, including “Critic’s Choice” by *The New York Times*, *Gramophone*, and *The Strad*. Hailed as “a brilliant cellist” by the legendary Mstislav Rostropovich, **Sergey Antonov** went on to prove his mentor’s proclamation when he became one of the youngest cellists ever awarded the gold medal at the world’s premier musical contest, the quadrennial International Tchaikovsky Competition. Antonov’s entry into this elite stratum of sought-after classical artists has already placed him on stages at world-renowned venues from Russia’s Great Hall at the Moscow Conservatory to Suntory Hall in Tokyo. And pianist **Ilya Kazantsev**, praised by *The Washington Post* as “virtually flawless,” has performed as a recitalist and a soloist with orchestras in Russia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. Mr. Kazantsev’s many awards and honors include first prize at the Nikolai Rubinstein International Competition (France) as well as top prizes at the International Chopin Competition (Russia) and the World Piano Competition (USA).

About the Mary Anne Renholds Chamber Concert Series

The Department of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University has presented the top chamber music performers in the world to Richmond audiences for more than forty years. VCU Music's series, originally founded as the Terrace Concerts, debuted in 1983 in partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Today, the series is named in honor of Mary Anne Renholds, one of Richmond's greatest music patrons. A fund was established in her memory to present chamber music events in Richmond, independently of the Terrace Concerts.

Please consider donating to the fund in honor of Mary Anne Renholds and her legacy. To donate online, please go to <https://support.vcu.edu/give/Arts>. Search by keyword and look for "Renholds". The fund name is "Mary Anne Renholds Chamber Concerts".

If you would like to provide a check donation, checks can be made out to the VCU Foundation with Renholds Chamber Concert in the subject line. Checks may be mailed to VCU Arts Music attn: Linda Johnston at 922 Park Avenue, Box 842004, Richmond, VA 23284-2004.

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VCU Symphonic Wind Ensemble
Thursday, October 5, 7:00 p.m.

VCU Symphony Orchestra
Friday, October 6, 8:00 p.m.

Sonia Vlahcevic Faculty Piano Recital
Sunday, October 8, 4:00 p.m.

Patrick Smith Faculty Horn Recital
Tuesday, October 10, 7:00 p.m.

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Wednesday, October 11, 7:30 p.m.

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Chamber Concert Series 2023-24

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Diana Adamyan, violin

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