



Friday, October 11, 2019 7:30PM

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto

Sunday, October 13, 2019 4PM

Old First Church, San Francisco

Fall Collective

Zoltán Kodály

Intermezzo for String Trio

Pēteris Vasks

Piano Quartet

Erich Korngold

Suite, Op. 23

Hrabba Atladottir, violin
Susan Freier, violin/viola
Stephen Harrison, cello
Keisuke Nakagoshi, piano



IVES
COLLECTIVE

Please save these dates!

Winter Collective

Guest Artists: Jay Zhong, violin
Susan Freier, violin; Melissa Matson, viola
Jessica Chang, viola; Stephen Harrison, cello
Richard Worn, bass; Elizabeth Schumann, piano



All Beethoven

String Quintet in C Major, Op. 29
Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major Op. 58
(arranged for chamber ensemble)

Friday, January 24, 2020, 7:30PM | St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto
Sunday, January 26, 2020, 4:00PM | Old First Church, San Francisco

Spring Collective

Roy Malan, violin; **Susan Freier**, violin/viola
Nancy Ellis, viola; **Stephen Harrison**, cello
Robin Sutherland, piano

Germaine Tailleferre – *Quatuor à cordes*
Gabriel Fauré – *Piano Quartet in C minor, Op. 15*
César Franck – *Piano Quintet in F minor*

Friday, May 1, 2020 7:30PM | St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto
Sunday, May 3, 2020 4PM | Old First Church, San Francisco

Salon Concerts

These concerts eliminate the boundaries between the artists and audience and invite interactive discussion that includes the sharing of ideas, concepts and impressions about the music performed. Along with guest moderator Dr. Derek Katz, we will discuss and demonstrate what fascinates us about a particular piece, taking everybody deeper into the creative process. Each Salon is hosted in a private home and is followed by a champagne reception.

Winter Salon

Sunday, February 16, 2020 4PM
Beethoven: Piano Trio, Op. 1, No. 3
Guest artist: Elizabeth Schumann, piano

Spring Salon

Sunday, April 26, 2020 4PM
Fauré: Piano Quartet in C minor, Op. 15
Guest Artists: Roy Malan, violin; Robin Sutherland, piano

All programs, artists and policies of the Ives Collective are subject to change without notice.



Fall Collective

IVES COLLECTIVE

Hrabba Atladottir, violin; Susan Freier, violin/viola
Stephen Harrison, cello; Keisuke Nakagoshi, piano

Intermezzo for String Trio (ca.1905)

Zoltán Koldály
(1882-1967)

Piano Quartet (2001)

Pēteris Vasks
(b. 1946)

Preludio - Moderato
Danze - Allegro
Canti drammatici - Andante
Quasi una passacaglia - Allegro - Andante
Canto principale
Postludio

Intermission

Suite for Two Violins, Cello and Piano Left Hand, Op.23 (1930)

Erich Korngold
(1897-1957)

Präludium und Fuge
Walzer
Groteske
Lied
Finale: Rondo (Variationen)

Intermezzo for String Trio

Zoltán Kodály

Zoltán Kodály, like his friend and contemporary Béla Bartók, was a pioneering folksong collector and ethnomusicologist as well as a composer. Kodály's efforts to preserve and study folk culture were inextricably linked to the development of his own compositional style. The Intermezzo for String Trio presents a particularly interesting problem in assessing this relationship since the exact composition date is unknown. It is an early work that predates his published works with opus numbers, and was probably composed around 1905, the same year Kodály made his first folksong collecting tour in August of 1905 and began the research that led to his PhD thesis on Hungarian folksong.

The Intermezzo falls into three parts. The first part presents a theme in the violin that concludes in the viola, mostly over rhythmic pizzicatos from the cello. The middle section is calmer with a less vigorous melody over drones in the cello. The third section repeats the material of the first, but distributed differently amongst the instruments and rising to a higher emotional pitch.

There certainly seem to be many features that could be explained as markers of a folk style. The guitar-like plucked accompaniment from viola and cello in the first section, the melodies that are spun out from a handful of notes in a narrow range, the piquant harmonic gestures that stray from conservatory norms and the open-string drones from the cello in the middle section all hint at musical life outside of the concert hall. However, it seems just as plausible that Kodály was indulging in the kind of generic exoticism also found in the works of composers (Dvořák, Dohnányi) that did not do any systematic research into folk music. Whatever the source of Kodály's inspiration, the Intermezzo is a highly attractive work, and, not surprisingly, given that Kodály played all three instruments, a pleasure to play for the whole trio.

