



SUMMER FESTIVAL ON THE EASTSIDE

MONDAY, AUGUST 9

Joaquín Turina

Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano in B minor, Op. 76 (1933)

Lento—Allegro molto moderato

Molto vivace

Lento—Andante mosso—Allegretto

Stefan Jackiw, violin

Edward Arron, cello

Anna Polonsky, piano

Ludwig van Beethoven

Quartet No. 9 in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3, "Razumovsky"

Introduzione: Andante con moto—Allegro vivace

Andante con moto quasi allegretto

Menuetto grazioso

Allegro molto

Augustin Hadelich, violin

Scott Yoo, violin

Richard O'Neill, viola

Ronald Thomas, cello

Josef Suk

Quintet for Piano and Strings in G minor, Op. 8

Allegro energico

Adagio (Religioso)

Scherzo: Presto

Finale: Allegro con fuoco

Joseph Lin, violin

James Ehnes, violin

Lily Francis, viola

Robert deMaine, cello

Orion Weiss, piano

Joaquín Turina (1882–1949)

Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano in B minor, Op. 76 (1933)

Along with his countrymen Manuel de Falla and Isaac Albéniz, Joaquín Turina's music evokes their exotic Spanish musical heritage—a potent mix of European, Arabic and even Hebraic elements—but overlaid with an unmistakably French accent à la Debussy, Chabrier and Ravel. Turina composed three piano trios; seven years separate his first effort of 1926 and his final offering in 1933. Turina dedicated his Trio No. 3 in B minor to Jacques Lerolle, nephew of Ernst Chausson and director of the French publishing firm Rouart-Lerolle (later merged into the well-known Editions Salabert).

The B-minor Trio opens with a three-measure *Lento* passage, impressionistically French, before the *Allegro molto moderato* takes off spiritedly and with a clearly Spanish accent. Marked *Allegretto*, a contrasting theme of gentler persuasion emerges, itself shortly interrupted by another *Lento* passage. A relatively serene mood takes over, tinged with cello-articulated melancholy before an energetic return of the *Allegro molto moderato* motive.

Marked *Molto vivace* and cast in 5/8 meter (not uncommon in Spanish folk music) the brief second movement combines the two stringed instruments into a rapidly flowing obbligato accompaniment to the piano's emphatic chordal passagework. A mid-movement episode of languorous ease lowers the wattage before a quantum leap back into an energetic restatement of the opening section.

The finale, reflecting its tempo markings *Lento—Andante mosso—Allegretto*, alternates between slow and fast sections that create ever-heightening mood contrasts. Throughout, one is aware of the Spanish accent filtered through exposure to French Impressionism. The opening and oft-recurring block-piano chords, like resounding and solemn tolling bells, contrast with the strings' alternating legato and pizzicato entries.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Quartet No. 9 in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3, “Razumovsky” (1806)

Beethoven's 16 string quartets remain the iconic works that have defined the chamber music experience for two centuries. From the six Op. 18 quartets of his youth, through the dramatic works of his adventuresome middle years, to the last unparalleled and frequently futuristic masterpieces of his full maturity, Beethoven built upon the great quartets of his immediate predecessors, Haydn and Mozart, and set a standard of excellence approached but never surpassed. As a body of music, Beethoven's quartets explore and express the vast range of emotion of a composer whose heart beat to the rhythm of our shared humanity.

In 1805, Count Andreas Razumovsky, the Russian ambassador to the Imperial Court in Vienna, commissioned a set of string quartets from Beethoven. The Count wanted the

new works to be performed as part of the inauguration of a palace being built for him at the time. He asked the composer to incorporate actual Russian tunes in all three quartets, but Beethoven accommodated the request only in the finale of the first piece and in the *Scherzo* of the second quartet (whose theme appears nearly half-a-century later in the “Coronation Scene” in Mussorgsky’s opera, *Boris Godunov*). Beethoven completed the set by 1806, a year before they were premiered; even then, the palace was unfinished.

The triptych, published as the “Razumovsky” Quartets, Op. 59, Nos. 1–3, are products of Beethoven’s “middle period,” by which time he had fully assimilated the models of Haydn and Mozart and was well into the full expression of his own forceful personality. The Op. 59 Quartets brim with confidence in both his technique and his sense of having “something to say” to the world. Admittedly, they are less overtly dramatic than other works from the same period, such as the “Eroica” and Fifth symphonies and the “Kreutzer” and “Appassionata” sonatas, yet they were sufficiently innovative to garner intensely harsh criticism—in great contrast to the enthusiastic response accorded the Op. 18 set of 1800. Much had changed in those six years, most notably his continuously diminishing hearing and attendant fear and anger, all of which propelled Beethoven into new and often audacious modes of musical and emotional exploration. When violinist Felix Radicati from the Schuppanzigh Quartet—the famed ensemble that gave the premieres in 1807—said to Beethoven, “Surely you do not consider this music,” the composer replied, “Not for you but for a later age.” Even more telling was Beethoven’s comment at the time, “...the tones whirl like the wind, and often there is a like whirl in my soul.”