Piano Quartet

Pēteris Vasks

Pēteris Vasks, like Korngold, has had a career that is perhaps too easy to reduce to a familiar narrative. In the case of Vasks, the story would be of a composer from the former Soviet Union whose compositional career was repressed for political reasons during Soviet rule, but who has emerged as a major voice in the post-Soviet era, thanks to both political liberation and a broader appreciation for new music coming from outside the mainstream of post-World War II Western high modernism. Vasks's life does match the basic contours of this story. Born in Latvia as the son of a Baptist pastor, Vasks was obviously at odds with the Soviet regime both as a native of a recently and forcibly occupied Baltic Republic, and on account of his religious beliefs. Although active as a composer during this time, he made his living as an orchestral double bass player and music teacher. In more recent years, Vasks's compositions have been championed by many prominent musicians and ensembles,

including Gidon Kremer, the Kronos Quartet and the Hilliard Ensemble. However, it does Vasks a disservice to experience his works primarily as a response to his years under Soviet rule. While Vasks has written some pieces with overt political content (in particular, his First Symphony), he has been much more engaged with communicating more general ideas about the relationships between humans and nature and about the human condition. As the composer wrote around the time of the Piano Quartet, "every honest composer searches for a way out of time's crises. Towards affirmation, towards faith. He shows how humanity can overcome this passion for self-annihilation."

The Piano Quartet is in six movements, played without pause. The first movement grows out of an open fifth, as if generated by the unstopped strings of the violin, viola and cello. The interval is transformed into a lively quasi-folk tune, but always supported by open string drones. The second movement is another vigorous tune over open string drones, this time in the form of a dance, and with melody described by Vasks as being particularly close to Latvian folk music. The "sizzling energy" of *Danze* gives way to the third movement, titled *Canti drammatici* (Dramatic Songs). Vasks calls this "the turning point of the piece. High spiritual suspense. Questions without answers." Cadenzas for each of the string players lead into the fourth movement, *Quasi una Passacaglia*. This is based on a theme first heard in the left hand of the piano, standing out as a moderate, legato voice underneath rapid repeated notes from the strings. The intense energy of the *Passacaglia* (Vasks calls it "a black hole") gives way to quiet and lyrical *Canto principale* (Main Song), first sung by the cello. Vasks describes this as a "glorious incantation... a song of praise to faith and love." This movement, too, rises to a powerful climax before the Quartet culminates in a *Postludio*, dissolving into a "poignant but hopeful atmosphere."

Suite for Two Violins, Cello and Piano Left Hand, Op. 23 **Erich Korngold**

Erich Korngold was one of the great prodigy composers of any era, hailed as a genius by Mahler, and with works performed by the Vienna Court Opera and by Artur Schnabel before reaching his teens. By his early twenties, he was famous across Europe as an opera composer. In America, he has perhaps been better known for his second career as an émigré film composer in Hollywood.

The nature of Korngold's career path makes it easy to set up binaries: Europe vs. America; opera vs. cinema, art vs. commerce. Each of these pairs fits neatly into a master narrative about émigré musicians; successful and artistically free in Europe, but forced to bend their talents to commercial pursuits in America. Korngold, however, began his collaboration with Jack Warner while still a European opera composer, and threw himself enthusiastically into film music, which he held to be as artistically important as tone poems. Korngold also enjoyed extraordinary autonomy and artistic freedom within the Hollywood studio system. Meanwhile, Korngold had

already faced a conflict between artistic desires and financial rewards in Europe. By the early 1920s he was devoting significant time to a lucrative sideline in arranging and conducting adaptations of 19th century operettas, and experiencing a concomitant decline in his compositional output.

The Suite for Two Violins, Cello and Piano Left Hand was composed in 1930, in response to a commission from the Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein came from an enormously wealthy and cultivated family. His father was a steel tycoon, frequently compared to Andrew Carnegie, and his siblings included the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (yes, *those* Wittgensteins!). Wittgenstein was trained as a concert pianist, but lost his right arm in the Great War. After that, he retrained himself as a one-armed pianist, specializing in works commissioned for his own use, including a concerto from Ravel composed at about the same time as the Korngold Suite. Korngold had already provided Wittgenstein with a concerto in 1923 before receiving a second commission.

Wittgenstein was deeply committed to the idea that his one-handed playing should produce the same pianistic textures and effects as the literature to be played with both hands. The Korngold Suite is typical of Wittgenstein's repertoire in its many passages that give the impression of two-handedness through rapid shifting of the left hand between high and low registers to sustain melodies and harmonies in different parts of the keyboard.

The opening *Präludium und Fuge*, which begins with a bravura, quasi-improvisatory cadenza for piano alone, immediately foregrounds the pianist as virtuoso soloist. The subsequent Fuge begins with a restrained subject in the lowest register of the cello, and gradually rises in register and volume as the other instruments join in. Once each instrument has had a turn with the fugue subject, Korngold drops any pretense of contrapuntal development, and continues with something more like a series of variations on the subject; each appears variously thundered out in the deepest reaches of the piano, quietly in the middle register of the piano and as lyrical solos for the cello and the first violin. The second movement *Waltzer* initially moves in fits and starts, and never really arrives at anything properly danceable (not the least because of frequently missing "pahs" amongst the "oom-pah-pahs"). If *Waltzer* might suggest refracted memories of Johann Strauss, the central *Groteske* shows that Korngold was also listening to Hindemith in the 1920s. A swift and aggressive outer section surrounds a more sentimental trio. The emotional core of the Suite is the fourth movement *Lied*, which is fairly closely based on a song from Korngold's Op. 22. The text of the song, by Eleonore van der Straten, asks, "What are you to me?" and answers "my belief in happiness." This is Korngold at his most luscious and glowing. The final movement snaps back from the dream-world of the song with variations on an amiable theme.

Notes by Dr. Derek Katz



Hrabba Atladottir, violin

Icelandic violinist Hrabba Atladottir studied in Berlin, Germany with Professor Axel Gerhardt. After finishing her studies, she worked as a free-lancing violinist in Berlin for five years, regularly playing with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Oper, and Deutsche Symphonieorchester. Hrabba also participated in a world tour with the Icelandic pop artist Björk, and a Germany tour with violinist Nigel Kennedy.

In 2004, Hrabba moved to New York, where she played on a regular basis with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Orchestra of St. Luke's and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra among other orchestras.

Since August 2008, Hrabba has been based in Berkeley, California, where she has been performing as a soloist as well as with various ensembles, such as The New Century Chamber Orchestra, The Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, The Empyrean Ensemble, The ECO ensemble and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players to name a few.



Susan Freier, violin

Susan Freier, violin/viola, and co-Artistic Director of the Ives Collective, earned degrees in music and biology from Stanford University as a Ford Scholar and continued her studies at the Eastman School of Music where she co-founded the award-winning Chester String Quartet. The Chester went on to win the Munich, Portsmouth (UK) and Discovery Competitions and were the quartet-in-residence at Indiana University, South Bend. In 1989 Susan returned to her native Bay Area and joined the Stanford faculty and the Stanford String Quartet. She performs with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and has been an artist/faculty member at the Newport Music Festival, Garth Newell, Music in the Mountains, Rocky Ridge Music Center, and the Schlern and Orfeo Music Festivals (Italy). Susan teaches and performs at the Mendocino Music Festival, the SoCal Music Workshop and the Telluride Chamber Music Festival.



Stephen Harrison, cello

Stephen Harrison, cello, and Co-Artistic Co-Artistic Director of the Ives Collective has been on the Stanford University faculty since 1983. A graduate of Oberlin College and Boston University, he has been solo cellist of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1985. He has toured internationally and recorded on the Delos, CRI, New Albion and Newport Classics labels. Stephen has been on the faculty of the Pacific Music Festival, the Orfeo and Schlern International Music Festivals (Italy) and the Rocky Ridge Music Center. He is currently principal cellist at the Mendocino Music Festival, and performs and teaches at the SoCal Chamber Music Workshop and the Telluride Chamber Music Festival.



Keisuke Nakagoshi, piano

Keisuke Nakagoshi , pianist, began his piano studies at the age of ten, arriving in the United States from Japan at the age of 18. Mr. Nakagoshi earned his Bachelors degree in Composition and Masters degree in Chamber Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Graduating as the recipient of multiple top awards, Keisuke was selected to represent the SFCM for the Kennedy Center's Conservatory Project, a program featuring the most promising young musicians from major conservatories across the United States.

Mr. Nakagoshi has performed to acclaim on prestigious concert stages across the United States, including the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco. He has received training from some of the most celebrated musicians of our time – Emanuel Ax, Gilbert Kalish, Menahem Pressler, Robert Mann, Paul Hersh, David Zinman – and enjoys collaborating with other accomplished musicians such as Lucy Shelton, Ian Swensen, Jodi Levitz, Robin Sutherland, Lev Polyakin, Axel Strauss, Mark Kosower, Gary Schocker and also conductors such as Alasdair Neale, George Daugherty, Nicole Paiement, Michael Tilson Thomas and Herbert Blomstedt. Mr. Nakagoshi is Pianist-in-Residence at The San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the award winning Opera Parallele. He resides in San Francisco.

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