If these middle quartets generally puzzled poor Radicati, the third of the set—String Quartet No. 9 in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3—was accorded a warmer initial reception because of its perceived “accessibility.” Nonetheless, the first movement’s *Introduzione: Andante con moto* inspired head-scratching among early listeners—players, too, no doubt. The opening “diminished” chord (three minor thirds piled on top of one another) is a tense fragment that can move into any number of tonal areas. After Beethoven guides us through a sequence of more harmonies with an uncertain direction (to us, not to him!) and disturbing dissonances, he relents and opens the door to a two-note phrase that soon propels the energetic and far less anxiety-producing *Allegro vivace*. That very two-note fragment recurs frequently and lends a purposive air that reassures us after the nebulous opening measures of the movement. Still, Beethoven has another trick up his sleeve: in the recapitulation he alters the opening violin solo to the point of near unrecognizability.

In Op. 59, No. 3 Beethoven chose not to literally fulfill Razumovsky’s request to incorporate a traditional Russian tune. He did, however, provide thematic material that “sounds” Russian in its flirting with Eastern European modes and scales. As in the first of the “Razumovsky” group, the cello’s numerous *pizzicatos* add a measure of mystery to this sad *Andante con moto quasie allegro* in A minor (same key signature as C Major, i.e., no sharps or flats).

A simple, charming and aptly described *Menuetto grazioso* leavens the texture and mood, serving as a pleasant musical oasis between the lugubrious tone of the second movement and the undimmed vigor of the *Finale*. Yet even in this otherwise unassuming *Menuetto* Beethoven appends a tonally ambiguous coda, which inspires perhaps a bit more head-scratching before hurtling us into the contrapuntal and bustling concluding movement.

Marked *Allegro molto*, a skittering fugato starts things off with a distinct jolt of electric energy that scarcely pauses to allow for a deep breath. Emphatic and triumphant in its C-Major glory (same key and forcefulness as the finale to the Fifth Symphony), this closing movement serves as a long-delayed resolution of the tonally insecure *Introduzione* of the opening movement.

Josef Suk (1874-1935)

Quintet for Piano and Strings in G minor, Op. 8 (1893)

Czech music history is dotted with a number of related musicians carrying the surname Suk. These include composer Joseph Suk and his like-named grandson, a fine and deservedly acclaimed violinist. The composer Suk was also a fine violinist who enjoyed a long and fruitful association with the Czech String Quartet. The itch to create, rather than re-create, music came early to Grandfather Joseph. He was already composing in his early teens. In 1891, while a student at the Prague Conservatory, he became the star pupil of no less than Dvořák, whose influence burrowed deeply into Suk's psyche. Their relationship was cemented by his marriage to his mentor's daughter, Otilie, in 1898. Suk's best known work remains his elegiac Serenade, written in memory of both Dvořák and his short-lived daughter. Suk emulated Dvořák's role as mentor; his students include composer Bohuslav Martinů and the late pianist Rudolf Firkůsný. (A final word on his grandson: *that* Joseph Suk performed and recorded Dvořák's Violin Concerto, a terrific piece that seems to be experiencing a much-deserved re-acceptance into the current repertory.)

Suk's Quintet for Piano and Strings in G minor bears the influence of his teacher as well as that of Brahms, an early and ongoing supporter of Dvořák as well as a model for that famed Bohemian master. The work of a young composer still in his teens, Suk's Piano Quintet is expansive, yet is by no means undisciplined or unsure of itself. Suk's fluent string writing (even for a young composer lacking an extensive canon) is not surprising, but the keyboard part shows a clear understanding of the capabilities of the piano. One can readily hear why Dvořák thought so highly of his gifted pupil.

The *Allegro energico* combines Brahms-inspired orchestral richness with a surfeit of dance-inspired Czech themes that cannot fail to remind one of Dvořák, though there is nothing imitative of the master. Suk's later music is far less beholden to Czech music. Sturdy and rhythmically forceful themes reflect the "*energico*" marking, but they mingle with lyrical episodes that enhance the spaciousness of the overall conception of the movement.

Shimmering yet calming strings quietly announce the opening theme of the aptly “*religioso*” description of the *Adagio*. The piano bathes the strings in a ring of arpeggio passagework and rich chords that add to the inward and spiritual nature of the music.

Energetic and effervescent, the *Scherzo* is a burst of invigorating spring air and youthful optimism. The cello briefly calms things down with a lyrical theme that gives way to a pizzicato-laden flight of whimsical energy. In its unforced yet unflagging motion, the *Scherzo* seems to pay its respects to the examples of Schubert and Brahms, with a brief nod to the airy manner of Mendelssohn.

A few boldly articulated notes from the piano sweep us into the fervent *Finale*. Expressive interludes periodically interrupt the irresistible zeal of this bold dash to the finish line. Though the upper strings sustain much of the melodic interest, the piano underlines the rhythmic insistence of the music, constantly urging the proceedings onward.

**Program Notes by
Steven Lowe**